

## **DIGITAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCY AND ORGANIZATIONAL SUCCESS OF TELECOMMUNICATION FIRMS IN RIVERS STATE**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The study examined digital communication competency and organizational success of telecommunication in Rivers State. Two (2) objectives and two (2) hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The cross-sectional explanatory survey research design was adopted. The target population of this study was fifty telecommunication firms in Rivers State. The sample size comprised of the entire fifty telecommunication firms while the respondents consist of five middle level managers in each of the firms making it two hundred and fifty (250) while two hundred and eight (208) questionnaire was retrieved. The study adopted socio-technical system theory. Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient was used for bivariate analyses (testing the hypotheses one and two). The findings revealed that there is a significant positive influence of digital communication competency on organizational success of telecommunication in Rivers State. The study concluded that digital competency of the employees determines the productivity level of the organization which in turn triggers the organizational success. Understanding the competency requirement of the digital technology, having the available skill and demonstrating the ability to match the demand of the customers will enhance success of telecommunication firms in Rivers State. However, digital competency relates to organizational success of the telecommunication firms in a competitive business environment. Thus, the study recommends among other things that a systematic competency assessment should be conducted in other to know the right digital competency gap.*

**Key Words: Digital Communication Competency, Organizational Success, Market Share, Expansion and Growth**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The cravings of organizations in the world is to be successful and remain relevant in their competitive business environment. A business staying alive depends on its present performance and adaptation to the future (Beinhocker, 2006). Consequently, doing both requires company's demonstration of agility, ability, quality, and simplicity. In an increasingly multifaceted business environment, successful adaptation to rapidly changing market conditions is essential to survival (Pérez-Luño&Cambra, 2013). Success like dreams can remain in the business thought, if certain moves are not made by key players for its actualization. Success is difficult to measure as there is no universal bench mark for its interpretations; that is why unravelling the puzzle of organizational success is almost impossible. Though to be successful have many interpretations and may be difficult to define as various reasons account for this. Thus, questions such as why, are some organizations continue to excel in their business activities over a long time, whereas others with same promising starts experience difficulties and later fail. Of a fact, organizational success lies somewhat on its financial and human resources strength. Still success and failure are both critical to process owners whether at the management or operational level. More so, this accelerating advancement in digital and information communication technology sweeping the globe today has transformed or modify both the socio-political and economical interaction structure. However, organizational success is determined by measuring the expected or proposed level by the actual level using the set objectives as the yardstick (Cheong et al., 2011). In this sense, the success of organizations will depend on the availability of the right competencies with the available technology to produce the desired services (MagidIgbaria et al., 2003). One may be pondering how the performance of competencies in an organization is important to organizational

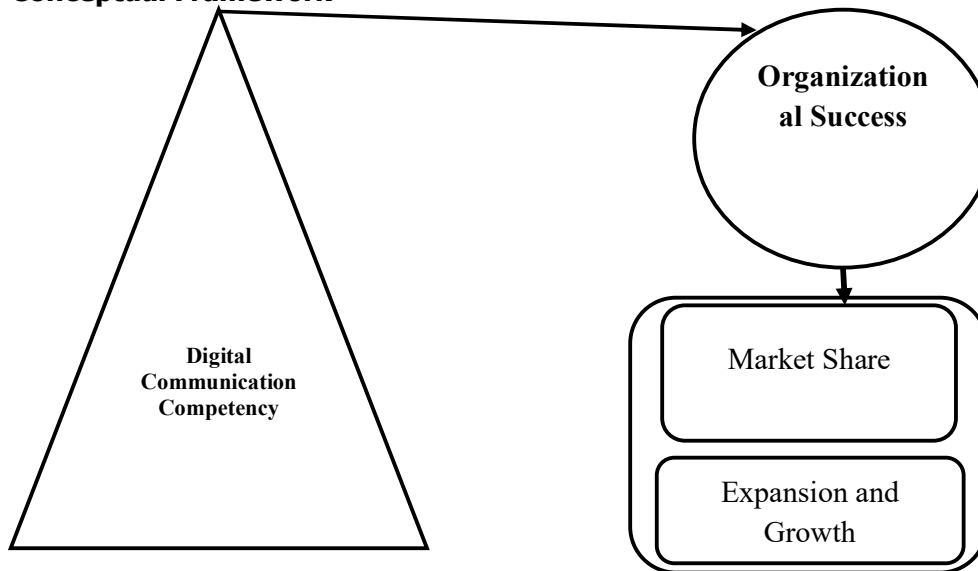
success, competitive advantage, and overall growth (Nzume, 2016). Correspondingly, telecommunication firms are not exempted from the craving to succeed as their main goal are to maximize profit and supplying the ubiquitous demands of digital services to the end users or customers. As pinioned by Gretzel (2015), telecommunication is a spin-off of communication as it is the art of transferring ideas from one source to another whether manually or electronically. It is agreeable that telecommunication has meaningfully influenced the social, cultural and economic aspect of our society before and presently. With the advancing digital technology innovation telecommunication applications are now countless such as, streaming, clouding, networking, data transmission, SMS, digital television, etc a host of Web based communication etc. In spite of the already competitive nature of the Telecommunication industry; the covid-19 pandemic outburst of 2019 drastically changed the interactions of humans round the globe both socio-politically and economically and these change also transformed the way business activities are done presently. This new business transformation thrust many organizations to demand for more of telecommunication services as never before in other to satisfy the demands of their customers. Conversely, with this new service demand telecommunication firms in Nigeria especially Rivers State need to understand the new business demand and have required digital competency to able to function effectively and remain relevant in the competitive business environment. However, the gradual transition to the information age was driven by advancements in various technologies, especially information communication technology (ICT) (Meroño-Cerdan & López-Nicolas, 2013).

### **Statement of the problem**

One constant thing in this life is change, and one of the predominant changes in this 21<sup>st</sup> century is digital technology. Digital technology have not only transformed or better still modified the way humans interact in the world today both socio-politically and economically but also machines. Recently, the covid-19 pandemic of 2019 which took the whole by surprise drastically changed the way business activities were carried out round the globe and forcing many business and social activities to be done online with the help of internet. This new business development thrust lots of organizations both multi-nationals and small medium scales (SMEs) to demand for telecommunication services (Pérez-Luño & Cambra, 2013).

Also, with the new increase in the telecommunication customer base, there appears to be a shocking rise of customer's complaint of disruptions of telecommunication services by the Telecom service providers in Rivers State. Although, many Telecommunication firms here have tied the disruption of network services to the transition from 4G network to 5G network. From the foregoing, few studies have actually investigated digital communication competency and organizational success but none have combined the digital communication competency with measures of organizational success such as market share, and expansion and growth of telecommunication firms in Rivers State. Against these backdrops this study intends to empirically evaluate the relationship between digital communication competency and organizational success of telecommunication firms in Rivers State. And this stands as the knowledge gap for which this study seeks to fill.

### Conceptual Framework



### Conceptual Framework Showing Relationship between Digital Communication Competency and Organizational Success.

**Source:** (Cavaani, Fini and Ranieri 2010) researcher conceptualize, (2020)

### Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study was to examine how Digital communication competency influence the organizational success of Telecommunication Firms in Rivers State. Specifically, the objectives are as follows:

1. To determine the extent to which digital communication competency correlate with organizational success in terms of market share in Telecommunication in Rivers State.
2. To determine the extent to which digital communication competency correlate with organizational success in terms of expansion and growth in Telecommunication in Rivers State.

### Hypotheses

Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between digital communication competency and organizational success in terms of market share in telecommunication in Rivers State.

Ho<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant relationship between digital communication competency and organizational success in terms of expansion and growth in telecommunication in Rivers State.

### Conceptual Review

#### The Concept of Digital Communication Competency

Technology and communication are not mutually exclusive (Kunaka & Kudzai, 2019). In the digital information age, critics of the technology saturated society claim that all the forms available to humans for digital communication are inherently ruining interpersonal communication as we once knew it. In the rise of digital communication, technology can actually help communication competencies because it teaches people to learn written communication to varying audiences. With technology being a standard in most office work environments, employees and managers have to learn ways of communicating in-person at meetings and during daily work routines, but also making sure they are updated on any company announcements via email or digitally posted. Simply said, digital communication involves an organization's online communication efforts. Digital communication technology have actually helped people with their communication competence and learning how to create messages that are understood in so many characters or less. Rather than

just immediately saying what one is thinking, it now has to go through multiple processes before the world knows what someone is saying. First it is thought, then typed, then read over, and then send is hit. Most organizations today use a wide range of online channels—from their website to mobile chat to blogs—to connect with current and prospective customers, employees, and other stakeholders. As a key focus it is concerned with proper utilization of information that will lead to the achievement of set goals. Nonetheless, understanding digital communication competency required to operate the digital tool that will supply information needed by organization to make business decision that will provide better services and yield profits. Hence, sharing and delivery of information to different beneficiaries through digital communication devices such as computer desktop, laptop, tablet, smart phone, websites etc.

### **Organizational Success**

Measuring organizational success is a continuous challenge for both process owners and researchers alike (Alan et al, 2003). Since organization endeavor to measure what they manage, performance measurement is central issue in both the literature and practice. Evaluating organization's success is process-oriented, which involves events, activities (Dumas et al., 2013). Creating a balance of leading and lagging indicators for measuring organizational success can forecast high probability of future success (Bizmanualz.com, 2021). What exactly is organizational success? And what do managers have to do to achieve sustainable, on-going success? As noted over decades ago, the myopic view where management payless attention on innovation, marketing infrastructure and people's competencies are fading off. Many organizations have difficulties determining which specific measures are important to their firm, and which measures will influence organization to do the right thing; the inability to define organizational success is also noted in academe, where assessing organizational performance has been a major research topic in organization theory literature for over decades. Thus, organization success according to firms should invest in creating the future by annexing the potential needs of their customers. Their focus should be to create and dominate emerging technological opportunities. Nevertheless, the measure of organizational success in this study are the presence of market share and expansion and growth.

### **Measures of Organizational Success**

#### **Market Share**

Market share is an important concept to understand (Srinivasan et al., 2005). As advocated by many it is considered to be an indicator of a company's strength. However, market share is the percentage of total sales in an industry generated by a particular firm or organization. Also, market share can be derived by calculating the accumulated company's sales over a period of time and divide by total sales over the same period. Thus, it is usually correlated to brand penetration and customer loyalty. Thus, any organization growing its market share is growing revenues faster than its competitors. Also, organization can expand its market share by reducing product or service prices, advertising etc. Survival tactics such as lowering production capacity and reducing workforce were found to be effective only in the short-run (Köksal & Özgül, 2007).

#### **Expansion and Growth**

The desire of any organization is to make more profit, fund her business and operate with little or no debt of any sort. The profit gotten is usually in many scenarios re-invested to the business which leads to growth and expansion. The terms expansion and growth are almost similar in meaning as they both involve increase of the business initial plan. Business expansion involves extending the initial business size and vision that is filled with both opportunities and perils. That is bringing in new ideas to the existing on, expanding the business operations to different locations from the main branch. On the one hand, business growth is tied frequently with financial fortunes for owners and employees; it cause lots of changes in the business as it open opportunity for

business advancement thereby driving other business needs that will call for a better strategies for handling the business competitors. Again, expansion and growth is wonderful but continuity sometimes may be overwhelming for unserious business owners.

### **Relationship between Digital Communication Competency and Organizational Success**

Our world today is in continuous evolution, all organizations want to drive their activity to accept the new types of technology; this is the reason digital transformation becomes a means of business existence. The competence of an organization is to sustainably make more profit and finance the goals and operations without being indebted in the long run. It's obvious that in order to survive and succeed organizations no matter the size needs customer's patronage and loyalty. In a competitive world like ours where customers are exposed to numerous service options, smart organizations have to strategically plan on how to retain its customers for better market share and continuity. Of a fact, the version of customers' retention strategies varies from one organization to another; how an organization feel about their customer success is seen in the level of competent workforce they are provide for the services and the availability of the right tools to execute the required services. That is to say, customer success aligns closely with digital technology competency of the employee. Most times the customer may be happy with the product but not satisfied with the services the product provides. Furthermore, communications which involves the transmission of information from man to man, man to machine has advanced to machine to machine making it digital. Thus, knowing the components of digital communication competency required certain communication skill which will enable employees contribute productively to organizational success in many ways. Though critics of technological advancement in this digital saturated society information claims that all the forms available to humans for digital communication are inherently ruining interpersonal communication. The rise in digital marketing is tremendous as telecommunication firms through data services provision help other organizations to advertise their product and services online. Although, survival and growth of a telecommunication's financial outcome is driven by its customer retention which is in turn driven by customer fulfillment and value (Nimako, 2012). So, a customer willingness to retain its loyalty to the organization in the future depends on how the services received and the customer succeeds. Nonetheless, digital communication competency enhance customer success in product usage, helping them understand the functionality of the product making them succeed in their endeavor.

### **Theoretical Review**

This work is based on Eric Trist, Ken Bamforth and Fred Emery socio-technical system theory popularized in 1951. The theory has its etymology from two distinct words: Socio and Technical. Eric Trist, Ken Bamforth and Fred Emery looks at interaction between the human and technology element the organization (Bula, 2012). According to them the interaction of human element and the technical system leads to high performance and productivities level in the organization. They argued that both the socio and technical aspects of the organization must fit together for a smooth running of the organization. Hence, a better operational performance could be achieved when the organization understand the digital communication technologies at the workplace.

Hence, better operational performance could be achieved when the organization understand the digital competency for operating the digital technologies at the workplaces. Intuitively, the knowledge and skills of the workforce are leveraged to help deal with technological innovations (Dobbs & Halmilton, 2003).

In addition, for workers to understand the components of their jobs and its relationship with other jobs too, to help overcome unforeseen challenges. Thus, Socio technical system design was intended to produce work force that are more committed, and willing to adapt to technological changes in business environment. Furthermore, (Brinckman, 2008) states that change in the society provoke change in the techniques, procedures and technological infrastructure used in the

organization. Meaning that, in order to remain relevant in the business environment telecommunication firms will have to adopt latent technological devices to achieve organizational success and business independence (Hoegl, 2011). However, the theory is relevant to explaining and predicting the relationship between digital communication competency and organizational success. The theory identifies and describes the digital communication competency as human skill required in adding value by servicing digital communication technology needs and not just primarily to make profit rather for the joy of solving peoples' problem in a given system and time, which will thereafter lead to self-empowerment and even empowerment of others.

## METHODOLOGY

The explanatory cross-sectional survey research design was adopted for this study. The population of the study consisted fifty (50) telecommunication firms in Rivers State. The sample size of the study remained the fifty (50) telecommunication firms in Rivers State, but since is a macro study five middle level managers are randomly selected for the purpose of respondents thus, the number of respondents making it two hundred and fifty (250) while two hundred and eight (208) questionnaires were retrieved revolving around eighty three percent. Bivariate analysis was done using Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient through SPSS.

## RESULTS

### Digital communication Competency and Market Share

Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between digital communication competency and organizational success in terms of market share in telecommunication in Rivers State.

**Table : Correlations between Digital Communication Competency and Organizational Success**

		Digital Communication Competency	Market Share		
Spearman's rho	Correlation	1.000	0.801**	0.708**	0.631**
	Digital Communication Competency				
	Coefficient				
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	208	208	208	208
	Correlation	<b>0.801**</b>	1.000	0.631**	0.708**
Market Share	Coefficient				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000
	N	208	208	208	208
	Correlation	<b>0.708**</b>	.0774**	1.000	0.801**
	Coefficient				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000

**Source: SPSS Output**

The above shows r value of 0.801 is less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05 for the hypothesis relating digital communication competency and market share. Since the significance value (0.000) is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis (Ho<sub>1</sub>) which states digital communication competency do not have any influence on market share of Telecommunication Firms in Rivers

State is rejected and the alternate hypothesis ( $H_{a1}$ ) is accepted. This implies that digital communication competency have very strong positive influence on market share of Telecommunication Firms in Rivers State.

### Digital Communication Competency and Expansion and Growth

$H_{o2}$ : There is no significant relationship between digital communication competency and organizational success in terms of expansion and growth in telecommunication in Rivers State.

**Table 1: Correlations between Digital Communication Competency and Organizational Success**

		Digital Communication Competency		Expansion & Growth		
Spearman's rho	Digital Communication Competency	Correlation	1.000	0.801**	0.708**	0.631**
		Coefficient				
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
		N	208	208	208	208
	Expansion & Growth	Correlation	<b>0.801**</b>	1.000	0.631**	0.708**
		Coefficient				
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
		N	208	208	208	208
		Correlation	<b>0.708**</b>	0.774**	1.000	0.801**
		Coefficient				

**Source: SPSS Output**

Column seven roll two of table above shows r value of 0.631 is less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05 for the hypothesis relating digital communication competency and expansion and growth. Since the significance value (0.000) is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis ( $H_{o2}$ ) which states digital communication competency do not have any influence on expansion and growth of Telecommunication Firms in Rivers State is rejected and the alternate hypothesis ( $H_{a2}$ ) is accepted. This implies that digital communication competency have moderate positive influence on expansion and growth of Telecommunication Firms in Rivers State.

### Discussion of Findings

The test of hypothesis one revealed that digital communication competency have very high/strong positive influence on market share of Telecommunication in Rivers State, while the tests of hypotheses two revealed that digital communication competency have high/strong positive influence on expansion and growth in Rivers State. These findings imply that the understanding and having the right digital communication competency increases the productivity level of the employee and increase market shares thereby enhancing expansion and growth of telecommunication firms. In consonance with the finding, (Nimako, 2012) found that organization can maintain a healthy relationship with their customers via the communication line open. That is to say, a firms' continual survival, existence and future growth is largely dependent on the value it places on customer loyalty through maintaining customers' satisfaction. Therefore,

telecommunication firms should always consider having good digital communication competency to help closely monitor the current changes in this risky business environment, and enable access business opportunities and penetrate their brand in the market to have better share (Kim, Park & Jeong, 2012).

As the concern of telecommunication firms towards their customers are becoming more customer-centric, good digital communication competency will effectively bring telecommunication firms and customers together in a way that make them achieve all goal. This is in line with Shanker et al. (2002) which assert that good customer service is a key to business success, ironically it is one of the first things that tends to fall by the wayside immediately business growth begins. By this meaningful engagement, telecommunication maintaining adequate digital communication competency ensuring customers receive the desired attention that will boost the firms, especially in terms of sales growth, customer retention, and business expansion. Again, the power to conceive and initiate is always one factor that makes for the success of an organization. Business expansion involves extending the initial business size and vision that is filled with both opportunities and perils. In line with Gretzel (2015), changes in the business as it open opportunity for business advancement thereby driving other business needs that will call for a better strategies for handling the business competitors. Thus, customer success is the satisfactory result experience from the service consumption and also an outcome that happens without comparing expectations (Oliver, 2000). Furthermore, (Gerpottet al., 2001) expressed customer success as an experience-based assessment made by the customer of how far the expectations of the overall functionality of the services obtained from the provider have been fulfilled. Therefore, customer success may be higher or lower depending on the extent to which what was actually provided exceeds or falls short of what was expected. A proper use of telecommunication firms' resources both information, human and finance facilitates business expansion and growth.

### **Summary of Findings**

1. Digital communication competency highly influences organizational success in terms of market share in the telecommunication firms in Rivers State.
2. Digital communication competency positively influences organizational success in terms of expansion and growth in the telecommunication firms in Rivers State.

### **CONCLUSION**

Based on the analyses of data and discussion of findings, therefore, digital communication competency of the employees determines the productivity level of the organization which in turn triggers the organizational success. Understanding the competency required for the operation of the digital communication technology, having the available skill and being able to demonstrate the ability to match the demand of the customers will enhance success of telecommunication firms in Rivers State. However, digital communication competency relates to organizational success of the telecommunication firms in Rivers State.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

From the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Telecommunication sector should have a unified competency framework in other to understand the job requirement for the operation of each digital communication technology job role.
2. A systematic competency assessment should be conducted to ensure the right digital communication competency need is known in other to fill any gap.

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