

ACQUISITION OF DIGITAL SKILLS AND QUALITY SERVICE DELIVERY IN PUBLIC TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN RIVERS STATE NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This work examined Acquisition of Digital Skills and Quality Service Delivery in Public Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State Nigeria. The researcher adopted explanatory cross-sectional survey research design being a research framework that involves the test of hypotheses using primary or secondary data obtained from the field by use of questionnaire, interview, observation or any other appropriate social science data collection tool. The population of this study consist seven (7) public tertiary institutions in Rivers Nigeria, with ninety-eight (98) office managers serving as the respondents on behalf of the institutions. The purposive sampling technique was used which grants the researcher the freedom to assume or choose a sample size that the researcher will be able to access. To determine the criterion mean, the four-point Likert scale was added up and the total divided by four (4). The data research questions were analyzed using the descriptive research, mean procedures for research questions, while the hypotheses were tested using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Statistics. The following findings were made: There is significant relationship between acquisition of digital skill and quality service delivery. Also, that organizational policy has significant moderating effects on the relationship between self-development strategies and office manager growth. From the findings obtained from empirical literature and results from our tested hypotheses, we conclude that public tertiary institution should invest in training office managers in courses on digital literacy and the use of specific digital tools, such as Mobile Cloud Computing software, Advanced Spreadsheet collaboration tools for effective record security, information delivery.

Keywords: Acquisition of Digital Skills, Quality Service Delivery, Innovation

INTRODUCTION

The term self-development includes all the activities, personally undertaken by an employee or professional to improve and develop potentials which in turn will contribute to realization of dream and aspirations (Orvis & Leffler, 2011). To Muhammad (2015) and Neelam (2014), self-development or individual employee training and development is said to be a planned learning platform that enables employees to perform current job and aspire for future job tasks. Self-development strategies imply setting a plan of action. It involves positive thinking and a change of mindset. When there is a positive thinking on how to improve, do things better growth is the end result. This implies that self-development is the act of one taking personal responsibility for his /her training and development to update already acquired skill so as to become efficient and attain the desired growth in the chosen profession and in the place of work. Any individual desiring growth in his/her field of endeavor must take personal responsibility for his/her growth. It entails Taking time to do something for oneself. It could be taking classes to stay current in your field of expertise, getting higher educational qualification or acquiring a new skills needed in ones field or

career. The world is changing rapidly and you must learn to manage change to avoid obsolescence. Self-development involves a conscious effort that requires painstaking strategy by the professional to explore avenues (such advanced professional training, on the job/off the job training) to acquire additional skills needed for growth, promotion, optimal performance, quality service delivery of assigned task in the place of work.

The discussion of quality service delivery as a measure of office managers' growth in this study shall be anchored in examining the phrase in its intangible features; Such as: time factor/saving and customer satisfaction. This is because of the fact that the term quality (being a qualifying adjective to service delivery) is an ambiguous and relative term. Basically, the term quality refers to the set of inherent properties of an object that allows satisfying stated or implied needs (Diaz, 2014). Service on the other hand is any activity or benefit that one party can offer to another, which is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything. It is also said to be economic activities that create value and satisfaction (Jashal, 2023). Also, according to the oxford advanced learner's dictionary (international student's edition), service is defined as system that provides something that the public needs, organized by the government or a private company. Quality service is the act of meeting the expectation of the customers expect from the service.

Hypothesis:

H0₁: There is no significant relationship between Acquisition of Digital Skills and Quality Service Delivery in Public Tertiary institutions in Rivers State Nigeria.

Acquisition of Digital Skills

Digital skills simply put are a range of abilities to use digital devices, communication applications, and networks to access and manage information. At the most basic level, digital skills refer to the essential skills needed to use computers and digital devices to access and manage information. However, digital skills go beyond basic knowledge and cover more complex sets of skills (Piwiec, 2023). Notwithstanding, knowing and mastering the complexity of these set of skills (advanced digital skills) is highly required of employees in recent times. This is because of the fact that we are living in a highly digitalized economy. To buttress this assertion, Windave (2020) opines that any employee or office professional or manager who fails to acquire digital skills, may become irrelevant in today's economy. It is in the same line of thought that Akpomi and Ordu (2009) reiterate the fact that new digital and technological devices have altered the procedure and technique for office operations. Also, according to Nwaokwa and Okoli (2012), the introduction of information communication technology has had an impact on office manager's service delivery in terms of accuracy and effective information dissemination in the work place. Nonye (2013) studied the need for capacity building for office managers/secretaries on the use of digital and modern office equipment, he concluded that office managers/secretaries must be abreast with the use of digital and modern office equipment and also recommended the need for periodic training and development for office managers to acquire and update their knowledge on digital skills such as Mobile Cloud Computing, Advanced Spreadsheet and Workforce Productivity Software which shall be discussed below.

i. Mobile Cloud Computing: Mobile Cloud Computing (MCC) is one of the emerging technologies in information technology. It is basically the combination of mobile computing; cloud computing, and wireless network. It include the use of hardware, software and communication for performing different operations like accessing information, storing data

and running different applications on mobile devices (Kusum & Sugandha, 2017). By advent of this technology, the processing of data and its storage are happens outside of mobile devices. To Jan (2021), mobile cloud computing refers to cloud-based data and the applications and services designed for mobile devices. Manjeet (2023) posit that mobile cloud computing combines mobile application development with cloud-based services, making the delivery of cloud services and apps to mobile users possible. In a nutshell, mobile cloud computing is the delivery of computing resources, such as storage, processing power, and software, to mobile devices over a network. It is a technological innovation that allows office and information managers to leverage on the power of the cloud to enhance their capabilities, performance, and efficiency of record and information management.

ii. Advanced Spreadsheet: Advanced spreadsheet skills refer to the ability to use spreadsheets to perform complex calculations, analyze large datasets, and automate tasks using advanced features and functions. According to Saloni (2022), the difference between basic spreadsheet and Advance spreadsheet is that in basic spreadsheet, simple formulas and function (Like, simple arithmetic problems, array, count, etc.) is performed without any complication. Whereas in advance spreadsheet, acknowledgement of formulas and function are required to performed with complex data.

The complexity and numerous data analysis the modern office management have increased the demand for Advance spreadsheet skill. Thus, making advanced spreadsheet skills are a real skill for everyday work tasks of the office managers. Advanced spreadsheet skills are innovative abilities to use Microsoft Excel software to perform complex tasks like generating graphs and tables, using spreadsheets professionally, and performing calculations and computerization processes. These skills are necessary for every office manager. This is because its ability facilities quick and accurate bulk data processing necessary for informed decision making.

iii. Workforce Productivity Software

Workforce Productivity Software is Employee Productivity Monitoring Software that uses automated data collection, analytics as well as logs from applications, calendars, etc. to report on employees' activities, time spent, work locations and work patterns. It can provide insights into when employees are working and what work is being done. The insight provided by this software can support efforts to improve employee effectiveness, experience. This software also creates detailed reports on the collected data that helps employees manage their workload for optimum results and managers to measure employee performance. Workforce productivity software is software that helps in improving workforce productivity. It helps in managing the workflow of your organizations and the employees (Lokesh, 2022).

Quality Service Delivery

Consequently the concept of quality service delivery is abstract and relatively concerned with the circumstances. As such its meaning can be understood by knowing the meaning of quality and service as explained. Quality service delivery a means different thing to different persons, sometimes it connotes: Assurance - exciting, reliance and self-assurance, Empathy - compassion, personalized interests given to customers, Reliability - delivering on time and Responsiveness - willing to help customers and provide without delay. It could also be seen as the regularity with which a service provider can provide efficient service to the customer. Quality service delivery is an important requirement for improving user satisfaction. Nevertheless, this study looks at quality service delivery as getting the best out of every

activities involved in service, it involves continuously meeting the agreed customer requirement at the lowest cost by employees. Thus for any employee to be said to have grown, the rate at which he/she delivers an assigned duty or service is adjudged to be a measure for assessment of growth, promotion and capacity.

i. Timely Promotion:

In the work environment, Promotion can be referred to as a progress of an employee's rank or position in a hierarchical arrangement. Gupta (2011) maintains that promotion refers to a higher post carrying greater responsibilities, higher status, and better salary. In other words, Promotion means the upward movement of an employee in the organization's hierarchy. It also entails assigning of more responsibility and authority to employees. Promotions are used to reward employees that perform better and to motivate them to greater effort. Therefore, when promotion is said to be timely it means it occurs in suitable time. Timely promoting employee from lower level to the upper level creates a feeling of content among the employees. It improves their job satisfaction and motivation by providing greater income, status and responsibilities. Promotion also reduces, labour turnover, stimulates self-development and creates interest in training and development programmes (Gupta, 2011). Timely promotion is no doubt an important factor in an employee's life and career growth.

ii. Problem Solving Skills

Problem-Solving Skills is one of the criteria to measure an employee or office manager's growth. In the context of workplace environment, problem-solving skills are often referred to mean the ability to handle difficult or unexpected situations in the workplace as well as complex business challenges. It is in this regard that Kaplan (2023) asserts that problem-solving skills are the ability to identify problems, brainstorm, analyze answers, and implement the best solutions. Organizations rely on people who can assess both kinds of situations and calmly identify solutions. Problem-solving skills is not only the ability to handle difficult or unexpected situations and complex business challenges in the workplace, it is an important capability highly valued by employers, because of its usefulness in areas of life like relationship-building and day-to-day decision-making. From the foregoing, it is important to state that Problem-solving skills are important in every career especially to office managers whose day to day responsibility involves Decision-making, Communication critical Analysis of situation in the organization. To obtain or improve on problem-solving skills, acquiring more technical knowledge in your field through additional coursework, training or practice is one of the methods (Harrity, 2023).

iii. Peak Career Attainment: The peak of a process or an activity is the point at which it is at its strongest, most successful, or most fully developed. When something peaks, it reaches its highest value or its highest level. The term peak is Synonyms with climax, high point, crown or culmination. Therefore the peak of a career refers to the point in time when an individual has achieved the highest success or level of accomplishment in their chosen field or pursuit. According to Vietnam (2023), getting relevant certificates, degrees and ignore professional training and skills are sure ways of getting to the peak of one's career.

Empirical Review

Kaya and Ceylan (2014) carried out a study on the Role of Career Development Programs in Organization and Organizational Commitment on the Job Satisfaction of Employees. The study revealed that career development programs are very essential for employee as well as the organization. The study used career development programs and organizational

commitment as independent variables while job satisfaction was used as the dependent variable. The study found; that because of the changes in the business environment, the needs and demands of employees are also changing and so the factors that motivate them are also changing.

Cross (2018) studied the effects of training on organizational performance of selected microfinance bank in Nigeria. Data were collected from 304 a sample of respondents through structured questionnaire. The data collected were subjected to descriptive and inferential techniques used to test formulated hypotheses. The findings indicate that training contributes to employee commitment and performance of employees in the organization.

Devi and Nagurvali (2012) investigated the impact of training and development towards employee's performance. At the end it was concluded that trained employees perform better than untrained employees. The authors stressed that training helps organizations in achieving their strategic objectives and provides organizations with a competitive advantage. Also in the investigation of Elnaga and Imran (2013) on the impact of training with regards to the performance of employees, it was concluded that training optimizes the performance of employees.

Tigelaar *et al.* (2006) studied how a Personal Development Plans stimulated reflection on the various aspects of teaching functioning by analyzing five medical school teachers. According to the study, the various aspects of teaching functioning were based on Korthagen's model (2004) for teacher reflection in which a distinction is made between mission, identity, beliefs, competencies, behaviours and environment. This study found that Personal development plans assessment is effective for reflection. However, the research showed that this reflection is often not very profound. Teachers do not reflect easily on their motivation, feelings, thoughts and their personality. The authors therefore conclude that reflection needs to be stimulated by supportive coaches.

Franklin *et al.* (2014) carried out a study on the impact of training and development on employee performance at ESCON consulting. A random sampling method was used to select participants for this study, which adopted a quantitative approach. Accordingly, data was collected using a questionnaire. The study was limited to employees of ESCON consulting. Subsequently, the findings revealed that working conditions and a lack of resources affect the training and development of employees. It is recommended that certain areas be improved, that is, management support, the provision of feedback to employees and the conducting of employee training on a continuous basis. The findings show that this would improve employee performance in the organization.

Shujaat *et al.* (2013) found a significant positive relationship between training career development and Employee job satisfaction in banking sector. This shows that employees were more satisfied when training and career development opportunity activities are offered at their organizations. It further determined that the corporate world has become more competitive hence employees have become more conscious of the need to develop their career in order to grow and remain relevant in their workplace.

Achimugu and Idu (2015), in their study titled studied Self-development: An imperative for bridging the critical human resource gaps of the 21st century university administrator in Nigeria. With focus on the Nigerian university administrator who's role is pivotal to the continued existence and optimum performance of the system. In their findings, they observed among other things that the conventional training acquired before employment may be grossly inadequate to respond to the core contemporary challenges faced by university administrators in Nigeria. Hence among other recommendations they suggest

coaching, supportive supervision, and continuous training and development as imperatives for bridging the critical human resource gaps.

Evans et al. (2002) researched the use of Personal Development Plans (PDPs) to stimulate the continuing employee and professional development. The main research question in this study was: Are PDPs effective for continuing professional development? In the study, effectiveness was operationalized as the perceived changes in practice and development. The research, questionnaires were administered to general professionals who use PDPs, how they identify their learning needs, what methods they use and what support they receive, their views on the use of PDPs and whether they perceive changes in their own practice and in their personal development. In addition, to explore and understand the professionals' reasons for undertaking Personal development plans, 68 completed questionnaires from General Professionals were analyzed. Furthermore, 19 of them were selected for semi-structured in-depth interviews to explore issues in detail. The study concludes that Personal Development Plans are effective in stimulating the continuing professional development and personal development.

Research Design

This study adopted explanatory cross-sectional survey research design.

Population of the Study

The population of this study consist eight (8) public tertiary institutions in Rivers Nigeria. The tertiary institutions, rather than their staff served as the population of this study. This is because the criterion variable "Office Manager Growth" manifests at the organizational level. Details of the list of the population of the study (i.e. public tertiary institutions in Rivers State) are presented in table 3.1 below:

Table 1 List of Public Tertiary Institution in Rivers State, Nigeria

S/N	LIST OF INSTITUTION	LOCATION
1.	Rivers State University	NkpoluOroworoko Port Harcourt
2.	University of Port Harcourt	ChobaPort Harcourt.
3	Ignatius Ajuru University of Education	RumuolumeniPort Harcourt
4	Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic	Rumuola Port Harcourt
5	Kenule Beeson Saro-Wiwa Polytechnic	Bori Rivers State
6	Rivers State School of Health of Technology	Rumueme Port Harcourt
7	Federal Government College Technical	Omoku Rivers State.
8	Federal Polytechnic of Oil and Gas	Bonny Rivers State

Instrumentation and Measurement

This study made use of primary data. The collection of primary data was done using a questionnaire designed by the researcher. The instrument (questionnaire) is titled "Office Self-Development Strategies and Officer Manager Growth (SDSOMG). A 4-point rating scale was used with the following response options: Strongly Agree (SA) 4; Agree (A) 3; Strongly Disagree (SD) 2; and Disagree (D) 1.

Method of Data Analysis

Arithmetic mean and standard deviation were used for univariate analysis, Spearman rank order correlation was applied for the bivariate analysis while, Partial correlation is be used for the multivariate analysis. The test of hypotheses was done at 95% confidence level. If our statistical analysis shows that the significance level is below the cut-off value we have

set (which is 0.05), the null hypothesis is to be rejected while alternate hypothesis is to be accepted when the significant value is below 0.05. Alternatively, if the significance level is above the cut-off value, the null hypothesis will be accepted.

In testing the hypotheses one to ten, the following rules were upheld in accepting or rejecting our null hypotheses. All the coefficient (r) values that indicated levels of significance (* or **) as calculated using SPSS were accepted and thus our alternate hypotheses were accepted and when no significance is indicated in the coefficient (r) value we rejected the null hypotheses. We set out a confidence interval at 0.05 level of significance to test the statistical significance of the study.

Results

Acquisition of Digital Skill and Quality Service Delivery

			Acquisition of Digital Skill	Acquisition of Digital Skill
Spearman's rho	Acquisition of Digital Skill	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.926**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	78	78
	Acquisition of Digital Skill	Correlation Coefficient	.926**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	78	78

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

Source: Research Desk, 2023.

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between acquisition of Digital Skills and quality service delivery of public tertiary institution in Rivers State.

From the result in the table above, the correlation coefficient (rho) shows that there is relationship between acquisition of digital skill and quality service delivery. The *correlation coefficient 0.926* confirms the magnitude and strength of this relationship and it is a strong positive correlation between the variables. The correlation represents is significant at $p\ 0.000 < 0.05$. Therefore, based on this finding the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a statistically significant relationship between acquisition of digital skill and quality service delivery in public tertiary institution in Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings

The study investigated the relationship between Acquisition of Digital Skills and office manager growth in public tertiary institutions in Rivers State Nigeria.

H₀₁: Acquisition of Digital Skills has a very strong relationship with Quality Service Delivery, based on (rho=0.926; p=0.000<0.005), and the null hypothesis was rejected

Findings from the above result, the study shows that a significant and positive relationship between acquisition of digital skill and office manager growth of public tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Acquiring new skills and knowledge can enhance office managers' communication abilities. They can develop a more comprehensive understanding of effective communication strategies and techniques, enabling them to articulate ideas, provide clear instructions, and engage in meaningful conversations with colleagues, superiors, and subordinates. Improved communication fosters stronger relationships and

promotes effective collaboration within the office, by actively seeking out and acquiring new skills, knowledge, and information, office managers can enhance their professional growth and development. The relational influence of acquisition lies in the improved communication, expanded knowledge base, adaptability, innovative thinking, professional networking, problem-solving skills, and leadership development, which collectively foster positive relationships and contribute to their overall growth as office managers. Acquisition of digital skill if properly practice in the public tertiary institution s greater value on the culture of the organization will be achieved which will further stabilize the financial and other requirement.

CONCLUSION

The study investigated and measured the relationship between acquisition of digital skill and office manager growth of public tertiary institution s in Rivers State. The null hypothesis was rejected, implying that acquisition of digital skill is considered a positive aspect of self-development strategies that is perceived as being better than other negative psychosocial factors at work. Furthermore, the lack of acquisition of digital skill can create stress and tension in an organization. From the foregoing, the researcher concludes that acquisition of digital skill significantly relates with office managers growth of public tertiary institution s in Rivers State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, conclusions and the implications of the study, the following recommendations have been made:

- i. Public tertiary institution should invest in training office managers in courses on digital literacy and the use of specific digital tools, such as Mobile Cloud Computing software, Advanced Spreadsheet collaboration tools for effective record security, information delivery. Also, there should be training on the use of workforce productivity software for efficient workflow and operations.
- ii. Organizational policies should be seen as very essential in the running of the institution. Therefore, in formulating policies, organizations should endeavor to make policies that encourage self-development, as well as reward system for employees who personally engage in training and development, as it will enhance quality service delivery, innovativeness efficient record management.

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