Scholars Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences OPEN ACCESS
Abbreviated Key Title: Sch J Arts Humanit Soc Sci
ISSN 2347-9493 (Print) | ISSN 2347-5374 (Online)
Journal homepage: https://saspublishers.com

Multi-Tasking and Administrative Service Delivery in Rubirizi District in Western Uganda

Byabashaija Deusdedit[1*], Rwasheema Enos[1], Musoke Paul[1]

[1]Valley University of Science and Technology, P. O. Box 44, Bushenyi, Uganda

DOI: 10.36347/sjahss.2023.v11i09.003 | **Received:** 17.08.2023 | **Accepted:** 21.09.2023 | **Published:** 25.09.2023

***Corresponding author:** Byabashaija Deusdedit
Valley University of Science and Technology, P. O. Box 44, Bushenyi, Uganda

Abstract **Original Research Article**

The realistic study evaluated the relationship between Multi-Tasking and Administrative Service Delivery in Rubirizi District in western Uganda. The research study applied a survey descriptive autopsy design with a quantitative paradigm. A sample of 72 respondents were carefully chosen from 155 persons using Slovene's formula. Information was congregated by means of questionnaires. The researchers used simple and stratified random sampling techniques to garner data from the field. Data was appraised using Descriptive statistics such as Pie charts and Pearson linear correlation coefficient (PLCC) for quantitative measurements. The study outcomes came up with a significant relationship between Multi-Tasking and Administrative Service Delivery in Rubirizi District in Western Uganda. The research project team concluded that doing more than one task at a time, especially more than one complex task, takes a toll on productivity. Managers can achieve their targets well if multi-tasking is well planned for and well implemented in any organization. From the study verdicts, the academics recommended that Managers should continue to apply multi –tasking techniques in order to reduce on the costs of their organizations. An employee can be given more tasks to perform which would have otherwise been done by many workers, thus saving on the expenses of the organization. Managers should try by all means to motivate the workers who perform many tasks in order to encourage them do their work efficiently. However, Multi-tasking with complex tasks should be avoided for example driving and receiving a phone call which may be a major cause of death among mankind.

Keywords: Multi-Tasking, Administrative Service Delivery, Local Governments, Uganda.

INTRODUCTION

In Britain, Monsell (2023) asserted that doing more than one task at a time, especially more than one complex task, takes a toll on productivity. Although that shouldn't surprise anyone who has talked on the phone while checking E-mail or talked on a cell phone while driving, the extent of the problem might come as a shock. Psychologists who study what happens to cognition (mental processes) when people try to perform more than one task at a time have found that the mind and brain were not designed for heavy-duty multi-tasking. Psychologists tend to liken the job to choreography or air-traffic control, noting that in these operations, as in others, mental overload can result in catastrophe. Multitasking can take place when someone tries to perform two tasks simultaneously, switch. from one task to another, or perform two or more tasks in rapid succession. To determine the costs of this kind of mental "juggling," psychologists conduct task-switching experiments. By comparing how long it takes for people to get everything done, the psychologists can measure the cost in time for switching tasks. They also assess how different aspects of the tasks, such as complexity or familiarity, affect any extra time cost of switching. In the past, Robert and Monsell (2023) found out that even when people had to switch completely predictably between two tasks every two or four trials, they were still slower on task-switch than on task-repeat trials. Moreover, increasing the time available between trials for preparation reduced but did not eliminate the cost of switching. There thus appear to be two parts to the switch cost -- one attributable to the time taken to adjust the mental control settings (which can be done in advance if there is time), and another part due to competition due to carry-over of the control settings from the previous trial (apparently immune to preparation).

In Asia, surprisingly, it can be harder to switch to the more habitual of two tasks afforded by a

stimulus. For example, Renata and Alan (1999), reported that if people had to name digits in their first or second language, depending on the color of the background, as one might expect they named digits in their second language slower than in their first when the language repeated. But they were slower in their first language when the language changed. In experiments published, Joshua, Jeffrey, and David (2001) conducted four experiments in which young adults switched between different tasks, such as solving math problems or classifying geometric objects. For all tasks, the participants lost time when they had to switch from one task to another. As tasks got more complex, participants lost more time. As a result, people took significantly longer to switch between more complex tasks. Time costs were also greater when the participants switched to tasks that were relatively unfamiliar. They got up to speed faster when they switched to tasks they knew better. Nick and Monsell (2003) quantitatively modeled the complex and sometimes surprising experimental interactions between relative task dominance and task switching. The results revealed just some of the complexities involved in understanding the cognitive load imposed by real-life multi-tasking, when in addition to reconfiguring control settings for a new task, there is often the need to remember where you got to in the task to which you are returning and to decide which task to change to, and when (Fiore, 2016).

According to Meyer *et al*., (2022) converging evidence suggests that the human "executive control" processes have two distinct, complementary stages. They call one stage "goal shifting" ("I want to do this now instead of that") and the other stage "rule activation" ("I'm turning off the rules for *that* and turning on the rules for this"). Both of these stages help people to, without awareness, switch between tasks. That's helpful. Problems arise only when switching costs conflict with environmental demands for productivity and safety. Although switch costs may be relatively small, sometimes just a few tenths of a second per switch, they can add up to large amounts when people switch repeatedly back and forth between tasks. Thus, multitasking may seem efficient on the surface but may actually take more time in the end and involve more error. Meyer has said that even brief mental blocks created by shifting between tasks can cost as much as 40 percent of someone's productive time. Understanding the hidden costs of multitasking may help people to choose strategies that boost their efficiency - above all, by avoiding multitasking, especially with complex tasks. (Throwing in a load of laundry while talking to a friend will probably work out all right.) For example, losing just a half second of time to task switching can make a life-or-death difference for a driver on a cell phone traveling and driving. During the time the driver is not totally focused on driving the car, it can travel far enough to crash into an obstacle that might otherwise have been avoided. Meyer and his colleagues hope that understanding switching costs and the light they shed on "executive control" may help to improve the design and engineering of equipment and human-computer interfaces for vehicle and aircraft operation, air traffic control, and many other activities using sophisticated technologies. Insights into how the brain "multitasks" lend themselves to a range of settings from the clinic, helping to diagnose and help brain-injured patients, to the halls of Congress, informing government and industrial regulations and standards (McKay, 2023).

In Africa, in today's business world, McKay (2023) noted that companies are looking out to cut costs and optimize processes. Sometimes that involves asking employees to take on additional tasks and projects that wouldn't be included in their basic job description More and more people in office settings are spending their time bouncing back and forth between tasks, believing that there are many benefits of multitasking, including increased efficiency. New studies, however, have uncovered that multitasking is a cause of concern. These studies suggest that multitasking causes us to: make more mistakes, retain less information, and change the way our brain works. This raises questions as to whether multitasking is good for workers. Business executives rely on a variety of professionals, including psychology experts, to empower workers to become more efficient multi-taskers. An online masters in applied psychology degree can arm aspiring corporate psychology professionals with the toolkit to improve workers' satisfaction and productivity — making them essential contributors to an organization's success strategy. Before exploring the potential drawbacks and benefits of multitasking, it's important to understand how our brains handle multiple simultaneous tasks in the first place. The brain's prefrontal cortex begins working anytime you need to pay attention. This area of your brain helps keep your attention on a single goal and carry out the task at hand by coordinating messages with other brain systems. Working on a single task means both sides of the prefrontal cortex are working together in harmony. Adding another task, however, forces the left and right sides of the brain to function independently from one another. Multitasking can actually hinder productivity and increase the likelihood of mistakes. Importantly, multitasking while performing simple, everyday actions like eating and walking simultaneously is much easier than doing more complicated tasks like texting and driving simultaneously. This is because simple tasks place less demand on the brain's prefrontal cortex, which means easier switching between tasks. In business settings, however, the tasks that workers take on are typically neurologically complicated. This suggests that requiring workers to complete multiple tasks simultaneously could have significant negative effects (Meyer & Kiern, 2000).

In everyday society, the ability to perform multiple tasks at work is often praised as a faster way to get more done. A study in the *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance*, however, indicates the opposite. The authors found that multitasking is actually less efficient because it takes extra time to shift mental gears every time a person switches between tasks. Joshua (2001) of the Federal Aviation Administration, has proposed new models of cognitive control. The first, called goal shifting, involves actively deciding to change tasks. Once you have decided to switch processes, your brain begins rule activation. This requires your brain to turn off the cognitive rules of the old task and turn on new rules for the next. This process can be seen in the workplace when a worker switches from completing financial excel sheets to writing emails, for example. The individual's brain must first shift goals and decide that it is done with the math processes and ready to begin writing. The extra time it takes for the brain to fully switch attention and cognitive rules lead to workplace inefficiency. Efficiency and task-switching are significant issues for managers, especially those who direct remote teams. To effectively lead virtual teams, managers must encourage members to stay focused on one task before moving on to the next one, allowing adequate time for the brain to fully switch attention. While there seems to be a plethora of evidence that does not support its efficacy, there may be some benefits of multitasking. A 2021 *Frontiers in Psychology* study notes that, in today's digital world, multitasking between different forms of media is inevitable. As such, learning how to productively multitask is essential to success in a world where we switch between different media, programs and devices daily. Another study found that, while attempting to undertake multiple tasks at once can diminish productivity, the perception of multitasking itself boosted performance. Among 32 studies with 8,242 participants, those who believed they were multitasking outperformed those who believed they were completing a single task. Shalena (2019) explains, "We find that multitasking is often a matter of perception that helps, rather than harms, engagement and performance. Thus, when we engage in a given activity, construing it as multitasking could help us" (Aichner, 2021).

In Uganda, avoiding multitasking at work can be difficult, especially when employees feel overwhelmed. Given the diminished benefits of multitasking, however, professionals can make a few simple and conscious changes to work more efficiently. Instead of bouncing back and forth between tasks and tabs, efficient workers dedicate chunks of time to a certain task. For example, they might spend 20 minutes reading the day's news and then move on to their next assignment for 20 minutes, and so on. Single-tasking on an individual level seems easy enough, but what happens when a team is involved? Multitasking with a group of coworkers makes for a higher chance of miscommunication, missed deadlines and poor work quality (Agubashongoreera, 2023). If everyone in the group is distracted, there is little to no chance of coming together and producing the best work possible. To rescue a sinking team, it's important to advise team members to remain collectively focused on one task, schedule blocks of time and use fewer tools that can get in the way. Productivity rates skyrocket when the group focuses their attention on one task, allowing them to join forces and devote themselves to the project at hand. By creating blocks of time for different tasks, teams have a better chance of staying productive, on task and on schedule. Lastly, with only the most effective platforms being used, each team member will have shorter transition times between tasks, keeping them in a productive mindset (Ganesan, 2022).

METHODS AND MATERIALS

Data Capturing

Actual facts used for the research organization were got by means of both primary and secondary fundamentals of data. Primary data was reached at by usage of questionnaires to vibrant persons related to the research task. Secondary data was accomplished by the use of documentary archives. The study betrothed a survey descriptive examination design while using the quantitative technique.

Amin (2005) specified that descriptive scrutiny design is generally used to designate a phenomenon and its data physiognomies. The specialists picked a total of 72 participants (sample size) by means of the Sloven's formula to participate in the probe study.

Sampling methods

The public experts engaged stratified random sampling and simple random sampling methods in the research task. The study masses used the target population including groups like District Technical workforce, Local council heads, support staff and Ministry of local government civil servants.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire is a research instrument involving inter-related debriefings organized by the scholar about the research impasse under study grounded on the intentions of the survey study. Items were set and transcribed for the contributors to answer with choices as reflected on the likert scale type inquiries.

This technique was much-loved because it covers a varied physical galaxy in data congregation; it accumulates a lot of substantiation within a short period of interval, and offers loftier guarantee regarding confidentiality.

Nonetheless, the questionnaire involved some constrictions of attrition. There were inadequate copies that were not returned, although this was fixed by issuing a lot of duplicates than the mandatory number of the sample size for the research task.

Validity and reliability of research instruments

Validity of the well-thought-out appraisal was assured by using content validity Index. Arising from the scrutiny of the validity of the instruments, the academic acquired content validity index (CVI) of 0.79 which was well directly afar 0.75 suggesting that the tool was valid to convey together statistics for the consideration study (Amin, 2005).

Reliability of the Planned Questionnaire was calculated by means of Cronbach's alpha coefficient formula though noting the variables that had an alpha coefficient of character bigger than 0.70. Since the reliability design got by the researcher produced 0.78 alpha value, it resolved that the research tool was reliable to produce data needed for the meticulous study.

Data analysis

Autopsy Statistical tools which were convoluted to analyze data for this exploration study included; descriptive measurements such as pie charts and inferential statistics like Pearson Linear Correlation Coefficient for assessing quantitative data.

RESULTS

Profile of Respondents

Gender of respondents

The respondents were requested to indicate their gender in order to determine how they were differently influenced by multi-tasking and the results are shown below in Figure 1.

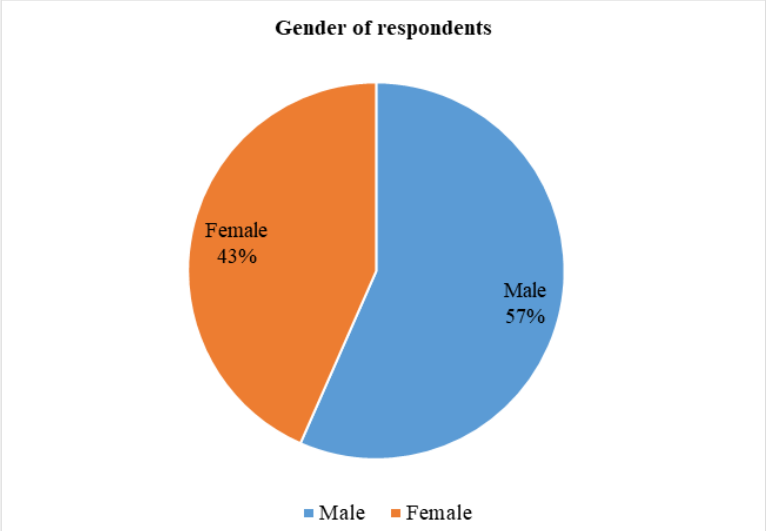

Figure 1: Showing gender distribution of respondents
Source: Primary Data, 2023

Results from figure 1 above showed that the majority of the respondents 38 (57%) were males while their female counterparts constituted 34 (43%). The biggest number of respondents was male by gender meaning that more male respondents were engaged in the study. This literary implied that most males were available to take part in the study and shared their views on Multi-tasking affecting Administrative Service Delivery having experienced some of the practices that take place within their respective areas.

Table 1: The correlation between Multi-Tasking and Administrative Service Delivery in Runirizi district

		Multi-Tasking	Administrative Service Delivery
Multi-Tasking	Pearson Correlation	1	.477**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	72	72
Administrative Service Delivery	Pearson Correlation	.477**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	72	72
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).			

Source: Primary data (2023)

The study established that Multi-tasking significantly (p=0.000<0.05) influenced Administrative Service Delivery in Rubirizi district in Western Uganda. Also, there was a moderate positive relationship (r=0.477) between Multi-tasking and Administrative Service Delivery in Rubirizi district. In this context, Multi-tasking improved Administrative Service Delivery in Rubirizi district; because it brought unity among the workers in Rubirizi district. This implied that the set null hypothesis was rejected: "Multi-tasking has no strong bearing on Administrative Service Delivery in Rubirizi district in Western Uganda.

DISCUSSION

The results of the study indicated that the effect of Multi-tasking on Administrative Service Delivery in Rubirizi district was substantial. This finding is contrary to the discoveries of former scholars such as McKay (2023) who conducted a study on Time Management in Tunisia and found out that multi-tasking is full of errors, a scenario that does not lead effectiveness in local government modus operandi. Nevertheless, the verdict was in accordance with the study steered by Allen (2021) on Stress Free Productivity who found out that Multi-tasking has helped local governments be efficient in their execution of activities for development. This was because each local government worker can perform many activities which would have been done by many employees. Thus, saving on the costs for operationalization of local government programmes.

CONCLUSION

Doing more than one task at a time, especially more than one complex task, takes a toll on productivity. Managers can achieve their targets well if multi-tasking is well planned for and well implemented in any organization.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Managers should continue to apply multi – tasking techniques in order to reduce on the costs of their organizations. An employee can be given more tasks to perform which would have otherwise been done by many workers, thus saving on the expenses of the organization. Managers should try by all means to motivate the workers who perform many tasks in order to encourage them do their work efficiently. However, Multi-tasking with complex tasks should be avoided for example driving and receiving a phone call which may be a major cause of death among mankind.

REFERENCES

- Agubashongoreera, F. (2023). District Report. Rubirizi, Uganda.
- Amin, E. (2005). Social research. Makerere University Printery, Kampala.
- Allen, D. (2021). Getting things done: the Art of Stress-Free Productivity. New York: Viking. ISBN 978-0-670-88906-8.
- Fiore, N. A. (2016). The Now Habit: A Strategic Program for Overcoming Procrastination and Enjoying Guilt- Free Play. New York: Penguin Group. ISBN 978-1-58542-552-5.
- Ganesan, R., Mamat, N. H. B., Mellor, D., Rizzuto, L., & Kolar, C. (2014). Procrastination and the 2× 2 achievement goal framework in Malaysian undergraduate students. *Psychology in the Schools*, *51*(5), 506-516. Doi:10.1002/pits.21760.
- Joshua, K., Jeffrey, B., & David, F. (2001). Empowerment Series: Generalist Practice with Organizations and Communities. Cengage Learning. p. 67. ISBN 978-1-305-94329-2.
- McKay, K. (2023). "The Eisenhower Decision Matrix: How to Distinguish Between Urgent and Important Tasks and Make Real Progress in Your Life". A Man's Life, Personal Development. Archived from the original on 2014-03-22. Retrieved 2014-03-22. "The Eisenhower Method". Fluent-time-management.com. Archived from the original on 2014-03-03.
- Meyer, D. E., & Kieras, D. E. (2022). A computational theory of executive cognitive processes and multiple-task performance: Part 1. Basic mechanisms. *Psychological Review*, 104, 3-65.
- Monsell, S. (2023). Reconfiguration of task-set: Is it easier to switch to the weaker task? *Psychological Research*, 63, 250-264.
- Morgan R. M., & Krejcie, B. (1970). Method of determining sample size. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.
- Nick, S., & Monsell, S. (2003). "Social media definition and the governance challenge: An introduction to the special issue". *Telecommunications Policy*, *39*(9), 745–750. Doi:10.2139/ssrn.2647377. SSRN 2647377.
- Robert, J., & Monnsell, S. (2023). Driven To Distraction: Recognizing and Coping with Attention Deficit Disorder from Childhood Through Adulthood. Touchstone. ISBN 9780684801285. Retrieved 2013-07-30.
- Renata, L. B., & Alan, S. (1999). Achieving Objectives Made Easy! Practical goal setting tools & proven time management techniques. Maarheeze: Cranendonck Coaching. ISBN 978-90-79397-03-7.
- Shalena, A. (2019). The 15 second principle: short, simple steps to achieving long-term goals. New York: New York: Berkley Books. p. 157. ISBN 0-425-16505-1.