Modern Office Automation and Managers' Productivity of Commercial Banks in South-East Senatorial District of Rivers State

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Abstract

This study showcases the influence of modern office automation on managers' productivity of commercial banks in south-east senatorial district of Rivers State. The study adopted a descriptive survey design to acquire responses from respondents of 6 commercial banks in south-east senatorial district of Rivers State. The mangers and departmental heads of these banks totalling 22 respondents were the study population. The study embraced census since the study population was little and known. Questionnaire was the main instrument for data collection. The nature of the data was quantitative. Spearman Ranking Correlation with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science was used to analyse and test proposed hypothesis. The study concluded that, office automation is an important area of today's management that is being significantly changed under the impacts of modern electronic technology. The study concluded that, office automated processes help managers manage their time more effectively, allowing them to prioritize tasks and meet deadlines. Thus, managers of organization should constantly augment their offices with modern automated devise for better productivity.

Keyword: Modern office automation, managers, productivity, commercial banks

Introduction

The rapid changes in various workstation and beyond has negated slow and time-consuming administrative processes. In this regard, it is necessary to develop a device through which the speed and precision of administrative processes could be enhanced. To this effect, modern office automation became the answer. Modern office automation is the process by which machines and equipment are introduced in the workstation to facilitate administrative processes, remove bureaucracy and unnecessary delay of the office functions (Ovbiagbale, et al, 2019). With reference to, Okon and Okogun (2020) modern office automation is the use of computer systems and software in service delivery. Consequently, office automation is the use of self-regulating devices to handle office activities traditionally performed manually or by semi-mechanical methods. The automation of modern office has thus revolutionized the managers procedures in modern offices and has greatly improved the way they carry out their duties.

The integration of technology into office work has greatly improved the speed and efficiency in which information is processed in the modern-day office. Office information is collected, processed, and stored as well as disseminated to support decision making in any organization. With reference to Okeke (2013) a manager in a modern office is expected to be a professional in the use of information technology tools which includes the ability to manipulate hardware, software, database and communication to input, process and output. According to Okeke (2013 cited in Chinwe & Okem, 2021) office automation can improve the communication abilities of managers. Modern office automation significantly boosts manager productivity by automating repetitive tasks, streamlining workflows, and providing real-time data and insights, allowing managers to focus on strategic initiatives and decision-making (Onoja, 2020). Office automation tools automate tasks like scheduling, reminders, and approvals, freeing up managers' time for more complex

tasks. Integrated communication tools and platforms facilitate seamless communication and collaboration among team members, leading to faster decision-making and project execution. Automation provides real-time data access and analysis, enabling managers to make informed decisions and track progress more effectively. By automating processes and reducing manual tasks, office automation improves overall efficiency and reduces operational costs.

However, the extent to which this assertion is true has not yet been proven among managers in some Commercial Banks in South-East Zone of Rivers State. According to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) (2013) commercial banks are financial institutions that provide banking services to businesses, individuals, and governments, including accepting deposits, making loans, and facilitating payments, and are distinct from investment banks that focus on capital markets. Commercial banks offer a wide range of banking services, including: accepting deposits, granting loans facilitating payments. offering financial products. They are profit-oriented and can access publicly. managers in these institutions carry out administrative tasks. The utilization of office automation can impact on their effectiveness to which they discharge these assigned tasks. Nevertheless, the extent to which this modern office automation influences the productivity of managers in this zone is yet to be empirically ascertain. Consequently, considering the non-urban nature of this zone, it is therefore, paramount to ascertain the extent to which modern office automation impact on the productivity of commercial banks managers in this zone.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to empirically examine the impact of modern office automation on managers productivity of commercial banks in south-east senatorial district of Rivers State. However, the specific objective was to examine the relationship between modern office automation and managers productivity, Therefore, it was postulated that, there is no relationship between modern office automation and managers productivity of commercial banks in south-east senatorial district of Rivers State.

Literature Review

Conceptual Review

Modern Office Automation

According to Koko and Okogun (2020) office is a place where administrative activities take place. Ajike (2015) sees office as a position where an organization's paper or clerical work is performed. Therefore, an office is a place where managerial, clerical and financial tasks are carried out in an organization. In today's offices, office activities depend on modern transaction tools. These tools ranging from photocopiers, printers, fax machines, electronic correspondence and image editing, etc. The process of utilizing these ICT tools in carrying out office functions is called modern office automation, (Dosunmu, Bukki & Akintola, 2017).

Some common functions office includes: registration and control of incoming mail; creation, proofing, storage and retrieval of documents; report and memo production and circulation; communication activities and meeting participation; and business calculations and planning. Ultimately, the essence of office automation is to match computer functions to office functions. For example, processing data in digital and alphanumeric form is used for word processing which, in turn, may be directly involved in the creation and proofing of documents. The computer storage function may be successfully used in different filing systems and/or management of document flow. Mathematical and logical computer abilities may be used for business planning, modeling and decision making. These examples of the application of computer functions to various office functions may be extended to many other office functions as well.

Today office automation not only means a process of mechanizing office task but also of utilizing computer technology to automate office procedures. As a result of a wide range of new equipment and technologies, it is now possible for data, letters, audio/visual information and mechanical functions to be encoded and transmitted in digital form Onoja, 2020). In connection with the problem of office automation, these technologies are often grouped together and called "information technology and offices using this technology and equipment are called electronic or integrated offices. From a technical standpoint, an electronic office can process and transmit information using electronic devices. Often, word and data processing have been combined and most office devices linked to create an integrated office system. Consequently, reprographics, word and data processing and telecommunications, which have traditionally been considered as radically different fields, are now merely becoming just different aspects of a single information technology.

Office automation in a simple form refers to all processes that integrate computer and communication technology with the traditional manual processes. According to Kontos (2015) office automation is a conglomerate of all the separate office information processing technologies which include: word processing, data processing, micrographics, reprographics and telecommunications. It also refers to the various automated electronic methods by which information is gathered, processed, reproduced, communicated, stored or protected and retrieved (Onoja, 2020). This includes not only the methods through which office information is processed by the resources applied to capture, process, deliver and or store office information. Office automation is a mechanism which aims to improve organization efficiency and productivity through use of effective and efficient management by utilizing electronic flow of correspondence in organization level, easy searching stored data, quick and timely response to client, removal of paper from administrative correspondence cycle, proper control over users, maintaining and recording data efficiently and improve communications within organization ((Onoja, 2020), increase non-productive activities like physical archiving of documents , maintaining records of operation in less volume, high safety and easy access, producing necessary report with different diagrams, decrease duties of office managers, possibility to telephone supervising on tasks and activities in any time, control over classified data, precision in doing operation and recording all affairs, removal of paper completely in performing work process, facility and speed in operation flow, high security in maintaining documents and possibility to rapid accessing them (Onoja, 2020).

According to Esene (2012 cited in Onoja, 2020) the modern offices of today lay due emphasis on paperless office as a way of facilitating the process of correspondence handling and operations. For instance, Ekula (2008) stated that in offices computer, database management and other accessories are increasingly being used to organize and control records. Managers are now being required to be able to operate computer using Dbase, Excel, Corel Draw and Word Processing packages such as Word Perfect, MS word, Power Point, Adobe Page Maker and in particular the dexterity to use most of the application packages. Esene (2012) further stressed that; computer internet is now being used to send and retrieve information from any part of the world with relative ease. Office automation has taken over the entire activities of very many organizations with various electronic equipment such as computers, electronic typewriters, photocopiers, teleprinters, fax recorders, telephones with cellular, GSM/Mobile attachments, electronic switch boards, laminating machines, scanners, Dictaphones, magnetic and non-magnetic tapes. All these equipment's, as a matter of fact are used to speed up the processing of correspondence (Ekula, 2010).

Office automation is a process that started with the industrial revolution. The typewriter was introduced in the 1840 and was followed by stenotypes machines, duplicators, tabulating machines and other types. In Nigeria, digital computer made it first appearance in 1963. According to Federal office of statistics "Census of computer installation (1984). Office automation is not widespread in Nigeria, companies with only

mainframes and minicomputers still rely on typewriter. Fax machines are only found in the most advanced offices, but the telex is more widespread. Electronic mail, internet service like surfing into websites and teleconferencing not common in offices, though found in some advanced offices in private organization. Office automation is a gradual evolutionary process of change. In many ways, the evolution of office automation parallel to data processing. Both evolved primarily in responses to the advancements in computer technology experienced in using the technology and changing business. In 1977 the total number of computer installation had grown to around 70% it was during this time governmental organization agencies and parastatals and banks began to show interest in computers (Peter, 2009).

Office automation has been most widespread in the private organization in Nigeria. Mostly in the area of financial management including payroll, accounts ledger, sales and invoicing (Kulie, 1995). For example, Nigerian banks are under pressure to automate considerable financial outlay. NCUD (1988) list 142 banks that have automated their offices. Government departments are rapidly automating its office during this information age. Among other state governments also adapted the automated trend. At present the office automation concepts of administration support, emerge along with the data processing, concept of management information system (MIS) the objective is to use computers to support administrative and management activities. Considerable areas in the design and implementation of modern office automation are discussed below.

Word Processing: Word processing is a basic facet of office automation. The idea behind word processing is the ability to type text and save it in the external memory of the computer (most often a magnetic disc) instead of having it typed on paper. Text can then be easily retrieved, edited or changed. Text correction, which is extremely time consuming when done on paper, may be easily accomplished through the use of the VDU and keyboard. Furthermore, printing can be executed without error and at speeds significantly higher than any professional typist. When selecting a word processing system, the editing rate of the system is usually not considered extremely important since actual typing accounts for only approximately 1.2% of white-collar worker costs. One of the more important aspects is the ability of word processors to store, edit and merge files, allowing letters and other forms to be re-used after simple alterations. Sophisticated systems can also be used for advanced information retrieval and sorting, thereby linking two office technologies, word processing and data processing (Kontos, 2015).

Business Information Management: Data base management systems are the most effective way of creating office file support systems and managing office information. Data base management systems are programs which have the capability to create a certain pool of records which are logically linked. Important features of data base management systems include the ability to create data files with a specified structure, the possibility of accessing, extracting and updating information for generation of reports and/or tables, and the development of relationships between various items contained in the data base (Chinwe & Okem, 2021). This last feature, the use of relationships between elements in a data set, is one of the most important features of data base management systems. Using such relationships, large amounts of data can be updated automatically by simply updating a few key data items. Data base management systems usually require a significant amount of random-access memory (RAM) and fast processing time within the core.

Data base management systems operate in one of two file processing modes. Traditional data base management systems handle sets of related data. Subsets of information within a file (a record), contain information about its relationship to other records within the file (Lydia, 2024). Furthermore, each item contained in a record has some information about its relationship to other items in the record. In contrast, file management programs (i.e. CPM micro-computer system DATASTAR) do not indicate relationships between records within a file. Items within a record however, may be related. In these systems information

is elicited by various sorting methods. Data base management systems are more general than file management systems, but file management systems are very useful for search and retrieval within a large set of unrelated data. When selecting a data base management system several factors must be considered. First, system documentation should be reviewed. Even the best data base management system is useless without good documentation. Second, data base structures vary greatly from system to-system. There are definite limits as to record length, number of items in each record, length and type of item within a record, etc. In addition, not all systems have the ability to interface with other computer systems. This may limit the possibility of accessing the data base created by the system with other software.

Third, available input/output (I/O) functions should be investigated. 1/0 functions can reduce the probability of errors in data input. Programs are available which check input data for appropriate length and type (letters or numbers) and report errors in entry. Other data characteristics such as numeric range or spelling can also be checked. 1/0 functions also allow the printing of data in desired formats with such features as titles, subtitles, etc. Fourth, data editing functions are vital for system versatility. Good systems allow the updating of several files simultaneously, and allow the use of mathematical relationships to automatically update other related data within the set. It is also possible to have programs which mathematically alter input as specified before entry into the data base. Finally, the ability for users to create application programs for work with specific types of data (Code generators) should be considered.

Telecommunications Communication: Telecommunications Communication activities occupy approximately 30% to 70% of a manager's time (With modern technology however, many communication activities may be greatly aided by electronic devices. Electronic mail systems and teleconferencing systems are two major examples of computer-aided communication. The term electronic mail covers a wide range of electronic text communication facilities from immediate transmission of simple data to electronic mail boxes - a facility to store material until the receiving point asks for it. Electronic mail systems allow the transmission of information from one place or person to another using electronic means for capture, transmission and delivery. The information may be in text and/or graphic form. An electronic mail system may be successfully used within the office to coordinate information, distribute projects, monitor project progress, elicit specific information, and aid in coordinating intellectual, informational and production activities. Usually, electronic mail systems work in a store-and-forward mode with one of two principal configurations.

The first configuration is called a centralized configuration and is based on a time-sharing computer system to which users are connected by terminals. This allows electronic messages to be written, sent and received directly at the terminal. In this configuration each user has a personal file to which all incoming mail and copies of outgoing mail are written and stored. The second configuration, called a decentralized configuration, is based on working stations connected to small computers dedicated to storage and distribution of messages. Each computer is linked into a distributed communication network. An example of such a decentralized system is the ARPANET mail system named MSG (Lydia, 2024). Such features as integration of graphic abilities into electronic mail systems, word processing and voice mailing are now becoming commercially available. Efforts have also begun to adopt a standard message format that will promote further use of electronic mail systems.

Teleconferencing is another alternative in text-based communications and together with electronic mail serves specific communication needs within the office environment. All conferencing systems use a central computer to coordinate, distribute and retrieve text messages. Messages are stored in files corresponding to particular conferences and distributed to a list of participants.

Human Considerations: Although consideration of the technological aspects of office automation is important in the implementation of an office automation system, the most critical and delicate side of design and implementation is related to the human factors involved. Three main areas of concern are: the personnel/computer interface; social impacts; and health considerations (Chinwe & Okem, 2021).

Personnel/Computer Interface: The design of the personnel/computer interface must be an integral part of the total system design to help ensure successful implementation and easy, effective use of the system. Design of the interface should start with the establishment of current needs and the forecasting of future inter-office demands. The system can then be constructed to meet both current and anticipated demands. Future users should take an active part in this process. The operational system within the computer should be as "user-friendly as possible and avoid the use of terse and/or confusing messages. This will greatly reduce frustration when using the computer to perform office tasks. To make system use more effective, all system functions should be explained to users in manuals using non-technical terms, since most managerial and clerical staff are not familiar with technical computer language (Chinwe & Okem, 2021). A well designed, on-line "help function would also facilitate full system utilization. Whenever possible, all communication interfaces (terminals) within the system should be standardized to avoid confusion and frustration when personnel use more than one terminal. Information presentation is another essential aspect of the user/computer interface. Information should be presented in the clearest manner possible. Clear presentation of information is often aided by the use of graphics.

Social Aspects: Unfortunately, the social impacts of office automation are poorly understood and often completely ignored when a system is selected and implemented. The lack of knowledge about the social impacts of automation is even more serious in light of the ever-increasing use of computers in the office. Implementation of office automation systems presents several serious social problems. Many times, employees will feel "threatened by the implementation of a computer system, and in some cases, these feelings are well founded. As discussed above, automation is designed to increase efficiency by reducing the labor required for a specific task. In some instances, this may result in staff reductions. Furthermore, top managers are often quite willing to invest in new equipment since the cost of computers and other electronic equipment can be largely recovered through depreciation while clerical workers are often demanding better pay, benefits, promotions and attention to health and safety (Chinwe & Okem, 2021).

Health Considerations: Several potential health problems should be taken into consideration when implementing an office automation system. The most important health problem is the possible development of stress conditions which may produce such symptoms as irritability, headaches, depression, nervousness, insomnia, and/or loss of appetite. This condition may be a result of the significant amounts of time devoted to work at the computer and reduced personal contact. Furthermore, such factors as slow computer response time, boredom, weariness, poor environmental conditions, worry about responsibility and the general information load from the computer may aggravate the situation. There is also concern about the effects of X-rays which comes from the high-voltage electron beam in the cathode ray tube (CRT) of a video terminal. Although the level of radiation is very low in comparison to set allowable radiation exposure limits for radiation, there is as yet no agreement on the potential effects of long-term, low-level radiation. Another area of concern which is not well understood is the effects of low-level radiation on pregnant women.

Research is still required to better understand the possible health effects of automation and computer use. Important health risks associated with screen-based systems are visual fatigue and eyestrain. Eyestrain and fatigue may be caused by glare, reflections and/or lack of contrast on the screen. Symptoms include soreness of eyes, a throbbing behind the eyeballs, and difficulty in focusing. These symptoms may also be accompanied by nausea and headaches. Some evidence exists to show that visual display units (VDU) can

accelerate certain ocular disorders such as cataracts and that screens flickering at a certain rate may induce epileptic seizures. The latter can usually be avoided by adjustment of the VDU controls. Well-designed seats and desks with terminals are essential to avoid posture problems and protect personnel from sore muscles in the neck and shoulders, backaches and headaches. In general, ergonomic and health considerations should be an important and integral part of the system construction and not viewed as an expensive luxury which cannot be afforded.

Managers' Productivity

Productivity means the efficiency of an organization or organization ability to convert inputs, such as capital and labor, into outputs, like services or products. Productivity increases when output increases faster than inputs. Additionally, you can also observe a productivity increase when a company generates the same output with lower inputs. Productivity is directly proportional to an increase in revenue. Productivity growth allows an economy to produce and consume more goods and services from the same amount of work (Ishan, 2025). It is important to managers because it fosters confidence by making them more efficient. Productivity is also critical for business leaders and analysts. Productivity measures how efficiently an organization or its employees convert inputs, like labor and capital, into outputs, like goods or services. Managers use goals, incentives, development, and communication strategies to enhance employee performance and help them increase their productivity (Ishan, 2025). Well-managed teams come out with increased productivity. On the other hand, poor productivity management can be one of the biggest reasons for lackluster employee performance and engagement. Studies show that good management can significantly boost productivity and increase market value and growth, and withstand adverse situations like a recession. The actions of managers and the enterprise can decisively influence the realization of productivity.

Managers play a vital role in improving and maintaining productivity levels in their teams. A Gallup study points out that as much as 70% of the variance in employee engagement can be attributed to management. A good manager will have a clear understanding of the skill levels of each team member, their strengths and weaknesses, and work with them to ensure the best output from each of them. Managers also consider teams. Stress levels and mental well-being and extends support when needed. Highly productive managers help a company achieve its goals. Productivity boosts morale and creates a company culture of excellence, resulting in an improved workplace environment. When a company is highly productive and successful, incentives like pay hikes, bonuses, medical insurance, etc., are made available to the employees. It motivates employees and advances their careers as the company flourishes. For every company, productivity in the workplace is an essential aspect that the top management must understand in order to enjoy success.

Productivity managers analyze workflows and processes to pinpoint areas where efficiency is lacking and implement solutions to streamline operations. This includes setting clear goals, using tools and techniques to improve time management, and fostering a culture of efficiency. Productivity managers often provide training and coaching to employees on how to improve their productivity, time management, and task execution. They track progress, measure the impact of productivity initiatives, and make adjustments as needed. Productivity managers understand the importance of employee motivation and create a positive work environment that encourages high performance. A commonly applicable example of productivity is the measure of output per worker or output per worker per hour. A company can measure productivity by evaluating the number or value of the finished products produced within a given time, using: total output/total input (Ishan, 2025).

Empirical Review

A study by Akpomi and Ordu (2009) using modern office automation availability, modern office automation and managers usage and modern office automation and managers productivity. DATA analytical instrument used were mean and chi-square. The study finds that, the availability of modern office automation increases managers productivity (Onoja, 2020). Another study conducted by Mashau and Beharry (2018) using a quantitative approach. According to findings from the study, modern office automation makes significant difference in a workstation. Office automation enhance productivity. The study further stressed that there is a strong correlation between the right use of office automation and positive change in management productivity.

Study by sunmu and Akintola (2017) that examined the influence of office automation on managers effectiveness. The result of the study indicated that, there was no significant influence of office automation on manager interpersonal skills, personal quality, professional behaviour and job-related skills. According to the study of Sholagbade (2012) technology has certainly changed the ways many office tasks are being performed. Technology has simplified many routine secretarial tasks, thereby making secretaries to assume new responsibilities in the office setting. Office automation has changed the secretarial duties from the manual method to purely mechanized process.

The study of Kerzner (2013) asserted that, managers today have a variety of tools and techniques for dealing with time management and resource issues. These tools must be fully integrated with the overall management system in order to manage businesses within the parameters of work quality, timing and resources' utilization. The study of Lydia (2024) which aimed at investigating the impact of office automation on university graduates. The study adopted survey research design. The population was 896 University graduates from University of Nsukka and ESUT, Enugu. The hypotheses were tested with chi-square at 0.05 level of significance. The study found that, there is significant relationship between office automation and productivity in organization.

The study of Christensen (2013) showed the magnitude and speed at which technology has advanced and changed in management practice over past years. The management of technology can make a difference. Thus, the big task is to harness this newly emerging technology for the benefit of business. According to the study technological advances have positive effect on quality of life, and this trend is expected to keep on increasing. Dion (2012) study supported this finding by asserting that new technology advancement is reshaping business industries where every business will need technology to compete successfully.

A study conducted by Nwaokwa and Okoli (2012) found that many managers lack the communication technology skills required in the various offices and this has critically affected their performance. The effect of office automation is to increase organizational productivity by redefining the office work and improving the quality and accuracy of output (Onoja, 2020). Base on the above empirically findings, this study postulated that, there is no relationship between modern office automation and managers productivity of commercial banks in south-east senatorial district of Rivers State.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design to acquire responses from respondents of 6 randomly selected commercial banks in south-east senatorial district of Rivers State. The mangers and departmental heads totalling 22 respondents were the study population. The study embraced census since the study population was little and known. The study was quantitative in nature, while questionnaire was the main instrument for data collection. Spearman Correlation Coefficient with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science was used to test proposed hypothesis. The respondents were served with the questionnaire and all 22 copies

of the questionnaire were filled and returned, representing a 100% response rate. All responses were measured on a five-level rating, ranging from "strongly disagree to strongly agree".

Data Analysis and Discussion

Table 1: Modern Office Automation and Managers Productivity

		Modern Office Automation	Managers Productivity
Modern Office Automation	Pearson Correlation	1	.839**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	22	22
Managers Productivity	Pearson Correlation	.839**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	22	22
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Source: Research survey, 2025

Table 1, discloses correlation between modern office automation and managers' productivity. The result implies a very strong positive association between the variables. The positive correlation coefficient of .839 suggests that, there is indeed an association between modern office automation and managers productivity. Furthermore, the correlation coefficient (.839) being greater than zero suggested that, the frequent use of modern office automation the more managers productivity of commercial banks in south-east senatorial district of Rivers State.

This result also specified that, to a very strong extent, modern office automation is related to managers productivity. This is because modern office automation improves organization efficiency and productivity through use of effective and efficient management by utilizing electronic flow of correspondence in organization level, promoting quick and timely response to client, removal of paper from administrative correspondence cycle, proper control over users, maintaining and recording data efficiently and improve communications within organization ((Onoja, 2020), This finding tally with those of Akpomi and Ordu (2009) that study finds that, the availability of modern office automation increase managers productivity.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Office automation is an important area of today's management that is being significantly changed under the impacts of modern electronic technology with substantial technical, organizational, and social consequences. The study further concluded that, office automated processes help managers manage their time more effectively, allowing them to prioritize tasks and meet deadlines. Modern office automation minimizes the risk of human error, leading to more accurate data and reports, which is crucial for informed decision-making. By automating routine tasks, managers can focus on strategic planning, problem-solving, and innovation, driving business growth and success. Modern office automation empowered managers by providing them with the tools and resources they need to perform their jobs more effectively, leading to increased productivity. The automation system might significantly influence the efficiency, cost-effectiveness and scheduling of managers decision making. Thus, managers of organization should constantly augment their offices with modern automated devise for better productivity.

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