

A Review of the Effect of Digital Communication Response on Managers' Interpersonal Effectiveness in Select Manufacturing Firms in Rivers State, Nigeria

¹ Amanawa, David Ebiegbere. ² Nwiyii, Blessing Joseph

1. Faculty Member, Centre for Continuing Education, IGNATIUS AJURU UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION.

2. PhD Candidate, Department of Management, IGNATIUS AJURU UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION.

Abstract: This study examines how the digital communication response of managers affects their interpersonal effectiveness in manufacturing firms in Rivers State. The study aims to ascertain the relationship between digital communication response and a manager's interpersonal effectiveness. The study adopted an explanatory cross-sectional survey research design. The population of the study consists of selected twenty-two (22) manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. The purposive sampling technique, where the entire population of a study is picked, was adopted since the whole population mentioned is relevant to this study. The structured questionnaire was titled "Digital Communication Response and Managers' Interpersonal Effectiveness Index (DCRMIEI)." It was designed on a Five-point Likert scale and had the following response options: Very Great Extent (VGE) 5; Great Extent (GE) 4; Moderate Extent (ME) 3; Low Extent (LE) 2, and; Not At All (NA) 1. Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. One hundred and ten (110) questionnaires were distributed to the selected twenty-two (22) manufacturing firms in Rivers State, and the researcher was able to retrieve ninety-two (92) copies. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 20.0 was used for the analysis; the hypotheses were tested using the Spearman Rank Order Correlation Statistical tool. The study found that: phone response sensitivity has a high positive relationship with manager's interpersonal effectiveness in manufacturing firms in Rivers State; SMS/email response has a high positive relationship with manager's interpersonal effectiveness in manufacturing firms in Rivers State, and; social media response has a strong positive relationship with manager's interpersonal effectiveness in manufacturing firms in Rivers State. The study concluded that digital communication response in terms of phone response sensitivity, SMS/email response, and social media response is an influential ingredient capable of increasing managers' interpersonal relationships with their colleagues, employees, and customers. The study, therefore, recommended that managers in manufacturing firms and sister organizations, alongside other leaders across organizations, should optimize their social media skills and imbibe the culture of responding quickly to messages and information received through this channel to enhance the interpersonal efficacy around their workplace.

Keyword: Digital Communication Response, Phone Response Sensitivity, SMS/Email Response, Social Media Response, Manager's Interpersonal Effectiveness

Background of Study

The proliferation of digital tools and platforms for communication and other activities has significantly simplified work-related tasks. Employees and managers can now communicate via social media, SMS, emails, and virtual meetings. Since some employees in the public and commercial sectors now work from home, the covid-19 pandemic era has created a physical distance in the workplace. Digital communication has emerged as an efficient tool for bridging this divide in communication between managers and their employees (Burjek, 2020). To effectively bridge the communication gap and build strong interpersonal relationships with their team members, peers, and clients/customers, managers must adopt a prompt response to calls, emails, SMSs, social media messages, and other information. Simply put, managers need to employ the practice of digital communication response to enhance their interpersonal effectiveness. Conceptually, interpersonal effectiveness is the ability of an individual, especially a manager, to relate with others around them so that goals and objectives are achieved while maintaining good relationships. This can be achieved through team goal attainment, successful liaison, and manager-employee friendliness. Still, literature has shown that the workplace is, to a great extent, deficient in these elements as required of a manager to attain interpersonal effectiveness.

As defined by Butner and Ho (2019), digital communication response is the act of reacting or replying to a received or perceived information transmitted over digital media. Individuals, especially managers in organizations, are duty bound to respond or react to virtually all information they receive from anyone in their line of duty, which is not the case in many organizations. However, literature has shown that, despite the ubiquitous use of smartphones and other electronic gadgets, some managers have shown lackadaisical behavior towards responding to calls, messages, and other forms of informing that come through their phones, laptops, tablets, etc. More obviously, this deficiency is expressed via untimely responses to phone calls, SMS, emails, and social media

interactions. And this study sees digital communication response in terms of phone response sensitivity, SMSs/email response, and social media response.

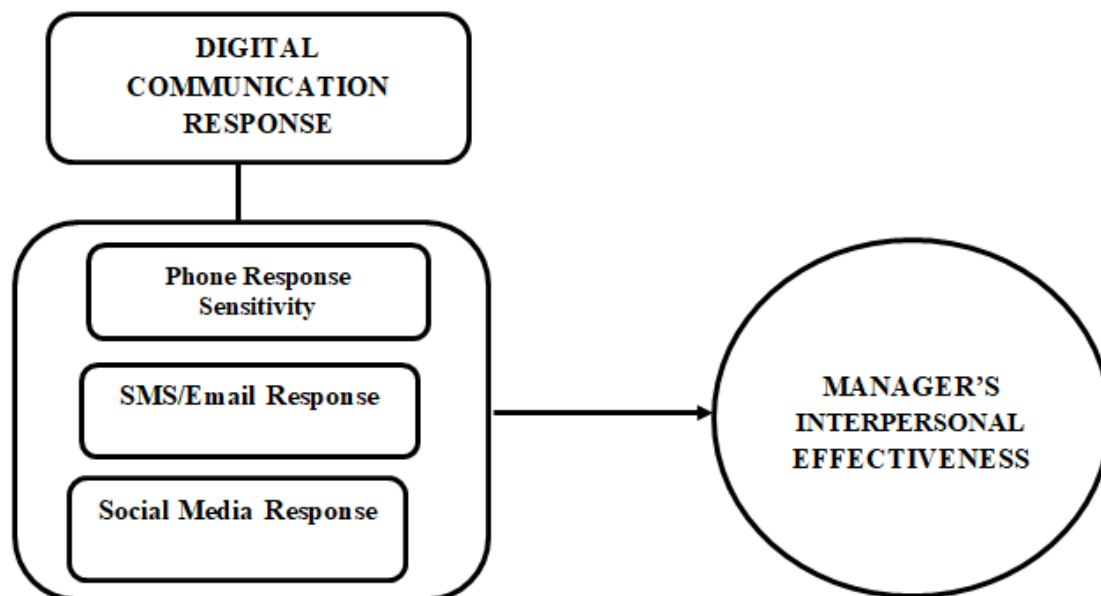
Chisambara (2018) states that phone response sensitivity is the alertness in responding to messages and calls from whichever communication platform drops through the phone. It also refers to the ability to answer or return phone calls on time. SMS/email is the reply to an information message sent over text or email. And social media response, as defined by Ilcus (2018), refers to a polite and timely reaction or reply given a message or information delivered through a social media space such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, etc. It, therefore, becomes a big concern that some managers across organizations are not up and doing in marrying their phones and other digital communication gadgets and platforms for the benefits of improving their team goal attainment, successful liaison, and manager-employee friendliness. Thus, this work seeks to literarily discuss how digital communication response in terms of phone response sensitivity, SMS/email response, and social media response can improve a manager's interpersonal effectiveness through team goal attainment, successful liaison, and manager-employee friendliness.

Statement of Problem

Employees and customers of corporate organizations such as manufacturing firms tend to lose connection intermittently with their managers. As a result, they experience some drop in their good office relationship with managers, manager-employee friendliness, and teamwork (Thomas & John, 2017). Additionally, research has shown that much has not been done empirically and literally on the concept of "digital communication response and manager's interpersonal effectiveness." Therefore, researchers must determine how digital communication response—dimensionalized into phone response sensitivity, SMS/email response, and social media response—could affect a manager's interpersonal effectiveness. The manager's interpersonal effectiveness is measured using team goal attainment, successful liaison, and social media response.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Fig. 1: Conceptual framework for the relationship between digital communication response and managers' interpersonal effectiveness.



Source: Desk Research, 2021.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

This study aims to ascertain the relationship between digital communication response and a manager's interpersonal effectiveness. The specific objectives include:

1. To determine the relationship between phone response sensitivity and manager's interpersonal effectiveness in manufacturing firms in Rivers State.
2. To determine the relationship between SMS/email response and manager's interpersonal effectiveness in manufacturing firms in Rivers State.

3. To determine the relationship between social media response and manager's interpersonal effectiveness in manufacturing firms in Rivers State.

Research Hypotheses

At the 0.05 level of significance, the following null hypotheses were tested:

- Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between phone response sensitivity and managers' interpersonal effectiveness in manufacturing firms in Rivers State.
- Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between SMS/email response and managers' interpersonal effectiveness in manufacturing firms in Rivers State.
- Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between social media response and managers' interpersonal effectiveness in manufacturing firms in Rivers State.

Theoretical Framework

Diane Dormant's more contemporary model demonstrates the impact of digital communication response for innovation acceptance and change, The Chocolate Model (Dormant, 2011). The Chocolate Model focuses on organizational innovation adoption and change. It is organized around four components: change, adopters, the change agent(s), and the organization CACAO when abbreviated for simplicity of recall and usage in planning.

Unlike Rogers' Innovation Diffusion Theory, the Chocolate Model may be used to prepare for organizational change and innovation uptake. The procedure is as follows: First, determine whether the change represents a new system or an innovation.

This is akin to Rogers' (2003) adoption process's initial phase of seeking knowledge. The second stage is to examine the change's early adopters. Third, identify the agents of change. A strategy is created at this phase. The next step is to evaluate the organization where the change process is likely to occur and analyze the larger context of the change - how it affects other areas of the organization. The plan may be altered before implementation based on the findings of the organizational analysis (Correia, 2022).

The Chocolate Model and the TAM have comparable changing characteristics. Adopters, like TAM practitioners, consider the relative advantage of the innovation or change (Dormant, 2011), referred to as "perceived utility" in TAM (Straub, 2009). In addition, adopters consider the innovation's simplicity and compatibility - the "perceived ease of use" in TAM (Dormant, 2011; Straub, 2009). Finally, the adaptability of the innovation to the specific demands of the adopters and the social impact of the change - what the change will entail for the social structure and atmosphere of the organization - are two components not explored in TAM but mentioned in the Chocolate Model (Dormant, 2011).

This theory implies that as organizations advance in their use of digital response channels, primarily through phone calls, SMS/emails, and social media, there may be disparities in the manner and period employees and managers will show interest in their usage, especially in the areas of sensitivity and quick response.

It follows that managers who fail to adopt the innovative styles of phone response sensitivity, swift SMS/email response, and social media response will experience ineffectiveness, slow operations, and high-level inefficiency (Odu, 2018).

Those who embrace and adopt emerging digital communication paradigms (in this case, digital communication response) will enjoy speed, efficiency and high-level effectiveness in administration while enhancing their managerial job performance in areas of team goal attainment, successful liaison, and manager-employee friendliness. However, since this theoretical assumption has not been tested and verified empirically amongst organizations, there is a need to empirically investigate how digital communication response influences a manager's interpersonal effectiveness.

Concept of Digital Communication Response

Digital communication response is reacting or replying to a received or perceived information transmitted over digital media (Butner & Ho, 2019). Individuals, especially managers in organizations, are duty bound to reply or react to virtually all forms of information they receive from anyone in their line of duty. It includes timely response to phone calls, SMS, emails, and social media interactions. Communicating in the digital workplace is an integral component of any modern organization. Since the COVID-19 situation, many people have had to work remotely. It has taken on even greater significance, with most digital communication between employees and managers happening. Despite the importance of digital communication to the growth of an organization, it is evident that responding to digital communication can be very strenuous at times and distracting in the workplace. The manager needs to be good at time management and a digital communicator to know how best to respond to messages received over digital channels. Along with this, Rex (2020) proposed that for managers to respond to messages and information received across digital media effectively, they must do the following actions:

- Communicate, but be efficient and thoughtful: Managers spend an average of 209 minutes daily checking their emails. In fact, according to a recent report from Workfront, 53% of managers say that "excessive emails" are a significant issue that

reduces productivity. Before responding to or sending out a digital communication, consider whether it is necessary. Look through your daily schedule and see if any reports can be consolidated or eliminated. Strategically, some messages should be responded to immediately, whereas some should be responded to at a later time. By strategy, depending on their necessity, some may need not be responded to. A manager should be able to go straight to the point and not over-flog issues or over-communicate; efficiency is critical.

- Be direct and professional: Keep the communication professional and avoid wordy digital communication in the workplace. The interaction seems more genuine when face-to-face. A manager should try to keep general personal conversations (e.g., How was your weekend?) to face-to-face meetings when possible. Doing this will result in over-communicating and overwhelming your employees and other persons in the line of duty.
- Schedule response appropriately: A manager should be able to fix times within working hours with which they can respond to the numerous messages received via different communication channels. It helps reduce the stress of having to reply to all messages as soon as they are received and also gives him the time to think through whatever response he intends to provide. Of course, this means that the manager will only respond immediately to urgent ones.

As this work conceptualizes, digital communication response can be broken into phone response sensitivity, SMS/email response, and social media response.

Dimensions of Digital Communication Response

Phone Response Sensitivity: Managers attract people within and outside the workplace depending on how they are connected to the organization. This is a result of the fact that the position of a manager comes with lots of responsibilities. As a result, the phone buzzes almost all the time. Therefore, the manager needs to program his mind towards answering these numerous calls professionally to improve the organization's growth, primarily through interpersonal effectiveness such as team goal attainment, successful liaison, and manager-employee friendliness.

Projecting an expert picture at work is significant for professional achievement (Claytor, 2020). Picking up the phone is something that every manager does, no matter what their situation in the organization. Answering the right way will project a positive tone, help the caller feel great, and set the manager up to assist with addressing issues (questions) the person might ask.

Phone response sensitivity is the alertness in responding to messages and calls from whichever communication platform drops through the phone (Chisambara, 2018). Therefore, the manager needs to be very sensitive to calls, emails, WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and SMS. that came through their phone(s). Conceptually, phone response sensitivity refers to the ability to answer or return phone calls on time. This implies that a manager may miss a call or calls for one reason or the other or may need to answer a call or a few calls later for reasons best known to him or the organization. But whatever the case, the manager should be sensitive enough to ensure that they respond to all calls that deserve responses at a time that such response will still be very effective. It may be necessary for the manager to return a call later when they are not prepared or disposed to answer it. As a result, this provides continual business performance, growth, and interpersonal relationships between him, the rest of the workforce, and the complete business collaborators.

SMS/Email Response: Responding to workplace communications promptly is part of good business etiquette (Dengler & Matthes, 2018). Nothing frustrates coworkers and business associates more than unanswered emails, non-responses to phone messages, or inappropriate responses to work emails and texts. SMS/email response is the reply given to an information message sent over text message or email. SMSs and emails are still very much ubiquitous in use in the workplace (Tocci, 2017). Therefore, the manager should professionally prepare his mind to respond to them appropriately. These emails entail business opportunities, complaints, product or service orders, and gratitude for a good product or service. Therefore, the manager should be courteous and professional in responding to these chunks of text messages and emails daily.

Social Media Response: Social media response refers to a polite and timely reaction or replies given a message or information delivered through a social media space such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, etc. (Ilcus, 2018). A lot of messages sent over social media platforms have expectations of responses. Some are sent as responses, and the senders are also anticipating responses. It, therefore, implies that replies to messages or information via these media are deemed very important, just like in other platforms like text messages, emails, phone calls, etc.

As a manager of an organization, reacting to notices remarks, and inquiries via online media are the central part of your web-based media methodology. Getting an arrangement set up for specific organizations, especially amid high pressure, might be hard to achieve. The manager acquiring a foothold and commitment from his audience will expect to be prepared to react without wasting much time. The manager's audience can rapidly lose interest or leave the cooperation with a negative perspective on the organization, assuming they feel that he has essentially disregarded their input.

The manager has to respond to employees and customers/clients on a timely basis. He must not keep them hanging, as this can ruin a business opportunity, trust, loyalty, workplace relationships, etc. As a manager, whenever you answer a client via social media, you are not answering that single client alone but as well as future expected clients. As needs are, Schallmo and Williams (2018) expressed that for a chief to get your needs straight, his essential center ought to be to make an impression on the client he is reacting to and, optionally, to make an impression on every other person who may understand it. By keeping an eye on that client's requirements, you are likewise showing other potential clients that you care about your clients and will make it right, assuming something turns out badly. Additionally, don't be reluctant to over-illuminate and answer more than whatever the client inquired. Doing such can proactively address other clients' inquiries, which is excellent.

Additionally, a manager should take conversations with customers to private messages if any personal information will be required to resolve their questions or issue. When doing so, be sure you are the one to reach out first privately, too (Wokurka et al., 2017). You do not want to make your customers reach out again if you can avoid it! And when responding to negative customer reviews, respond quickly, take responsibility, apologize, and work out a solution with the customer. Coming to employees, the manager should develop a policy on how appropriately to respond to employees' messages via social media platforms such as Facebook, Whatsapp, Instagram, Twitter, etc. The manager needs to be courteous and timely when responding to employee messages via these media. He should keep it professional (only a little information when necessary) and not over-communicate.

The Concept of Manager's Interpersonal Effectiveness

At its most fundamental, interpersonal effectiveness relates to the capacity to engage with people. It involves abilities like attending to relationships, balancing priorities vs. demands, balancing "wants" with "shoulds," and developing a sense of mastery and self-respect (Vivyan, 2018). Our ability to interact with others can be broken by the goal we have in mind for our interactions. According to Vivyan (2018), there are three main goals to interaction – gaining our objective, maintaining our relationships, and keeping our self-respect. Each plan requires interpersonal skills; while some interpersonal skills will be applied in many situations, some skills will be essential for achieving one of these goals. For example, when working towards gaining our objective, we need skills that involve clarifying what we want from the interaction and identifying what we need to do to get the results we want.

In the researcher's concept, a manager's interpersonal effectiveness is the ability of an individual, especially a manager, to relate with others around them so that goals and objectives are achieved while maintaining good relationships. Managers connect with employees in groups and individually. In all these ways, he tries to play his managerial role effectively and efficiently, which is the core aim. It is rightly said that an intelligent business person is not just a businessman; he is a brilliant communicator too. He knows how to interact with other people and how to handle and solve all the issues by interacting. According to Big Think Edge (2018), any professional, especially a manager, should have the following interpersonal skills to exercise good interpersonal effectiveness in their work environment:

- **Verbal communication:** This is key when leading a team. Managers should have the option to talk compactly, expertly, and forthrightly. They should have the jargon expected to get their point across; if not, their staff cannot follow through with their responsibilities. Yet, there is a distinction between imparting and conveying actually. The best supervisors can make themselves transparent and simultaneously utilize their relationship-building abilities to communicate so that the other individual comprehends the errand and, all the more significant, they are purchased in and need to finish it.
- **Nonverbal communication:** Albeit regularly ignored, it is frequently more significant than verbal. This incorporates tone, pitch, volume, looks, hand motions, clothing decisions, etc. A manager who continually folds their arms while tending to their staff might appear awkward or distant. A director who can't hold an eye-to-eye connection during a discussion will appear exhausted and uninterested. It isn't what you say. However, how you say it matters a lot.
- **Listening skills:** These skills are necessary for influential leaders like managers. This requires tuning in a one-on-one discussion or gathering to ensure all questions, concerns, and remarks have been heard and tended to. Effective listening can avoid slip-ups and screw-ups and can enormously affect the correspondence cycle.
- **Motivation skills:** Understanding what makes others tick is a crucial skill of a top manager. They comprehend the inspirations and drivers of their staff so they can oversee and lead them. However, there is something else to inspiration besides cash.
- **Empathy:** Interpersonal skills are about individuals, and on the off chance that you can't get others, their reality, and what they may be going through, you will struggle to genuinely interface with them and get the best out of them. Put

yourself in the shoes of others and see life according to their point of view. That is what's genuinely going on having sympathy.

A Managers interpersonal effectiveness can be measured through team goal attainment, successful liaison, and manager-employee friendliness. Team goal attainment refers to the achievement of a set goal or goals by a team (Salman & Hassan, 2016). For example, individuals and groups within the team might be saddled with tasks that emanate from the plan. By this, these individuals and groups try to accomplish these tasks. As these are completed, the results are brought together to enable the team unanimously present a unifying result of their goal to the organization. Showing your team that you care about their goals is a powerful way to build rapport and increase motivation. You are also building trust by offering them that their success matters to you, even if those goals do not perfectly align with their current position. That trust then helps keep communication lines clear and feedback flowing both ways. But there is more you can do to develop your employees. And working with your team to achieve their goals is not the only way to motivate them.

Successful liaison means the ability of an individual, such as a manager, to build and maintain mutually beneficial relationships and facilitates communications between him and employees, colleagues, customers/clients, etc. (Wiley-Cordone, 2019). The liaison role includes managers in relational connections outside their power area. This job might consist of contacts both inside and outside the association. The high-level manager utilizes the contact job to acquire favors and data, while the manager utilizes it to keep up with the normal progression of work. As the head of the association or unit, the director must fill the roles of inspiration, correspondence, empowering camaraderie, and such.

Further, he needs to arrange the exercises of every one of his subordinates, which includes the action of contact. This job requires the manager to communicate with different supervisors outside the association to get favors and data. In this job, the supervisor addresses his association in all custom questions.

Manager-employee friendliness is the cordial relationship between employees and managers to facilitate a highly productive and happy workplace (Louise, 2020). However, the relationship between employee and manager is sometimes fragile. The worker may feel pressured to keep his job while harboring unfavorable opinions about his boss. In contrast, the boss wonders if the employee works to the best of his ability. Managers are also worried about the morale of laborers since low morale could prompt costly issues with turnover or low performance. Assuming a manager dismisses employees' worries, it could start a significant and expensive problem. Other than turnover, work environment viciousness is likewise a danger to business on the off chance that employees become displeased. Employees who feel insulted by managers may again think twice about the security of the organization's exclusive data by proprietary sharing innovations or taking that vital information to another contending business. An organization that doesn't cultivate a proper connection between employees and managers additionally may foster a helpless standing in the business.

Methodology

The study adopted the explanatory cross-sectional survey research design. The population of the study consisted of selected twenty-two (22) manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. The purposive sampling technique, where the entire population of a study is picked, was adopted in this work since the entire population mentioned is relevant to this study. As a result, the whole population was used as a manageable size and is also digital communication-oriented. The key respondents were Chief Operations Manager, Information Technology Manager, Marketing Manager, Financial Manager, and Quality Control Manager. Therefore, the sample size for this study was five (5) managers from each of the twenty-two (22) manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt, which will give 110 managers (5*22) from the manufacturing firms. A structured questionnaire entitled "Digital Communication Response and Managers' Interpersonal Effectiveness Index (DCRMIEI)" was designed. The instrument was constructed using a 5-point Likert scale of Very Great Extent (VGE) 5; Great Extent (GE) 4; Moderate Extent (ME) 3; Low Extent (LE) 2, and; Not At All (NA) 1. The instrument was face and content validated by the researcher's supervisor and two research experts in the Department of Management, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt. The reliability of the research instrument "DCRMIEI" was determined through Cronbach alpha via SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). One hundred and ten (110) questionnaires were distributed to the selected twenty-two (22) manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt. The researcher retrieved ninety-two (92) copies of the questionnaire distributed. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 20.0 was used for the analysis. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman Rank Order Correlation tool.

Decision Rule: Using a level of significance of 0.05 (confidence interval of 95%), when a significant calculated value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected; if otherwise, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Results/Findings

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between phone response sensitivity and managers' interpersonal effectiveness in manufacturing firms in Rivers State.

Table 1: Correlations Between Phone Response Sensitivity and Managers' Interpersonal Effectiveness

			Phone Response Sensitivity	Managers' Interpersonal Effectiveness
Spearman's rho	Phone Response Sensitivity	Correlation	1.000	0.676**
		Coefficient		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	Managers' Interpersonal Effectiveness	N	92	92
		Correlation	0.676**	1.000
		Coefficient		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	92	92

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

Source: SPSS Output

Column two of table 1 above shows an r-value of 0.676 at a significance level of 0.00, which is less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05 for the hypothesis relating phone response sensitivity and managers' interpersonal effectiveness. Since the significance value is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis (Ho₁) states that there is no significant relationship between phone response sensitivity and managers' interpersonal effectiveness in manufacturing firms in Rivers State is rejected, and the alternate hypothesis (Ha₁) is accepted. This implies that phone response sensitivity positively influences managers' interpersonal effectiveness in manufacturing firms in Rivers State.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between SMS/email response and managers' interpersonal effectiveness in manufacturing firms in Rivers State.

Table 2: Correlations Between SMS/Email Response and Managers' Interpersonal Effectiveness

			SMS/Email Response	Managers' Interpersonal Effectiveness
Spearman's rho	SMS/Email Response	Correlation	1.000	0.618**
		Coefficient		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	Managers' Interpersonal Effectiveness	N	92	92
		Correlation	0.618**	1.000
		Coefficient		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	92	92

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

Source: SPSS Output

Column two of table 2 above shows an r-value of 0.618 at a significance level of 0.00 which is less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05 for the hypothesis relating SMS/Email response and managers' interpersonal effectiveness. Since the significance value is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis (Ho₂) states that there is no significant relationship between SMS/Email response and manager's interpersonal effectiveness in manufacturing firms in Rivers State is rejected, and the alternate hypothesis (Ha₂) is accepted. This implies that SMS/Email response has a strong positive influence on managers' interpersonal effectiveness in manufacturing firms in Rivers State.

Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between social media response and managers' interpersonal effectiveness in manufacturing firms in Rivers State.

Table 3: Correlations Between Social Media Response and Managers' Interpersonal Effectiveness

			Social Media Response	Managers' Interpersonal Effectiveness
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Spearman's rho	Social Media Response	Correlation	1.000	0.725**
		Coefficient		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	Managers' Interpersonal Effectiveness	N	92	92
		Correlation	0.725**	1.000
		Coefficient		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	92	92

Column two of table 3 above shows an r-value of 0.725 at a significance level of 0.00, less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05 for the hypothesis relating social media response and managers' interpersonal effectiveness. Since the significance value is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_{03}) states that there is no significant relationship between social media response and managers' interpersonal effectiveness in manufacturing firms in Rivers State is rejected, and the alternate hypothesis (H_{a3}) is accepted. This implies that social media response has a strong positive influence on managers' interpersonal effectiveness in manufacturing firms in Rivers State.

Summary of Findings

Based on the quantitative and qualitative analyses presented above, the following findings were evident:

1. Phone response sensitivity has a high positive relationship with managers' interpersonal effectiveness in manufacturing firms in Rivers State.
2. SMS/email response positively correlates with managers' interpersonal effectiveness in manufacturing firms in Rivers State.
3. The social media response has a strong positive relationship with managers' interpersonal effectiveness in manufacturing firms in Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings

The test of hypothesis one revealed that phone response sensitivity has a strong positive relationship with managers' interpersonal effectiveness in manufacturing firms in Rivers State. Every manager answering the telephone, regardless of his/her position in the organization, is something every manager does. Responding the right way will project a positive tone, help the caller feel comfortable, and set the manager up to help answer whatever questions they may have. In tandem with this, Chisambara (2018) asserted that managers' attitudes towards answering their phone calls and responding to messages are strong determinants of their relationship with employees, business associates, and colleagues. Phone response sensitivity, being the ability to answer or return phone calls in an on-time manner, implies that a manager may miss a call or calls for one reason or the other or may need to answer a call or a few calls at a later time for reasons best known to him or the organization. But whatever the case, the manager should be sensitive enough to ensure that they respond to all calls that deserve responses at a time that such response will still be very effective. Sometimes, it might require the manager to return a call at a later time when they are not composed or disposed to answer it. It is in line with this that Ward (2020) posited that managers should keep a pen and notepad near the phone, smile while speaking, speak clearly and professionally, address the caller professionally, transfer the person if necessary, and end the call professionally, to be effective in their phone calls. These will help enhance their relationship with their colleagues, employees, and customers/clients. This means that the more a manager responds swiftly to phone calls or returns calls at later times that are still not considered late, the more they keep in touch with all those they work with. Such can propel team goal attainment, successful liaison, and manager-employee friendliness. Claytor (2020) once stated that the digital age had driven more discussions to be carried out via digital devices and technologies, especially in the workplace. This, therefore, means that employees and managers in the workplace should not be lazy in their response to phone calls, as it happens to be one of the critical aspects of digital communication.

The test of hypothesis two showed that SMS/email response has a strong positive relationship with managers' interpersonal effectiveness in manufacturing firms in Rivers State. This implies that a swift response to SMSs and emails is a veritable tool for managers and employees to improve their interpersonal effectiveness in and outside the organization. SMS and emails have been instrumental in the world of communication with both individuals and organizations. Thanks to smartphones, individuals such as managers can send and receive SMSs and emails wherever they are. According to Tocci (2017), managers and employees now find it pretty easy to respond to, send and receive messages and information through emails and social media from whichever geographical location they find themselves, as a result of the advent of smartphones and other electronic gadgets such as tablets.

Despite the digital stress brought about by intelligent mobile digital gadgets, it has also added much value to humanity, especially in the workplace. The age where people go to cyber cafes or look for a computer before they can send emails is gone. When your mobile data is on, emails and messages from other platforms display on the phone as soon as they arrive. Therefore, managers need to take advantage of this by responding early enough to messages and other information they receive through emails and SMSs to keep in touch with everyone they work with. This will help increase interpersonal effectiveness, which they will gain through team goal attainment, successful liaison, and manager-employee friendliness in their workspace.

The test of hypothesis three revealed that social media response has a strong positive relationship with managers' interpersonal effectiveness in Rivers State manufacturing firms. This implies that managers who are quick and sensible to respond to messages directly and indirectly sent to them via social media space will do exceptionally well when it comes to relating with colleagues, bosses, customers, and subordinates. Johansson et al. (2017) averred that social media allows organizations and individuals to tell their stories, connect with audiences, and expand their influence. Despite an organization's social media platform, interactions with its audience are at its core. Successful social media response strategies promote the organization's goals and feel authentic and welcoming to those it is trying to reach. Social media platforms are more than just a broadcasting tool; they provide the unique value of being built for virtual interactions (Kuusisto, 2017).

Being a manager involves numerous responsibilities; some are by directives, while others are figured out. Responding appropriately to digital communication usage has become a huge one amongst them. Responding to mentions, comments, and questions on social media as an organization manager is the most important aspect of a manager's social media strategy. It can boost his teamwork with his employees and others who work with him. For some organizations, getting a plan in place, particularly in times of high stress, may be challenging. For the manager to get a grip on his audience and keep abreast with all happenings, it will require him to be ready to respond to social media messages and other information promptly. The manager's audience can quickly lose interest or leave the interaction with a negative view of the organization if they feel he has simply ignored their input. Social media response requires a polite and timely reaction to messages or information delivered through a social media space such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, etc. (Ilcus, 2018). The manager, therefore, has to respond to employees and customers/clients on a timely basis. He must not keep them hanging, as this can ruin a business opportunity, trust, loyalty, workplace relationships, etc. Quick response in this regard can enhance his performance in the area of interpersonal effectiveness expressed in team goal attainment, successful liaison, and manager-employee friendliness.

Conclusions

The study's core focus is to evaluate the role of digital communication in improving managers' interpersonal effectiveness.

The study concluded that digital communication response, including phone response sensitivity, SMS/email response, and social media response, is an influential component capable of improving managers' interpersonal relationships with their colleagues, employees, and customers.

This judgment was made in light of the theoretical discussion found in books, journals, the internet, and other published materials on the topic. Therefore, it follows that managers will experience poor relationships or possibly disconnection with some or most of their colleagues, employees, and customers if they choose not to adopt the trend in digital communication response at work, which is characterized by phone response sensitivity, sms/email response, and social media response.

Recommendations

1. To improve their friendliness and ability to communicate with coworkers, employees successfully, and customers/clients, managers of organizations like manufacturing firms, must immediately adopt the habit of returning phone calls promptly, especially in the workplace. They should also consider calling at a later time that is still appropriate. Swift response to emails and SMSs should be a culture that managers and leaders in corporate organizations should adopt to enhance their connectivity with all those they work with, from the least to the highest in the hierarchy.
2. Managers in manufacturing firms and sister organizations, alongside other leaders across organizations, should optimize their social media skills and imbibe the culture of responding quickly to messages and information received through this channel, to enhance the interpersonal efficacy in their workplace.

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