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JOB INDIVIDUATION AS A NECISSITY FOR INFORMATION MANAGERS' INNOVATIVENESS IN MANUFACTURING SECTOR IN RIVERS STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between job individuation and information manager innovativeness performance in manufacturing sector in Rivers State. The study adopted the explanatory cross–sectional survey research design with a population of 332 information managers in 64 manufacturing firms in Rivers State. The sample size of the study was one hundred and eighty-one (181) respondents which were obtained using the Taro Yamene formula. Questionnaire developed on a 5-point rating scale was used to elicit data from respondents. Out of 181 copies of the questionnaire administered, a total of 172 copies were retrieved. Mean and standard deviation were used for the univariate analysis; Spearman Rank Coefficient was used for the bivariate analysis while the multivariate analysis was done using Partial Correlation. SPSS version 23.0 was used. The analysis revealed that job individuation has significant positive relationship with information manager innovativeness in manufacturing sector in Rivers State. The study recommended that management should ensure that organizational justice prevails in every situation and adopt a reward system which will in turn propel information managers in the path of competence and competitiveness.

Keywords: Job Individuation, Manager Performance, Innovativeness, Service Delivery, Efficiency

INTRODUCTION

The competitive business environment has become increasingly dynamic, driving organizations to react with the same speed, making the necessary adaptations and changes. This race for market participation requires organizations to closely monitor performance indicators so that it is possible to access and lunch new ways of doing things and thereby establish competitive advantage (Valmohammadi & Ahmadi, 2015).

Innovativeness is the capacity of an organization to make change across the border of the organization that will give it competitive advantage in the business environment. For any organization to realize its goals it must be productive. Innovativeness is a driving force that helps an organization to remain productivity and achieve its set goal.

Wang and Ahmed (2004) identify multiple aspects of innovativeness; they define innovativeness as "an organization's overall innovative capability of introducing new products to the market, or opening up new markets, through a combination of strategic orientation with innovative behavior and process". Innovativeness reflects a firm's tendency to engage in and support new ideas, novelty, experimentation, and creative processes that may result in new products, services, or technological processes. Innovativeness is the capacity and tendency to purchase new products and services. It is a personality trait which can be linked with obtaining acceptance for new products Foxal, (1984). It is the company's productivity towards the adoption of new technologies, thus representing its ability to adapt to different environmental opportunities (Kitchell, 1995).

Individuation also involves bringing back the concepts of craftsmanship, which means that workers have maximum autonomy in determining the rhythm of their work and in planning how it should be done. It refers to the work environment in which employees are encouraged to develop themselves to their fullest competence a system of work which facilitates the fullest possible development of individual potential (Beach, 1985).

Eklund and Bergrah (1998) asserts that recent studies of worker's altitudes have clearly revealed their desire that jobs be more interesting, provide more autonomy and allow them to develop abilities, factors concerning them more after they reached a certain levels of income. These studies indicate that the workers have a sense of what is important to their sanity.
Enders and Teacher (1997) posited that both psychological and physiological studies show a direct relationship between boredom and destructiveness in people. The health of both the worker and the society we live in depends on putting into practice the principle of individuation at the work place. The precondition for this is the availability of freedom and autonomy in deciding the pace of activity and design of operations. Finding ways where a person is able to feel that they are been seen for themselves and not just how they fit into a category.

Advocates of the application of this principle, emphasize that "work should stimulate the development of unique abilities, craftsmanship, and this principle will encourage workers to identify and develop their individual abilities, and because of the humanized work environment, which the application of this principle will create, the worker will develop a greater sense of commitment to the organization. Bringing back craftsmanship, which the Taylorian work organizational system had tended to destroy due to over-emphasis on specialization and fragmentation of jobs, will enable workers to have a greater "autonomy in determining the rhythm of their work, and in planning how it should be done" (Ahiauzu, 1999).

Research Hypothesis

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between job individuation and innovativeness in manufacturing sector in Rivers State.

Job Individuation

The principle of job individuation stipulates that work should stimulate the development of unique abilities, craftsmanship and the capacity for continued learning Kirkcaldy & Athanason, (1999). If the principle of individuation is adopted, it can lead to a non-bureaucratic work environment in which workers are encouraged to develop themselves and learn as much as they wish about the organization as a whole (Amis et al., 2020).
The principle of individuation describes the manner in which a thing is defined as distinguished from other things; it implies knowing yourself as an individual and not something else. It is the process of transformation whereby the personal and collective unconscious (e.g by means of dreams, active imagination, or free association) to be assimilated into the whole personality.
It is opined that when the principle of individuation is in place in work environment it leads to job satisfaction, which in turn leads increased performance (Skinner, 1986). For further buttress, job individuation can be indicated using competency development, autonomy and craftsmanship.

Competency Development: Competency development is a culmination of skills, knowledge and job attitude aimed at accomplishing desired workplace behavior and/or performance (IGI, 2019). Today's labor market is a dynamic environment. Digitization continuously demands new competencies and skills while a lot of traditional jobs are disappearing or losing ground. In addition, an increasing proportion of companies and government institutions needs highly qualified employees who are eager to learn and prepared to grow along with the organization.
On the flip side, today's professionals are demanding as well. A lot of millennials do not just work to pay the bills but are also looking for a meaningful position that offers growth opportunities and satisfaction. In a recent study, almost two-thirds of participating employees preferred a job with a moderate income and a lot of growth opportunities over something unchallenging and monotonous yet royally paid.

This means that employers and employees both benefit from competence development. But what exactly does the term mean? Competence development is the practice of developing one or several competencies in a specific way and in a particular direction.

Autonomy: Autonomy in the workplace means giving employees the freedom to work in a way that suits them (Wooll, 2021). With autonomy at work, employees get to decide how and when their work should be done. Workplace autonomy will look different depending on your organization. But done correctly, it can benefit your employees and wider company culture in more ways than one.
Autonomy at work refers to how much freedom employees have to do their jobs (Wooll, 2021). Specifically, it relates to the pace at which work is completed, its order of completion, and a person's freedom to work without micromanagement. If employees are capable of getting the job done without micromanagement, why impose rules? Sometimes rules stifle creative thinking and create unneeded performance pressure.
Autonomy is the ability for employees to control their work situation (Smith, 2019). Depending on your company and industry, employee autonomy might involve a choice in the selection of projects, roles or clients. Traditionally, only employees in upper management have much autonomy, which can leave lower-level staff members feeling disenfranchised. When you want to increase employee engagement, morale and motivation, giving your staff more discretion over their work lives can be a useful tactic.
In a business, employee autonomy can have positive benefits for both the individuals and the company as a whole. When staff members have the freedom to approach their jobs in a way that suits their personalities and skill sets, your business can flourish as long as all bases are covered. As you plan a way to strike the right balance of autonomy in your company, consider how you can work within the structure of the business to find a solution that works for everyone.
If giving freedom sounds potentially chaotic, consider how increased workplace autonomy embraces the concept that not everyone's the same. Each member of a team may have a different approach, but that approach is not necessarily invalid. Trust is given to each employee based on the notion that they will get the job done. Importantly, autonomy may be an effective solution to a lack of workplace engagement. A workforce that is trusted and allowed to approach tasks their own way is more likely to be engaged.

Craftsmanship: Craftsmanship is often confused with workmanship (Mann, 2020). While later is about one's technical skills, the former requires a combination of workmanship and a deep understanding of utility and aesthetics. Though workmanship is important, it cannot do any good on its own. It is a painting or a work of art that no one ever saw or understood but the workman himself. So when or how a workman becomes a craftsman? The simplest answer can be, by possessing a comprehensive understanding of his craft. Unless you do not know your craft theoretically, you will not be able to translate for whom it is for. This translation is important because not only it gives the craft an all too important visibility but it also moves the workman forward.
A craftsman or the artist is always self-policing. He is the biggest critique of his own work. He takes feedback and goes on to make his work even better. He knows first-hand that his work is not about him. Rather it is about and for someone else, the customer. Someone he might not know or have met in person but someone with whom he has an intimate relationship with.
Another misconception about craftsmanship is about the use of technology. Like if it is not created by hand then it is not craftsmanship. Craftsmanship is not doing everything by hand. It is about doing what is best regardless of how it is done. It is about making sure that craft is aesthetically beautiful, performs what it was designed for and every detail that went into making it was carefully attended.
A craftsman will use his hands where technology seems to strip away the personal attention. And he will use technology where hands can't be precise enough. Thus the job of a modern craftsman is neither to avoid technology nor to make a tradition obsolete. It is somewhat a balance between

the two. He understands the history yet breathes in the present. He moves like a true journeyman. He creates and innovates in a way that is not demeaning to the centuries old traditions.

Innovativeness

Innovativeness indicates behavioural change and may refer to the degree to which an individual or other unit of adoption is relatively earlier in adopting new ideas than any other member of the system Rogers, (2003). Innovativeness is considered to be either the ability of generating new ideas or the combination of existing elements for the creation of new sources of value or the receptivity to new ideas (Hurley & Hult, 1998).

Innovativeness is an important source of growth and a key determinant of competitive advantage for many organizations. Achieving innovativeness requires the coordinated efforts of many different actors and the integration of activities across specialist functions, knowledge domains and contexts application. Therefore, organizational creation is fundamental to the process of innovation Van de Ven *et al*., (1999). The ability of an organization to innovate is a pre-condition for the successful utilization of mean live resources and new technologies. The introduction of new technology often presents complex opportunities and challenges for organizations, leading to changes in managerial practices and the emergence of new organizational forms.

The classical theory of organizational design was marketed by a preoccupation with universal forms and the idea of one best way to organize. Weber (1947) on the bureaucracy and Chandler (1962), on the multidivisional form, was most influential. Differences in technological and market environment, their rate of change and complexity, affect organizational structures and innovation management. Organizations could be grouped into two main types rigid and hierarchical, suited to stable conditions, and a more fluid set of arrangements, adapting to conditions of rapid change and innovation (Burns & Stalker, 1961). Additionally, innovativeness is further expressed in this work using indicators such as organizational structure, competency and knowledge, and network.

Organizational Structure: Organizational structure is considered as both cause and effect of managerial strategic choice in response to market opportunities. Organizational forms are constructed from the two variables of 'strategy' and 'structure'. The argument is that certain organizational types or attributes are more likely to yield superior innovative performance in a given environment because they are more suited to reduced transaction costs and cope with potential capital market failures (Chandler, 1962).

Lawrence and Losch (1967) conceptualized organizational design problems as differentiation and integration. The theory distinguishes the 'optimizing firms' from the 'innovative firm'. The former seeks to maximize profits within given technological capabilities and market constraints while the later seeks to transform technological and markets constraints through development of distinctive organizational capabilities which cannot be easily imitated by competitors.

Lazonick (2010) identified three social conditions that support the development of the innovative organizations. They are: strategic control which refers to set of relations that gives key decision-makers the power, knowledge and incentives to allocate the firm's resources to confront market threats and opportunities. The second condition is 'organizational integration' – the horizontal and vertical integration of skills and knowledge to support cumulative learning overtime. The third condition is 'financial commitment' to ensure that sufficient funds are allocated for competence development to sustain the cumulative innovate process.

Competency and Knowledge: The essence of the innovative organization is the organizational integration of a skill base that can engage in collective and cumulative learning (Lazonick, 2010). The critical importance of skills and knowledge integrate as the social foundations of innovation is also stressed by other authors such as Lami (2000) and Lam and Lundvall (2006).

Managing knowledge and achieving competitive advantages are the ingredients of the contemporary organizations. Knowledge is the most important source of wealth and basic economic resource in

the contemporary organizations (Drucker, 1993). Knowledge is perceived as the key corporate asset in increasing an organization's competiveness (Sanchez, 2001). It is the inspiration of how an organization can be able to maintain and act intelligently to sustain its long term competitive advantage through developing, building and organizing its knowledge assets (Nonaka, 1991). Effective identification of required knowledge and core competences is a driving force leading to competitive advantage. Competence can be said to be the cognitive, affective, behavioural and motivational personality or dispositions of an individual enabling him/her to perform well in specific situations; competency can be defined as the knowledge, skills and attributes (KSA) that differentiates superior performers from others in organizations. The development of accurate and appropriate competencies results in enhanced organizational learning performance management while maximizing the usage of the organizational intangible assets. Knowledge is the resource base of any organization and therefore, needs to be properly managed. Organizations should be concerned with the extraction, exploitation, and development of the knowledge assets of individual members that make up the organization with a view to furthering the knowledge objectives. The use of different systems for extraction of knowledge is advocated like corporate intranet (Nwakaego & Opara, 2020).

A knowledge organization is that organization who is mainly concerned with conversion of information into possessions or assets of an organization which generate income to the organization. That is, an organization that is able to use available information in bringing about development in all facets of the economy of the organization. A knowledge organization is interested with the management of knowledge in enriching her economy i.e. an organization that deliberately and systematically organize and coordinate technologies, human resources and structures in order to add value through innovation and reprocessing. Chux-Nyeche, (2021) agreed that, there are no universally acceptable definitions of knowledge. However, the Merriam-Wester Dictionary and Thesaurus in ultimate reference (2020) defined knowledge as: "the fact or condition of knowing something with familiarity gained through experience or association, the body of truth, the fact or condition of being aware of something; the range of one's information or understanding; the circumstance or condition of apprehending truth or fact through reasoning; fact or condition of having information or of being learned; information, and principles acquired by mankind". He further asserts that knowledge applies to facts or ideas acquired by study, investigation, observation, or experience rich in the knowledge of human nature and that learning equally applies to knowledge acquired especially through formal, often advanced schooling. Knowledge can be acquired through information.

Network: Network can be said to be an organizational structure with which enterprises implement business innovation faster and more efficiently. Innovation networks support continuous improvement, ideal management and the innovation management of an organization Drucker, (1993). It is the complex linkage of several co-operation partners who agree on and practice an intentional, lasting interactive co-operation based on a division of labour for the innovation process. Network analysis of innovation networks has become a very vibrant, interdisciplinary research Petra & Mark, (2013).

Social Exchange Theory

Social exchange theory propounded by Homans (1961) and Pfeffer (1983). The theory holds that human behaviour and social interaction is basically an exchange of both tangible and intangible activities. It notes that behavioural compliance on the part of the individual is exchanged for something which is perceived to be contingent on the individual's behaviour. It is an exchange of benefits, giving others something more valuable to them than is costly to the giver, and vice versa. This mutually benefiting is important to all parties involved because in the long run the relationship produces maximum gain for the parties and the organization as well.

It is argued that people in organizations engage in a self-interested exchange process with the owners of the organization and among themselves, and strive to maximize the benefits of such an exchange process. Parties in exchange process carry out a cost – benefit audit to determine the viability of the exchange relationship. Social exchange is composed of actions of purposive actors that presuppose constellations of their interests and resources. These processes are governed by reciprocal relations. Exchange is defined as social interaction characterized by reciprocal stimuli. It examines the processes establishing and sustaining reciprocity in social relations, or the mutual gratifications between individuals (Ahiauzu & Asawo, 2016).

The basic assumptions of the social exchange theory are:

1) Theory is the rational man model
2) Actors in social exchange make choices freely in regard to alternative courses of action while guided by cost-benefit considerations.
3) Individuals establish and continue social relations on the basis of rational value – maximizing choices.
4) Participation in the exchange relationship is largely a product of intrinsic rewards.
5) Rational choice and behaviourisms

The social exchange theory is adopted as the anchor of this study because it is apt to the variables (work humanization and information managers' performance). The theory posits that the relationship between an employee and employer is a social exchange and that people in organizations engage in a self-interested exchange process with owners of the organizations and among themselves, strive to maximize the benefits of such exchange process. To accomplish this, the parties in the exchange process carry out a cost-benefit audit to determine the viability of the exchange relationship.

METHODOLOGY

The work adopted the cross-sectional explanatory survey research design. The population frame for this study was drawn from 64 manufacturing companies registered with Corporate Affairs Commission (C.A.C.) in Rivers State. The sample size for the study was determined using the Taro Yamane sample size derivation formula as put forward by Baridam, (2001). The study adopted the structured questionnaire as its main tool for the generation of data for the study. Mean and standard deviation were used for the univariate analysis while the bivariate analysis was done using Spearman rank order correlation in SPSS Version 22.0. The spearman rank order (Rho) is considered to be the most appropriate for the study as it appropriately measures the degree of relationship between the two set of ranked observations.

RESULTS

Bivariate Analysis

Job Individuation and Information Managers Innovativeness

H_{07}: There is no significant relationship between job individuation and innovativeness in manufacturing sector in Rivers State.

Correlations between Job Individuation and Information Managers Innovativeness

			Job Individuation	Innovativeness		
Spearman's rho	Job Individuation	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	0.622**	0.757**	0.668**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
		N	172	172	172	172
	Innovativeness	Correlation Coefficient	0.622**	1.000	0.755**	0.767**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000
		N	172	172	172	172
		Correlation Coefficient	0.757**	0.755**	1.000	0.632**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000
		N	172	172	172	172
		Correlation Coefficient	0.668**	0.767**	0.632**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.
		N	172	172	172	

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

Source: SPSS Output

Column two of table above shows r value of 0.622 at a significance level of 0.00 which is less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05 for the hypothesis relating job individuation and innovativeness. Since the significance value is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis (Ho_1) which states that there is no significant relationship between job individuation and innovativeness in manufacturing sector in Rivers State is rejected and the alternate hypothesis (Ha_1) is accepted. This implies that there is a strong positive relationship between job individuation and innovativeness in manufacturing sector in Rivers State.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of the study suggest that organizations, especially manufacturing firms that desire to enhance the performance of their information managers service quality delivery and efficiency, should put in place in job individuation, among others. The study therefore concludes that the ensuring of job individuation by an organization are true paths with which information managers' service delivery can be achieved, especially when organizational culture mediates.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Base on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Manufacturing firms should adopt values and norms that will encourage job security, equity in remuneration and job individuation, leading to enhanced performance.
2. Management should organize on-the-job and off-the-job training sessions that will build competency, autonomy and craftsmanship in their information managers. This will in turn boost their performance.
3. Information managers should carry out their duties with competence, so as to enhance service quality delivery and efficiency.
4. Information managers should at times be allowed autonomy in their duty post, as this is capable of boosting their confidence and competence as well.

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