

TELEPHONE/MOBILE NETWORK GADGET AND ADEQUATE DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION IN SELECTED TELECOMMUNICATION FIRMS IN RIVERS STATE.

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ABSTRACT

The study examined telephone/ mobile n networks gadgets and adequate information dissemination in selected telecommunication firms in Rivers State. The study was anchored on Information/Innovation Diffusion Theory by Rogers, 1962. The exploratory research design was adopted which necessitated the test of hypotheses. The population of the study was 114 employees working in the head office of the selected telecommunication firms in Rivers State. The entire population of 114 employees from four (4) telecommunication firms in Rivers State was used as the study sample. Hence, the study was a census study. A total of 114 questionnaire were administered by the researcher while 80 were copies retrieved. Simple percentage and Pie chart was used for the univariate analysis while Chi-Square (X^2) was employed in the bivariate analysis. The following findings were made: there is a significant relationship between office manager's use of telephone/mobile network and adequate dissemination of information in selected telecommunication firms in Rivers State. Based on the findings of the study, it was therefore, recommended among other things that Office managers should endeavour to have telephone/mobile networks in their offices to enable accurate and adequate dissemination of information; Office managers should embark on seminar/workshops that will enable them learn to use the internet network proficiently in sourcing for information; finally, the researcher recommends that office managers should upgrade with the modern trend in the use of computer network as to effectively keep records in the office.

Keynotes: Telephone/Mobile Network Gadget, Adequate Information Dissemination

INTRODUCTION

Communication is one of the fundamental functions of the office and it is a process which is essential to all forms of business. It is the means of conveying information from one person to another, which can be through telephone, post office, e-mail, mobile phone, messenger services, computer and many other means (Bhatt, 2016).

Communication is done in order to pass or receive information, ideas and knowledge from one person to another. During the past few decades there have been development and improvement in office communication system. This makes the work of today's trained office managers to be easier.

Over the years, a lot of changes have occurred in the kind of communication networks used in carrying out communication. Before, office professionals such as office managers were made to use letters and send them through post offices and working talking phones. In order to carry out clerical and administrative functions, the use of typewriters to write letters was the order of the day and it was not effective because, in case of errors the secretary has to retype the same letter over and over again before sending it to the post office for it to be given to the various persons. It delays time and brings about low productivity (Edwin, 2018). The use of working talking phones was only used in the office and was heavy to carry about as it became very difficult for office managers to work adequately in the comforts of their homes, this brought about delay in carrying out office duties. In our modern offices today, secretarial duties are

carried out mainly through the use of fast and sophisticated information communication network facilities such as telephone, internet, smart phones, computers, etc. which in some cases uses the following communication networks; (i) Remote Data Entry Stations (RDES); (ii) Local Area Network (LAN); (iii) Wide Area Network (WAN); (iv) Metropolitan Area Network (MAN); (v) Distributed Data Processing Network (DDPN); and (vi) Gateways (Harish, 2017).

Today's office managers are exposed to communication facilities including the internet which makes work much easier and knowledge more accessible (Edwin, 2018). It is now easier to send messages by telex, electronic mails (e-mail), fax and telephones. This is an era of computers and information facilities which has become an enabler of greater convenience.

Three of the most popular types of communication software programme are Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox and Opera browser which helps the users (office manager) to send and receive information in the organization (Dulek & Fielden 2016). Office managers now have many technologically advanced gadgets to ease their jobs especially in communication and transmitting of information that will enhance proficiency and productivity, leading to improved access to services globally. (Akpomi, 2013, Anyakoha, 2015 & Wolfensohn, 2017).

By far the largest communication network on this planet is the global Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN). This network brings together about a billion telephone sets in a highly connected fashion which allows almost every set to be reached by every other set. The global telephone network is the center-piece of the field of telecommunication. Telephone networks have been traditionally circuit-switched and largely remain so.

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were used to guide the study.

HO₁: There is no significant relationship between office manager's use of telephone/mobile network gadget and adequate dissemination of information in selected telecommunication firms in Rivers State.

Telephone/Mobile Network Gadget

A telephone is an instrument that transmit voice over a distance (Pooja, 2016). A person can talk and communicate with another person at distant place with the use of a telephone or mobile phone. Halshall (2012) defined a telephone as a device that converts the human sound into a form that is transmittable through wire or radio facilities, and reproduces it at a faraway place in an audible format. It is a gadget that you can use to talk to someone who is present at some other place. As the cellphone has evolved into the Smartphone, the desire for Internet access on these devices has led to data networks being included as part of the mobile phone network. While Internet connections were technically available earlier, it was really with the release of the 3G networks in 2001 (2002 in the US) that smartphones and other cellular devices could access data from the Internet. This new capability drove the market for new and more powerful smartphones, such as the iPhone, introduced in 2007. In 2011, wireless carriers began offering 4G data speeds, giving the cellular networks the same speeds that customers were used to getting via their home connection (Halshall, 2012).

Telecommunication infrastructure remains one of the major issues that affect technology deployment required for growth and development in Nigeria. Although, there has been massive improvement in infrastructure over the past few years. Nigeria has certainly left the telecomm state where there were only a few dial-up e-mail providers and Internet service providers (ISPs) and when Nigerian Telecommunications Limited (NITEL) was the only telecommunications operator. The NITEL era was characterized by slow Internet links, poor service, high cost, lack of infrastructure and an unprogressive telecoms monopoly. Deregulation of the telecommunications sector led to the introduction of major Global System of Mobile

Communications (GSM), mobile phone providers MTN Nigeria, V-Mobile, Globacom and Mtel (<http://www.jidaw.com/telecomproviders.html>). NCC issues licenses to private telecoms companies to provide a variety of telecom services to the Nigerian populace (NCC, 2018).

According to NCC, deregulated telecommunications services include: Sales and Installation of Terminal equipment (Mobile Cellular Phones, Satellite Communication and Switching equipment etc.), Public Payphone Services, Internet Services; Prepaid Calling Card Services Community Telephony with exchanges, Paging Service Trunk and 2-Way Radio Network Services, Fixed Telephony Services, employing cable and Radio, Satellite Network Services (e.g. Domestic VSAT networks), Repairs & Maintenance of telecommunications facilities, Cabling services, and Tele-Centers/Cyber Cafes.

Concept of Office Managers' Job Performance

It is pertinent to start this discussion by first establishing conceptual clarification of the nomenclature 'Office Manager'. The term Office Manager has been given different meanings by different authors based on their perceptions and societal trend. Clement (2013) pointed out that the Human Resource Management nomenclature "Office Manager is synonymous to 'Secretary' which describes a staff who provides administrative support or who is in charge of clerical and administrative activities of a Chief Executive Officer, department, unit, or an entire organization. For a clearer understanding of the nomenclature, Office Manager, it is pertinent to first examine the concept of Office Management as a branch of Administrative Science. Secretaries and administrative officers perform various office management functions such as maintaining department accounts, compiling information and analyzing data, and preparing reports; coordinates activities of a department project or program; coordinates department computing and software resources, including web activities; prepares and processes correspondence, agendas, general papers, manuscripts, and/or publication materials; prepares purchasing and timekeeping information.

Wikipedia (2018) defined Office management as a profession involving the design, implementation, evaluation, and maintenance of the process of work within an office or organization, in order to maintain and improve flow of information, efficiency and productivity. Office management is generally described as organizing and administering the auxiliary, day-to-day chores of the front office chores that are often the responsibility of receptionist or secretary (Ensel, 2019). From the above discussions, it can be deduced that Office Management is a branch of Administrative Science concerned with the planning, coordination, execution, and supervision of human and material resource of an office or unit to ensure the flow of information in a work system and to ensure productivity. Thus, employees who handle such tasks are suitably referred to as Office Managers. Hence, heads of departments, secretaries, administrative officers, and personal assistants can be referred to as Managers because they help in sustaining the administrative hub of an organization especially managing office resources and flow of information.

The Online Business Dictionary (2018) describes the office manager as an employee of a business or organization whose duties typically include allocating physical resources such as office space and supplies, scheduling internal events, overseeing operational staff such as accountants, technicians, and administrative personnel, and other details necessary to run an office in any industry or field. Managers, also called administrative service managers, are business professionals who are responsible for a diverse set of administrative tasks.

Elms (2019) identified the following activities carried out by administrative officers (Office Managers) in an organization:

1. Prepares and processes confidential correspondence, reports, agendas, and general papers; composes and types routine correspondence, memos, letters, reports, etc.;

- processes exams, forms, schedules, contracts, grants, and general correspondence; prepares and edits papers, reports, agendas, and/or manuscripts for publication.
2. Maintains departmental databases, budgets, cash controls, and accounting and purchasing records; coordinates billing to departments; maintains accounts receivable database system; processes and maintains payroll and personnel records for staff and students; researches, gather, and analyzes data.
 3. Regularly coordinates the activities of a department project or program; coordinates department events; coordinates department computing and software resources, which may include a web page.
 4. Arranges conferences and meetings; prepares and assembles materials; makes, confirms, and processes travel arrangements and expense reports; schedules appointments and arranges meetings; screens phone calls; maintains schedules and calendars; monitors inventory.
 5. May supervise clerical/student staff; performs other duties as assigned.

Telephone/Mobile Network Gadget and Office Manager's Fast Dissemination of Information

Telephone or phone is a telecommunication facility that permits two or more users to conduct a conversation when they are too far apart to be heard directly. A telephone converts sound, typically and most efficiently the human voice into electronic signals that are transmitted via cables and other communication channels to another telephone which reproduces the sound to the receiving user. The telephone was the first device in history that enables people to talk directly with each other across large distance. Telephone rapidly became indispensable to businesses, organization and households and are today some of the most widely used small appliance (Halshall, 2012).

The first telephones were directly connected to each other from one customer's office or residence to another customer's location. Being impractical beyond just a few customers, these systems were quickly replaced by manually operated centrally located switchboards. This gave rise to landline telephone services in which each telephone is connected by a pair of dedicated wires to a local central office switching system which developed into fully automated system starting in the early 1900s, for greater mobility, various radio systems were developed for transmission between mobile stations on shops and automobiles in the mid-20th century (Pooja, 2016). Handheld mobile phones were introduced for personal services starting in 1973. Today, the world wide public switched telephone network, with its hierarchical system of many switching centers with the standardized international numbering system E 164, each telephone line has an identifying telephone number that may be called from any other authorized telephone on the network. Convergence has given most modern cell phones capabilities far beyond simple voice conversation. They may be able to record spoken messages, send and receive text messages, take and display photographs or video, play music or games, surf the internet, do road navigation or immerse the user in virtual reality. Since 1999, the trend for mobile phones is smartphones that integrate all mobile communication and computing needs. Telephone is now regarded as one of the most prominent office machines used in office today; it makes it easy for secretary's to communicate in the organization. According to Crook and Booth (2012), the use of telephone set in modern office today makes dissemination of information very easy and adequate in the organization. Modern offices have telephones set used by the secretary to receive both internal and external calls on behalf of the boss, unit or organization. The beauty of telephone as a communication facility is that rather than the secretary going from one office to another, passing information, he or she can stay at a place and send information across various units and offices. Information cannot only be transmitted

by the use of calls but can be sent inform of PDF, videos, through social media, messages, and conferences calls this makes it fast and adequate and also reliable. In the ancient days' message are sent through post office and it takes three to one week to get to its destination but with the use of this modern communication facility it is very easy because it takes less than 2 minutes for information to be cut across various persons.

A mobile phone is an instrument that transmits voice over a distance. A person can talk and communicate with another person at distance place with the use of mobile phones. A telephone is a device that connects the human sound into a form that is transmittable through wire or radio technology, and reproduces it at faraway place in an audible format. It is a gadget that you can use to talk to someone who is present at some other (Pooja, 2016; Halshall, 2012).

Information/Innovation Diffusion Theory - Rogers (1962)

Information/ Innovation diffusion theory was propounded by Rogers in 1962. This theory explains how innovations are introduced and adopted by various communities. The theory stipulates that people should be informed of any innovation and that the people should be prepared to adopt and accept the innovation. The theory states that an innovation is an idea, practice, or project that is perceived as new by an individual, group or society. The main focus of innovation theory is on innovation. The theory stipulates innovations are changes that occur in an individual or a social system as a result of adoption or rejection of new procedures, process or techniques an innovation.

The relevance of this this theory to this study is that as a result of innovation driven by information and communication technology (ICT), in offices, employees including secretaries should adopt and accept the innovation by acquiring the appropriate skills for the purpose. Innovation has brought changes in office environment today and local governments staff especially, the secretaries should embrace it by acquiring the new skills required by the change.

Research Design

The exploratory research design was adopted for this study. Exploratory research design is a design that emphasizes the test of hypothesis in order to investigate and establish the relationship between variables.

Population of the Study

The population of the study was 114 employees working in the head office of the selected telecommunication firms in Rivers State. This information was gotten from the Human Resource Managers of the firms. See table 3.1 for the population distribution.

Table 1: Study Population

Name of Company	Number of Employees
MTN Nig. Communications PLC, PH.	37
Airtel PLC, PH	27
9Mobile, PH	24
GLO Nig. Ltd, PH.	26
Total	114

Sample Size/Sampling Technique

The entire population of 114 employees from four (4) telecommunication firms in Rivers State was used as the study sample. Hence, the study was census research which involves using the

entire population instead of drawing a sample from it. This decision is made because 114 as the respondents were not too much for the researcher to handle.

Instrumentation

For the purpose of the study, a structured questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection. The instrument was entitled "Information Communication Networks Gadget and Office Managers Performance Index (ICNGOMPI)".

Method of Data Analysis

This subsection describes how data from the field was arranged and analyzed for decision-making. Simple percentage and pie chart were used to answer the research questions while statistical tool for testing the hypothesis of this study was chi-square (χ^2). The Chi-square formula is stated thus:

$$\chi^2 = \frac{(fe-fo)^2}{fe}$$

Where

Σ =Summation

Fo= Frequency Observed

Fe=Expected Frequency

Test of Hypotheses

Test of Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between office manager’s use of telephone/mobile network and adequate dissemination of information in selected telecommunication firms in Rivers State.

Table 1: Contingency Table for Ho₁

Very great extent	Great extent	Moderate extent	Low extent	Total
39	20	11	10	80
30	20	16	14	80
12	15	20	33	80
34	26	15	5	80
115	81	62	62	320

Source: Data Survey, 2024

$$fe = \frac{RT \times CT}{GT}$$

Where

RT = Row Total

CT = Column Total

GT = Grand Total

$$\text{Very great extent} = \frac{115 \times 80}{320} = 28.75$$

$$\text{Great extent} = \frac{81 \times 80}{320} = 20.25$$

$$\text{Moderate extent} = \frac{62 \times 80}{320} = 15.5$$

$$\text{Low extent} = \frac{62 \times 80}{320} = 15$$

Table 4.3: Chi-Square Table for Ho₁

Fo	Fe	(Fo-Fe)	(Fo-Fe) ²	(Fo-Fe) ²
39	28.75	10.25	105.0625	3.654348
30	28.75	1.25	1.5625	0.054348
12	28.75	-16.75	280.5625	9.758696
34	28.75	5.25	27.5625	0.958696
20	20.25	-0.25	0.0625	0.003086
20	20.25	-0.25	0.0625	0.003086
15	20.25	-5.25	27.5625	1.361111
26	20.25	5.75	33.0625	1.632716
11	15.5	-4.5	20.25	1.306452
16	15.5	0.5	0.25	0.016129
20	15.5	4.5	20.25	1.306452
15	15.5	-0.5	0.25	0.016129
10	15.5	-5.5	30.25	1.951613
14	15.5	-1.5	2.25	0.145161
33	15.5	17.5	306.25	19.75806
5	15.5	-10.5	110.25	7.112903
				49.03899

Source: Data Survey, 2024

Since the calculated value $\chi^2 = 49.03899$ is greater than the critical χ^2 16.919, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between office manager's use of telephone/mobile network and adequate dissemination of information is rejected. This implies that office manager's use of telephone/mobile network enhance adequate dissemination of information.

Discussion of Findings

Office manager's use of telephone/mobile network and adequate dissemination of information.

The finding revealed that there is a significant relationship between office manager's use of telephone/mobile network and adequate dissemination of information which leads to his or her job performance.

The finding of the study is in view with the claim of Halshall, (2012) which says Telephone rapidly became indispensable to businesses, organization and households and are today some of the most widely used small appliance. The first telephones were directly connected to each other from one customer's office or residence to another customer's location. Being impractical beyond just a few customers, these systems were quickly replaced by manually operated centrally located switchboards. This gave rise to landline telephone services in which each telephone is connected by a pair of dedicated wires to a local central office switching system which developed into fully automated system starting in the early 1900s, for greater mobility, various radio systems were developed for transmission between mobile stations on shops and automobiles in the mid-20th century (Pooja, 2016).

According to Crook and Booth (2012), the use of telephone set in modern office today makes dissemination of information very easy and adequate in the organization. Modern offices have telephones set used by the secretary to receive both internal and external calls on behalf of the boss, unit or organization. The beauty of telephone as a communication facility is that rather than the secretary going from one office to another, passing information, he or she can stay at a place and send information across various units and offices. Information cannot only be

transmitted by the use of calls but can be sent in form of PDF, videos, through social media, messages, and conference calls. This makes it fast and adequate and also reliable. In the ancient days' messages are sent through post office and it takes three to one week to get to its destination but with the use of this modern communication facility it is very easy because it takes less than 2 minutes for information to be cut across various persons.

In the view of Pooja, (2016), a person can talk and communicate with another person at a distance place with the use of mobile phones. A telephone is a device that connects the human sound into a form that is transmittable through wire or radio technology, and reproduces it at a faraway place in an audible format. It is a gadget that you can use to talk to someone who is present at some other

CONCLUSIONS

From the copies of questionnaires administered to the respondents under study. Out of the 114 copies administered to office managers, 80 were completed and retrieved representing 70%. While 34 copies representing 30% were unretrieved. Thus, the aggregate copies of questionnaires retrieved were 80 which represented 70%, which indicated that the retrieved data is workable for analysis and interpretation.

From the pie chart in research question one, it was shown that 176⁰ (49%) of the respondents agreed that telephone/mobile phone networks is now regarded as one of the most prominent information communication networks used in office today. Also, there is a significant relationship between office manager's use of telephone/mobile network and adequate dissemination of information in selected telecommunication firms in Rivers State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following suggestions were made:

1. Office managers should endeavour to have telephone/mobile networks in their offices to enable accurate and adequate dissemination of information.
2. Office managers should embark on seminar/workshops that will enable them learn to use the internet network proficiently in sourcing for information
3. Finally, the researcher recommends that office managers should upgrade with the modern trend in the use of computer network as to effectively keep records in the office.

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