

**BUSINESS WHATSAPP AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATION HEALTH IN HOTELS
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Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt, Nigeria***E-mail: samotamiri@gmail.com***ABSTRACT**

The study examined the relationship between business whatsapp and administrative communication health in Hotels in Rivers State. The objective of the study was to ascertain how business whatsapp interacts with measures of office administrative communication health (information circulation and administrative coordination) in Hotels in Rivers State. The cross sectional explanatory survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of one hundred and fifty-three (153) registered and fully functional hotels in Port Harcourt considering accessibility. The random sampling technique was adopted for the study. Out of one hundred and fifty-three (153) hotels in Port Harcourt the focus city in Rivers State, twenty-eight (28) hotels were randomly selected as the geographical focus of this study. Thus, the sample size of the study was two hundred and twenty-four (224) administrators who are administrative heads of units/departments. Structured questionnaire was used as the main instrument for the collection. Face validity was adopted and Cronbach alpha via SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) was used to ascertain the reliability of the instrument. Out of two hundred and twenty-four (224) copies of questionnaire distributed, two hundred and eight (208) copies of the completed questionnaire were retrieved. Thus, Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient was used for the bivariate analyses. The study revealed that there is no moderate significant positive relationship between business whatsapp and information circulation in Hotels in Rivers State; there is a high significant positive relationship between business whatsapp and administrative coordination in Hotels in Rivers State. It was concluded that the more hotels adopt these new media, the more their administrative communication becomes healthier. Thus, the study recommends that management of hotels should ensure all unit, department or section in their hotels has general work whatsapp group for smooth workflow.

Keywords: Business Whatsapp, Administrative Communication Health, Information Circulation and Administrative Coordination.

Background of Study

Communication in the workplace is one concept that determines the progress, effectiveness and performance level of many businesses, organizations and institutions. The act of communication has evolved from one stage to another over time. It has moved from traditional means and channels to the adoption and use of technological facilities or platforms (Maravic, 2013). Recently, the use of technological platforms in the workplace has also experienced the introduction of new, more innovative communication channels that are internet based like the new media which is popularly known as social media. Hotels all over the world including Rivers State require a lot of fast and reliable communication for business to go on well and make progress. This makes the business whatsapp a veritable tool to drive hotel business. The concept of new media enjoys the blessing of popular acceptance in the society but its adoption and use in the workplace like hotels has not been encouraging even in Rivers State. However, business whatsapp is referred to as a new media platform created by Brian Anton and Janused for sending and receiving text messages, images, voice notes and video files between business managements or owners and their clients or customers (Cohavi, 2013). Business whatsapp is aimed at sharing of text messages, videos,

images, and audio messages via internet connection between managements, business owners and their employees, customers, partners, the public etc.

According to Altinöz (2018) administrative communication refers to the giving of instruction, guidelines, data and other information to other employees in such a way that they are clear to understand, timely and enable employees to carry out their responsibility to achieve organizational aim and objectives. A healthy communication in the organization is characterized by information circulation and administrative coordination. However, information circulation is the act of sharing data and information in an organization in such a manner that information gets and achieve its aim and objectives. As opined by Sharp in Lawal et al. (2010), the chief aim of communication is to effect change in someone, that is, to shape action or to secure inactiveness in the total interest of a business enterprise. More so, administrative coordination as another measure of administrative communication health depicts the effective planning, effective organizing, effective staffing, effective directing, effective reporting, and effective budgeting. The activities of any business venture including hotels can only be said to be effectively coordinated when all there is proper planning, when reports are been made to the right person at the right time (Witherspoon, 2017).

Statement of the Problem

The use of business whatsapp platforms at the workplace has significantly bridged communication gap amongst management and employees and between employees in the workplace. However, many staff including administrative staff abuse the use of new media at the workplace by habitually dedicating more time to idle chats at the expense of urgent and important administrative tasks. There is a problem of slow administrative process and ineffective communication in the hospitality sector especially Hotels in Rivers State (Clement, 2014). The late circulation of information by administrative staff and incessant cases of wrong communication point to the fact that the administrative communication machinery is highly unhealthy and ineffective (Ngulube, 2018). The researcher has observed that in Nigeria and Rivers State in particular, the hospitality industry especially Hotels have not fully adopted and put in use business whatsapp platforms to facilitate information flow which leads to unhealthy communication by the administrative staff. This goes ahead to become a hindrance to organizational effectiveness and high performance. Also, the researcher has observed that hotels in Rivers State and beyond experience in administrative coordination as a result of unhealthy communication coming from the administration because of the lack of fast, efficient and effective business whatsapp in the workplace (Ned, 2016). This ugly situation has obviously affected the administrative communication health and effectiveness of Hotels of Rivers State.

Conceptual Framework

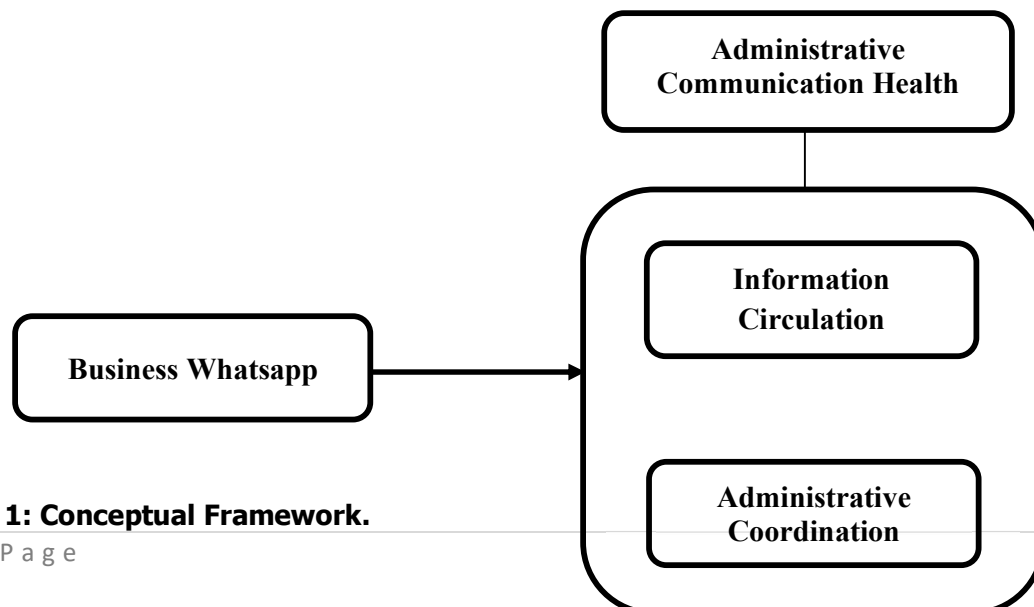


Fig. 1: Conceptual Framework.

Source: (Amadike, 2018; Dike, 2018)

Aim/Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study was to examine the relationship between business whatsapp and administrative health in Hotels in Rivers State. The specific objectives of the study were as follows:

1. To determine the extent of relationship between business whatsapp and information circulation in Hotels in Rivers State.
2. To investigate the extent of relationship between business whatsapp and administrative coordination in Hotels in Rivers State.

Hypotheses

In line with the objectives, the following null hypotheses were formulated:

- Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between business whatsapp and information circulation in Hotels in Rivers State.
- Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between business whatsapp and administrative coordination in Hotels in Rivers State.

Conceptual Review

Concept of Business Whatsapp

Whatsapp is an instant messaging application created by Brian Anton and Jan Koom with the aid of an 8 million dollar investment by Major Sequoia, one of Silicon Valley's most fashionable investors' holding companies, the pair launched whatsapp in 2009 (Chokri, 2015). Whatsapp is a popularly referred to as a social media platform that enables users to share text messages, videos, images, and audio messages via internet connection. The name of the application whatsapp was coined from the English phrase "What's up?" meaning "What's new?" is an instantaneous messaging application for smartphones. The name of the application whatsapp was coined from the English phrase "What's up?" meaning "What's new?" is an instantaneous messaging application for smartphones (Amadike, 2018).

Nevertheless, business whatsapp is a new media platform created by Brian Anton and Janused for sending and receiving text messages, images, voice notes and video files between business managements or owners and their clients or customers. Business whatsapp is aimed at sharing of text messages, videos, images, and audio messages via internet connection between managements, business owners and their employees, customers, partners, the public etc. It features entails group chat and whatsapp document sharing (Dike, 2018).

Group Chat: A special feature of business whatsapp as a new media (social media) platform is the option to create group with many persons and to communicate within its boundaries. The person who created the group becomes the group administrator which enables him to add, erase and control membership. In the case of group chat, aside from this, all of the participants in the group enjoy equal rights. The software makes it possible for members to receive a notification for each message sent or, alternatively, to mute the in-coming alerts for the duration of 8 hours, a day, or a whole week.

Whatsapp Document Sharing: Whatsapp in its more updated forms also allows document sharing. WhatsApp document sharing is one feature that was recently added to whatsapp networking tool. It gives the ability to share documents, both on the [Android](#) and [iOS](#) versions of the application. Whatsapp document sharing enable whatsapp users to send and receive all forms of documents (Kingsley & Lucky in Kuppuswam & Shankar, 2010). The whatsapp document sharing feature also allows one to send attached documents to individual contacts as well as into groups.

Concept of Administrative Communication Health

Healthy administrative communication is tremendously important to organizations because it increases productivity and efficiency. Unhealthy administrative communication leads to communication gaps between management/administrative staff and other employees, which causes confusion, wastes time, and reduces productivity (Ayatse, 2015). Misunderstandings that cause friction between people can be avoided by communicating in a healthy manner. For administrative communication to healthily occur it must pass from a sender (administrative staff) to a receiver (junior employees) and achieve a predetermined goals or objectives of the organization. Thus, Administrative communication is the process of exchanging information, both verbal and non-verbal, within an organization that is aimed at achieving administrative goals (Orpen, 2017).

Administrative communication health is defined as the fair degree to which information about the job is transmitted by an administrative staff to its employees and other members of the organization (Price, 2017). Healthy administrative communication is said to be the foundation for sound management, healthy administrative communication helps greater coordination and interaction among workers, healthy administrative communication helps in motivating the workers, and healthy communication helps in establishing links between different hierarchies and functions of management, healthy communication clears confusion, misunderstanding and delays in administration, it helps in achieving maximum productivity with minimum cost, it helps in building genuine human relation. Communication is not only an essential aspect of these recent organizational changes, but healthy and effective administrative communication can be seen as the foundation of modern organizations (Witherspoon, 2017). Administrative communication health is measured through information circulation and administrative coordination.

Measures of Administrative Communication Health

Information Circulation: The extent to which data and information shared in an administrative system is accessed and used by designated persons without delay. Information circulation is closely associated with communicative skills of an administrator (Okonu, 2017). However, information circulation is the act of sharing data and information in an organization in such a manner that information gets and achieve its aim and objectives. As opined by Sharp in Lawal et al. (2010), the chief aim of communication is to effect change in someone, that is, to shape action or to secure inactiveness in the total interest of a business enterprise. It is a cord that binds people together in an organization. In organizational communication, information circulation is said to be effective when it is sent, received and well-understood by both parties (sender and receiver) (Otamiri, 2019).

Administrative Coordination: Administrative coordination refers to effective planning, effective organizing, effective staffing, effective directing, effective reporting, and effective budgeting. The activities of any business venture including hotels can only be said to be effectively coordinated when all there is proper planning, when reports are been made to the right person at the right time. For there to be an effective coordination in the workplace especially hotels, a clear definition of roles and responsibilities must be emphasized (Viinamäki, 2014).

Relationship Between Business Whatsapp and Administrative Communication Health

Business whatsapp is very important establishments specifically in hotels. This is because it allows people to access a great deal of information rapidly. Through document sharing, it gives administrators the opportunity to easily share task among subordinates. This is in line with the assertion of Kingsley and Lucky in Kuppuswam and Shankar (2010) that the whatsapp document sharing feature also allows one to send attached documents to individual contacts as well as into groups. This goes a long way in enhancing administrative communication health in terms of information circulation and administrative coordination.

In a similar manner, Cohavi (2013) averred that in the case of group chat, aside from this, all of the participants in the group enjoy equal rights. The software makes it possible for members to

receive a notification for each message sent or, alternatively, to mute the in-coming alerts for the duration of 8 hours, a day, or a whole week. This triggers administrative communication health in terms of information circulation and administrative coordination.

Theoretical Review

This study was anchored on Diffusion of Innovation Theory. Diffusion of Innovation Theory was postulated by Roger in 1962, with the following assumptions:

- i) In a social system, there will always be a disparity in the level and time at which individuals within a given social system adopt new ideas, techniques, and technology.
- ii) Individuals and departments of Hotels that adopt innovations early will naturally outperform late adopters and the laggards

The justification for adopting this theory as one of the theoretical foundations of this work lies in its relevance to the independent variable (business whatsapp). The theory identifies the indispensable and undeniable place of new media (social media) platforms such as business whatsapp and other forms of social media in firms and organizations especially Hotels as a veritable tool for achieving administrative communication health in the workplace in the 21st century. We live in a digital world where every human activity especially communication revolves around computers, smart phones and the internet. The theory makes us to understand that full adoption, usage and/or application of new media in the work place can enhance and make administrative communication healthier as it regards information circulation and administrative coordination.

METHODOLOGY

The cross sectional explanatory survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of one hundred and fifty-three (153) registered and fully functional hotels in Port Harcourt considering accessibility. The random sampling technique was adopted for the study. Out of one hundred and fifty-three (153) hotels in Port Harcourt the focus city in Rivers State, twenty-eight (28) hotels were randomly selected as the geographical focus of this study. Thus, the sample size of the study was two hundred and twenty-four (224) administrators who are administrative heads of units/departments. Structured questionnaire was used as the main instrument for the collection. Face validity was adopted and Crombach alpha via SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) was used to ascertain the reliability of the instrument. Out of two hundred and twenty-four (224) copies of questionnaire distributed, two hundred and eight (208) copies of the completed questionnaire were retrieved. Thus, Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient was used for the bivariate analyses. The coefficient will be computed with the formula overleaf:

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

Where;

n = number of pairs of data

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

Σ = Summation

Result

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between business whatsapp and information circulation in Hotels in Rivers State.

Table 1: Correlation of Business Whatsapp and Information Circulation

	Business Whatsapp	Information Circulation
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Spearman's rho	Business Whatsapp	Correlation	1.000	.557**
		Coefficient		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	Information Circulation	N	208	208
		Correlation	.557**	1.000
		Coefficient		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	208	208

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Output

Table 1 above reveals r value of 0.557 at a $p=0.00 < 0.05$ for the hypothesis relating business whatsapp and information circulation. Since the significance value 0.00 is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) which states that there is no significant relationship between business whatsapp and information circulation in Hotels in Rivers State was rejected and the alternate accepted. With a correlation coefficient of 0.875, the result implies that there is no moderate significant positive relationship between business whatsapp and information circulation in Hotels in Rivers State.

H_{02} : There is no significant relationship between business whatsapp and administrative coordination in Hotels in Rivers State.

Table 2: Correlation of Business Whatsapp and Administrative Coordination

		Business Whatsapp	Administrative Coordination	
Spearman's rho	Business Whatsapp	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
		N	208	
	Administrative Coordination	Correlation Coefficient	.693**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	208	208

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Output

Table 2 above reveals r value of 0.693 at a $P=0.00 < 0.05$ for the hypothesis relating business whatsapp and administrative coordination. Since the significance value 0.00 is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_{02}) which states that there is no significant relationship between business whatsapp and administrative coordination in Hotels in Rivers State was rejected and the alternate was accepted. This means that there is a high significant positive relationship between business whatsapp and administrative coordination in Hotels in Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings

The test of hypotheses one and two respectively revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between business whatsapp and information circulation in hotels in Rivers State; there is a significant positive relationship between business whatsapp and administrative coordination in hotels in Rivers State. This finding implies that the adoption of business whatsapp in the administrative system of Hotels in Rivers State significantly and positively enhances communication processes in the firms. This finding is in consonance with the findings of Kuppuswamy and Shankar (2010) that the adoption of social networks enhances workplace communication efficiency and makes coordination less stressful for administrative heads. With the present software upgrade, the use of business whatsapp has a lot of features that can facilitate communication process in business organizations. The use of whatsapp (both business and ordinary whatsapp) both positive and negative effect on individuals including administrators. These studies are centered on how the

use of whatsapp (business whatsapp inclusive) affect performance. Invariably, the literature x-rayed above shows a connectivity between business whatsapp and communication health in administrative systems. Relating it to the workplace, literature suggests that with the adoption and use of new media in the workplace, information circulation, administrative coordination and information timeousness can be greatly influenced or affected. Furthermore, the findings of Bere (2013) revealed that the use of whatsapp enhances lecturer-student academic interactions, enhances feedback for group works and makes learning more interesting. This implies that the use of whatsapp enhances communication in an administrative system.

CONCLUSION

The more hotels adopt these new media, the more their administrative communication becomes healthier. The study also concluded that hotels who fail to adopt new media will find it very difficult in maintaining communication links in their administrative system and this will have very negative impact on their overall performance as business establishments.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Management and administrative heads should use business whatsapp platform in creating and sharing administrative information contents like letters, memos, work schedules, etc. on whatsapp group platforms to enable them stay in constant touch with colleagues and subordinates beyond the physical office space.
2. Management of hotels should ensure all unit, department or section in their hotels has general work whatsapp group for smooth workflow.

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