

## **COMPETITIVE WAGES AND INFORMATION MANAGERS' PERFORMANCE IN CONSTRUCTION FIRMS IN RIVERS STATE**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The study determine the relationship between wages and information managers' performance in construction firms in Rivers State. Ten research objectives, ten research questions and ten hypotheses guided the study. This study is built on two theories: Social Exchange Theory and Force-Field Theory of Change. The cross-sectional explanatory survey research design was used in this study. The population of this study consisted of one hundred and fifty-five (155) information managers from thirty-seven (37) active construction firms in Rivers State. The entire population of one hundred and fifty-five (155) information managers from thirty-seven (37) active construction firms in Rivers State were used as the study sample. Hence, the study is census research method. A structured questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection after ascertaining its reliability through the employment of Cronbach Alpha. A total of 155 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the target respondents through the help of two research assistants. Effort was made and 147 copies were successfully retrieved. mean and standard deviation were used for the univariate analysis while the bivariate analysis was done using Spearman rank order correlation in SPSS Version 22.0. Multivariate analysis was done using Partial Correlation. Findings revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between compensation techniques and information managers' performance in construction firms in Rivers State. The study concluded that it takes competitive wages to enhance the ability of information managers to circulate information effectively, relate interpersonally, and as well as manage records effectively. The study recommended amongst others that construction firms in Rivers State should establish a competitive wage structure that recognizes and rewards information managers' contributions, thereby encouraging them and other employees to step up their performances every now and then.

***Keywords: Competitive Wages, information Managers Performance, Effective Communication***

### **Introduction**

In construction firms, there are both operational and administrative jobs. This points to the fact that information managers are part of the key players in construction firms, as they handle administrative operations. Information managers refer to workers who are primarily saddled with the responsibility of managing all data and information contents in administrative unit in an organization. Traditionally, information managers are known as secretaries (Odu, 2019). In reality, all managers are information managers, as they manage information at some level or the other. In many organizations today, employees who provide secretarial services are known or referred to as information managers. As used in this study, information managers' performance is defined as how well administrative assistants carry out their duties to enhance operational and administrative activities. In most administrative offices, the job performance of an information manager is measured using parameters such as effective information circulation, interpersonal relation, and records management.

Obviously, many things will go wrong if information is not effectively circulated in an organization, especially a construction firm. Information managers are not just information circulators or disseminators, but administrative staff who, among other things, circulate information effectively. Information circulation is then said to be effective when it is circulated to recipients at the right

time, within the time schedule for such information to be enhanced (Okonu, 2017). A good information manager always sends letters, circulars, notices and mails either online or offline using the right format and channel to effect timely circulation to its users or recipients. Thus, the ability of the information manager to circulate information, procedures and developments to designated persons is an indicator of their job performance. Operationally, effective information circulation is the effective process of making accurate and reliable data and information resources securely available to designated or authorized persons, units, partners, and other consumers in the required format and time.

### **Research Hypotheses**

In the course of the study, the following hypotheses stated in the null form were tested:

- Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between wages and effective information circulation in construction firms in Rivers State.
- Ho<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant relationship between wages and interpersonal relation in construction firms in Rivers State.
- Ho<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant relationship between wages and record management in construction firms in Rivers State.

### **Wages**

Wages refer to the financial compensation paid to employees for their labor and services (Bregger & Hildreth, 2019). These payments can be based on an hourly rate, a daily rate, or a piece rate, depending on the employment agreement and the nature of the work. Wages are fundamental to the employment relationship, serving as the primary source of income for workers. They play a crucial role in determining the standard of living, economic stability, and overall well-being of employees. A fair and adequate wage is essential for motivating employees and ensuring their loyalty and productivity (OECD, 2018).

For employees, wages represent not only a means of subsistence but also a measure of their value within an organization. Adequate wages can improve job satisfaction, reduce turnover rates, and enhance overall morale. When employees feel they are compensated fairly, they are more likely to be engaged and committed to their work. Conversely, inadequate wages can lead to dissatisfaction, decreased motivation, and increased absenteeism, ultimately impacting the organization's performance and productivity (Bregger & Hildreth, 2019). Therefore, employers must carefully consider wage policies to attract and retain skilled workers and maintain a competitive edge.

Wages also have broader implications for the economy and society. They affect consumer spending, savings, and investment patterns, influencing overall economic growth. Inadequate wages can contribute to income inequality and social unrest, while fair wages promote economic stability and social cohesion. Policymakers and employers must balance the need for competitive wage structures with the imperative to provide living wages that meet the basic needs of employees and their families (ILO, 2020). By ensuring fair wages, organizations contribute to a sustainable and inclusive economy that benefits both workers and employers.

Implicit contract model briefly demonstrated that the wages of workers in a company is determined by the contract between the employer and the union. This means that in the presence of strong unions, wage rates cannot be easily changed as in a perfectly competitive market. Resulting in wages rigidity and especially wages will be extremely difficult to decrease if there is a recession. According to this theory the company tend to set wages higher than perfectly competitive market equilibrium wages.

Insider-outsider models considers that the markets for goods and labor markets are imperfect. If the labor market there is a union and a relatively limited number of enterprises, the wage rate is determined from the collective contract agreements between unions and employers. Union members called insider and who are not in a union called the outsider. wages determination with the contract likely to be higher than was the case in a perfectly competitive market.

Wage flexibility is the main topic of the economy, are mostly found in the literature related to the provision of incentives provided by the company. A number of theoretical models have developed an explanation of how the company should design compensation schemes to encourage employees to work for the benefit of the company. The conclusion is put some effort into their work to maximize corporate profits (Prendergast, 1999).

Wages become an important aspect of being effective if linked to the performance significantly (Umar, 2012). Granting wages remuneration is the most complex task for the industry, is also the most significant aspects for workers, because of the amount of wages reflects the size of the value of their work among the workers themselves, their families and communities. Wages are very important for the industry because it reflects the industry's efforts to defend human resources in order to have a high loyalty and commitment to the industry. Effective wages strategy is expected to contribute to maintaining the viability of the work force, the realization of the vision and mission, as well as for the achievement of work objectives (Umar, 2012). In addition, wages in this study is indicated using minimum wages and occupational wages.

### **Information Managers' Performance**

Information Managers (also known as Secretaries, Administrative Officers and Office Administrators) plan and coordinate administrative support activities and ensure that every task is performed efficiently in an office system (Clement, 2017). They often manage the administrative support operations in a large firm and an entire office in a small company. They make decisions on the types of support duties required in their department or company as well as the list of necessary qualifications to perform specific jobs. Administrators also deal with promotions, determine salaries and working conditions and assist in hiring administrative support staff. They devise rigorous training programs to hone the skills of new employees. When duties are duplicated in the office, they redefine jobs to attain maximum productivity. Information managers also known as secretaries undertake a range of functions to make sure the administration activities within an organization run smoothly (Igwe, 2012). They may be responsible for the management of human resources, budgets, accommodation and property facilities and records. These functions can be performed at various levels ranging from junior through to upper management.

Information managers' performance also refers to the ability of a manager to plan, organize and coordinate many and often-conflicting social energies in a single organization so adroitly (Adams in Besong, 2015). It implies that, it is the right and duties attached to an individual irrespective of the gender of the incumbent. Performing information managers also have laudable computer skills, especially with basic Microsoft Office programs such as Word, Excel and PowerPoint, and they type with high speed and accuracy.

As used in this study, information managers' performance is defined as how well administrative assistants carry out their duties to enhance operational and administrative activities. In economic development and global competition, many organizations such as construction firms can still survive until today. Most of these organizations are believed to survive due to employee performance including the performance of the information manager. However, the important issue is how to improve information manager job performance which is related to survival and development of business and it can be sustained. Thus, performance should be considered in order to provide benefits to the company. This is because the benefits depend on individual employee performance (Yao, 2009). To understand more about the overall performance, the section below elaborates more on definition of job performance especially as it regards information managers, the purpose of performance appraisal, the performances appraisal methods and the last is the measurement for employee performance. In addition, this study has effective information circulation, interpersonal relationship, and records management as the measures of information managers' performance.

### **Wages and Information Managers' Performance**

Wages, encompassing both minimum wages and occupational wages, play a critical role in determining the performance of information managers in construction firms in Rivers State. This is in line with Robinson and Schroeder (2021) assertion that adequate compensation ensures that information managers are motivated to perform their duties effectively, which includes managing effective information circulation, fostering strong interpersonal relations, and maintaining robust records management. The assurance of a stable and fair income allows these professionals to focus on their tasks without the distraction of financial insecurity, thereby enhancing overall job performance and satisfaction.

Minimum wages set a baseline for the lowest remuneration that employees can receive, ensuring a standard of living that can meet basic needs. For information managers in construction firms, this baseline is crucial as it impacts their daily functioning and morale. When the minimum wage is sufficient, it alleviates financial stress and allows managers to devote their full attention to managing information systems, improving circulation efficiency, and maintaining accurate records (Miller & Whiting, 2019). Studies have shown that employees who receive fair wages are more likely to engage positively with their work and demonstrate higher levels of productivity and commitment. Occupational wages, which reflect the pay scales based on specific job roles and expertise, further influence the performance of information managers by recognizing their skills and responsibilities. In construction firms, where the complexity of information management can be high, appropriately set occupational wages are vital. These wages ensure that information managers are compensated in alignment with the demands and expectations of their roles. In the same line, Smith and Larson (2020) opined that when wages are perceived as fair and commensurate with job responsibilities, managers are more likely to exhibit strong interpersonal relations, fostering better teamwork and collaboration within the firm.

Effective information circulation is one of the key performance metrics for information managers, directly impacted by wage levels. Adequate wages provide the motivation and resources needed for managers to invest in and improve information systems (Williams *et al.*, 2021). This can include implementing new technologies, optimizing workflows, and ensuring timely and accurate dissemination of information. Furthermore, well-compensated managers are better positioned to engage in continuous professional development, staying abreast of the latest trends and best practices in information management, which in turn enhances their performance.

Lastly, robust records management, another critical aspect of an information manager's role, is significantly influenced by wage satisfaction. Properly managed records are essential for regulatory compliance, efficient operations, and strategic decision-making in construction firms (Johnson & Lee, 2022). Information managers who feel adequately compensated are more likely to be diligent in their record-keeping duties, ensuring accuracy, security, and accessibility of information. This level of meticulousness and dedication is crucial for the overall effectiveness and efficiency of construction firms, underpinning their operational success and competitiveness.

### **Social Exchange Theory**

Social exchange theory was propounded by George Casper Homans in the year 1958 (Olannye, 2014). Social exchange theory postulates that "give and take" forms the basis of almost all relationships though their proportions might vary as per the intensity of the relationships.

Pfeffer (1982) cited in Ahiazu and Asuquo (2016) posits that social exchange theory is a behavioural compliance on the part of the individual in exchange for something which is perceived to be contingent on the individual's behaviour. Thus, the social exchange theory is about giving something of more value to others than what has been given to you and also receiving something of higher value than you have given out (Ahiazu & Asuquo, 2016). Some relevant assumptions of the theory are as follows:

- i. In a relationship, every individual has expectations from his/her partners. A relationship without expectations is meaningless;
- ii. Good relationships are mutually beneficial and not supposed to be one sided. An individual invests his time and energy in relationship only when he gets something out of corresponding or higher value from it (Olannye, 2014).

Accordingly, social exchange theory holds that feelings and emotions ought to be reciprocated for a successful and long-lasting relationship. Good relationships should be mutually beneficial and not supposed to be one sided.

This theory is adopted as the theoretical foundation of this work and the justification is predicated on the relevance of the theory on the predictor and the criterion variables. Obviously, the theory explains that both the construction firms and their information managers have their own unique expectations in their contractual relationship and that the extent to which these expectations are met will influence or determine the quality of relationship and job performance. Construction firms expect their employees to depict high level of performance and commitment towards the achievement of organizational goals by making meaningful inputs, especially in terms of effective information circulation, interpersonal relation, and records management. On the other end, their employees expect them (construction firms) to adopt mouth-watering wages, salary, and incentives, etc. This is just in line with the position of the theory that the extent to which construction firms are able to provide mouth-watering compensations will influence their information managers' performance, especially in terms of effective information circulation, interpersonal relation, and records management.

### **Research Design**

The cross-sectional explanatory survey research design was used in this study.

### **Research Population**

The population of this study consisted of one hundred and fifty-five (155) information managers from thirty-seven (37) active construction firms in Rivers State.

### **Sample Size/Sampling Techniques**

The entire population of one hundred and fifty-five (155) information managers from thirty-seven (37) active construction firms in Rivers State were used as the study sample.

### **Instrumentation and Measurement**

The study made use of structured questionnaire as the instrument for data collection. The structured questionnaire was developed by the researcher.

### **Method of Data Analysis**

For data analysis, mean and standard deviation were used for the univariate analysis while the bivariate analysis was done using Spearman rank order correlation in SPSS Version 22.0. Multivariate analysis was done using Partial Correlation. Thus, Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient was computed with the formula below:

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

## **Results**

### **Bivariate Analysis**

#### **Wages and Information Managers' Performance**

Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between wages and effective information circulation in construction firms in Rivers State.

- Ho<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant relationship between wages and interpersonal relation in construction firms in Rivers State.  
Ho<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant relationship between wages and record management in construction firms in Rivers State.

**Table 1: Correlations between Wages and Information Managers' Performance**

		Wages	Effective Information Circulation	Interpersonal Relation	Records Management	
Spearman's rho	Wages	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	0.561**	0.718**	0.775**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
		N	147	147	147	147
	Effective Information Circulation	Correlation Coefficient	0.561**	1.000	0.615**	0.846**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000
		N	147	147	147	147
	Interpersonal Relation	Correlation Coefficient	0.718**	0.615**	1.000	0.507**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000
		N	147	147	147	147
	Records Management	Correlation Coefficient	0.774**	0.846**	0.507**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.
		N	147	147	147	147

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

**Source: SPSS Output, 2024**

Column two of table 1 above shows r value of 0.561 at a significance level of 0.00 which is less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05 for the hypothesis relating wages and effective information circulation. Since the significance value is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis (H<sub>01</sub>) which states that there is no significant relationship between wages and effective information circulation in construction firms in Rivers State, was rejected. This implies that there is a relatively strong positive relationship between wages and effective information circulation in construction firms in Rivers State.

Column three of table 1 above shows r value of 0.718 at a significance level of 0.00 which is less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05 for the hypothesis relating wages and interpersonal relation. Since the significance value is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis (H<sub>02</sub>) which states that there is no significant relationship between wages and interpersonal relation in construction firms in Rivers State, was rejected. This implies that there is a strong positive relationship between wages and interpersonal relation in construction firms in Rivers State.

Column four of table 1 above shows r value of 0.775 at a significance level of 0.00 which is less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05 for the hypothesis relating wages and record management. Since the significance value is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis (H<sub>03</sub>) which states that there is no significant relationship between wages and record management in construction firms in Rivers State, was rejected. This implies that there is a strong positive relationship between wages and record management in construction firms in Rivers State.

**Conclusion**

Through the empirical analyses engaged in the chapter four of this study, it has been revealed that wages have a strong relationship with the performance of information managers, especially in construction firms. This implies that it takes a competitive wages to enhance the ability of

information managers to circulate information effectively, relate interpersonally, and as well as manage records effectively.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the conclusion of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Construction firms in Rivers State should establish a competitive wage structure that recognizes and rewards information managers' contributions, thereby encouraging them and other employees to step up their performances every now and then.
2. Construction firms in Rivers State should invest in training and development programmes for information managers, focusing on skills enhancement in effective information circulation, interpersonal relations, and records management, as this will enable information managers to optimize their performance and contribute to organizational success.

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