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# Digital Consciousness and Organizational Performance of Aviation Firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

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**Abstract:** *This study examines the relationship between digital consciousness and organizational performance of aviation firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. The study adopted the explanatory and quantitative method, hence correlational research design is employed. Sample size of three hundred and ten (310) employees was derived from a population of one thousand six hundred (1600) using Krejcie and Morgan determination table as sampling technique. Data collection was gathered through closed ended structured questionnaire. The reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. The hypotheses were tested using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 23.0. The tests were carried out at a 95% confidence interval and a 0.05 level of significance. The results of analysed data showed digital consciousness significantly correlated positively with the measures of organizational performance being quality service and patronage. Based on the empirical findings, the study concluded that digital consciousness has positive significant relationship with organizational performance. Therefore, the study recommends that in the era digital economy and the pace at which customers tastes changes, management of aviation firms should ensure the recruited or employees of organization are digitally conscious as it is seen to enhance organizational performance.*

**Key words:** *Digital Consciousness, Organizational Performance, Quality Service, Patronage.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Businesses are becoming more conscious of the need to adjust their operations, strategies, and routines to the difficulties posed by the "new normal" (Loureiro, Ferreira & Simes, 2021). To maintain company continuity, businesses have started to streamline and increase the efficiency of their operations using digital technologies. Thus, a shifting and unstable environment is to blame for the rise in popularity of digital capabilities (Zhen, Yousaf, Radulescu & Yasir, 2021).

In the digital age, technology has become a crucial part of business operations, enabling the creation of organisations that can organise supply chains and generate value across borders while retaining integration (Hasbi, Fakhri, Saragih, Kurnia & Aini, 2020). Furthermore, it is what makes geographic boundaries hazy, unhindered, and makes the distance between economic activity centres within a group of commercial organisations increasingly irrelevant (Blouch et al., 2021). The involved activities include integrating horizontal relationships characterised by supply chain pattern structure (horizontal integration via a new generation of global value chain networks), integrating vertical relationships in the production process (vertical networking of an intelligent production

system), having mechanisation processes throughout the entire supply chain (through engineering across the entire value chain), and accelerating economic growth (Kang & Kim, 2017).

The purpose of this paper therefore was to examine the relationship between digital consciousness and organizational performance of aviation firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study included:

- i. To examine the relationship between digital consciousness and quality service of aviation firms in Port Harcourt, River State, Nigeria?
- ii. To examine the relationship between digital consciousness and patronage of aviation firms in Port Harcourt, River State, Nigeria?



**Figure 1:** conceptual model for the relationship between digital consciousness and organizational performance

**Source:** Desk Research (2022)

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Theoretical Foundation

#### Human Capital Theory

The theory of human capital was propounded by Becker (1962). The theory argues that individual workers have a set of skills or abilities which they can improve or accumulate through training and education. It is an illustration of people's investment in themselves or in their skills that eventually increases their economic productivity. The theory is based on the idea that human capital leads to creativity which eventually results in receiving higher personal income.

Babalola (2003) stated in Olanyan and Okemakinde (2008) the logic behind investing in human capital is built on three points of view, which are: first, the new generation must be provided with the knowledge that previous generations also had. Second, the new generation should be trained in the ways in which the existing knowledge can be used to develop and invent different products or social services. Third, the new generation should be encouraged to discover entirely new approaches in fulfilling the community's needs through creative approaches.

### **Digital Consciousness**

Consciousness is an expression of experience, an expression of your higher grasping and control over life and reality. Digital consciousness is a nice term for this age of digital devices and digitization of experiences in organization. Before you are digitally conscious, you are naturally digitally unconscious. You will be exhibiting certain unique unconscious responses to digital surroundings and ecosystem. Like any ecosystem, digital realm also will have layers of experiences. digital art, digital signs, digital science, digital philosophy, digital religions, digital fetishism, digital ideology, digital pathology all will be part of this way of life that reflects in this new way of thinking. How is digitization coming to our life in such a big way? It is part of our professional and personal life alike. Workplace intimacy and expertise with digital technologies follow at home. The more we use them in our economic transactions and money making moments, it becomes closer to us. This is quite natural.

Digitization introduces a lot of layers and hierarchies of experiences. We bank on technology to pierce through these layers to reach out to more people virtually. Then these layers will become natural parts of our digital persona and virtual life. These virtual networks offer huge amount of 'life casting' to attract our interests. Digitization has huge capability to create a virtual layer that imitates you and amplify your like and dislikes. This reflexive capacity of digital medium can induces a hyper level of narcissism in our ego. It can override your balanced state of mind in great scales.

When we deal with digital experience, there is a certain amount of abstraction and condensation in this mode as opposed to analogue experiences. It is always in beta. Data is never in final form. It continuously evolves with the digital interfaces. Thus human mind fails to a certain extent to generate a final reasoning or conclusion about digital moments. When we experience anything our mind works on both reality principle and pleasure principle. Digital experiences provide a digital layer that directly interacts with human to create a satisfaction in both real terms and pleasure. Thus, human mind continues to explore digital experience. And when people are expose to digital devices the more conscious they are to use of digital assets.

### **Organizational Performance**

Robbins and DeCenzo (2005) defined organization as a systematic arrangement of people brought together to accomplish some specific purpose. From this perspective, the organization comprises of people who are coordinating from different geographical location with the objective of achieving the purpose of the organization. Organizational performance depends on the people who put all other resources together to achieve the purpose. Without the people who convert other resources to finish products, organizations cease to exist. In the words of Hitt (1988) cited in Adewale, Abolaji and Kolade, (2011) organization is the framework of responsibility, authority and duties through which the resources of an enterprise are brought together and coordinated for the achievement of set goals. As expected organizations strive for performance and continuity on one hand, which are paramount focus of the people in the organization.

Organizational performance is a subjective perception of reality, which explains the multitude of critical reflection on the concept and its measuring instruments (Lebas, 1995; Wholey J., 1996). At present, there are a variety of definitions attributed to the concept of organizational

performance due to its subjective nature. Thus, the concept of organizational performance has gained increasing attention in recent decades, is pervasive in almost all spheres of human activity. Organizations perform various activities to achieve their organizational objectives. Quantified repeatable activities help to utilize processes for the organization to be successful in order to ascertain the level of performance and management to make informed decisions on where, if needed, within the processes to actions to improve performance (Georgopoulos, 1957; Robbins, 1987). Therefore, it is possible to claim that there is a close relationship between the organizational objective and the concept of organizational performance. Nevertheless, organizational performance is one of the most argued concepts about which there has never been an agreement among various researchers and theorists (Johnson & Sowa, 2019).

### **Quality Service**

The term service quality is an association of two different words; service and quality. Service means any activity or benefit that one party can offer to another that is essentially intangible and does not result in ownership of anything. Quality on the hand has come to be recognized as a strategic tool for attaining operational efficiency and better performance of the business. Nowadays people live in an environment that is increasingly moving towards a service based economy. Other services are not small part of the economy, but are considered as the heart of value creation in economy. Due to the increasing role of service organizations in the areas of the economy and the importance of quality in the areas of competition, service organizations must look to service quality management with dynamic and strategic approach and have a clear understanding of the quality status of services, the expectations of the client (customer) and the general characteristics of their quality.

Service with regards compared to goods are intangible and are considered an integral part of service providers, thus their assessment by their customers are more difficult. Service quality means the ability of a service provider to satisfy customers in an efficient manner through which he can better the performance of the business. In the service sector, quality is an important element for the success of business. It is because of the realization of its positive link with profits, increased market share and customer satisfaction.

Services quality is defined as a measure of meet customer needs and expectations by the service. Therefore, services quality can be defined difference between customers' expectations of service and services received. In addition, services quality has been defined as "an attitude or general judgment of customers in relation to supremacy of a service, (Afthanorhan, Awang, Rashid, Foziah, & Ghazali, 2019). Services quality in marketing literature is defined as: overall assessment of customers from company services. The concept of service quality includes service delivery process and also the results offered services, (Awara & Esu, 2022).

### **Patronage**

According to the Oxford English Dictionary (2008), the word customer or consumer patronage mean a person or thing that eats or uses something or a person who buys goods and services for personal consumption or used. People patronize organizations products/services at one point or

the other. Some authors or scholars use customer patronage and loyalty interchangeably because customer patronage precedes loyalty. There is a strong relationship between patronage and loyalty. Patronage is born out of a desire to be committed to an organization either based on its service quality or perceived service qualities as well as products qualities. Hence, the extent to which a customer will patronize the services of a retail outlet depends on how the customer perceives the business physical environment, the treatment, price and how the customer also thinks and feels that the condition of the service rendered by the retail outlet is consistent with his / her expectation. The desire of a customer to keep shopping in a particular business organization is as a result of the outcome of the previous services perceived by the customer.

The success of every business organization depends largely on the effective customer services initiated by the management of the organization. Without effective customer services, customer patronage isn't visible by any organization and the tendencies for business to sustain growth is not also guaranteed. Hence, the need for effective customer services, which in return attract customer patronage leading to business sustainability.

### **Digital Consciousness and Organizational Performance**

It is now widely accepted that businesses may employ digital technology, which combines information technology, networking, communication, computing, etc., to give them a sustainable competitive advantage that will keep competition alive across a variety of industries. According to Mansoor and Wijaksana (2021), corporate digitalization is a tactic companies can employ to research and adopt cutting-edge digital technology. According to Zaman, Florez-Perez, Abbasi, Nawaz, Fariás & Pradana, (2022) because of their adaptability, durability, and lower costs, digital formats are convenient for a variety of jobs. Over the past 10 years, many company infrastructures have been changed to a digital format in order to promote connection between products, processes, and services (Devi et al., 2021). Business practices, firm capabilities, products and services, and even connections between companies in a wider business network can all be profoundly changed by digital technology, which affects organizations in a wide range of industries and sectors (Willayat, Saud, Ijaz, Silvianita & El-Morshedy, 2022).

When an organization plans for digital strategies in a setting that is changing quickly, digital culture can also exist (Martnez-Caro, Pérez-Luño & Fuentes-Blasco, 2020). Therefore, even though they provide obstacles, the current organizational culture should support accepted values and standards (Pradana, Pérez-Luño & Fuentes-Blasco, 2020). Before deciding whether the digitalization endeavor may be useful, it must be resolved. According to Martnez-Caro, Cegarra-Navarro & Alfonso-Ruiz (2020), the organization should first identify the characteristics of the current culture before removing those characteristics. Establishing organizational culture traits that enable effective corporate digitalization is also crucial at the same time.

In fact, the digital age has investigated the potential of technologies to enhance organizational performance. However, different digital technologies have different effects (Pradana *et al.*, 2020). As a result, there has been pressure to demonstrate that digital technologies consistently improve organizational performance (Fakhri, Ferreira, J., & Gouveia, 2021). This essay focuses on the dual ways that digital technologies—from the standpoints of corporate digitalization and digital organizational value—can affect performance. Organizations can gain from business

digitalization by improving connectivity and reducing costs (Martnez-Caro, Cegarra-Navarro & Alfonso-Ruiz, 2020). On the other hand, maintaining employees' Internet connectivity while they are working on duties might be beneficial thanks to digital organizational value. Undoubtedly, the ways that people connect, communicate, send, and receive information within and across organizations are changed by digital organizational value (Farinha, Ferreira, & Gouveia, 2016).

From the foregoing discourse, the study hypothesized thus:

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between digital consciousness and quality service of the aviation firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between digital consciousness and patronage in the aviation firms in Port Harcourt, River State, Nigeria.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted the explanatory and quantitative method, hence correlational research design is employed. Sample size of three hundred and ten (310) employees was derived from a population of one thousand six hundred (1600) using Krejcie and Morgan determination table as sampling technique. Data collection was gathered through closed ended structured questionnaire. The reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. The hypotheses were tested using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 23.0. The tests were carried out at a 95% confidence interval and a 0.05 level of significance.

### **DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

**Table 1: Correlation matrix for digital consciousness and organizational performance**

		Digital Consciousness	Quality Service	Patronage
Digital Consciousness	Pearson Correlation	1	.991**	.992**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	280	280	280
Quality Service	Pearson Correlation	.991**	1	.985**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	280	280	280
Patronage	Pearson Correlation	.992**	.985**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	280	280	280

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

Source: SPSS Output

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between digital consciousness and quality service of the aviation firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.

The table 1 showed the correlation of hypotheses one and two; the hypothesis one showed a significant correlation at  $r = .991^{**}$  where  $P\text{-value} = .000$  ( $P < 0.001$ ). This implies a very strong and significant relationship between both variables at 95% level of confidence. We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_{0:1}$ ), and upheld the alternate and restated, thus; there is a significance relationship between digital consciousness and quality service in the aviation firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between digital consciousness and patronage in the aviation firms in Port Harcourt, River State, Nigeria.

The hypothesis two showed a significant correlation at  $r = .992^{**}$  where  $P\text{-value} = .000$  ( $P < 0.001$ ). This implies a very strong and significant relationship between both variables at 95% level of confidence. We therefore reject the null hypothesis ( $H_{0:6}$ ), and upheld the alternate and restated, thus; there is a significance relationship between digital consciousness and patronage in the aviation firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The finding showed that, there is a strong positive relationship between digital consciousness and measures of organizational performance, quality service and patronage of which the significant is based on  $r=0.991$ ;  $p= 0.000 < 0.05.$ , and  $r=0.992$ ;  $p= 0.000 < 0.05.$ , both at 95% confidence interval leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis ( $H_{0:3}$ ) and ( $H_{0:4}$ ), stated in the chapter one, and upheld the alternate and restated thus; there is a significant relationship between digital consciousness and quality service and patronage. This study findings support the empirical findings of Smith (1990) in his study suggests that individuals will need to create and use self-training opportunities as an integral element in personal digital consciousness. Self-training is therefore, promoted as a developmental strategy which is beneficial both to the individual and the organisation. Indeed one finds that many of the perceived benefits from self-training are highlighting the integration of individual development and organisational development. In support of this finding, Stewart (1991) argues that unlike other development methods, self-training allowed the necessary flexibility and facilitates a more immediate response to the changing needs of individuals and organisations.

The study finding agrees with Martínez-Caro *et al.* (2020) who stated that although a digitalised organisational culture can lead to better performance, especially in an environment already familiar with digital technology, the ideal digital organisation value cannot be achieved without a clear digitalisation strategy. The organisations need to identify the existing cultural attributes then select the attributes that can accelerate digital business and form new organisational cultural attributes to support the success of digital business.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study concludes that digital consciousness positively enhances organizational performance in the aviation firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.

Therefore, the study recommends that in the era digital economy and the pace at which customers tastes changes, management of aviation firms should ensure the recruited or

employees of organization are digitally conscious as it is seen to enhance organizational performance.

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