

## **DIGITAL CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMMES AND EMPLOYEE EARLY TASK COMPLETION OF COMMUNICATION COMPANIES IN RIVERS STATE**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The study determines the relationship between career development programmes and office manager performance of communication companies in Rivers State. The explanatory cross-sectional survey research design was adopted. The population of the study consisted of two hundred and sixty-two (262) office managers (branch, departmental and unit heads) drawn from 5 telecommunication firms operating in Rivers State. The study adopted census method of sampling which involves using the entire population of the study. Structure questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection after face validation. Cronbach alpha was used to test the internal consistency of the instrument. Out of 262 copies of the questionnaire administered, a total of 253 were retrieved. Arithmetic mean was used for the univariate analysis while the test of hypotheses was done using Correlation Statistical tool such as Spearman Rank Order Correlation. The findings revealed that there is a very strong positive relationship between digital capacity building and early completion of task of Telecommunication companies in Rivers State. The study concludes the engagement of office managers in such programmes as digital capacity building enhances their ability to discharge their duties with creativity and quickness of task completion. The study recommended among others that employee in telecommunication firms and other organizations should learn to leverage on artificial intelligence tools that will lighten their jobs, thereby enhancing their creativeness and early task completion.

***Keynote: Digital Capacity Building Programme, Employee Early Task Completion, Career Development***

### **INTRODUCTION**

Digital capacity building refers to the computer and Internet-related skills and attitudes that individuals and organisations need if they are to thrive in today's world (Zoe, 2019). Digital capacity building refers to the process of enhancing the knowledge, skills, and capabilities of individuals, organizations, and communities to effectively utilize digital technologies and leverage them for various purposes. The goal of digital capacity building is to empower individuals and groups to fully participate in the digital world, take advantage of digital tools and resources, and adapt to the rapid technological changes. Office managers with up-to-date knowledge of Cloud computing and Artificial Intelligence in this present day business world will enhance their creative ability, effective decision making and early task performance among others. Digital capacity building is essential in today's digital age, where technology plays a critical role in various aspects of life, work and governance. By investing in digital capacity building, individuals and organizations can unlock new opportunities, enhance productivity, and adapt to the evolving digital landscape. Additionally, digital capacity building contributes to creating a digitally inclusive society where everyone can participate and benefit from the digital revolution.

Enrollment of office managers into advanced professional programmes such as Business School and overseas sponsored courses can also enhance their performance. Advanced professional programmes include trainings, workshops, conferences and seminars that not only provide valuable networking opportunities but insights from acclaimed practitioners and recognized educational experts, as well as rich information regarding the advanced continuous improvement system, and accreditation process and standards (UNESCO, 2019). A professional education is termed advanced because it is far or ahead or further along in progress, complexity, knowledge, skill, etc. than the basic professional education required for a certain course or career. This means moving a step or more further than what is the usual standard of required professional education/development for a certain career. Office managers will be better off in their problem, decision, and tasks handling abilities around their job roles.

Master's and PhD programmes are degree advancement programmes that office managers can undertake to help them perform better in their job duties. All things being equal, office managers who have gone through degree advancement programmes do better than those with undergraduate degrees (Jack, 2019). The study operationally defines degree advancement programmes as higher university programmes such as Master's and Doctoral degrees targeted at enhancing the relevance and skill sets of the participant. Whether you work in a science-related field, communications, engineering, or management, new knowledge and discoveries are constantly being added. Those who pursue that knowledge through advanced degrees could become leaders in their field. In addition to the obvious financial benefit to the employee, employer-funded advanced education can carry financial and soft benefits for employers, employees, and colleagues alike. And as earlier hinted, degree advancement programmes and other career development programmes introduced above can be catalysts to the performance of office managers, especially in telecommunication firms.

### **Research Hypothesis**

The following hypotheses stated in the null form were tested in the course of the study:

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between digital capacity building and early task completion of Telecommunication Firms in Rivers State.

### **Digital Capacity Building**

Kerry (2016) defines digital capacity building as development in ICT proficiency (functional skills), information, data and media literacies (critical use), digital creation, problem solving and innovation (creative production), digital communication, collaboration and partnership (participation), digital learning and development (development), and digital identity and wellbeing (self-actualising). Digital capacity building refers to the computer and Internet-related skills and attitudes that individuals and organisations need if they are to thrive in today's world (Zoe, 2019). At an individual level digital capacity building is seen as those which equip someone to live, learn and work in a digital environment. In the level of an organisation we need to look beyond the capabilities of individuals and consider the extent to which the culture and infrastructure of an institution enables and motivates digital practices. What it means to be digitally capable will vary for each person. It will depend on the requirements of their role, their subject specialism, career choice, personal and other contextual factors.

Digital capacity building can also be seen as the minimum skills required to safely use the internet and access the benefits it can provide including the skills needed to benefit from a digital world, skills that allow you to shop, transact, and find the best deals online; communicate with family and friends; access digital public services; and search and apply for jobs. Kaye (2017) defines digital capacity building as the confident and critical use of information society technology for work, leisure, learning and communication. It is underpinned by basic skills in ICT, i.e. the use of computers to retrieve, access, store, produce, present and exchange information, and to communicate and participate in collaborative networks via the internet. According to Kaye (2017), digital capacity building includes: computer literacy or technology literacy (the ability to use computers and related software); Internet (or network) literacy (skills needed to locate, select and evaluate information on the internet); information literacy (skills needed to locate and evaluate information, store and retrieve information, make effective and ethical use of information and apply information to create and communicate knowledge); media literacy (skills that enable people to analyse, evaluate, and create messages in a wide variety of media modes, genres, and formats); and digital literacy (the most overarching concept, which includes many of the skills mentioned above).

The office manager, otherwise known as the middle level managers, are in the unique position of being placed in such a way that they have access to the top management and they can command the loyalty of the regular member's employees. Hence, any organizational initiative has to necessarily take into account the importance of the Office Manager in the larger scheme of things. Among other things, the Office Manager's jobs are to: recognize the specific responsibilities and job functions often assigned to them; office managers are accountable to top management for their departments; they provide guidance to lower-level managers and employees under their designation, and inspire them to perform better. They make decisions that are functionally revolved around enabling teams of their jurisdiction; they keep to records of their departments, units and other outlets under their control. Within the context of administration in the telecommunication industry, we use the term office managers to capture administrative personnel such as departmental managers (production, marketing, human resource, accounting, procurement) and administrative assistants working in the offices of their designated principals.

The job performance of office managers in the Telecommunication industry depend largely on their effectiveness and efficiency in management information especially in today's digitalized business environment. In lieu of the above, it is imperative to briefly examine the concept of office managers' job performance. Job performance of the Office Managers here refers to the ability of designate personnel to accomplish his or her tasks, duties and responsibilities, effectively and efficiently. The Cambridge Dictionary (2016), indicated that effectiveness is the [ability](#) to be [successful](#) and [produce](#) the [intended results](#). While, efficiency denotes the attainment of expected results with minimal utilization of organization' resources, for examples: minimal use of time in achieving the set targets.

For affirmations to be made that an office manager is performing well, it is certain that he or she is effective and efficient in carrying out job schedules assigned for the period. Performance is the capability of producing a desired result. An office manager is deemed performing, if he or she has met an intended or expected outcome on a job or task assigned to him/her. From the definitions given above, an effective office manager can be described as an administrator who judiciously and professionally executes his jobs to the point that organizational goals or targets are met in the office or unit under them. Anthony (2016)

identified the following as measures or indicators of manager's effectiveness: early completion of tasks; smooth administrative activities in the organization; good records keeping and easy retrieval of documents and files; timely dissemination of information in the organization; proper coordination and flow of administrative activities in the system; and problem solving. The information manager otherwise known as the middle level managers are in the unique position of being placed in such a way that they have access to the top management and they can command the loyalty of the regular member's employees. Hence, any organizational initiative has to necessarily take into account the importance of the office manager in the larger scheme of things.

### **Early Task Completion**

One of the signs of a performing office manager is his ability to create an environment that enables employees to accomplish routine tasks in time. Early task completion is some strategic contribution to the higher objectives of an organization that could take the form of revenues generated, costs avoided, revenues recovered and percent improvement in some process, smooth operation etc., something above and beyond the normal day-to-day duties and responsibilities. Now, those daily duties and responsibilities may be tactics that support the strategic contribution (Mattessich, 2015).

Vocabulary.com defines that something is said to be early if it is finished quickly or on time. By this, then it is been done in an early manner. Also, the Freedictionary.com defines early completion as completion of the work, done or designated portion thereof on or before the date required.

Jeff (2017) stressed that task completion is one of the fundamental usability metrics. It is the most common way to quantify the effectiveness of an interface. If users cannot do what they intend to accomplish, not much else matters. While that may seem like a straightforward concept, actually determining whether users are completing a task often is not as easy. The ways to determine task completion will vary based on the mode of evaluation and whether the data is collected from actual use (things users have done or self-reported) or simulated use (typically a usability test).

To this end, early task completion portends timely completion of the work, duty, task, responsibility or assignment as a designated portion by an individual on or before the time or date required. It is the attainment of a task or duty by an individual on or before the designated time required for such to be completed. In line with the above conceptual definition, timely task completion as a measure of job performance of an Office Manager means when an Information Manager attains a designated tasks or duties on or before the stipulated time. An Office Manager in a telecommunication firm, such as the unit or departmental head is expected to issue out memos, call for meetings, give reports, etc. on time, as this will permeate into their performance, thereby enhancing his performance as an office manager.

Office managers' jobs among others include: to recognize the specific responsibilities and job functions often assigned to them; accountable to top management for their departments; to provide guidance to lower-level managers and employees under their designation, inspire them to perform better, to keep records of their departments, units and other outlets under their control. It is better put they are more proficient when these duties and responsibilities are timely completed (attained on or before the stipulated time).

In addition, task accomplishment is an observable and measurable end result having one or more objectives to be achieved within a more or less fixed timeframe. Task

accomplishment is the desired result or possible outcome that a person or a system envisions, plans and commits to achieve at the end: a personal or organizational desired end-point in some sort of assumed development. Many people or organizations endeavor to reach goals within a finite time by setting deadlines (Liang & Martin, 2018). It is roughly similar to purpose or aim, the anticipated result which guides reaction, or an end, which is an object, either a physical object or an abstract object, that has intrinsic value. Given the fact that most of the tasks of administrative systems revolve around preparation of documents and coordination of administrative activities, this work sees goal attainment and target achievement as indicators of office manager.

**Goal Attainment:** A goal is an observable and measurable end result having one or more objectives to be achieved within a more or less fixed timeframe (The Business Dictionary, 2019). To successfully achieve a goal, an organization or employee needs to: set motivating goals; set specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time bound goal; set goals in writing; make an action plan; and stick with it. With these steps put in place, an office manager is highly sure of attaining such goal.

Goal attainment is the process through which humans and other resources are mobilized for the attainment of collective goals and purposes (David, 2018). In a social system, the goal attainment functions are met through political activities and mobilization occurs through the generation and exercise of power. The attainment of organizational goals depends largely on the effort of its managers (Hilliard & Msaseni, 2015). No organization survives without the effort of managers. That is why every organization must recognize the position of managers as a very vital ingredient that sustains the growth and long survival of the organization. Office managers across telecommunication firms are seen as rational entities whose primary purpose is to accomplish objectives.

Goal attainment as an indicator of early task completion of an office manager means the extent to which an office manager is able to successfully land a set goal. A unit or departmental head may have a daily, weekly, monthly or yearly for the faculty or department, all to enhance the entire performance of the institution. If these goals are met, it means that amongst other things, the unit or departmental head is able to complete task on time, hence adding to his performance.

### **Holland's Theory of Vocational Choice (John L. Holland, 1950)**

Holland's Theory of Vocational Choice, also known as the Holland Codes or the RIASEC model, is a widely accepted framework for understanding and classifying individuals' vocational interests and career choices. This theory was developed by John L. Holland, a psychologist, in the 1950s and has been influential in the field of career development. Holland's Theory of Vocational Choice, proposed by John L. Holland, is a widely recognized and influential theory in the field of career development. The theory suggests that individuals possess unique personality types that align with specific work environments. Holland's theory is also known as the RIASEC model, named after the six personality types that he identified: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional. The assumptions of the theory that align with this study include:

- i. The theory assumes that individuals can be classified into one of six distinct personality types: Realistic (R), Investigative (I), Artistic (A), Social (S), Enterprising (E), and Conventional (C). Each person exhibits varying degrees of these personality

types, but there is usually a dominant type that best characterizes an individual's preferences.

- ii. Holland's theory assumes that an individual's personality is relatively stable over time. It means that a person's interests, values, and preferences tend to remain consistent, making their career choices aligned with their dominant personality type.
- iii. The central assumption of Holland's theory is that individuals seek a person-environment fit, aiming to match their dominant personality type with work environments that correspond to it. The closer the fit between an individual's personality and the vocational environment, the higher the job satisfaction and career success.
- iv. Holland's theory proposes that as individuals explore and make career choices based on their dominant personality type, they develop a vocational identity. This identity represents a sense of self in the vocational domain and becomes an essential part of an individual's self-concept.

### **Implication of Holland's Theory of Vocational Choice**

The implications of Holland's Theory of Vocational Choice on the relationship between Career Development Programmes and Office Manager Performance are multifaceted and can have a positive impact on both individual employees and the overall organizational performance. Career Development Programmes that incorporate Holland's Theory can help office managers identify career paths that align with their dominant personality types. When employees find jobs that match their interests and preferences, they are more likely to be engaged and motivated in their roles. Office managers can benefit from a highly engaged workforce, leading to improved productivity and job satisfaction. Also, Holland's Theory emphasizes the importance of person-environment fit in career satisfaction and performance. Career development programmes that take this into account can assist employees in finding roles within the organization that best suit their personalities. When employees experience a good fit between their personalities and job roles, they are more likely to perform well and remain committed to the organization.

Furthermore, career development programmes that consider Holland's Theory can assist office managers in designing effective career paths for their employees. When employees are guided along career trajectories that match their personalities, they are more likely to experience career growth and advancement within the organization. This can improve employee retention and reduce turnover. Office managers can use Holland's Theory to guide the training and development initiatives within their teams. By understanding the dominant personality types, they can offer personalized training programs that align with the specific needs and interests of their employees. This targeted approach can lead to more effective skill development and improved job performance.

Summarily, the application of Holland's Theory of Vocational Choice in career development programmes can lead to a better understanding of individual office manager personality types, interests, and career aspirations. When this knowledge is integrated into office manager performance strategies, it can result in a more engaged, motivated, and high-performing workforce. By aligning individuals with roles that suit their personalities and providing tailored career development opportunities, organizations can create a positive work environment that fosters growth, productivity, and overall success.

### Research Design

The exploratory cross-sectional survey research design was adopted. The explanatory cross-sectional survey research design is interested in the test of hypotheses using primary data generated from respondents. The recent nature of digital knowledge entrepreneurship in this part of the world also informed the choice of this research design.

### Population of the Study

The population of the study consisted of two hundred and seventy-six (276) office managers (departmental and unit heads) drawn from 100 telecommunication companies operating in Rivers State (Sourced: Rivers State Yellow Pages).

### Sample Size/Sampling Techniques

The entire population of two hundred and seventy-six (276) office managers drawn from 100 telecommunication companies in Rivers State was used for the study without sampling. Thus, the study adopted census method of sampling which involves using the entire population of the study. The researcher is making the above decision based on the fact that the two hundred and seventy-six (276) office managers drawn from 100 telecommunication companies could be covered. Therefore, a total of two hundred and seventy-six (276) office managers of the 100 telecommunication companies became the respondents.

### Instrument for Data Collection

Instrument for data collection for the study was done through structured questionnaire.

### Method of Data Analysis

Arithmetic Mean and Standard Deviation were used for the univariate analysis while bivariate analysis was done using Spearman Rank Order Correlation. Partial Correlation was applied for the multivariate analysis.

## Results

### Bivariate Analysis

#### Digital Capacity Building and Early tasks Accomplishment

Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between digital capacity building and early task completion of Telecommunication Firms in Rivers State.

#### Correlations between Digital Capacity Building and Office Manager Performanc

			Digital Capacity Building			Early Task Completion
Spearman's rho	Digital Capacity Building	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	0.861**	0.644**	0.855**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
		N	253	253	253	253
	Creativeness	Correlation Coefficient	0.861**	1.000	0.785**	0.786**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000
		N	253	253	253	253
		Correlation Coefficient	0.644**	. 0.785**	1.000	0.646**

Effective Decision Making	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000
	N	253	253	253	253
Early Task Completion	Correlation Coefficient	0.855**	0.786**	0.646**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.
	N	253	253	253	253

**\*\* . Correlation is Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**

**Source: SPSS Output**

Column four of table above shows r value of 0.855 at a significance level of 0.00 which is less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05 for the hypothesis relating advanced professional programmes and early task completion. Since the significance value is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis ( $H_{03}$ ) which states that there is no relationship between advanced professional programmes and early task completion of Telecommunication Firms in Rivers State was rejected. This implies that there is a very strong positive relationship between advanced professional programmes and early task completion of Telecommunication Firms in Rivers State.

Digitalization has enhanced speed and smoothness of business activities, especially in digitally-inclined organizations such as telecommunication companies. Virtualization, through video conferencing, Google sheets, Google doc, Google drive, Google slides, DropBox, etc., have improved the way the business of these days are done, as customers can be easily and smoothly attended to in spite of their geographical dispersion. Customers do not need to appear physically at every slight complaint or transaction, since video communication and collaboration through Google sheets, Google doc and Google slides can be used; these are smooth and save time for the customer and the telecommunication firm as well. Digitally-inclined customers will always be excited to have their telecommunication firms respond to them virtually on time. It therefore takes a digitally-savvy office managers to handle the set of customers that are rooted from this present digital age. These customers have tasted and understood what speed and smoothness of service means in digitalization, and as such want to experience them virtually wherever they go. Equipping the office managers with digital skills such as conferencing skill, advanced spreadsheet, AI skills, and cloud computing skill will definitely keep them fit to deliver satisfactory service to customers where there is client time saving, creativeness, complaint redress, effective decision, and early task completion.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The study has shown how digital capacity building programmes positively relate with the Employee early tasks accomplishment, especially in terms of creativeness, effective decision making, and early task completion. From the analyses and discussion of findings carried out, the study concludes the engagement of office managers in such programmes as digital capacity building programme enhances their ability to discharge their duties with creativity and quickness of task completion.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Office managers in telecommunication firms and other organizations should learn to leverage on artificial intelligence tools that will lighten their jobs, thereby enhancing their creativeness and early task completion.
2. Office managers and others in telecommunication firms should undertake professional courses to advance their knowledge and expertise in their career, thereby improving their performance and that of their organizations.
3. All administrative offices should be equipped with functional state-of-the-art desktop/laptop computer systems and other digital office resource to enhance the digital capacity of office managers and others.

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