

## **TECHNOLOGY-OVERLOAD AND OFFICE MANAGERS' PERFORMANCE IN PAINT MANUFACTURING FIRMS IN PORT HARCOURT**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the relationship between technology overload and office managers' performance in paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt. The explanatory cross section survey research was adopted for the study. The population of this study consisted of one hundred and ten (110) office managers of nineteen (19) registered paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt. A sample of one hundred and ten (110) respondents was obtained using census sampling technique. Structured questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection after face-validation. Cronbach alpha was used to test the internal consistency of the instrument. Out of 110 copies of the questionnaire administered, a total of 90 copies were retrieved. Mean and standard deviation was used for the univariate analysis while the bivariate analysis was done using Spearman rank order correlation. Multivariate analysis was done using Partial Correlation. The findings revealed that techno-overload have significant negative relationship on office managers' performance in paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt. The study concluded that technology-overload has negative effect on office managers' performance in paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt. The study recommended that management of paint manufacturing firms could provide regular hands-on ICT training for administrative heads and their assistants to enable them upgrade and update their digital skills and experiences to close the digital skills gap in the system.*

**Keywords: Techno-Overload, Work Quality, Timely Information Dissemination, Task Accomplishment**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Information and communication technology (ICT) users are recurring overwhelmed with information from laptops, smartphones and PDAs, resulting in work overload. In an organizational context, employees are inundated with too much information which they fail to resourcefully utilize (Fisher & Wesolkowski in Ragu-Nathan et al., 2008). This, in combination with the increasing levels of complexity in the ever changing ICTs, generates feelings of the inability to cope, leading to stress (Clark & Kalin in Tarafdar et al., 2010) as well as "information fatigue" as described by Weil and Rosen in Mlotshwa (2013). Additionally, when new systems are implemented, old functions are eliminated as processes are reengineered and new structures of power, authority, and decision making are created in the process, which changes the role of the ICT end user and that of the manager and/or supervisor (Tarafdar et al., 2010). Work quality depicts a unit of production of goods and service in an excellent or improved manner. Quality is critical to satisfying Customers: failure to meet customers' expectation, will make them quickly look for alternatives. Quality is critical to satisfying customers and retaining their loyalty so they continue to patronize the organization in the future. Quality products make an important contribution to long-term revenue and profitability (Clement, 2017; Elshaer, 2016). Timely information dissemination as the second measure of office managers' performance refers to how prompt the office managers ensures that files and data/information reach the right person(s) at the right time. It also deals with the ability of an office manager to complete administrative tasks like typesetting, appointments, purchases of office resources, etc. on time. For the information manager to effectively act as an important link and interface between the top management and the operating core, he must be conscious of timely circulation of information to its users within the periscope of jurisdiction (Roth, 2016). The last measure of this study is task accomplishment. Conceptually, timely task completion is defined

as the ability of employees at all levels to effectively carry out assigned targets/tasks within record time or before deadline. Employees at all levels including information managers are primarily employed to provide administrative assistance and carry out other office tasks assigned to him/her. Employers and bosses look out for office managers that can accomplish any assignment, task or target given to them promptly or early enough before deadline. In fact, an information manager that is fond of completing tasks at the last minute or deadline can be said to be underperforming. The information manager and other employees are expected to be up and doing in preparation of documents, information dissemination, and carrying out their day to day official duties (Nayyar, 2015).

Nevertheless, the manifestation of the variables, dimensions and measures aforementioned in this study is determined by environmental factors of the organization. This implies that the environmental factors in terms of ventilation/temperature and condition of office equipment moderates the perceived relationship between technology-overload and office managers' performance within the confide of paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.

- H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant relationship between techno-overload and office managers' work quality in paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt.
- H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant relationship between techno-overload and office managers' timely information dissemination in paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt.
- H<sub>03</sub>: There is no significant relationship between techno-overload and office managers' task accomplishment in paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt.

### **Techno-Overload and Office Managers' Performance**

It could be expatiated that though ICT users are recurrently overwhelmed with information from laptops, smartphones and personal digital assistants (PDAs), resulting in work overload, it does not disable an employee from accomplishing his or her task, because tasks are related to the nusus one has to carry out a task which ordinarily cannot be determined by techno-overload. Rather, it is tied to the skills, knowledge, ideas the employee has as related the job. Techno-overload is a serious stressor for workers in the manufacturing industry. Workers are sometimes given unrealistic production targets and deadlines by their supervisors with the assumption that they can achieve so much within a limited time frame with the speed of machines (Odu, 2018). Thus, this causes work-life imbalance because, even at home most office managers' still attend to work related issues such as e-mailing of document, receiving of telephone call etc, thus causing imbalance in office managers' work-life balance. No matter how it is justified, taking official work home is the act of allowing work to encroach into personal life which causes an imbalance between work and personal life. However, the numerous calls and messages at the disposal of the office managers especially at the customer care unit in the paint manufacturing firms in order to meet the customers' demands has raised serious concern and constitutes one of the information induced stress or info-stressor. This development is due to the numerous customers at the disposer of the attendant with divers calls and messages which becomes difficult to assimilate or digest the information he is required to act within the short frame of time.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This work was based on Lewin and Edwards' Person-Environment Fit Theory popularized in 1962 (Osita, 2018). Person-Environment Fit Theory of psychological stress describes the interaction between the person and environment ( $P \times E$ ) as the key to comprehending people's cognitive, emotional and behavioural reactions such as stress. The theory assumes:

- i. A mismatch between a person and his work environment will lead to tension and uneasiness capable of hampering his level of productivity.

- ii. The second tenet of this theory is that worker's capabilities (skill sets) will determine the level of work pressure and how environmental pressure affects their output. The theorist explained that "the level of match between job demands and workers' capabilities (knowledge and skill) to meet those demands is referred to as demands-ability fit (Cummings & Worley, 2008).

This relates to the technology-induced stress as the independent variable of this study in that when there is a mismatch between the technological experience and skills of an office/office manager and the nature of technological resources in use in his work environment, he experiences some level of psychological strain. Technical failure, techno-insecurity (risk of hackers and virus attacks), and the inability of the office manager to cope with the skills upgrade required to operate and manipulate computer systems, projector, internet network, electronic media and other electronic resources are capable of subjecting him to pressure which in turn could affect his effectiveness in terms of document management, information dissemination, and supervision.

The proponent of person-environment fit theory also argued that when there is a match or equilibrium between an employee's personality, skills/competencies and the working environment (organizational culture, technology and tools), it leads to job satisfaction and optimal performance. This aspect of the theory amplifies the fact that the individual digital literacy level of an average office managers in the paint manufacturing firms can moderate the relationship between technology-induced stress and his effectiveness in the discharge of his administrative duties.

The adoption of person-environment fit theory as a major theoretical framework for this study is predicated on the fact that the theory describes how the interactions and relationship between a worker and his working environment affects the level of strain he/she experiences on the job. It also recognizes environmental factor which can moderate the relationship between technology-induced stress and office managers' performance.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The cross-sectional explanatory survey research design was adopted for this study. The population of the study consists of one hundred and ten (110) office managers (heads of departments) of nineteen (19) registered paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt. The above information was obtained from Paint Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (PMAN), Rivers State Branch. The census method was adopted since the population is not large. Structured questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. The work adopted the face and content validity Cronbach alpha was used in determining the internal consistency of the instrument. Thus, a Cronbach alpha level of 0.70. Mean and standard deviation was used for the univariate analysis while the bivariate analysis was done using Spearman rank order correlation. Multivariate analysis was done using Partial Correlation. The entire process of analysis done via SPSS. Spearman rank order correlation coefficient was computed with the formula below:

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

Where;

n = number of pairs of data

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

Σ = Summation

If our statistical analysis shows that the significance level is below the cut-off value we have set (which is 0.05), we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis. Alternatively, if the significance level is above the cut-off value, the null hypothesis was accepted.

**Results****Bivariate Analysis of the Variables****Techno-Overload and Office Managers' Performance**

Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between techno-overload and office managers' work quality in paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt.

Ho<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant relationship between techno-overload and office managers' timely information dissemination in paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt.

Ho<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant relationship between techno-overload and office managers' task accomplishment in paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt.

**Correlations between Techno-Overload and Office Managers' Performance**

		Techno-Overload	Work Quality	Timely Information Dissemination	Task Accomplishment
Correlation Coefficient		1.000	<b>.213**</b>	<b>-.411**</b>	<b>-.280**</b>
Techno-Overload	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	90	90	90	90
Correlation Coefficient		<b>.213**</b>	1.000	<b>.850**</b>	<b>.509**</b>
Work Quality	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000
	N	90	90	90	90
Correlation Coefficient		<b>-.111**</b>	.	1.000	<b>.730**</b>
Timely Information Dissemination	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	90	90	90	90
Correlation Coefficient		<b>-.280**</b>	<b>.509**</b>	<b>.730**</b>	1.000
Task Accomplishment	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	90	90	90	90

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

**Source: SPSS Output**

Column two of Table above shows r value of -0.213 at a significant value of 0.00 which is less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05 for the hypothesis relating to techno-overload and work quality. Since the significant level is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis (Ho<sub>1</sub>) which states that there is no significant relationship between techno-overload and office managers' work quality in paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt was rejected and the alternate hypothesis (H<sub>a1</sub>) was accepted. This implies that there is a weak negative relationship between techno-overload and office managers' work quality in paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt.

Column three of Table above shows r value of 0.411 at a significant level of 0.00 which is less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05 for the hypothesis relating to techno-overload and timely information dissemination. Since the significant level is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis (Ho<sub>2</sub>) which states that there is no significant relationship between techno-overload and office

managers' timely information dissemination in paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt was rejected. This implies that there is a moderate negative relationship between techno-overload and office managers' timely information dissemination in paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt. Column four of Table above shows  $r$  value of  $-0.280$  at a significant level of  $0.00$  which is less than the chosen alpha level of  $0.05$  for the hypothesis relating to techno-overload and task accomplishment. Since the significant level is less than the alpha level of  $0.05$ , the null hypothesis ( $H_{03}$ ) which states that there is no significant relationship between techno-overload and office managers' task accomplishment in paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt was rejected and the alternate hypothesis ( $H_{a3}$ ) was accepted. This implies that there is a weak negative relationship between techno-overload and office managers' task accomplishment in paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt.

These results gotten indicated that there is a weak relationship between techno-overload and office managers' job performance in terms of work quality, timely information dissemination and task accomplishment in paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt.

### **Techno-Overload and Office Managers' Performance**

The test of hypotheses seven, eight and nine revealed that techno-overload has a significant low or weak relationship with office managers' performance in terms of work quality, timely information dissemination and task accomplishment in paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt. This implies that increase in administrative workload due to the availability of ICT facilities brings about inadequate performance of office managers which relationship that exist between them is weak in paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt. Although, Otamiri (2019) revealed that increase in administrative responsibility is positively correlated with the effectiveness of principals in Rivers State. This buttresses the fact that stress is not completely negative as it is often believed (Ameh, 2014). While it is true that the use of ICT has increased the amount of workload administrators are expected to accomplish within a very short space of time, it is capable of bringing out the best in administrative workaholics.

Administrative workaholics are administrative personnel with high level of mental and physical resilience which enables them to function and achieve especially under very stressful conditions. As the office and information manager continues to handle more digital responsibilities, it has a way of sharpening their skills as well as making them more dexterous in handling difficult tasks. Overtime, the office and information manager succeeds in developing proven ways of handling routine jobs faster and more effectively using the templates and processes they have mastered and established, having done the same kind of job over and over.

However, this finding is in sharp contrast with the findings of Shalini, et al. (2017) that technology-induced work-overload impairs employee innovativeness as a result of mental exhaustion. Rafferty and Griffin, (2016) had pointed that any environmental or psychological factor that is capable of impairing innovativeness is also capable of reducing the individual's efficiency and effectiveness at work. By above assertion, the fact that Shalini, et al. (2017) found that techno-overload impairs innovativeness equally implies that it is capable of hampering the administrative effectiveness of office and information managers in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Admittedly, when the office and information manager has a lot of administrative tasks to accomplish with his computer system, it does not only lead to physical and mental exhaustion, it can also lead to information obesity. This is a situation where the individual has too many information at his disposal that he begins to misapply them or feels overwhelmed. Under this circumstance, the office and information manager may not be able to function effectively.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the analyses of data and discussion of findings, the study concluded that technology-overload has negative effect on office managers' performance in paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt. The study also concluded that techno-overload if well managed enhances the performance of office managers in paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt. rs.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations were made:

1. Managers of paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt in Port Harcourt could also be committed to learning basic troubleshooting skills to reduce the amount of time often wasted in waiting for technicians.
2. Management of paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt in Port Harcourt could ensure subscription of single user modem to overcome network problem.
3. Employees of paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt could ensure frequent dusting of their respective computer system to avoid unnecessary hanging.
4. Employees of paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt could ensure they handle all phone calls relating to their job in the office.
5. Management could ensure electronic files are backed in external storage devices as well as online platforms such as e-mail and google drive to guarantee recovery of data/information in the event of information security breach.
6. As a way of self-help, employees could always give in their best at work so that incessant calls and messages will not be received when in non-official hours.
7. Management of paint manufacturing firms could ensure to provide enabling work environment to enhance job performance of employees.

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