



MANAGER'S ASSESSMENT OF SKILLS REQUIRED FOR SUCCESSFUL MANAGEMENT OF BUSINESSES AMID COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN DELTASTATE

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Abstract

This paper investigated into the manager's assessment of skills required for successful management of businesses amid covid-19 pandemic in Delta State. The population of the study comprises of seventy managers of various businesses in Delta State. Two research questions and two corresponding hypotheses guided the study. Structured validated questionnaires was used to elicit responses from the managers. Test re-test method was used for reliability test and coefficient value of 0.81 was obtained. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation while the t-test was used to test the hypotheses of 0.05 level of significance. The responses revealed that all the items, are ICT skills required for successful management of businesses by managers except item 5, also the responses revealed that all the items are problem solving skills required by managers for management of business, except item 16. The researchers concluded that business cannot succeed without managers applying the necessary skills as outlines in this study. The researchers recommended among others that managers should from the time to time undergo training and workshop in order to update and upgrade themselves on the required skills for effective operation of business in a digital age.



Keywords: *Manager's Assessment, Skills, Management, Businesses Delta State.*

Introduction

The way and manner managers handle businesses matters a lot. Productivity and efficiency of any business depends largely on good organizational management by the business managers. According to Okoro and Dajur (2011) management is the co-ordination of all the resources of the organization through the process of planning, organizing, directing and controlling in order to attain the business objective of maximizing profit. Management also means the process of efficiently getting activities involved in the business completed through other people. Management needs skills to operate (Okoro & Dajur, 2011). Management identifies a special group whose job is to direct the efforts and activities of other people towards common objective, that is, getting things done through other people (Miller & Akume, 2014).

The importance of productivity in any business organization cannot be over-emphasized. The productivity of workers as cited by Nwachuwku in Okoro and Dajur 2011 is seen as the relationship between units of labour input and units of output. A skill is the learned capacity to carry out pre-determined result often with minimum outlay of time, energy or both. Skill usually requires certain environmental stimuli and situation to assess the level of the one being shown or used (Igodo, Ezoem, Ikejiofor, Nwalado and Ayemhenre 2013). According to Ikenga, Ayemhenre, Okpuzor and Uloko (2014), skill refers to the various psychological and interpersonal skills that lead people to a healthy and productive life. These skills include the ability to make informed decisions, communicate effectively, cope with life situations, attitude understanding and knowledge occupation (Ikenga, et al 2014).

According to Ihimekpen, George and Ayemhenre (2011) skills are the economic tools that empowers the individual, society and nation with marketable acumen to live a useful life instead of a life of dependency. Skill is an asset to the individual because with it, the individual can be invited to work, contribute his knowledge, experience and expertise.

Skills required of a manager can be divided into the following:

1. Self confidence - which has to do with doing what he thinks is right and continue doing it without minding other people's opinion until he succeeds.



Motivational skills – This skill makes the manager to do what he thinks is right and help him to succeed in it.

2. Saving and investment skills - saving is a skill which can be acquired through practice or learnt under a successful businessman. The world of business has developed over the years that what is thought to be hard and difficult before now is an activity of seconds and minutes, for example money transfer and payments far and near (Eluro, Ayemhenre and Oru, 2013).
3. Human/public relation skill has to do with skills such as courtesy, politeness, tolerance and patience, recognition of second party, positive handling of visitors, friendliness, respect and humourous (Nwalado, 2016).
4. Problem solving skill – According to Oyedipe (2009), problem solving is the process of working through details of a problem to reach a solution. It might be mathematical, scientific, analytical or systematic operations and can be used to measure the individual's critical thinking skill. Managers of businesses need to see problem as friends in order to scale through, to grow and become better managers.
5. Vocational skill – this is the ability of the manager to choose a business suitable to the environment putting all other variables into considerations such as the site, people's likeliness and loyalty to the product.
6. ICT skill – Information and communication technology is the transformation of data into information electronically. It comprises of equipment, procedures and people whereby thoughts, ideas opinions are expressed and circulated in hard copy or in soft copy form. It make business fasters and easier especially in special cases just like covid-19 pandemic where physical presence movement were restricted. Even as the world is growing electronically the business manager needs this skill to be able to cope with the globalization changes such skills includes use of computer, cell phones, ATM and POS.

Some businesses that were able to strive and manage successfully amid covid-19 pandemic while observing the NCDC guidelines, coupled with the application of ICT and problem solving skills are: food processing businesses;



pharmaceutical companies; water companies; petrol and gas filling stations and Banks.

Statement of the Problem

It has been observed over the years that many managers do not appreciate the importance of performance evaluation and feedbacks and in that process workers get frustrated and productivity suffers. Workplace is changing and so are skills that managers must have to be able to change with the change. Management influences and determines the productivity of the sub-ordinates and some managers accept low quality or mediocre performance, while others rationalize workers where quality work is required.

The success and failure of any business depends on management, skills and expertise. It has been observed that many managers are lacking in appropriate and necessary skills, required for a business to succeed especially in this digital age. Again, it has also been observed that many managers are not conversant with management skills and this portrays lack of efficiency and effectiveness which in turn affect their productivity in business management. It is against this backdrop that the researchers decided to find out managers' assessment of skills required for successful management of businesses amid covid-19 pandemic in Delta State.

Research Questions

The following two research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What are ICT skills required by managers for successful management of businesses amid covid-19 pandemic in Delta State?
2. What are problem-solving skills required by managers for successful management of businesses amid covid-19 pandemic in Delta State?

Hypotheses

The following two null hypotheses were raised for the study and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

H₀₁ There is no significant difference between managers of business in Delta State on their mean ratings of ICT skills needed for successful business management based on gender.

H₀₂ There is no significant difference between managers of businesses in Delta State on their mean ratings of problem-solving skills needed for successful management of businesses based on location.



Method

The study adopted descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprises of 70 managers of businesses in Delta State: food processing managers (15); pharmaceutical managers (15); water companies' managers (15); petrol and gas managers (15) and bank managers (10). The entire population was used for the study. Structured questionnaire was used for data collection on a 5 point Likert scale as: Strong agree (5); Agree (4); Undecided (3); Disagree (2) and Strongly disagree (1) The instrument was validated by two managers, one from food processing company and the other from a bank, both in Delta State. Test re-test method was used for reliability test and coefficient value of 0.81 was obtained when subjected to Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The Data collected was analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions and t-test to test the null hypotheses of 0.05 level of significance. The bench mark was, any mean score of 3.00 was accepted as required while score less than 3.00 was not required.

Results

Research Question 1: What are ICT skills required by managers for successful management of businesses amid covid-19 pandemic in Delta State?

Table 1: Mean ratings by managers on ICT skills required by managers for successful management of businesses amid covid-19 pandemic in Delta State.

S/No	ICT Skills	SA	A	U	D	SD	\bar{X}	Decision
1.	Capability of advertising products produced via internet	70	-	-	-	-	5.00	Required
2.	Ability to manipulate message search and replace, arithmetic functions, word and counts	60	10	-	-	-	4.86	Required
3.	Ability to draft and process all business correspondence through on-line	28	13	7	14	8	3.56	Required
4.	Ability to store and retrieve document using different storage devices	45	15	5	5	7	4.43	Required
5.	Capability of using internet for business communication	60	10	-	-	-	4.86	Required
6.	Ability to send messages using	4	9	0	49	8	2.31	Not



7.	e-mail, whatsapp or CD Rom Graphics ability diagram, photographic, desktop publishing and mail merging	28	7	14	13	8	3.55	Required
8.	Ability to operate computer for on-line business	50	10	10	-	-	4.80	Required
9.	Ability to edit messages, insert, delete or amend	40	20	10	-	-	4.90	Required
10.	Ability to use ATM, POS or even mobile transfer for business transactions	60	10	-	-	-	4.86	Required
Cluster Mean							4.31	Required

Data in Table 1 above revealed that for a business to be successful, managers require certain ICT skills as represented in the table. All items whose mean is above 3.00 were excepted. The cluster mean score of 4.31 indicates that managers in Delta State require ICT skills for successful management of businesses amid covid-19 pandemic.

Research Question 2: What are the problem-solving skills required by managers for successful management of businesses amid covid-19 pandemic in Delta State?

Table 2: Mean ratings by managers on problem-solving skills required for successful management of businesses amid covid-19 pandemic in Delta State.

S/No	ICT Skills	SA	A	U	D	SD	\bar{X}	Decision
11.	Ability to clearly identify a problem	50	10	10	-	-	4.80	Required
12.	Ability to profer solutions to the identified problem	60	10	-	-	-	4.86	Required
13.	Ability to brainstorm in order to stimulate creative and imaginative ideas	30	26	3	2	9	3.94	Required
14.	Ability to access and collect needed ideas for solution	70	-	-	-	-	5.00	Required
15.	Ability to select the most appropriate of the alternative solutions	28	13	7	14	8	3.46	Required



16.	Ability to analyze complex situations appropriately	14	6	4	16	30	2.40	Not Required
17.	Ability to implement the selected solutions well	51	19	-	-	-	4.93	Required
18.	Ability to apply alternative solutions to complex situations	40	20	10	-	-	4.75	Required
19.	Ability to define a problem to know how to approach it	50	20	-	-	-	4.80	Required
20.	Ability to take decisions based on reasoned available facts and ideas	60	10	-	-	-	4.86	Required
Cluster mean							4.38	Required

The data presented in Table 2 above indicates that apart from item 16 which had mean score of 2.40 implying that it is not required, all other items had mean scores above 3.00 showing that they are required as answered by the respondents. The cluster mean score of 4.38 shows that problem-solving skills is required by managers for successful management of businesses amid covid-19 pandemic in Delta State

Table 3: Summary of t-test analyses of male and female business managers on ICT skills and problems solving skills required for successful management of businesses amid covid-19 pandemic based on their location

Sample	N	\bar{X}	Df	SD	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Gender managers	43	4.23	68	1.02	0.55	0.59	NS
Location of managers	27	4.08		1.18			

From table 3 above, the t-calculated of 0.55 is less than t-critical value of 0.59, the null hypotheses earlier stated is therefore upheld, that there is no significant difference between managers mean ratings based on their location regarding skills required for successful management of businesses amid covid-19 pandemic in Delta State.



Discussion of Findings

The data presented in Table 1 provided answers to research question one. The findings revealed that apart from item 6 with mean score of 2.31, all other items has mean score above 3.00 meaning that they are required skills for managers to manage a successful business amid covid-19 pandemic in Delta State. This study collaborates with Ikenga et al. (2014) whose study revealed that skills include the ability to make informed decisions, communicate effectively and cope with life situations, attitude understanding and knowledge occupation.

Table 2 revealed that all the items are problem-solving skills required for successful management of businesses amid covid-19 pandemic in Delta State except item 16 with 2.40 mean score. This is in line with Oyedipe (2009) that problem solving is the process of working through details of a problem to reach a solution. It could be mathematical, scientific, analytical or systematic operations and can be used to measure the individual thinking skill.

The result of the t-test of the null hypotheses was upheld as the t-calculated of 0.55 is less than t-table value of 0.59 at 0.05 level of significance.

Conclusion

Since the success and failure of any business depends on management and managers needs skills to operate, it becomes imperative that managers possess the relevant skills required for effective performance. Although a number of workers might present the posture of hard work, the ability to perform well will be in doubt if the managers' ability to ensure good work and performance are lacking in the skills required.

Notwithstanding, managers are encouraged to play their role of management well having applied the skills acquired in order to ensure a healthy and competitive business environment in this era of changing world occasion by covid-19 pandemic.

Recommendations

This paper recommends the following;

1. Managers should from time to time undergo training and workshop in order to update/upgrade themselves on ICT and problem-solving skills to be able to manage businesses in the present day workplace.



2. There should be public private partnership (PPP) on acquisition of skills by managers of businesses in Delta State.
3. Managers are also encouraged to study the present situation just like covid-19 pandemic before applying any skill of management in business.

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