

## WORKPLACE OBJECTIVITY AND COMPETITIVENESS OF TELECOMMUNICATION FIRMS IN RIVERS STATE

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### ABSTRACT

*The study examined workplace objectivity and competitiveness of telecommunication firms in Rivers State. The objective of the study was to examine the relationship between dimensions workplace objectivity (use of hard facts/evidence, clear/irrefutable information, performance evaluation) and measures of competitiveness such as new policies development, workplace retention and competitive salary/defined career path of telecommunication in Rivers State. Thus, the study was anchored on Equity Theory as its theoretical foundation. The study adopted the explanatory cross sectional survey research design. The population of the study consists of one hundred (100) registered telecommunication firms in Rivers State. Due to accessibility and manageability, only ten (10) telecommunication firms operating in Port Harcourt were used. Since the population is small, the sample size of the study consists of the entire population. Thus, the study adopted a census method of sampling. The census method was adopted since the population is not large. In terms of respondents, four (4) managers were purposively selected from each of the ten (10) telecommunication firms in Port Harcourt. Thus, the sample of this study is ten (10), telecommunication firms in Port Harcourt with 40 respondents. After validation by the experts in test and measurement, A total of forty (40) copies of questionnaire was distributed to the targeted respondents and the researcher was able to retrieve thirty eight (38) copies of the entire validated questionnaire distributed. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained, using test-retest. Mean and standard deviation was used for research questions analysis while Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to test hypotheses. It was found that there is a significant positive relationship between dimensions of workplace objectivity (use of hard facts/evidence, clear/irrefutable information, performance evaluation) and measures of competitiveness in terms of new policies development, workplace retention and competitive salary/defined career path of telecommunication firms in Rivers State. It was concluded that Telecommunication forms who fail to be fair in cause of making decisions in employees' work-related issue, might really face great challenge in attaining organizational competitiveness. Consequently, the study recommended that management of telecommunication firms should ensure that fact and evidence presented to them are reliable before usage so as to enable them develop new policies that could aid their organization-compete favourably.*

### INTRODUCTION

Organizations feel a great sense of belonging when they compete favourably at whatever level that satisfy them for the now. The reason is because factors such as new policies development, workforce retention, competitive salary and defined career path amongst others, are taken into consideration before an organization is termed to be competing favourably. An organization that is on the same level or has a higher new policies development, workforce retention, competitive salary and defined career path than its counterparts within a time period and a geographical entity is said to be a favourable competitor (Smith, 2017).

However, competitiveness is the ability of an organization to design, produce and/or market products superior to those offered by competitors, considering the price and nonprice qualities. The competitiveness process can be viewed as a balancing process that complements traditional functional processes such as operations management and human resources management (D'Cruz,

2017). Competitiveness in this study is measured through new policies development, workforce retention, competitive salary and defined career path.

Telecommunication firms such as A & B Telecommunication; Callus Miller Communications Ltd; Mega Byte International Limited; MTN Communications Limited; Nigerian Telecommunications (NITEL); Assotel Mobile; Digital Satellite Systems Limited; Cyberlink Communication Limited; Space Telecom s Nigeria; Globacom and many more become can compete favourably when they are able to implement new policies that will guide their operations. Thus, this study defines new policy development as the organizational recent methods of deciding what should be achieved, what should be done to achieve it, how to do it efficiently and economically, who should do it, etc. Policy development and implementation are often described as distinct and separate stages within policy cycles, In practice, the lines between policy development and implementation can become quite blurred (Sinha, 2011). During the policy development stage, both political and technical issues have to be addressed.

Employees are more likely to remain and work for the successful achievement of organizational goals when appropriate employee's retention strategies are adopted and implemented by organizations. Chen, *et al.*, (2017) averred that retention is a voluntary move by an organization to create an environment which engages employees for long term, and the essence of retention is to protect the loss of competent employees from the organization, which could have an adverse effect on productivity and service delivery. Thus, workforce retention represents the strategic actions to keep employees motivated for the benefit of the organization. Competitive salary/defined career path as the last measure depicts a form of periodic payment from an employer to an employee, which may be specified in an employment contract that could equal the level of work done by an employee as well as making them have clear picture of their profession. However, Zahra *ex al.* (2015) defined salary as a fixed amount of money paid to a worker usually measured at monthly and annual basis, not hourly, as opposed to wages, salary is a fixed amount of money or compensation paid to an employee by an employer in return of work done.

Objectivity is critical in the workplace in order to maintain employee loyalty and to avoid ethical conflicts. Employees demonstrate objectivity by detaching and reflecting on their impulses and seeking the perspective of others. Managers who are objective avoid using their own judgments and interpretations when faced with a situation or decision, instead relying on facts or data. Operationally, workplace objectivity refers to as using fair, balanced criteria for making decisions concerning employees or company problems. Objectivity is critical when a company begins an investigation into a matter that happened at the workplace (Boles, *et al.*, 2014). Within the context of this study, workplace objectivity is dimensionalized through use of hard fact/evidence, clear/irrefutable information, performance evaluation.

### **Statement of Problem**

Obviously, every commercial action is completed in a specific situation, and the success of any association is dependent on the availability of a qualified personnel to compete favourably. The transmission of media is recognized as a hallmark component of the organization (Clement, 2015). However, it appears that customers continue to complain about poor services organization rendered, which manifests through dropped calls, high-rate calls, and information membership use as a result of poor development of new policies, lack of quality personnel retention incompetent salary structure and undefined career path among others, these alone has been revealed to have hampered competitiveness of organizations (telecommunication firms) (Boma-Siaminabo, 2020; Ogaram' 2021; Amos, *et al.*, 2016).

Another issue that necessitated this study is the fact that there appears to be a dearth of empirical studies on how workplace objectivity interacts with competitiveness within the context of telecommunication firms. Over the years, several authors have their different view of workplace objectivity, so to say, workplace objectivity and organizational competitiveness has been researched from different angles such as Bushiri (2014) examined the impact of working

environment on employees' performance: the case of institute of finance management in Dar Es Salaam Region; Katarina (2018) studied objective and subjective work characteristics and their relation to the successful development of adults in a society after a macrosocial transition. It was found that long-term career stability did not prove to be a significant predictor of generativity or stagnation; Boma-Siaminabo (2020) examined tacit knowledge strategies and organizational competitiveness in paint manufacturing firms Port Harcourt. The results showed that dimensions of tacit knowledge strategies such as strategic deputization, externalization and information sharing culture significantly and positively affects measures of organizational competitiveness such as product innovation, satisfactory service delivery and outstanding brand image; Moreso, Ogaram (2021) examined the relationship between job security and organizational competitiveness of hotels in Port Harcourt.. The study revealed that employee job competence has significant positive effect on organizational competitiveness of hotels in terms of market share. It also found that task significance facilitates organizational competitiveness of hotels in terms of net profit. It was also found that employee relations positively influence brand reputation of hotels. Amos, *et al.* (2016) examined effect of knowledge management on firm competitiveness: testing the mediating role of innovation in the small and medium enterprises in Kenya. The study results showed that knowledge management processes influence innovativeness positively, innovativeness enhances firm competitiveness while innovativeness is a mediator between knowledge management and firm competitiveness.

However, none of the aforementioned study examined the relationship between workplace objectivity and competitiveness. Thus, the current study examined the relationship between workplace objectivity and competitiveness specifically in telecommunication firms in Rivers State. Dimensionalizing on use of .hard facts/evidence, clear/irrefutable information performance evaluation; measuring through new policies development, workforce retention and competitive salary/defined career path. This has become a concern and therefore seeks for research effort.

### **Objective of the Study**

The objective of the study was to examine the relationship between workplace objectivity and competitiveness of telecommunication firms in Rivers State. Specifically, the study objective was to:

1. Ascertain the extent of relationship between use of hard facts/evidence and new policies development of telecommunication firms in Rivers State.
2. Determine the extent of relationship between clear/irrefutable information and workforce retention of telecommunication firms in Rivers State.
3. Investigate the relationship between performance evaluation and competitive salary/defined career path of telecommunication firms in Rivers State.

### **Research Hypotheses**

Based on the research questions posed above, the following null hypotheses was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between use of hard facts/evidence and new policies development of telecommunication firms in Rivers State.

H02: There is no significant relationship between clear/irrefutable information and workforce retention of telecommunication firms in Rivers State.

H03: There is no significant relationship between performance evaluation and competitive salary/defined career path of telecommunication firms in Rivers State.

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### Conceptual Review

#### Concept of Workplace Objectivity

Objectivity is critical in the workplace in order to maintain employee loyalty and to avoid ethical conflicts. Operating a company means setting personal ties aside and not focusing on the emotional aspects that could influence a decision. Though complete objectivity may be difficult for cohesive organizations, managers should strive to make decisions based on clear, irrefutable information (Abbas & Yaqoob, 2019; Agho, *et al.*, 2013).

Operationally, workplace objectivity refers to as using fair, balanced criteria for making decisions concerning employees or company problems. Decisions are based on hard facts and evidence, not the personal judgment of one person or a group. Objectivity aims to eliminate decisions based on personal bias, cultural differences and any other criterion that cannot be measured or proven. Employees demonstrate objectivity by detaching and reflecting on their impulses and seeking the perspective of others. Managers who are objective avoid using their own judgments and interpretations when faced with a situation or decision, instead relying on facts or data. According to Amir (2010), objectivity is necessary to get an accurate explanation of how things work in the world. Ideas that show objectivity are based on facts and are free from bias, with bias basically being personal opinion.

Armstrong (2008) averred that objectivity is critical when a . company begins an investigation into a matter that happened at the workplace. Similar to a detective or a police officer, a designated person from human resources in the company would use the statements of employees, correspondence and even security footage to arrive at a final decision. For example, if an employee complains of sexual harassment from another employee, the company would use objective methods to verify this complaint. Recognizing your biases and separating facts from feelings is essential to objectivity in investigations (Boles, *et al.*, 2014). The reason objectivity is important in leadership is to ensure decisions concerning employees or organizational issues are made fairly,, based on informed and balanced facts. This means decisions aren't biased by historical practices, personal opinions, relationships or conscious or subconscious biases. Within the context of this study, use of hard fact/evidence, clear/irrefutable information, performance evaluation are used as dimension of workplace objectivity.

#### Dimensions of Workplace Objectivity

##### Use of Hard Fact/Evidence

At all time, organization must ensure that in handling issues or passing judgement in work related activities, they must have to use hard facts and evidence. However, A fact could be a statement that is real or true, or a thing that can be shown to be real or true (Brill, 2012). That is its core meaning, though the word has along history, and has been used in many ways. A fact is something that has really happened or is actually the case. A fact is a datum about one or more aspects of a circumstance, which, if accepted as true and proven true, allows a logical conclusion to be reached on a true/false evaluation (Chandrasekar, 2011).

Nevertheless, this study defines the use of hard facts/evidence as use of clear information through documentation, oral and other form to testify truth about a particular happening. Evidence is used to back up or refute arguments, and it helps us to make decisions at work. Using evidence allows us to work out what is effective and what is not. Basically, evidence is used to prove an argument been made by individuals or groups that believe something to be true or a fact. Alternatively, evidence can used to disprove or refute a fact or argument people disagree with, or hold to be false.

Knowing facts helps us to place other problems into context and access higher order thinking skills (Govindarajulu, *et al.*, 2014). If the facts we have memorized are accurate and accessible they can be used in order to give context to other situations, if we cannot recall these facts we are unable to place new problems into context. According to Harris, *et al.* (2020), there is not a single type of

evidence, it comes in various differing forms. Different kinds of evidence are associated with differing types of disciplines. Hard evidence or facts are definitely true and do not need to be questioned. Facts enhance the overall grid capacity and performance.

### **Clear/Irrefutable Information**

There has been series of interpretation on the concept of information, however, Otamiri, *et al.* (2019) conceptualized information as "processed and meaningful data about any subject matter capable of helping users to gain knowledge about a phenomenon, process, activity or system." Meaningful information exchange or communication between management and employees makes the workforce to become more informed about organizational policies, plans, and trends. When managers and supervisors become fair in the sharing of information about organizational activities, employees see the information process to be fair. As members of the organization, employees desire to be involved or consulted in the decision-making process (Asim, *et al.*, 2016). It is concerned with an organizational scenario where decision making processes and communication activities are considered to be inclusive, timely, open, sincere, and fair to every member of the organization. Organizational information is concerned with validated account of the operational activities, decisions, progress, and trends that guide members on what to do (Laudon & Laudon, 2013).

This study defines clear/irrefutable information as information provided that cannot be shown to be incorrect or unsatisfactory. Information is an abstract concept that refers to that which has the power to inform. At the most fundamental level information pertains to the interpretation of that which may be sensed. Clear/irrefutable information refers to how fair information regarding issues in the workplace are considered appropriate without any form of doubt. In other words, clear/irrefutable information refers to the truthfulness and justification of information provided to employees in the workplace (Akana in Asim, *et al.*, 2016). The appraisal that information is inadequate or untrue leads to the perceptions of injustice. Thus, it is ought to consist of factors that enhance individual perceptions of efficacy of explanations provided by the organizational agents.

### **Performance Evaluation**

The term evaluation refers to as assessment done either by an; individual or group of individuals to ascertain how good or bad an object, person or persons are in a given area at a particular time. In the view of Michael (2014), performance evaluation deals with how organizations examine and measure its employees' achievements and behaviours. It is an employee review by his/her manager where his work performance is accessed and strengths/weaknesses are identified so that the employee knows his improvement areas. Performance evaluation is the right time to set new, goals and objectives for the employees. Performance appraisal has also been called an audit function of an organization regarding the performance of individuals, groups and entire divisions (Abdulaziz, *et al.*, 2011). Performance evaluation systems aim to fulfill the features of modern performance management concepts,, paving the way for major changes in the work culture of the public sector. It could also be called performance appraisal. Appraisals range from official prescribed meetings between an evaluator and evaluate to causal, change occasions where an evaluator observed work activities and indicated his or her assessment with an informal comment (Hershey and Blanchard in Abdulaziz, 2011).

Conceptually, performance evaluation can be described as the process of examining and assessing an employee performance, potential and development needs in order establish their conformity with operational standards and expected results. The appraisal is an opportunity to take an overall view of work content, loads and volumes, to examine what has been achieved during the reporting period and agree objectives for the next (Ameh, 2015). Hanson (2017) explains that one important purpose for appraisal is that it is a basis for employers to take disciplinary action such as denying a pay increase or justification of employee termination. Performance appraisal also

serve the determination of transfers and assignments, personnel planning, assisting in goal identification, reinforcing the authority structure, and identifying widespread organizational developmental needs. In their view of Mckenna (2012), performance appraisal refers to as any personnel decision that affects the status of employees regarding retention, termination, promotion, demotion, transfer, salary increases or decreases, or admission into a training program.

### **Concept of Competitiveness**

Competitiveness originated from the Latin word, *competere*, which means involvement in a business rivalry for markets (Murths, 2018). Thus, in organizational settings competitiveness refers to the capability of a profit or non-profit organization to produce goods and services that are of higher quality and perhaps quantity than those of its rivals in the regional, national, or global level (D'Cruz, 2017). Organizations feel a great sense of belonging when they compete favourably at whatever level that satisfy them for the now. The reason is because factors such as market share, net profit, and brand reputation

amongst others, are taken into consideration before an organization is termed to be competing favourably. An organization that is on the same level or has a higher market share, net profit, brand reputation than its counterparts within a time period and a geographical entity is said to be a favourable competitor (Smith, 2017).

Conceptually, competitiveness is the ability of an organization to design, produce and/or market products superior to those offered by competitors, considering the price and nonprice qualities. Organizational competitiveness happens through the instrumentality of what is known as competitive processes. Competitive processes are those processes, which help identify the importance and current performance of core processes such as strategic management processes, human resources processes, operations management processes and technology management processes (D'Cruz, 2017). The competitiveness process can be viewed as a balancing process that complements traditional functional processes such as operations management and human resources management.

Competitiveness involves a combination of assets and processes, where assets are inherited (natural resources) or created (infrastructure), and processes transform assets to achieve economic gains from sales to customers (DC, 2016). Outcomes can be achieved through competitive potentials through the competitiveness process, similar to the Asset-Process-Performance (APP) framework (Momaya, 2015). Productivity has often been termed as a surrogate of competitiveness and good indicator of long-term competitiveness of an organization by many authors. Porter defined competitiveness at the organizational level as productivity growth that is reflected in either lower costs or differentiated products that command premium prices.

### **Measures of Competitiveness**

#### **New Policies Development**

The term policy can also be defined as "deliberate action of government that in some way alters or influences the society or economy outside the government. Policies constitute the output of the policy system and they are almost always embodied in legal acts. Policy is produced by the policy process, which is normally conceptualized as a cycle (Sabir, *et al.*, 2012). The policy process is normally initiated by a political decision (usually in the form of general declaration of policy objectives), followed by detailed policy development that produces options for more specific political decisions on the policy instrument to be enacted (passed). Once enacted, the instrument is implemented and subsequently assessed, which in turn may lead to further policy development (and possibly amendments to the instrument) or even to reconsideration and modification of the initial political decision (Sabir, *et al.*, 2012).

This study defines new policy development as the organizational recent methods of deciding what should be achieved, what should be done, to achieve it, how to do it efficiently and economically, who should do it, etc. For example, following a political decision to undertake measures to reduce car accidents, policy development would involve analysis of the causes of accidents, their distribution among different subpopulations and on different roads, the rules and policies already in place, the experience of other governments, etc. According to Sinha (2011), most policy models generally include the following stages: (1) identifying the issue to be addressed by the proposed policy, (2) placement on the agenda, (3) formulation of the policy, (4) implementation of the policy, and (5) evaluation of the policy. The three key tasks of development policy are now to help fragile states become stable, make growth in middle-income countries more inclusive, and address cross-border problems that affect us all. Policy development and implementation are often described as distinct and separate stages within policy cycles. In practice, the lines between policy development and implementation can become quite blurred. During the policy development stage, both political and technical issues have to be addressed.

### **Workforce Retention**

Workforce retention is one of the major problems facing companies in the competitive environment. The big business challenge is to align your goals with the growing demand for a balanced organizational climate that meets basic human needs and where work is synonymous with personal fulfillment and fulfillment (Teixeira & Franfa, 2013). In this sense, managers are increasingly convinced that attracting and retaining good employees goes far beyond paying the best salaries in the market. It is imperative to understand the factors that lead people to stay in a job, since all business action requires financial and human resources, and the latter act better when motivated. Thus, implementing an effective employee retention strategy helps the company to ensure better performance by properly utilizing employee capital.

Conceptually, workforce retention represents the strategic actions to keep employees motivated for the benefit of the organization. Workforce retention must be authentic and retention of competent employee requires powerful recognitions (Pranita, *et al.*, 2015). A role is a set of behaviors, rights and obligations at work companies must guard against too many roles or role overload while also fully being in the roles that contribute to results, relationships, and engagement. Thos model emphasizes that workforce retention can- contribute to effective performance management and performance demonstrates company's engagement while engagement and retention can help companies excel at performance. Good employee retention should foster star performers. Yazinski (2019) posit that retaining quality employees are is very important in organizational setting. This is because it provides organizations involve with competitive advantage over other/

Aguenza and Som (2012) emphasize that retention and employee involvements are fundamental to the organization. This is because they are the driving force for achieving planned development and achieving organizational goals and objectives. Thus, Wikipedia assert that employee retention refers to the ability of an organization to retain its employees. Workforce retention can be represented by a simple statistic. However, many consider workforce retention as relating to the efforts by which employers attempt to retain the employees in their workforce. A comprehensive workforce retention program can play a vital role in both attracting and retaining key employees, as well as in reducing turnover and its related costs. All of these contribute to an organization's productivity and overall business performance. It is more efficient to retain a quality employee than to recruit, train and orient a replacement employee of the same quality.

Thus, workforce retention is defined by Rappaport (2013) as the organizational goal of keeping talented employees and reducing turnover by fostering a positive work atmosphere to promote engagement, showing appreciation to employees, and providing competitive pay and benefits and healthy work-life balance.

### Competitive Salary/Defined Career Path

Zahra *et al.* (2015) defined salary as a fixed amount of money paid to a worker usually measured at monthly and annual basis, not hourly, as opposed to wages, salary is a fixed amount of money or compensation paid to an employee by an employer in return of work done. A salary is contrasted with piece wages, where each job, hour or other unit is paid separately, rather than on a periodic basis. From the point of a view of running a business, salary can also be viewed as the cost of acquiring and retaining human resources for running operations, and is then termed personnel expense or salary expense. In accounting, salaries are recorded in payroll accounts.

On the other hand, career can be defined as a pattern of work experiences comprising the entire life span of a person and which is generally seen with regard to a number of phases or stages reflecting the transition from one stage of life to the next (Wang & Ahmed, 2014). Similarly, Collings and Mellahi (2019) explains that the term career arises from the interaction of individuals with organizations and society. This interaction, as Savickas (2019) proposes, is no longer merely just a sequence of jobs but is now a story that working people build about themselves. Therefore, career path is the process through which a supervisor(s) or talent development professional works with an employee to layout their potential trajectory' through the organization.

Operationally, competitive salary/defined career path is a form of periodic payment from an employer to an employee, which may be specified in an employment contract that could equal the level of work done by an employee as well as making them have clear picture of their profession. Salaries given to employees can be well understood as a way of motivating them. This can well be explained in the role of money as a condition reinforce, an incentive which is capable of satisfying needs, an anxiety reducer that serves to erase feelings of dissatisfaction (Opsahl & Denette, 2018). Salary is a huge motivator for many employees. Making the connection between money and performance motivates employees to be more productive and to go the extra mile (Zingheim & Schuster, 2017). Salary is what is paid to people that are permanently employed and this is at a fixed weekly, monthly, or annual rate of pay. It is an agreed payment given at regular intervals in exchange for work done. Caring about employees on a personal level is important as well.

### Theoretical Review

The study was anchored on Equity Theory. The Equity Theory was propounded by Adam Smith 1963 with the following assumptions:

1. Equity theory focused on explaining how human beings strive to ensure fairness and justice in collective or give-and-take relationship.
2. Employee evaluates his or her work (inputs) against what he or she gets (outputs) and compares with a different worker's ratio of inputs and outputs. As such, various problems result when the employee makes comparison and perceives some form of unfairness (inequity).

The justification of this theory to this study is noted from the fact that an organization's employees who might sense inequity in the way their grievance procedure or other outputs might alter their attitude towards the organization they work for. This theory is related to this study because, 'offering equal opportunity, equity and fairness (objectivity) to all employees of telecommunication 'Firms will help in curbing, grievance and conflict among workers as well as Attaining organizational peace success.

### Empirical Review

Bushiri (2014) examined the impact of working environment on employees' performance: the cage of institute of finance management in Dar Es Salaam Region. The study aimed to assess the impact of working environment on employees' performance at Institute of Finance Management in Dares Salaam Region. For the purpose of this study, descriptive research design was used. Simple random- sampling technique was respectively used to select the respondents for the study. Respondents for this study were fifty (50) made up of twenty-five (25) senior staff and twenty-five



(25) junior staff. Structured questionnaires were used for data collection. The Study findings indicate that, organization working environment had an impact on memos as far as respondents are concerned. The study also revealed that employees will improve their performance if the problems identified during the research are tackled by the management. The problems are flexibility of working environment, work noise distraction, supervisor's interpersonal relationship with subordinates, presence of job aid, the use of performance feedback and improve of work incentives in the organization so that to motivate employees to perform their job. In conclusion based on the findings the study recommended' that, the organization needs to have periodic meetings with employees to air their grievances to management and serve as a motivating factor to the employees. Management should find ways and means of communicating their goals and strategies to their employees-in order to achieve what the organization is in business for, its mission and vision.

Katarina (2018) studied objective and subjective work characteristics and their relation to the successful development of adults in a society after a macrosocial transition. The aim of this study was to explore how the objective and subjective characteristics of the work domain relate to generativity and stagnation as indicators of successful psychosocial development. It focused on an age cohort whose 'work trajectory started during the important macrosocial changes that Czech society underwent in the 1980s and 1990s. One hundred and fifty (150) people of which 187 were women, participated in two ongoing longitudinal studies which commenced in 1956 (Prague) and 1961 (Brno). Work characteristics (job satisfaction, occupational status, and career stability) were surveyed in 2011 (mean age 50.24, SD = 2.96) while generativity (generative concern, generative action) and' stagnation were measured in 2016 (mean age 54.82, SD = 2.88). Participants' job satisfaction and: the occupational status of their current work, functions proved to be the best predictors of generative concern and stagnation. It was found that long-term career stability did not prove to be a significant predictor of generativity or stagnation. Our findings are discussed in the context of the macrosocial changes that have occurred in Czech society as well as the context of successful development.

Boma-Siaminab'o (2020) examined tacit knowledge strategies and organizational competitiveness in paint manufacturing firms Port Harcourt. The objective of the study was to examine the extent to which dimensions of tacit 'knowledge strategies such as strategic deputization, externalization and information sharing culture affects measures of organizational competitiveness such as product innovation, satisfactory service delivery and outstanding brand image. The study also sought to determine the moderating role- of organizational culture in the relationship between tacit knowledge strategies and Organizational competitiveness. The study adopted .the explanatory survey research design, a sample size of five(5) top managers in each of the selected paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt<sup>1</sup> with 95 top managers as respondents. After validation by the supervisor, 95 copies of structured questionnaire were administered while 76 copies were: retrieved. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained using test-retest. Mean and standard deviation were used for the univariate analysis while Spearman Rank: Order Correlation through SPSS was used for the bivariate analysis. The results showed that dimensions of tacit knowledge strategies such as strategic deputization, externalization and information sharing culture significantly and positively affects measures of organizational competitiveness such as product innovation, satisfactory service delivery and outstanding brand image. The study concluded that tacit knowledge strategies brings about managers<sup>5</sup> organizational competitiveness. Consequently, the study recommended among other things .Organizations should endeavour to select or appoint qualified individuals to deputized in their various units or place of assignment.

Ogaram (2021) examined the, relationship; between job and organizational competitiveness of hotels in Port Harcourt. Objective of the study was to examine how dimensions of job security such as employee job competence, task significance, and employee relations influence measures of organizational competitiveness such as market share, net profit, and brand reputation. The targeted population of the study consisted of 55 managers from 11-,.hotels in Port Harcourt. The

Krejcie and Morgan Sample Size Determination .Table of .1 §70 was used to obtain a sample size of 4.8 respondents.

Structured questionnaire was used to obtain primary data after due validation, and test- retest method was adopted in ascertaining the reliability of the instrument at  $\alpha > 0.74$ . The researcher was able to retrieve. 38 copies of the distributed questionnaire. Mean and: standard deviation and tables were used to analyze the research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used for the test of hypothesis. The study revealed that employee job competence has significant positive effect on organizational competitiveness of hotels in terms of market share. It also found that task significance facilitates organizational competitiveness of hotels in terms of net profit. It was also found that employee relation<sup>^</sup> positively influence brand reputation of hotels. The study concluded that job competence, task significance, and employee relations enhance the organizational competitiveness of hotels. Amongst other things the study recommended that employees in hotels and the entire hospitality industry in Rivers State should devise means to enhance their job competence in order to aid their chances of job security and as well boost the organizations' competitiveness in terms of market share.

Amos, *et al.* (2016) examined effect of knowledge management on firm competitiveness: testing the mediating role of innovation in the small and medium enterprises in Kenya. The objective of the study was to evaluate the role of innovation on the competitiveness of small and medium enterprises. The study examined knowledge management, innovativeness and firm competitiveness. The study is conducted on the results based on 252 small and medium manufacturing enterprise managers in Nairobi, Kenya. The data obtained from the questionnaires were analyzed using the SPSS statistical packaged software. The study results showed that knowledge management processes influence innovativeness positively, innovativeness enhances firm competitiveness' while innovativeness is a mediator between knowledge management and firm competitiveness. The study recommended that knowledge management and innovation should be integrated to enhance firm competitiveness. The viewpoint proposed is that knowledge management is an important element for small and medium enterprises in today's dynamic and competitive environment.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

The cross sectional explanatory survey research design was adopted for the study. This research design is deemed suitable and most appropriate for . the study because of two reasons: (i) the study was conducted across different telecommunication firms in Rivers State at the same time which makes it a survey study; (ii) it also involves the test of hypotheses which is explanatory in nature.

### Research Population

The population of the study consists of one hundred (100) registered telecommunication firms in Rivers State. Due to accessibility and manageability, only ten (10) telecommunication firms operating in Port Harcourt were used. This information was obtained from. Rivers State Yellow Page. Detail of the population is stated in table below:

**Table 1: Study Sample**

s/N	Telecommunication Firms and Address
N	
1.	A &B Telecommunication; 37 Aba Road, Port Harcourt
2.	Callus Miller Communications Ltd; 14 Aba Aba Road Port Harcourt
	Mega Byte International Limited; 39 Emekuku Street, D/Line Port

- Harcourt
4. MTN Communications Limited; 330 Aba Road, Port Harcourt
  5. Nigerian Telecommunications (NITEL); 18 Garrison, Aba Road Port Harcourt
  6. Assotel Mobile; 90 Aba Road Port Harcourt
  7. Digital Satellite Systems Limited; 64 Trans Amadi Layout Port Harcourt
  8. Cyberlink Communication Limited; 15 Ohaeto Street D/Line Port Harcourt
  9. Space Telecom s Nigeria; 121 Aba Road Port Harcourt
  10. Globacom; 163 Aba Road Port Harcourt

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Source: Rivers State Yellow Page, 2024.

### **Instrumentation and Measurement**

Structured questionnaire was used as the main instrument for the collection of primary data: The instrument was entitled "Workplace Objectivity and Competitiveness Index (WOCI). The instrument was designed in a four (4) point rating scale format with the following response options: Very Great Extent (VHE) 4, Great Extent (GE) 3, Moderate Extent (ME) 2, Low Extent (LE)

### **Validity of Instrument**

To establish the validity of the instrument, copies of the questionnaire were submitted to the experts in Management for face and content validity. Necessary corrections and adjustments were made on the final copy of the questionnaire used based on the comments by the experts in test and measurement.

### **Reliability of Instrument**

The term reliability of instrument refers to the capacity of an instrument to measure the variables it was designed to measure consistently. Reliability of instrument refers to consistency of the measuring instrument. Test-retest method is used. The response obtained from the respondents on the two occasions was correlated using PPMC (Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient) which yielded a coefficient of 0.79.

### **Administration of Instrument**

A total of forty (40) copies of questionnaire was distributed to the targeted respondents and the researcher was able to retrieve thirty eight (38) and two was not retrieved due to the respondent's unwillingness in completing them when needed.

### **Method of Data Analysis**

Arithmetic mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the research questions while the test of hypotheses was done using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient.

The formula is presented below:

$$r = \frac{n\sum xy - \sum x \sum y}{\sqrt{[n\sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2][n\sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2]}}$$

Where:

N= total number

X = number of data in group A

Y= number of data in group B

$\Sigma$  = Summation

$\sqrt{\quad}$  = Square root

Decision Rule: The null hypothesis was rejected if the calculated correlation value is greater than the critical value; if otherwise, the null hypothesis was accepted

### Test of Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between use of hard facts/evidence and new policies development of telecommunication firms in Rivers State.

**Table 1: Relationship between Use of Hard Facts/Evidence and New Policies**

S/N	X	Y	XY	X <sup>2</sup>	Y <sup>2</sup>
1	9	8	72	81	64
2	6	4	24	36	16
3	5	4	20	25	16
4	1	1	1	1	1
5	10	8	80	100	64
6	7	5	35	49	25
7	3	3	9	9	9
8	1	1	1	1	1
9	8	7	56	64	49
10	6	6	36	36	36
11	4	3	12	16	9
12	2	2	4	4	4
13	8	9	72	64	81
14	5	6	30	25	36
15	4	3	12	16	9
16	2	1	2	4	1
	$\Sigma X = 81$	$\Sigma Y = 71$	$\Sigma XY = 466$	$\Sigma X^2 = 531$	$\Sigma Y^2 = 421$

Source: Survey 2024.

$$r = \frac{n \Sigma xy - \Sigma x \Sigma y}{\sqrt{[n \Sigma X^2 - (\Sigma X)^2] [n \Sigma Y^2 - (\Sigma Y)^2]}} = \frac{16 \times 466 - 81 \times 71}{\sqrt{(16 \times 531 - 81^2)(16 \times 421 - 71^2)}}$$

$$r = \frac{7456 - 5751}{\sqrt{(849 - 6561)(6736 - 5041)}} = \frac{1705}{\sqrt{(182751)(1695)}}$$

$$= \frac{1705}{\sqrt{3279825}} = \frac{1705}{\sqrt{1811.0287}} = 0.9415$$

$$\therefore r = 0.941 \text{ (approx)}$$

Table 1 shows that a calculated r value is 0.941, Since the calculated r value 0.941 is greater than the critical r value 0.05, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between use of hard facts/evidence and new policies development of telecommunication firms in Rivers State was rejected while the alternate was accepted. This implies that there is a significant positive relationship between use of hard facts/evidence and new policies development of telecommunication firms in Rivers State.

H02: There is no significant relationship between clear/irrefutable information and workforce retention of telecommunication firms in Rivers State.

**Table 2: Relationship between Clear/Irrefutable Information and Workforce Retention**

S/N	X	Y	XY	X <sup>2</sup>	Y <sup>2</sup>
1	11	8	88	121	64
2.	5	4	20	25	16
3	4	3	12	16	9
4	1	2	2	1	4
5	9	11	99	81	121
6	5	4	20	25	16
7.	3	4	12	9	16
8	1	1	1	1	1
9	9	10	90	81	100
10	5	6	30	25	36
11	2	0	6	4	9
12	2	1	2	4	1
13	10	8	80	100	64
14	7	5	35	49	25
15	2	4	8	4	16
16	1	1	1	1	1
$\Sigma X = 77$		$\Sigma Y = 75$	$\Sigma XY = 506$	$\Sigma X^2 = 547$	$\Sigma Y^2 = 499$

Source: Survey 2024.

$$\gamma = \frac{n \Sigma xy - \Sigma x \Sigma y}{\sqrt{[n \Sigma X^2 - (\Sigma X)^2] [n \Sigma Y^2 - (\Sigma Y)^2]}} = \frac{16 \times 506 - 77 \times 75}{\sqrt{(16 \times 547 - 77^2)(16 \times 499 - 75^2)}}$$

$$\gamma = \frac{8096 - 5775}{\sqrt{(8752 - 5929)(7984 - 5625)}} = \frac{2321}{\sqrt{(2823)(2359)}}$$

$$= \frac{2321}{\sqrt{6659457}} = \frac{2321}{\sqrt{2580.5924}} = 0.8994$$

$$\therefore \gamma = 0.899 \text{ (approx)}$$

Table 2 shows that the calculated r value is 0.899. Since the calculated r value 0.899 is greater than the critical r value 0.05, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between clear/irrefutable information and workforce retention of telecommunication firms in Rivers State was rejected and the alternate was accepted. This implies that there is a significant positive relationship between clear/irrefutable information and workforce retention of telecommunication firms in Rivers State.

H03: There is no significant relationship between performance evaluation and competitive salary/defined career path of telecommunication firms in Rivers State.

**Table 3: Relationship between Performance Evaluation and Competitive salary/defined career path**

S/N	X	Y	XY	X <sup>2</sup>	Y <sup>2</sup>
1	10	9	90	100	81
2	5	6	30	25	36
3	2	3	6	4	9
4.	1	2	2	1	4
5	7	12	84	49	144
6	4	6	24	16	36
7	2	4	8	4	16
8	1	2	2	1	4
9	8	12	96	64	144
10	4	5	20	16	25
11	3	4	12	9	16
12	1	1	1	1	1
13	7	10	70	49	100
14	6	5	30	36	25
15	0	4	12	9	16
15	2	1	2	4	1
<b>ΣX=66</b>		<b>ΣY= 86</b>	<b>ΣXY=489</b>	<b>ΣX<sup>2</sup>=388</b>	<b>ΣY<sup>2</sup>= 658</b>

Source: Survey 2024.

$$\gamma = \frac{n\sum xy - \sum x \sum y}{\sqrt{[n\sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2][n\sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2]}} = \frac{16 \times 489 - 66 \times 86}{\sqrt{((16 \times 388 - 66^2)(16 \times 658 - 86^2))}}$$

$$\gamma = \frac{7824 - 5676}{\sqrt{(6208 - 4356)(10528 - 7396)}} = \frac{2148}{\sqrt{(1852)(3132)}}$$

$$= \frac{2148}{\sqrt{5800464}} = \frac{2148}{2408.4152} = 0.8919$$

$$\therefore \gamma = 0.892 \text{ (approx)}$$

Table 3 shows that the calculated r value is 0.892. Since the calculated r value 0.892 is greater than the critical r value 0.05, the null hypothesis which states that there is 'no significant relationship between performance evaluation and competitive salary/defined career path of telecommunication firms in Rivers State' was rejected and the alternate accepted. This implies that there is a significant positive relationship between performance evaluation and competitive salary/defined career path of telecommunication firms in Rivers State.

### Summary of Findings

The findings from the analysis revealed the following:

1. There is a significant positive relationship between use of hard facts/evidence and new policies development of telecommunication firms in Rivers State.
2. There is a significant positive relationship between clear/irrefutable information and workforce retention of telecommunication firms in Rivers State.

3. There is a significant positive relationship between performance evaluation and competitive salary/defined career path of telecommunication firms in Rivers State.

### **CONCLUSION**

Base on the findings, the study concludes that there is a significant positive relationship between dimensions of workplace objectivity (use of hard facts/evidence, clear/irrefutable, information and performance evaluation) and competitiveness (new policies development, workforce retention and competitive salary/defined career path). Telecommunication forms who fail to be fair in cause of making decisions in employees' work-related issue, might really face great challenge in attaining organizational competitiveness.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Management of telecommunication firms should ensure that fact and evidence presented to them are reliable before usage so as to enable them develop new policies that could aid their organization compete favourably.
2. Employees of telecommunication firms should ensure they provide adequate work information at all time to enable their organization create strategies of retaining workforce.
3. Management of telecommunication firms should properly access employees for proper career path direction.

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