Utilization of Information Technology is an Elixir to Maximizing Efficiency in Business Organizations

Dr (Mrs.) Gift J. Eke
Department of Office and Information Management
Faculty of Management Sciences
Niger Delta University
Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

Abstract

This study has been able to justify the notion that the utilization of information technology is an elixir to maximizing efficiency of business organization. The paper used the qualitative approach applying survey design. The study purposively selects fifty (50) entrepreneurs and business owners to form the sampled subjects. The instrument for data collection used for this study was the close ended questionnaire with question items measured with the 4-likerts "Extent Format" (VHE, HE, LE, VLE). Conclusively, it was found that computers, mobile phone, computer software and internet are utilized for maximizing efficiency of business organizations to a high extent. Also, it was revealed that challenges as such infrastructural deficiencies, lack of maintenance culture, poor/no access to the internet and lack of skilled and competent ICT personnel has affected the utilization of information technology to a high extent. It recommended that business owners should ensure to put in place a standard ICT structure that will support effective and full utilization of information technology.

Keywords: *Utilization, information technology, challenges, Efficiency.*

Introduction

Utilization of Information technology (IT) is described as application of computer hardware, software and other telecommunications such as internet to achieve organization's objectives (Ajah & Chigozie-Okwum, 2019). Information technologies are adopted based on the economic status or the organization. The level of investment of information technology is different based on the objective of the business organization. Information technology covers electronic and digital devices such as computer, Internet, mobile phones, Videos, content management systems, knowledge management systems used for routine business operations.

Globally, IT changes the society dynamically. It is influencing all sectors of business organizations. The use of information technology is not only limited to one profit-making organizations because today churches, hospital, business organizations, government, spiritual-houses and even traditional practitioners are utilizing IT in directly and indirectly to achieve its set goals. Every bit of data gathered from the market, customers, clients, suppliers, resources must be process into information that will be utilized for corporate decision making (Barineme,

2015). This has inferred that information technology is important for all categories of organization in this present-day business demands.

Nowadays, more collaborative, interactive and online elements is involved. Over the years, ICT stands out by their rapid evolution and revolution, continuously changing the modes of engagement with them. A long-time infusion of computers, and more recently ICT, has demonstrated effective impacts on the efficiency of businesses, serviceability, communication and administrative prowess by management and other employees. It provides business administrators with more opportunities in adopting digital approach in managing the organizational needs. It enables employees to communicate effectively and work together and to receive quicker feedback from each other in and outside the organization. Information technology assists business administrators in improving the functional effectiveness of routine work system. In general, it provides newer and more effective ways of mitigating some of the challenges being faced by the present business environment such as conflicts, natural disaster, epidemic and war (Ahsan, Shuvankar & Mostafa 2017).

The use of IT peripherals in administrative efficiency of an organization can be referred to as e-administration. With emergence of technology and growing demand of the society, e–administration is widely applied by the developed nations with less chance of a stopping point in the near future to better serve their citizens through efficient and effective services, with accountability and transparency. In developing countries such as Nigeria, the adoption and utilization of information technology in business organization has not been fully actualized because of some national challenges. Someone organizations are still running their administration using the manual and traditional approach while others have deployed shallow office automation of their administrative transactions. It clear that the full utilization of information technology can maximize the efficiency of an organization (Ajah & Chigozie-Okwum, 2019).

Good deployment and sustainability of ICT in organization (large, medium and small) employees to be computer literate. In the absence of skilled and competent workers a fully invested information technology will be arguable useless because it needs manpower skill and knowledge to be utilized, so it is imperative that in as much that there is importance in investing in information technology, it is also important to invest in the knowledge and skill of employee towards ICT competence for full utilization.

Problem statement
For business organizations to fully utilize information technology for business processes, there must be an established support from the owners of the business or management of the organization. The support from the leadership of the organization is very paramount to develop ICT-oriented practice in the digital edge (Ukanwa & Eze, 2019). However, despite the varieties of roles played by IT in the administration and management of routine business objectives, there are structural and behavioral impediments militating against its effective use for business management, of which some of the challenges are infrastructural deficiencies, lack of maintenance culture, poor/no access to the internet, lack of skilled and competent ICT personnel. These challenges can possibly hamper or slow down the utilization of information technology. On this note, this paper will look into the required information technology tools needed for

utilization of information technology and the challenges affecting the utilization of information technology.

Objectives

This paper is to examine the utilization of information technology is an elixir to maximizing efficiency in business organizations. Specifically, the paper will;

1. Examine the extent to which information technology tools are utilized to maximizing efficiency in business organizations.
2. Explore the challenges affecting the utilization of information technology.

Literature Review: Conceptual

ICT Application Tools in Business Administration and Management

Several ICT application tools have been extensively used in corporate management and administration. Internet, websites, software, and hardware including printers, scanners, photocopiers, and PCs are all ICT applications that may be used for company administration (Kazi, 2012). The following provides further information on the ICT tools that are frequently used in corporate management and administration:

Internet —Based and Web-Based Tools: The use of the Internet and ICT application tools in business has increased significantly during the past twenty years. This is because the Internet may offer opportunity for implementing cutting-edge teaching and learning techniques. Students can become proficient workers of the future thanks to the sophisticated and contemporary methods of education.

Most corporate companies enable professors to interact individually with their pupils via email, forums, or social media sites like Facebook and Twitter. Also, students' assignments are uploaded to and received through the Internet. There is evidence in the literature that instructors believe that the internet offers access to relevant data and technologies that may benefit both groups of pupils and teachers (Afshari, Ghavifekr Saeda & Rahniad 2012). Yet, using the internet for finding, communicating, and organizing documents will directly and indirectly increase the effectiveness of the organization (Afshari et al, 2012). Moreover, internet-based solutions have opened up several chances for management of corporate organizations to maximize their resources.

When it comes to better, faster, and more affordable methods of running, managing, and performing daily chores like information processing, transmitting, storing, and retrieving, the internet is the most important facilitator (Susmita, 2017). Administrators of business organizations should thus pay closer attention to providing knowledge and information access to all academic and non-academic workers using Internet-based business apps and tools.

Hardware Applications: Every year, gear for information technology and communications, including computers, advances. Modern machines and new equipment provide new prospects notably in company administration to make management process easier, faster, and cheaper. We can observe from this context that commercial organizations' management and administration are equipped with several typical ICT application equipment, such as computers and photocopiers.

Televisions, radios, scanners, digital cameras, DVI players, laptops, multimedia projectors, and overhead projectors (Nwankwoala, 2015).

Computers were utilized to store a variety of administrative, teacher, student, and other staff members' papers. Moreover, administrators frequently employ interactive whiteboards, smart boards, and multimedia projectors for managing meetings, internal training for teachers and staff, video conferencing, and presenting reasons (Nwankwoala, 2015).

Software Applications: Management and administration in business companies frequently employ a variety of software programs for administrative tasks. Office solutions like Microsoft Office were the most often utilized programs by corporate enterprises for administration and management (Word, Excel, and PowerPoint) and add up (Nwankwoala, 2015). Administrators are conversant with a variety of information-handling applications, including spreadsheets and databases, as observed by Kalaivani (2013).

The majority of commercial companies now employ inefficient and ineffective methods to handle information. There are many other software programs that have been utilized by corporate organizations' management and administration; for instance, EMIS is the most well-known program in these businesses. EMIS, short for "Business Management Information System," is a component of a business system whose goal is to gather and retain data. Information processing, analysis, and dissemination (Kalaivani, 2013).

Challenges Of Information Technology in Business Organizations Management and Administration

Managers and administrators in corporate organizations now face special difficulties that their forebears had never even considered. Access to mountains of online material may expose students to more knowledge in just one day than people from earlier generations would have been able to acquire in a lifetime. Information processing skills have become a survival skill that is almost universal (Ukanwa & Eze, 2019).

Managers and administrators need the guidance and direction of business organization officials who are aware of 21st century abilities in order to prepare kids for the future. Notwithstanding the significant contributions that ICT has made to administration and management of business organizations, there are glaring issues that prevent its efficient application to business organization management. This essay aims to draw attention to the difficulties in using ICT in business organization management in the twenty-first century and to suggest solutions as a result. The successful use of ICT in business organization management is hindered by a number of issues, including insufficient infrastructure, a lack of maintenance culture, limited or no internet connection, and a lack of experienced ICT staff.

Infrastructural Deficiencies: Infrastructure problems are a very frequent and serious barrier to using ICT. In order to supply energy and a suitable atmosphere for whatever ICT device you are utilizing within your company organizations, other infrastructures like furniture, electricity (power), and cool weather condition must be given.

So, there must be enough power and backup to maintain high-tech equipment like computers running effectively, especially in harsh weather conditions like those seen in some underdeveloped nations. So, it is almost impossible for commercial organizations to take

advantage of using ICT gadgets like computers, radios, televisions, and video recorders in locations where they do not have access to electricity (power) or its substitute. As a result, the usage of ICT for administration and management in corporate organizations is impacted by the absence of electricity and other alternate sources of power supply (Ukanwa & Eze, 2019).

Lack of maintenance culture: ICT equipment has to be maintained, repaired, and restored over time due to wear and tear brought on by constant use. As a result, when ICT devices are not routinely maintained, they eventually break down completely, making it difficult to use them effectively for management and administration of commercial enterprises (Ukanwa & Eze, 2019).

Limited/no access to the internet: Another problem in business organizations management utilizing ICT is limited/no access to the internet. The bedrock of every Business Management System using ICT is the internet through which activities are carried out on the cloud, and an absence of this internet connection means that information/data being manipulated in any business organizations with no internet access remain local and doesn't go beyond that business organizations and hence cannot be accessed by the targeted audience (variety of users) (Ukanwa & Eze, 2019).

Non-availability of skilled personnel: The use of ICT in business organization management is still faced with a significant problem in situations where there are provisions for enough ICT badges with good acceptable supply but a lack of the requisite human ability and expertise to adequately handle them. To manage the installation of ICT equipment, business companies must have staff that are highly qualified, talented, and adaptable in the field of ICT. The use of ICT in business organization management and administration is greatly hampered by the fact that in many business organizations in some developing nations, personnel responsible for the usage and management of the computer receive little to no training, if any training at all (Ukanwa & Eze, 2019).

Methodology

The paper used the qualitative approach applying survey design. The study purposively selects fifty (50) entrepreneurs and business owners to form the sampled subjects. The instrument for data collection used for this study was the close ended questionnaire with question items measured with the 4-likerts "Extent Format" (VHE, HE, LE, VLE) that covers information technology tools and several challenges affecting effective utilization of information technology in business. The reliability status of the instrument was ensured and used by Olelewe and Amaka (2011). The data collected were analyzed descriptively using mean score.

Results

Extent to which information technology tools are utilized to maximizing efficiency in business organizations

S/N	Question Items	VHE (4)	HE (3)	LE (2)	VLE (1)	Mean X	Decisions
1	We utilize computer for effective business practice.	25	9	10	6	3.1	High extent
2	We use mobile phones to communicate with customers	25	17	5	3	3.3	High extent

and suppliers.

S/N	Question Items	VHE (4)	HE (3)	LE (2)	VLE (1)	Mean X	Decisions
3	We utilize the internet service in acquiring information on about the market trends.	15	13	14	8	2.7	High extent
4	The use of computer/phone software (WhatsApp) for integrating our employees and customers.	23	13	9	5	3.1	High extent
	Grand mean response Score					**3.1**	High extent

The table shows the result on the extent to which information technology tools are utilized to maximizing efficiency in business organizations. From the results presented question items 1,2,3 and 4 have a mean score above the criterion score of 2.5. Also, the grand mean response score of 3.1 was also above the criterion score of 2.50. This implies that computers, mobile phone, computer software and internet are utilized for maximizing efficiency of business organizations to a high extent.

Explore the challenges affecting the utilization of information technology

S/N	Question Items	VHE (4)	HE (3)	LE (2)	VLE (1)	Mean X	Decisions
1	Infrastructural deficiencies	15	8	22	5	2.7	High extent
2	Lack of maintenance culture	21	17	8	4	3.1	High extent
3	Poor/no access to the internet	16	17	6	11	2.8	High extent
4	Lack of skilled and competent ICT personnel	17	19	10	4	3.0	High extent
	Grand mean response Score					**2.9**	High extent

The results presented in table above on the challenges affecting the utilization of information technology. From the results, items 1,2,3 and 4 had a mean response above scores above 2.5 criterion score. In addition, the grand mean response score of 2.9 was also above the criterion score of 2.50. This implies that challenges such infrastructural deficiencies, lack of maintenance culture, poor/no access to the internet and lack of skilled and competent ICT personnel has affected the utilization of information technology to a high extent.

Conclusion

This study has been able to justify the notion that the utilization of information technology is a elixir to maximizing efficiency of business organization. Information technologies are influencing all aspects of human existence from our communication to business. Information technology has been seen as a required tool for every form of business enterprise both profitable and non-profitable, private or public firms and above all sector of the economy. I.T tools are

upgrading the business from the traditional paper-based system to a more effective electronic management system to support effective communication among customers and business owners, speedy processing and storage of information, integrating of management and employees, and maximizing the efficiency of the overall business administration.

Conclusively, it was found that computers, mobile phone, computer software and internet are utilized for maximizing efficiency of business organizations to a high extent. Also, it was revealed that challenges such infrastructural deficiencies, lack of maintenance culture, poor/no access to the internet and lack of skilled and competent ICT personnel has affected the utilization of information technology to a high extent

However, despite the limitations found to be a militating against for full utilization of information technology especially businesses developed in rural settings, many has still pushing towards full utilization to achieve business goals and objectives.

Recommendations

Business owners should embrace training policy to upgrade the knowledge and skills of their employees on ICT.

Presently, being a computer literate is a most criteria for most job employment, management and business owners should encourage the policy of employing only computer-skilled workers.

In terms of infrastructural efficiency, business owners should ensure to put in place a standard ICT structure that will support effective and full utilization of information technology.

Customers and clients should also be encouraged to develop interest in information technology because it will improve business transactions and support swift communication via social media and other electronic platforms.

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