



Impact of mobile phone technology on job performance of human resource managers in Nigeria

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Abstract

The use of mobile phone technology has increased steadily in recent times. There is a paradigm shift from use of desktops and laptops to mobile devices such as smartphones, Android phones, I-phones, and tablets etcetera. This is because of the portability and affordability of mobile phones which makes it easier for people of different communities, backgrounds and professions to acquire it. Mobile phone technology contains some trending apps, features, functions, and capabilities that enhance the efficiencies of Human Resource Managers. Nearly all Human Resource Managers in Nigeria use mobile phones for different activities both professionally and personally. Considering the level of penetration of mobile phone technology among human resource management professionals, the present study examines the impact of mobile phone technology on the job performances of Human Resource Managers in Nigeria. The results of the study show that the use of mobile phone technology increases the productivity of HR managers, and their job performances. Majority of the respondents agreed that the use of mobile phone technology aid their job activities, and performances at work. The findings show that majority of the respondents use the mobile phones for communication; knowledge sharing, staff engagement, Internet access, contact with family and colleagues, training, feedback and m-learning. The study affirms the growing significance of mobile phone technology on effective human resource management. ©2019 ijrei.com. All rights reserved

Keywords: Mobile phone, Job performance, Human Resource Manager, Smartphone, Android phone.

1. Introduction

The mobile phone technology has become essential part of human daily activities. The society is rapidly moving from desktop and laptop computing to mobile devices, such as smartphones which include features such as video cameras, global positioning systems, and Internet access, as powerful as the desktop models [1]. Mobile phones vary in sizes and functions but they share many similar qualities particularly as it relates to portability, mobility and affordability [2]. According to [3] there has never been any technological advancement in entire history that has been so available to civil societies as mobile communication. Mobile subscriptions around the world have reached a total of 6 billion people, and large numbers of people are using mobile phones to market products and services to consumers [4]. Mobile devices such as I-phones, smartphones and tablets are very

popular among people primarily because they are wireless and portable, and these functionalities enable users to communicate while on the move [5]. The use of mobile phones has become indispensable to all professions including the human resource management. The new generation of employees is familiar with mobile phone technology, and they prefer to use it for communications and connections. The portability and affordability of mobile phones has increased its spread and availability in most communities in Nigeria particularly among adolescents, students and even the elderly [2]. There is a steady increase in the number of HR managers in Nigeria who use mobile phones to aid their daily activities particularly at work. Employees across different organizations and businesses move around with different kinds of mobile phones such as android phones, smartphones, I-phones, I-pad, tablets and other mobile technologies for private and organizational use. The usage of

these mobile phones enables employees to build and maintain business relationships with clients and customers. The penetration of mobile phone technology is high among staff in the workforce and this is having effects on their job performances. The Human Resource (HR) department remains one of the most important parts of organizational structure and their function is centered on employees' engagement, welfare and improvement. The HR functions are instrumental to the success of businesses and organizations. To be able train, engage and help struggling workers to improve or regain their performance, the HR managers need to build relationships with employees to continuously engage and monitor their level of performances. These engagements are easily facilitated by use of mobile phones which enable them to easily connect to the employees at any time and location via phone calls, e-mails or text messaging.

The mobile phones are used by the HR department to disseminate information relating to staff welfare, training and meetings. Also, mobile phones are used by the HR managers to resolve relational issues and to access necessary online resources for preparation of training manuals and handbooks [6] posited that the use of mobile solutions by HR department in 2018 increased productivity by 20-25% in organizations with connected employees. The development of mobile technologies have provided opportunities for businesses around the world to expand their current business, as it is easier to reach out to consumers at anytime and anywhere through the Internet [4]. The frequent use of mobile phones by HR managers could be a vital tool to strengthen customers' and organizational relationships, and to conduct mobile-trainings for employees. The usefulness of mobile phone technology to human resource management cannot be overemphasized. Against this backdrop, the study examines the effects it has on the job performance of Human Resource Managers in Nigeria.

2. Review of Related Literature

The penetration of mobile technologies across the world is overwhelming. This could be attributed its features, functionality and affordability. Gartner cited in [7] stated that consumers bought 1.6 billion mobile devices in 2010, of which, 304 million, or 19 percent, were Smartphones. Most employees and managers now use mobile phones to share and communicate ideas and task rather than desktop or laptops. On May 11, 2010, there were 4,935 positions posted on Monster requiring applicants to have some domain in mobile devices [7]. Smartphones and other mobile devices have been developed and increasingly integrated with people's lives not only for social use, but for professional use as well [8]. It is clear that developments in internet, and more recently mobile, technologies have increased the ability of individuals to work remotely and therefore out of usual office hours [9]. Evans and Wurster (2007) cited in [10] opined that emergent mobile technologies and mobile commerce are expected to change drastically a number of industries and to force organizations to reconsider their strategic management. Human resource management is evolving into a more technology-based profession and that in many organizations; employees now see the face of HR as a portal rather than a person [11]. [12], states that processes with effective HR technology are likely to be more productive and more profitable than those that do not. Human

Resource Managers play a critical role in the management of employees in an organization. The quality of employees goes a long way to determine the productivity of an organization. Today's work environment requires the use of mobile technologies for different purposes including communication, training, feedback, assessment, and innovations. It is widely accepted that employees constitute a vital part of organization resource with the potential to enhance the organization's sustainable competitive advantage [13]. Human resource performance is intimately linked to technological change and technological innovation [14]. Steve Wang cited in [15] stated that employees actually need their phones in order to work effectively and disallowing them from using them at work is an outdated company policy that can only bring more harm than good. [16], stated that mobile phone usage by the workers at work place may be considered by some people as a disruption from work which may negatively affect productivity while others see as an improvement to productivity. When employees use their smartphones to work on their projects from their work, sometimes they bring stress from their workplaces into their private lives at home, so they cannot separate their work from their non-work lives [17]. [18], states that management usually ask employees to make personal phone use at lunch time and tell their family and friends not to disturb them during work hours unless it is emergency. [16], conducted a study on "Mobile Phones Usage and Employees' Performance: A Perspective from Pakistan. The result shows that most of the employees from the service sector agreed that mobile phones are best way to keep in touch with clients and supervisor and that it is necessary for better performance of work. [19], states that people are not only fulfilling their social needs with cell phones but also using mobile technology as a way that has brought a positive change at both environmental and social level. The use of mobile phone technology improve HR managers' access and relationships with workers in an organization. [7], agreed that mobile technology is useful to human resource management but is now a matter of how and when Human Resources will deliver functionality to these devices. [8], conducted a study on "Smartphones in the workplace: Changing organizational behavior, transforming the future". The result show that using Smartphones in the workplace can be valuable in three ways: promoting autonomy, strengthening relationships with peers as well as superiors, and improving knowledge-sharing. [10], conducted a study on "Impact of Information Technology on organizational performance: case of population services Kenya. The results show that 35.98 percent of the respondents had a company mobile phone, and iPad or tablet (25.4 percent) at their disposal to enable them to perform their duties at population service in Kenya. [9], conducted a study on "the impact of emerging technologies on work: a review of the evidence and implications for the human resource function" The result show that emerging technologies including mobile technologies are increasingly being used to support the implementation of more flexible working practices but it present a number of challenges for human resource professionals, who will need to help employees to update their skills to compete in the future world of work. Kafyulilo, Fisser & Voogt, (2011) cited in [20] stated that mobile phones brings up new opportunities because a mobile phone can play a role of a

radio, a TV, a computer, a digital camera, iPod or mp3 and newly emerging mobile phones have internet and supports programs such as MS words, Excel, PPT, etc. There is a growing number of mobile phone users in Nigeria, and this is playing an important role in the human resource management of both countries. Though, there is a growing literature on mobile phone technology, few studies have focused precisely on its effects on the job performance of Human Resource Managers in Nigeria. The need to bridge this gap in literature necessitated this study.

2.1 Objectives

The following are the objectives of the present study:

- To investigate the effect of mobile phone technology on the productivity of Human Resource Managers.
- To assess the purpose of usage of mobile phone technology by Human Resource managers.

2.2 Method

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. Data were gathered through structured questionnaires. A total of two hundred and twenty (220) questionnaires were administered to respondents that consist of Human Resource Managers selected from both public and private sectors in Nigeria. However, two hundred (200) responses were received and valid. The medium of instruction was English in all the selected firms. The samples were selected through purposive sampling technique, and the questionnaires contain questions that were relevant to the achievement of the stated objectives. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

2.3 The Study Framework

The conceptual framework of the study is represented below.

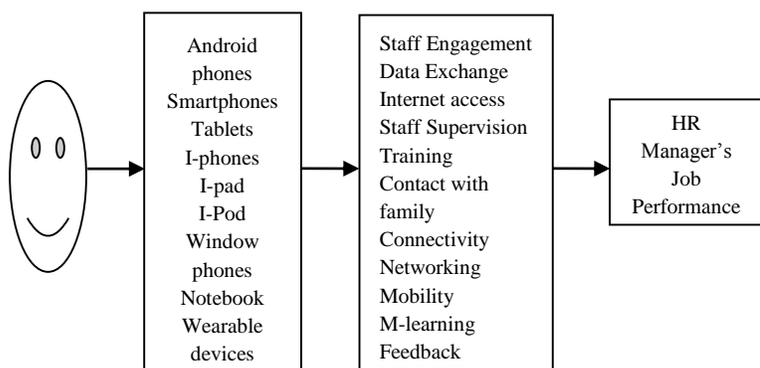


Figure 1: Conceptual framework of the Study

3. Results

The result of the study show that majority of the Human Resource Managers sampled use various types of mobile phones for different purposes. Majority of the respondents agreed that use of mobile technology aid their work. Many respondents were of the opinion that mobile phones enable them to communicate with

employees at work and to carry out research on their job and profession. They also stated that mobile phones help them to keep in touch with their colleagues on the go, and to attend to some urgent family matters during working hours. This is in line with [6] who posited that mobile technology is the best way to improve HR communications with the ubiquity of smartphones and use of text messaging to reach out to the employees that HR department serve. The results show that mobile phones are being used by many HR managers to conduct trainings for employees; share ideas and exchange work related messages at any time and place thereby enhancing their productivity and job performance. This is in line with earlier assertion by [21] that majority of employees feel happy and satisfied if their smartphones are with them during working hours while the result of a study by [16] shows that most of the employees agreed that the use of cell phones has improved their working efficiency and that the cell phone is necessary for better performance of work.

The internet being one of the major things that is required in global world of works has also influenced the usage of mobile phones by HR managers. Respondents agreed that mobile phone is instrumental to their usage of the internet for official work and networking activities. Many agreed that mobile phones aid their access to Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) for professional development and for information updates on events which influence their jobs. The study indicates that mobile phone technology such as Smartphones, Android phones, I-phone, tablets and other handheld devices enhance mobility at work and supervision. It facilitates staff participation in orientation and training sessions from any location and time. HR managers can easily engage, manage and relate with employees using mobile phone technology. However, some respondents argued that using mobile phone during working hours can cause misconduct, distractions, laziness and misplacement of priorities at work. Therefore, they support restrictive use of mobile phones by employees during working hours. From the result of the study, it is obvious that mobile phone technology has wide penetration among Human Resource Managers, and it has enhanced their creativity and connectivity with employees and feedback.

Furthermore, the study reveals that some HR managers are restricted from using their mobile phones at work due to restrictive policies put in place by certain firms regarding the use of mobile phones by all employees during working hours. The study affirms that the use of mobile technology has become part of effective human resource management, and a necessity for improved job performance in the digital age. This is in tandem with the earlier assertion of [22] that harnessing the power of mobile technology will provide businesses with opportunities to make huge changes for the better. Mobile phones contain emerging apps like the HR app and functions that are capable of assisting the Human Resource Managers to be competitive in the emerging digital work environment and market. Therefore, the researcher is of the opinion that banning the use of mobile phones at workplace would deprive HR managers and other employees of the huge potential opportunities that it offers to support their personal and professional efficiencies.

4. Conclusion

The study examines the importance of mobile phone technology on job performances of Human Resource Managers. The results of the study establish the potential and usefulness of mobile phone technology on the productivity and job performance of Human Resource Managers. Mobile phones contain some emerging HR apps which can make the job of Human Resource Managers easier, faster and more rewarding. It enhances connectivity, mobility and wider accessibility to people and data. The findings show the growing significance of mobile phone technology on effective human resource management. The use of mobile phone technology provides access to innovative applications and information that are critical for firms' survival and competitiveness in the digital age. The level of penetration and affordability of mobile phones makes it a vital tool for employees' training and mobile learning. Consequently, the researcher concludes that mobile phone technology has become a relative important technology to enhance creativity and productivity of Human Resource Managers and employees.

Recommendations

- The use of mobile phone technology should be encouraged in all organizations to enable employees optimize the potentials that it offers.
- Organizations should invest in the digital development of their employees to enhance their digital literacy skills.
- Businesses are going digital and mobile; thus, HR managers should embrace mobile technologies to improve their productivity and competitiveness.
- HR managers should maximize the functions of mobile phones to improve staff and customers' relationship.
- There should be no limitations on use of mobile phones during work considering the importance of communication.
- Employees should take advantage of the flexibility and functionality of mobile phones for creative and innovative ideas that can be useful to their firms.

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