



## **Time Prioritization and Utilization and Quality Service Delivery in Universities in Rivers State**

**Dr. (Mrs) C.U. Osuji; Dr. (Mrs) Blessing Wey-Amaewhule & \*NNAA, Lekpa Favour**

**Department of Educational Management  
Rivers State University, Port Harcourt, Nigeria  
\*Email of corresponding author: nnaalekpa20@gmail.com**

### **ABSTRACT**

The research investigated time prioritization, utilization and quality service delivery in universities in Rivers State. The research adopted correlation design. The population of the study comprised 6870 (administrators, teaching and non-teaching) staff of the universities. The sample size of the study was 400. The Taro Yamane formula was used to determine the sample size for the study while the simple random sampling technique was used to select the number from the three universities. The instrument for data collection was structured questionnaires titled; time management questionnaire and quality service delivery in universities questionnaire. The instruments used for data collection was face and content validated by the researcher's supervisor and two other experts from the Department of Measurement and Evaluation of the Faculty of Education in Rivers State University. The average reliability coefficient of the instruments was 0.85 and 0.85 which indicates a reasonable reliability coefficient. 400 copies each of the instruments were administered directly to the respondents by the researcher and her four trained assistants and all 400 were retrieved amounting to 100 percent return of the administered instrument. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) was used to answer the research questions and test the formulated hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings of the study revealed that, there is a significant high positive relationship between time prioritization, time utilization and quality service delivery in Universities in Rivers State. The researcher made the following recommendations that, all staff of the universities channel their strength to delivering the most weighted tasks first in order to achieve set goals by setting priorities amongst others.

**Keywords:** Time prioritization, utilization, Services, Quality Service Delivery.

### **INTRODUCTION**

In managing time, prioritizing the daily tasks is an effective method of time handling, for this purpose, one should have to separate and categorize his activities according to their importance. It is more suitable to handle less important tasks intermittently in order to complete the major tasks.

Joshua (2017) stated that prioritizing means to work with others to identify more critical and less critical activities and assignments, and also to coordinate project assignments, roles and responsibilities; adjusting priorities when appropriate. Prioritization is the process of determining the level of importance and urgency of a task, thing or event. It is a key skill for any working professional and is absolutely essential for universities staff to master (Amal, Mazen & Youssef, 2017). Prioritization is a vital part of planning intelligence philosophy to align people, priorities and projects. Time management is considered as an inclusive process that is done through administrative functions which is deeply dependent on high personal talents and skills so it can then produce positive effects to society and individual at the same time. Nonetheless, all of that must be restricted to a specified period of time in order to make persons adjust with present and future situations (Alghamdi, 2018). It is of importance to point out to the fact by Alsalmi (2018) that the more institutions are able to manage time effectively, the more it fulfills its aims correctly in the right time. And for the sake of effectiveness, one must give priorities to some tasks over the others in order to distribute the sufficient

time to get the best results, and effectiveness can be then measured by the quantity of finished tasks in that specified time.

Prioritizing means that all tasks are put in a hierarchical order and are primarily sorted according to urgency and usefulness (Lawrence, 2012). This helps in the use of resources and energy as sensibly as possible. Firstly, work will be carried out on works that are particularly important and continued until the resources for the day are exhausted. This way, the most important task gets the most attention. When tasks have been scheduled, the next move is to put the specific activities through which the goals of the school are expected to be achieved into hierarchy, according to their degree of importance in enhancing productivity, from the most educationally productive to the least educationally productive functions.

Killian, Michael and Sexton (2019), proposed the idea of time scheduling and time allocation to tasks based on how educationally productive they are for ensuring effective teaching and learning. In their time management ladder, they grouped the numerous functions of the school administrator into three categories; The professional goal functions, the critical and crisis functions and maintenance functions, with the professional goal functions at the apex of the ladder and the maintenance functions at the base of the ladder in order of priority. The professional goal functions embrace all efforts by the administrator towards the development and implementation of the curriculum and instructional matters and most functions in staff personnel matters that lead directly to effective teaching and learning. Maintenance functions embrace all routine management tasks geared towards maintaining stability and status quo in the school. The middle level critical and crisis functions embrace mostly activities critical to student personnel administration and fiscal management etcetera. Okoro and Ogbonnaya (2012) maintained that it is very important to allocate large quality time at a stretch to programmes of importance instead of allocating bits of time stretched out for a long period to the same function. For instance, allocate some two to three weeks in the year at a stretch for supervision of all teachers in the school, lasting for about three hours each day. This will give the administrator a clear and comprehensive picture of the direction the programmes of the curriculum are going and what general and specific problems there are in relation to effective teaching and learning in the school. Allowances must however be made for emergencies and unexpected events as they are bound to come up in any human organization. Over-estimation of time should be preferred to under-estimation to avoid frustration of not meeting deadlines.

Hellsten and Roger (2019) identified the following seven steps for priorities settings;

1. Collect a list of all tasks: Pull together every work that could possibly be carried out in a day. This will help the staff frame up how and when to allocate time wisely.
2. Identify urgent versus important: The next step is to see if there are tasks that need immediate attention. These are works that if not completed by the end of the day or in the next several hours, will have serious negative consequences.
3. Allocate time to prioritizing most urgent tasks earlier in the day. Prioritizing based on urgency also alleviates some of the stress when approaching a tight deadline or high-pressure workload demands.
4. Check to see if there are any high-priority dependencies that rely on finishing up a piece of work. Be sure to contact any member of the work team that can help finish any dependencies earlier in the day.
5. list everything that has to be done, sort out the most important and urgent tasks and concentrate on them first. Base priorities not just on what is assumed important but also on what the managers consider important to the organization.
6. Create a master list of every task for the next month or three months. Then, break the list into things that have to be done immediately, later and so on.
7. Assess the value of tasks: Take a look at the important work and identify what carries the highest value to the organization. As a general practice, recognize exactly which types of tasks are critical and have top priority over the others.

Hicks and Gullet (2016) identified critical priorities are time sensitive and high value. These include tasks dealing with crises or strict deadlines. High value tasks that are not time sensitive should be considered high priorities. These are tasks that involve thinking, planning and collaboration. Medium priorities can be time sensitive but not high in value. Meetings, email communications, and project organizing can fall into this category. Low priority projects and tasks are ones that are not time

sensitive and do not have high value. Hines (2012) stated that if there are tasks that seem to tie for priority standing, the staff should check their estimates, and start on whichever one he or she thinks will take the most effort to complete. Productivity experts suggest the tactic of starting the lengthier task first. Tasks prioritizing distinguishes the tasks that must be done from the tasks that can be let to slide. Eisenhower (2012) opined that to clarify which tasks are in which category is a task prioritization matrix. The matrix put the priority tasks into four boxes based on a mix of urgency and importance:

1. Urgent and important: This work is the highest task priority level. Space is needed to schedule tasks and to get them done as soon as possible.
2. Important, but not urgent: This is a task have to be done, but can be worked into the schedule when it is convenient.
3. Urgent, but not important: These tasks have a looming deadline, but they should not steal time from important works. It is ideal if the task can be delegated.
4. Not important and not urgent: These tasks are ones which can be ignored. Ideally, they can be dumped from the schedule in order to focus on more important tasks.

Time utilization is the extent to which an individual worker applies or dedicates himself to the duties assigned to him during the agreed business time and cooperates with the other employees in the school to achieve the set goals of the school (Bosah, 2013). James (2013), Covey and Merrill (2014) and Cole (2015) stated that time utilization is a systematic approach to the process and use of time resource to aide in service delivery. On the other hand, time utilization rate is the ratio of realized work hours to the theoretical number of hours expected of the employee (Hubbard, 2016). In the case of a teacher, given his work environment, time utilization is the ratio of the number of hours for the classes he is expected to teach for the same period (Riisgaard, 2016). It is believed that if employees utilize a reasonable proportion of work time performing their duties, organizational performance will be enhanced. To this end, time utilization, through time management, is presumed to have a significant positive influence on employee performance (Green & Skinner, 2015). In the same vein Cyril (2015), Muir (2016) and Hager (2016) opined that inadequate time utilization and inadequate time utilization and ineffective time management have their consequences on expected outcomes which, in this case, are the attainment of educational goals. That is, inadequate time utilization and ineffective time management lead to the sub-optimization of educational goals. To say the least, efficient time utilization stimulates the optimization of expected outcomes which, in this case, are the attainment of educational goals (Greenfield, 2013).

When people are employed to work in any organization, there are terms and conditions of service that they are supposed to comply with. There are also obligations that the employer owes his employees. Among other things, the employee is supposed to perform certain duties for a specified number of hours daily, except for periods that he is on leave. To this end, he is supposed to utilize the work time strictly for office purpose (Haastrup, Musiball & Konwea, 2011). On the part of the employer, he is supposed to provide a good working environment and pay the employees' entitlements as and when due, among others. It is only then that he can demand full compliance by the employee with all terms and conditions (Filam & Aharon, 2013). The same applies to educational institutions, including the universities. Time utilization is critical to organizational efficiency and performance because organizational design takes cognizance of tasks within specific periods (Felton & Sims, 2019). When employee engagement time is significantly less than the specified time, there is increased idleness and decreased efficiency. Notwithstanding its relevance to organizational efficiency, there is the dearth of literature on work-time utilization by employees and the consequences of such work time utilization on organizational efficiency as well as the relationship between employee work time utilization and socio-demographic variables (gender, marital status and age) (Fleming, 2011).

### **Statement of the Problem**

In the university there are number of resources which are all important and must be utilized such as people, money and materials. But there is one resource we all have in common which is time. In any organization, time has to be properly managed to ensure quality service delivery. Both the teaching and non-teaching staff of the university community are to dispense their duties within a stipulated time which requires a high amount of proficiency in time management. Unfortunately, some of these staff barely completes their tasks as they constantly hinge their inabilities on scarcity of time. The

finding of a research work carried out by Kenny (2018), showed an increasing number of unnecessary delays amongst the staff of the university in carrying out their duties; as some teaching staff lag behind the scheme of work and non-teaching staff accumulate more time treating files in their offices. It further stated that some university staff usually waste time on gossips, attending to visitors, visiting colleagues in their offices etcetera while disregarding their official duties and unable to deliver quality service to the university clients.

There is a problem resulting from the lack of time management amongst the staff. Could this have hindered effective service delivery? The study investigated time management and quality service delivery in Universities in Rivers State.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate time management and quality delivery service in Universities in Rivers State. Specifically, the objectives of the study sought to;

1. investigate the manner of relationship between time prioritization and quality service delivery in Universities in Rivers State.
2. identify the relationship between time utilization and quality service delivery in Universities in Rivers State.

### **Research Questions**

The study was guided by these questions;

1. what is the relationship between time prioritization and quality service delivery in Universities in Rivers State?
2. what is the relationship between time utilization and quality service delivery in Universities in Rivers State?

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were formulated for the study and tested at 0.05 level of significance

1. There is no significant relationship between time prioritization and quality service delivery in Universities in Rivers State
2. There is no significant relationship between time utilization and quality service delivery in Universities in Rivers State.

### **METHOD**

The research adopted correlation design. The population of the study comprised 6870 (administrators, teaching and non-teaching) staff of the universities. The sample size of the study was 400. The Taro Yamane formula was used to determine the sample size for the study while the simple random sampling technique was used to select the number from the three universities. The instrument for data collection was structured questionnaires titled; time prioritization, utilization questionnaire (TPUQ) and quality service delivery in universities questionnaire (QSDUQ). The instruments used for data collection was face and content validated by the researcher's supervisor and two other experts from the Department of Measurement and Evaluation of the Faculty of Education in Rivers State University. The average reliability coefficient of the instruments was 0.85 and 0.85 which indicates a reasonable reliability coefficient. 400 copies each of the instruments were administered directly to the respondents by the researcher and her four trained assistants and all 400 were retrieved amounting to 100 percent return of the administered instrument. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) was used to answer the research questions and test the formulated hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

**RESULTS**

**Research Question 1:** Determine the relationship between time prioritization and quality service delivery in Universities in Rivers State.

**Table 1: Correlation Analysis of Reponses on the Relationship between Time Prioritization and Quality Service Delivery**

Variables	N	$\Sigma x$ $\Sigma y$	$\Sigma x^2$ $\Sigma y^2$	$\Sigma xy$	DF	LS	r-cal	r-crit	Decision
Time Prioritization	400	28.2	79.88	69.42	398	0.05	0.99	0.113	Positive high relationship
Quality Service Delivery	400	24.62	61.01						

**Source:** Researcher’s Field Result 2021

The result in Table 1 shows a high positive relationship between time prioritization and quality service delivery in Universities in Rivers State. This is shown on the correlation coefficient of 0.99, which means that have time prioritization has a strong association with quality service delivery. The implication of this result is that quality service delivery is most likely to be influenced by time prioritization.

**Research Question 2:** Determine the relationship between time utilization and quality service delivery in Universities in Rivers State.

**Table 2: Correlation Analysis of Reponses on the Relationship between Time Utilization and Quality Service Delivery**

Variables	N	$\Sigma x$ $\Sigma y$	$\Sigma x^2$ $\Sigma y^2$	$\Sigma xy$	DF	LS	r-cal	r-crit	Decision
Time utilization	400	27.63	76.46	71.15	398	0.05	0.93	0.113	Rejected null hypothesis
Quality Service Delivery	400	25.70	67.83						

**Source:** Researcher’s Field Result 2021

The result in Table 2 shows a high positive relationship between time utilization and quality service delivery in Universities in Rivers State. This is shown on the correlation coefficient of 0.93, which means that have time utilization has a strong association with quality service delivery. The implication of this result is that quality service delivery is most likely to be influenced by time.

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant relationship between time prioritization and quality service delivery in Universities in Rivers State.

**Table 3: PPMC Analysis of the Responses of Respondents on the Relationship between Priorities Setting and Quality Delivery Service**

Variables	N	$\Sigma x$ $\Sigma y$	$\Sigma x^2$ $\Sigma y^2$	$\Sigma xy$	DF	LS	r-cal	r-crit	Decision
Time Prioritization	400	28.2	79.88	69.42	398	0.05	0.99	0.113	Rejected null hypothesis
Quality Service Delivery	400	24.62	61.01						

Result in Table 3 shows that the calculated r-value of 0.99 is greater than the r-critical value of 0.113 for degree of freedom of 398 at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected which states that there is no significant relationship between time prioritization and quality service delivery in Universities in Rivers State.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant relationship between time utilization and quality service delivery in Universities in Rivers State.

**Table 4: PPMC Analysis of the Responses of Respondents on the Relationship between Time Utilization and Quality Service Delivery**

Variables	N	$\Sigma x$ $\Sigma y$	$\Sigma x^2$ $\Sigma y^2$	$\Sigma xy$	DF	LS	r-cal	r-crit	Decision
Time utilization	400	27.63	76.46	71.15	398	0.05	0.93	0.113	Rejected null hypothesis
Quality Service Delivery	400	25.70	67.83						

Result in Table 4 shows that the calculated r-value of 0.93 is greater than the r-critical value of 0.113 for degree of freedom of 398 at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected which states that there is no significant relationship between time utilization and quality service delivery in Universities in Rivers State.

### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

#### **The relationship between time prioritization and quality service delivery**

The findings on research question 1 with respect to the relationship between time prioritization and quality service delivery in Universities in Rivers State and r-calculated value of 0.99 indicated that the respondents agreed to the statements that, priorities setting suggest tasks that need urgency and focus for quality delivery; setting priorities helps in focusing on more important tasks for goal attainment; staff achieve set goals by setting priorities for tasks; jobs are prioritized for quality delivery service; prioritization helps in balancing career and private lives and eliminates burnout; it reduces excessive workload and enhances service delivery; it reduces stress and boost confidence while delivering official jobs; focusing on important jobs enhances quality delivery service; priorities helps in focusing on works that meets set goals and quality output and setting priorities is quality service delivery driven. Thus, the study revealed that there is a high relationship between time scheduling and quality service delivery in Universities in Rivers State. This finding agreed with the finding of Khan, Khan and Abu-Nasser (2015) that showed that managers manage their time in schools frequently by using practices of prioritizing tasks, goal setting, planning activities, scheduling contacts, delegating, unnecessary telephone calls, frequent interruptions by visitors, multi-task, and so on.

The corresponding hypothesis 1 revealed that there is a significant high positive relationship between time prioritization and quality service delivery in Universities in Rivers State. With r-calculated value of 0.99 which is greater than the r-critical value of 0.113 at 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected.

#### **The relationship between time utilization and quality service delivery**

The findings on research question 2 with respect to the relationship between time utilization and quality service delivery in Universities in Rivers State and r-calculated value of 0.93 indicated that the respondents agreed to the statements that, time utilization promotes efficiency and quality delivery; time utilization enhances quality service delivery; time utilization helps the manager focus on more important tasks to achieve set goals; it promotes flexibility and quality delivery service; it promotes collaboration and enhance service delivery; time utilization helps unburden workload and promotes efficiency; it increases productivity; it promotes fair shared tasks responsibility leading to quality delivery service; time utilization help in achieving more in a little time and ensure efficiency and it promotes trust among staff and encourage effectiveness and enhanced delivery. Thus, the study revealed that there is a high relationship between time utilization and quality service delivery in Universities in Rivers State. This finding agreed with the finding of Abu-Nasser (2011) that school administrators utilized their effectively by adopting delegation of tasks to their subordinates who concentrated on more important tasks in order to deliver within the stipulated time and monitored the subordinates to ensure that such tasks are performed properly for effective delivery.

The corresponding hypothesis 2 revealed that there is a significant high positive relationship between time utilization and quality service delivery in Universities in Rivers State. With r-calculated value of

0.93 which is greater than the r-critical value of 0.113 at 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected.

## CONCLUSION

The study investigated time prioritization, utilization and quality service delivery in Universities in Rivers State. The study concludes that time prioritization is a panacea to quality service delivery in the universities. Effective time management will improve staff productivity, make staff to perform tasks at their highest skill level, helping staff to prioritize and accomplish important task, recording and guiding the organization towards achieving its set goals, eliminating procrastination, strengthen cordial superior-subordinate relationship.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. That all staff of the universities channel their strength to delivering the most weighted tasks first in order to achieve set goals by setting priorities.
2. That all principal officers, Deans, Directors, Heads of Departments and other superior officers of the universities cultivate the culture of utilizing stipulated time when saddled with enormous tasks to reduce workload and increase flow of tasks for effective delivery.

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