

CREATIVITY AND OFFICE MANAGER'S ATTITUDE OF REAL ESTATE COMPANIES IN PORT HARCOURT

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ABSTRACT

This work examined creativity and manager's attitude of real estate companies in Port Harcourt. The objective of the study was to determine the influence of creativity and manager's attitude of real estate companies in Port Harcourt. The study adopted the explanatory survey research design, sample size was drawn from the entire twenty (20) accessible real estate companies in Port Harcourt with 72 secretaries, receptionist administrative officer as respondents. After validation by the supervisor, 60 copies of structured questionnaire were administered while fifty-three (53) copies were retrieved. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained using Cronbach Alpha. Mean and standard deviation were used for the analyses of research questions while Spearman rank order correlation in SPSS Version 22.0 was used for the test of hypotheses. The results showed that there is a significant positive relationship between in real estate companies in Port Harcourt. The study concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between creativity and manager's attitude in real estate companies. Application of digital literacy such as creative/innovative skill will influence manager's job performance. Consequently, the study recommended amongst others that management of the real estate companies should insure the creativity/innovation, to improve manager's job performance as this is capable of fostering organizational goals.

Keywords: Creativity, Innovation, Manager's Attitude, Performance, Organisational Goals

Introduction

Office Managers play a crucial role in the operational success of real estate companies, particularly in a city like Port Harcourt, where the industry is rapidly growing. However, there has been a notable decline in secretaries' job performance in some real estate firms, attributed to issues such as low productivity, ineffective communication, and poor management of administrative tasks (Brown, 2020). Managers have expressed concerns over the increasing workload that secretaries face without adequate training or technological support, which affects their ability to efficiently handle document management, client communication, and scheduling (Smith, 2021). Additionally, the absence of structured reward systems and inadequate organizational support have further diminished their job satisfaction and overall performance (Adams, 2022). These performance-related issues have impeded the ability of real estate firms to maintain smooth operations, ultimately affecting business outcomes.

A significant challenge contributing to this decline is the neglect of digital literacy among secretaries in these firms. Many real estate companies in Port Harcourt have not prioritized equipping their secretaries with essential digital skills, such as creativity, innovation, and effective use of digital communication tools (Wilson, 2021). This lack of training hampers secretaries' capacity to utilize modern technologies that could improve efficiency and productivity. Without strong digital literacy, secretaries struggle to manage complex tasks, leading to miscommunication, data breaches, and administrative delays that undermine organizational performance (Garcia, 2022). The failure to incorporate digital literacy into administrative roles creates a digital divide that not only affects individual performance but also poses a broader threat to the real estate industry's competitiveness and growth in Port Harcourt. This implies that this area of research is demanding for attention, which this study is focused on.

Creativity and innovation

Creativity and innovation are essential drivers of success and competitiveness in real estate companies. Adewale (2020) define creativity as the ability to generate new ideas, approaches, and solutions to problems, while innovation involves the implementation of these creative ideas into practical applications, products, or services. In the dynamic and competitive real estate industry, creativity and innovation play a critical role in meeting changing customer demands, adapting to market trends, and enhancing operational efficiency. Real estate companies in Nigeria, particularly in urban centers like Lagos and Abuja, are increasingly adopting creative and innovative strategies to stand out in the marketplace and provide added value to their clients (Adewale, 2020). In the context of real estate companies, creativity manifests in various aspects of the business, from architectural designs to marketing strategies. Real estate developers, for instance, rely on creativity to design properties that not only meet functional needs but also appeal to modern aesthetic sensibilities. The incorporation of sustainable design elements such as green spaces, energy-efficient systems, and innovative use of building materials showcases creativity in addressing environmental concerns and enhancing the liveability of properties (Chukwu, 2020). Additionally, creativity is evident in how real estate agents market properties, using storytelling, virtual tours, and interactive digital platforms to engage potential buyers and differentiate properties from the competition.

On the other hand, innovation in real estate involves the practical implementation of creative ideas through technology, business processes, and service delivery. For example, the use of digital platforms and applications to streamline property searches, automate transactions, and provide virtual property tours is a form of technological innovation that enhances customer experience and reduces transaction times (Okechukwu, 2021). Real estate companies that adopt innovative technologies are better equipped to meet the evolving needs of tech-savvy clients, particularly millennials and investors who prefer the convenience of digital interactions over traditional methods. One area where innovation is increasingly shaping the real estate industry is property management. Property management software and digital tools that facilitate tenant communication, maintenance tracking, and rent collection are revolutionizing the way real estate companies operate. These innovations not only improve efficiency but also provide real-time data and analytics, enabling property managers to make informed decisions about leasing, pricing, and property improvements. Moreover, innovations such as blockchain technology are being explored to improve transparency and security in real estate transactions by creating decentralized and tamper-proof digital records of property ownership and transactions (Ibrahim, 2021).

Creativity and innovation also extend to financing models and customer engagement strategies in real estate companies. In response to Nigeria's challenging economic environment and fluctuating interest rates, innovative financing solutions such as instalment-based payment plans and shared ownership schemes have emerged. These creative financing models provide more flexible options for clients who may struggle to afford traditional mortgage structures, thus broadening the customer base and increasing property sales. Additionally, innovative customer engagement strategies such as the use of artificial intelligence (AI) to analyze market trends and predict customer preferences allow real estate companies to offer personalized property recommendations, enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty (Adegbite, 2020). Creativity and innovation can be described as indispensable in the success and sustainability of real estate companies in Nigeria. By fostering a culture of creativity, real estate firms can generate new ideas that address market demands and operational challenges. Innovation, on the other hand, enables these companies to implement creative solutions effectively, whether through technology, service delivery, or customer engagement. As the real estate landscape continues to evolve, companies that prioritize creativity and innovation will remain competitive, meet the changing needs of their clients, and achieve long-term growth.

Manager's Attitude

Manager's attitude refers to the mindset, behaviours, and approaches a manager adopts in overseeing and guiding employees within an organization. In the context of real estate companies, a manager's attitude significantly impacts the organizational climate, employee motivation, client relationships, and overall performance. A positive managerial attitude fosters an environment of collaboration, transparency, and innovation, while a negative attitude can lead to low morale, poor performance, and diminished client satisfaction (Adewale, 2020). In real estate companies, where client relations and transactions are central to business success, a manager's attitude plays a crucial role in shaping how effectively the team operates. A manager who exhibits a positive attitude—characterized by openness, supportiveness, and a solutions-oriented mindset—can inspire confidence and commitment in employees. Such managers encourage open communication, provide constructive feedback, and are willing to support their teams through challenges. This not only enhances employee satisfaction but also leads to better client service, as motivated and empowered employees are more likely to go above and beyond to meet client needs (Chukwu, 2021).

Conversely, a negative manager's attitude can have adverse effects on both employees and the organization. Managers who are overly critical, unapproachable, or indifferent to the concerns of their staff can create a toxic work environment, leading to high employee turnover and low productivity. In real estate, where responsiveness and client satisfaction are critical, a manager's poor attitude can hinder team performance and damage client relationships (Ibrahim, 2019). Employees who feel undervalued or unsupported may fail to meet deadlines, communicate effectively with clients, or handle property transactions efficiently, ultimately affecting the company's reputation and profitability. The attitude of managers in real estate companies also influences how employees adapt to changes, such as market fluctuations, technological advancements, or new regulatory requirements. Managers with a proactive and adaptive mindset can help their teams navigate these challenges by promoting continuous learning and innovation. For example, a manager who encourages the adoption of new technologies such as virtual property tours or online transaction platforms enables the company to remain competitive in an increasingly digital market (Okechukwu, 2021). Such managers lead by example, showing that adaptability and forward-thinking are essential for long-term success in the real estate industry. The manager's attitude in real estate companies is a critical factor in shaping organizational culture, employee engagement, and client satisfaction. A positive, supportive attitude fosters a productive and motivated workforce, which translates into better client service and improved business outcomes. Conversely, a negative attitude can harm employee morale, reduce productivity, and negatively affect the company's ability to meet client expectations. As the real estate industry evolves, managers who adopt a growth-oriented and supportive attitude will be better positioned to lead their teams to success.

Creativity and Innovation and Manager's Attitude

The performance of a secretary in any organization, including real estate companies, is largely influenced by the work environment shaped by creativity, innovation, and the attitude of managers. In real estate companies, where administrative efficiency, communication, and organizational skills are critical to the smooth operation of the business, secretaries play a pivotal role. However, their job performance is not only dependent on their skill set but also on the creativity and innovation fostered within the organization, as well as the manager's attitude toward supporting these elements (Adewale, 2020). Creativity and innovation are essential drivers of administrative efficiency and job satisfaction. When managers encourage creative problem-solving and support innovation in daily tasks, secretaries feel more empowered and motivated to contribute meaningfully to the company. For instance, in real estate companies, secretaries may need to manage multiple clients, handle property listings, and coordinate communication between various stakeholders. Introducing innovative solutions, such as digital tools for scheduling, customer relationship management (CRM) systems, or virtual office setups, can significantly improve a secretary's efficiency and job performance (Okechukwu, 2021). When creativity is encouraged, secretaries are more likely to

propose new ways of managing workload and improving communication channels, which ultimately leads to better performance.

The manager's attitude plays a crucial role in fostering creativity and innovation within the workplace. Managers who exhibit a supportive and open attitude toward new ideas create an environment where secretaries feel comfortable suggesting improvements or adopting new technologies that could streamline their work. A manager's attitude towards innovation, whether positive or negative, can directly affect how secretaries approach their work. If a manager is resistant to change and discourages the use of new technologies or methods, secretaries may feel constrained and demotivated, leading to a decline in job performance (Ibrahim, 2021). On the other hand, a manager who actively encourages continuous improvement, learning, and creativity will inspire secretaries to take initiative, be more proactive in their roles, and contribute to the overall success of the organization. Furthermore, communication and feedback, which are influenced by the manager's attitude, are also crucial in determining a secretary's job performance. Managers who maintain open lines of communication and provide constructive feedback help secretaries stay aligned with organizational goals and expectations. Positive reinforcement for creative efforts or innovative solutions reinforces a culture of creativity and initiative. For example, when a manager acknowledges a secretary's innovative approach to organizing client files or improving property listings, it boosts morale and encourages further innovation (Chukwu, 2020). In contrast, a lack of recognition or negative feedback can stifle creativity and reduce a secretary's motivation to perform optimally. In real estate companies, where competition is fierce and operational efficiency is crucial, the relationship between creativity, innovation, and the manager's attitude becomes even more important. Secretaries are at the forefront of managing administrative tasks, and their ability to perform well can significantly affect the company's overall productivity. A supportive and innovation-friendly environment enables secretaries to leverage creativity in problem-solving, adapt to new technologies, and manage their tasks more efficiently. This relationship ultimately improves job performance, client satisfaction, and the company's competitive edge in the market (Adegbite, 2021). Conclusively, the interplay between creativity, innovation, and a manager's attitude is fundamental to enhancing a secretary's job performance in real estate companies in Port Harcourt. Managers who foster an environment of innovation and creativity while maintaining a positive, supportive attitude toward their staff help create a culture of productivity, efficiency, and job satisfaction. Real estate companies that recognize this relationship will see improved administrative performance and overall business success.

Technological Determinism Theory (McLuhan, 1964)

This study is anchored on Technological Determinism theory propounded by Marshall McLuhan in 1964. It is the belief that technology is the primary driver of societal change and shapes human behavior, culture, and organizational dynamics. According to McLuhan (1964 in Smith, 2020), technology acts as an independent force that influences how individuals (secretaries) think, communicate, and interact with their environment. The theory argues that as new technologies are introduced, they have the power to alter not only individual behaviors but also the structure and performance of entire organizations Headrick and Winston (2008). The assumptions relevant to this study are as follows:

- 1) The theory assumes that technology evolves independently of human control and dictates the direction of societal change. The development of digital tools, for instance, has restructured the way people work, communicate, and manage information.
- 2) That technological advancements necessitate changes in the behaviour and skills of employees within organizations. As technology evolves, so must the workforce's digital literacy to keep up with new demands (Chandler, 2000).
- 3) The theory assumes that technology directly influences the way individuals (secretaries) perform tasks. It compels individuals to adapt their behaviours, competencies, and routines to the requirements imposed by new technological tools.

Implication of Technological Determinism Theory to the study is that Technological Determinism provides a strong framework for understanding how digital literacy relates to and enhances secretaries' job performance in real estate companies in Port Harcourt. In real estate firms, where accurate and timely information is key, secretaries increasingly rely on digital tools such as property management software, customer relationship management (CRM) systems, and online communication platforms to manage documents, communicate with clients, and coordinate property transactions. According to this theory, as the work environment in real estate companies becomes more digitized, secretaries must develop strong digital literacy skills to remain competitive and effective. Their ability to use modern office tools effectively determines their productivity, as tasks such as managing electronic calendars, filing digital documents, and handling online customer inquiries become critical aspects of their job (Headrick & Winston, 2008). Furthermore, digital literacy empowers secretaries to adapt to technological changes, ensuring they can manage more complex tasks, such as data analysis and document automation, which are increasingly essential in real estate operations. In this context, the Technological Determinism Theory helps predict that secretaries who possess high levels of digital literacy are likely to perform better in real estate companies, where technology plays a central role in organizational processes. The theory suggests that digital tools shape secretaries' job performance by altering the way they handle office management tasks, thereby enhancing their efficiency and overall contribution to the firm's competitive advantage (Smith, 2020).

Research Design

The study adopted the cross-sectional survey research design. The population of the study consisted of sixty (60) secretaries, receptionist and administrative officers from 20 accessible real estate companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The decision for receptionists and administration officer's inclusion for the research population was the fact that receptionist and administrative officers also act in the place of secretary and to enable the researcher access the required respondents for the study. The above information was obtained from the Corporate Affairs Commission, Rivers State (2024). The twenty (20) Real Estate Companies currently operating in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, are listed overleaf:

Using the census sampling technique, the entire population became the sample. Therefore, the sample size of the study was sixty (60) secretaries, receptionist and administrative officers from 20 accessible real estate companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Structured questionnaire was used as the main instrument for the collection of primary data. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyse the research questions while the test of hypotheses was done using Spearman rank order correlation in SPSS Version 22.0. Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient was computed with the formula below:

$$R = \frac{6\sum d^2}{n(n^2 - 1)}$$

Where;

n = number of pairs of data

d = different between the ranking in each set of data.

Σ = Summation

Hypothesis

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between creativity/innovation and manager's attitude of real estate companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Table 4.5: Relationships Between Creativity/Innovation and Manager’s Attitude

			Creativity/ Innovation	Manager’s Attitude
Spearman's rho	Inventory Management	Correlation	1.000	0.664**
		Coefficient		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	Manager’s Attitude	N	53	53
		Correlation	0.664**	1.000
		Coefficient		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	53	53

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

Source: SPSS Output

Table 4.5 above shows r value of 0.664 at a significance level of 0.00 which is less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05 for the hypothesis relating to creativity/innovation and manager’s attitude. Since the significance value is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis (Ho₁) which states that there is no significant relationship between creativity/innovation and manager’s attitude of real estate companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State was rejected. This implies that there is a strong positive relationship between creativity/innovation and manager’s attitude of real estate companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Creativity/Innovation and Manager’s Attitude

The first hypothesis of the study showed that there is a strong positive relationship between creativity/innovation and manager’s attitude of real estate companies. Adewale (2020) found that secretary’s job performance is not only dependent on their skill set but also on the creativity and innovation fostered within the organization, as well as the manager's attitude toward supporting these elements. This finding is in line with the findings of Okechukwu (2021) that creativity and innovation are essential drivers of administrative efficiency and job satisfaction. Creativity and innovation are essential drivers of administrative efficiency and job satisfaction. When managers encourage creative problem-solving and support innovation in daily tasks, secretaries feel more empowered and motivated to contribute meaningfully to the company. For instance, in real estate companies, secretaries may need to manage multiple clients, handle property listings, and coordinate communication between various stakeholders. Introducing innovative solutions, such as digital tools for scheduling, customer relationship management (CRM) systems, or virtual office setups, can significantly improve a secretary’s efficiency and job performance (Okechukwu, 2021). When creativity is encouraged, secretaries are more likely to propose new ways of managing workload and improving communication channels, which ultimately leads to better performance. The manager’s attitude plays a crucial role in fostering creativity and innovation within the workplace. Managers who exhibit a supportive and open attitude toward new ideas create an environment where secretaries feel comfortable suggesting improvements or adopting new technologies that could streamline their work. A manager’s attitude towards innovation, whether positive or negative, can directly affect how secretaries approach their work. If a manager is resistant to change and discourages the use of new technologies or methods, secretaries may feel constrained and demotivated, leading to a decline in job performance (Ibrahim, 2021). On the other hand, a manager who actively encourages continuous improvement, learning, and creativity will inspire secretaries to take initiative, be more proactive in their roles, and contribute to the overall success of the organization. Furthermore, communication and feedback, which are influenced by the manager's attitude, are also crucial in determining a secretary's job performance. Managers who maintain open lines of communication and provide constructive feedback help secretaries stay aligned with organizational goals and expectations. Positive reinforcement for creative efforts or innovative solutions reinforces a culture of creativity and initiative. For example, when a manager

acknowledges a secretary's innovative approach to organizing client files or improving property listings, it boosts morale and encourages further innovation (Chukwu, 2020). In contrast, a lack of recognition or negative feedback can stifle creativity and reduce a secretary's motivation to perform optimally. In real estate companies, where competition is fierce and operational efficiency is crucial, the relationship between creativity, innovation, and the manager's attitude becomes even more important. Secretaries are at the forefront of managing administrative tasks, and their ability to perform well can significantly affect the company's overall productivity. A supportive and innovation-friendly environment enables secretaries to leverage creativity in problem-solving, adapt to new technologies, and manage their tasks more efficiently. This relationship ultimately improves job performance, client satisfaction, and the company's competitive edge in the market (Adegbite, 2021). Conclusively, the interplay between creativity, innovation, and a manager's attitude is fundamental to enhancing a secretary's job performance in real estate companies in Port Harcourt. Managers who foster an environment of innovation and creativity while maintaining a positive, supportive attitude toward their staff help create a culture of productivity, efficiency, and job satisfaction. Real estate companies that recognize this relationship will see improved administrative performance and overall business success.

Conclusion

The relationship between creativity and manager's attitude of real estate companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State highlights the critical influence of creativity and innovation are better positioned to steer the densities of creative/innovative idea in insuring productive manager's attitude to effectively performance tasks leading to the growth of an organization such real estate companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Office Managers with high creativity and innovation are better positioned to improve organizational workflows of real estate companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State through creative/innovative.

Recommendation

Real estate companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State should ensure managers significantly improve their attitude by fostering a creative work environment. When managers create an atmosphere that encourages creativity and innovation among employees, they become more open to new ideas, processes, and perspectives. References

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