

Information Integration and Service Quality: Information Acquisition and Sharing Perspective

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Abstract

The paper investigates the empirical link between information integration and service quality. Specifically, to examine the relationship between information acquisition and service quality, to ascertain the relationship between information sharing and service quality. The study adopted the resource-based view theory (RBV). A correlational survey design was employed and a questionnaire was adopted as the primary source for data collection from the top management employees of the studied telecommunication firms, inferential analysis was done using Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient. The study revealed that there is a significant relationship between information acquisition and service quality, and also there is a significant relationship between information sharing and service quality. This paper concludes that information integration correlates with service quality. It was recommended that business organizations should invest in standard information technologies that support information acquisition and sharing from multiple sources in the business environment.

Keywords: *Information Integration, Service Quality: Information Acquisition, Information Sharing*

Introduction

The exchange of imperative information through the communal network, made possible by information technology, is referred to as information integration (IT). Real-time transmission and dispensation of the information required for corporate decision-making. This is one aspect of the significant goals of information integration. By reducing inventories and shortages, Lee and Tang (2000) established how information integration may cut costs⁷ However, modifications to the business procedure are essential to attain this advantage, such as vendor-managed inventory (VMI) programs, quicker lead times, smaller order quantities, and more regular deliveries. Information integration shows two related kinds of integration that move in opposite ways when taking into account data from customers, clients, and suppliers (i.e. forward and backward respectively). The corporal flows of materials from suppliers to the organization are the focus of forward integration. The coordination of information technology and information flow from the company to suppliers and other business partners, on the other hand, is the focus of recessive integration.

Though several empirical studies have taken IT and information integration into version, the use of information integration for tactical decision-making has not yet been completely realized.

Zhou and Benton's (2007) & Li, Yang, Sun, & Sohal's (2009), deliberations on information integration, which used eight IT-related, information-sharing-related topics to explore the integration of both information and material. They discovered a strong relationship among improved business activity performance and a greater breadth of information integration. They were inept to regulate any connection between information integration and information sharing among all levels of personnel's in an organization, however, things were merged into a single construct. Zhou & Benton (2007), postulated that information sharing affected normal business practices, which they defined as parts of planning, production, and delivery practices. Furthermore, they revealed that information sharing had a major impact on service delivery procedures, company performance, and effective management of business operations. Li et al (2009), study included IT performance and application (including technological capabilities and information exchange). They discovered that the installation of IT significantly impacted the integration of information and consequently affected performance. On this note, this paper will ascertain the relationship between information integration and service quality in the telecommunication sub-sector.

Problem of Statement

Information is the life force of any organization, regardless of the objective and nature of business. Organizations are found susceptible to invisible setbacks from the internal and external business setting when there is a lack or no basis of dynamic information for resilience.

Integrating information sourced from the internal and external business setting will position organizations to efficiently make decisions that will certify their operative efficacy. Information is considered a very central resource that empowers managers and workers to accomplish their tasks successfully, attained and shared information is an authorizing approach to funding overall business growth.

In today business corporations it seems like several organizations have failed to invest in information resources to continue striving in this turbulent business environment with the high level of competitiveness among rival establishments. Integrating information involves the use of information technologies that will allow acquisition, storage, and sharing of information to all levels of managers to make tactical decisions for growth. But the reality is that firms might consider the investment in information acquisition as an excess investment compared to their potential profitability. However, the absence of valuable information in telecom companies may lead to poor routine management, communication barrier, ineffective actions and decisions, poor service quality, low client or customer retention, poor customer support system, and business growth. on this premise. This paper is determined to investigate the information integration and service quality in telecommunication companies in Bayelsa state considering the role of information acquisition and information sharing perspective.

Objectives

The objective of the study is to investigate the empirical link between information integration and service quality. Specifically, the study is to:

1. Examine the relationship between information acquisition and service quality.
Ascertain the relationship between information sharing and service quality.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses will be tested in the course of the study;

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between information acquisition and service quality.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between information sharing and service quality.

Literature and Theoretical Review

Information Integration

The essential skills for 21st-century corporate success will be the dimensions to swiftly and affordably locate and analyse high-quality global management data in an environment of fast business transformation. A key component of conducting business, not a by-product, is how organizations are increasingly seeing the creation and administration of information. While planning for the "next phase" of business intelligence, when analytic software draws from many data silos, avoiding Garbage In and Garbage Out (GIGO) is a crucial success element. In recent times' a company's capacity to respond to fast change both internally and internationally rests on its information awareness. Mendelson (2000), an organization's profitability is significantly influenced by its organizational intelligence, which is in turn fuelled by its internal knowledge sharing and information awareness. Organization workers must comprehend the data that is crucial to the firm as a whole and be ready to compile the necessary data. For the organization to exchange such information successfully and efficiently, it must be organized and have the necessary infrastructure. The right information technology is essential for enabling executives to observe the business from any angle with a worldwide up-to-date and change-ready perspective without being constrained by any massive, rigid information systems. The main components of the adaptive innovativeness are the alignment of flexible and integrated information systems with adaptive well-informed decision-making and strategy.

Information Acquisition

Knowledge and information are essential resources in the modern world and are central to an organization's long-term existence. Organizations are starting to recognize that there is a big and mostly available asset floating about the companies as a result of competition and surroundings that are becoming more dynamic. Non-profit organizations as well as international corporate groups have come to this awareness. Gold & Malhotra & Segars (2001), postulated that acquisition-centered knowledge management approaches are those oriented toward acquiring knowledge in an era of the availability of information. Tanriverdi (2011), said that libraries have a limited amount of funds, technology, employees, and space. libraries must carefully assess their users' needs and work to create cooperative acquisition strategies. As a result, libraries should set aside an annually or annual budget to offer staff training and ongoing education to all employees. To keep knowledge from a stalemate, it has to be updated and extended. Organization's information has always been handled in isolated groups, or "silos," rather than as a whole. For instance, whereas record managers concentrate on papers internal to the company or essential to its administration, librarians have concentrated on the collection or dissemination of information gained outside of the business. No one group appears to comprehend the entire information demands in such a situation.

Information Sharing

Information exchange is crucial because it provides a means of coordinating and integrating various corporate operations or activities (Ramayah & Omar, 2010). It is essential to manage the information flow linked with the transfer of items (goods or services) to the ultimate customer to guarantee that customer expectations in the business may be met. Information exchange among company employees is essential for efficient product and service flow. Therefore, with the information exchange, businesses will be able to adapt successfully to shifting market demand requirements. Sharing of information is important not just in the manufacturing sector, but also in agricultural industries like the wine business. It was discovered that the wine sector has to increase information sharing to foster trust among its stakeholders and guarantee the success of its marketing initiatives.

Along with facilitating the coordination of business activities, information exchange across business partners helps organizations accomplish shared objectives (Lambert 2004).

The setup of the supply network and the alignment of the business partners' goals might have an impact on the degree of information sharing within the organization. Internal company communication of information is extremely crucial. It would be challenging for businesses to communicate information externally with their partners if they were unable to do so inside. Information may serve two purposes: it can increase organizational effectiveness and competitive advantage while also benefiting commercial entities (Li et al., 2006). Information concerning forecast, sales, and promotional efforts must be disseminated not just among internal functions but also throughout the firm to maximize corporate success (Bowersox et al., 2000). Information sharing has to place a strong emphasis on the quality and quantity of the information.

Information sharing also refers to activities that include openly exchanging beneficial information across individuals, systems, or organizational units. The following questions should be addressed when sharing information: "What to share," "Whom to share," "How to share," and "When to share." If these questions are appropriately answered, sharing costs, information overload or deficiency, and company responsiveness will all be reduced. How information is used in the workplace affects a company's capacity to secure a competitive edge and assure product availability (Ramayah & Omar, 2010).

Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory

The resource-based vision theory (RBV) has its roots in Penrose (1959). He argued that the organization's resources what it owns, uses, and deploys are more crucial than the structure of the industry. In agreement with Penrose, Barney (2001) asserted that a firm's resources are its main source of competitive advantage. As a result, the resource-based view (RBV) is a management paradigm used to identify the strategic resources that a corporation might utilize to gain a long-term competitive advantage. The resource-based view (RBV) emphasizes that the resources an organization has built influence the extent to which it can compete in the business environment and draws attention to businesses' internal environments as an enabler for competitive advantage.

In addition to a firm's overall resources, Barney (2001) argued that there are other resources, including physical capital, human capital, and organizational capital resources. He highlighted "all assets, capabilities, organizational processes, organizational attributes,

information, knowledge, etc., controlled by a firm that enable the firm to conceive of and implement strategies that improve its efficiency and effectiveness."

Previous Studies

Information collection on many facets of company performance, numerous research has been done. For instance, research by Richards & Duxbery (2014), postulatedS that a correlation between the acquisition of knowledge and organizational contextual elements including shared vision and organizational goals. It is considered that management plays a crucial role in how contextual elements affect knowledge acquisition. The primary responsibility of management is to find fresh information from outside sources and graft or appropriate it into the company.

The relationship between organizational learning and performance was investigated in research by Argote & Spektor in 2011. In addition, the study, arranging, collecting, and disseminating of information to other users involves both information distribution and information dissemination. Direct learning occurs from one's own experience, while indirect learning occurs through others. Although it is challenging to codify and transmit tacit information, doing so produces inimitability, which is a foundation for competitive advantage. Technology, individual movement, templates, routines, social networks, and alliance mechanisms are used to distribute information across groups, organizational units, or geographic barriers.

Fletcher & Prashantham (2011), information sharing is linked to successful organizational outcomes, such as high levels of productivity, efficiency, creativity, and creative behavior. Furthermore, he stated that information has to be institutionalized and shared. Organizations modify their physical infrastructure to create open workplaces and information networks and adopt systems of information-sharing rewards to encourage knowledge and information exchange.

Methodology

A cross-sectional correlation survey research design was used for this study. This design enabled the researcher to use the questionnaire instrument in generating data. The population is from four identified downstream telecommunication companies that supplied us with seven (7) management staff each under the category of regional coordinator, marketing manager, financial manager, production manager, HRM, customer relations manager, and operational supervisor, which summed up to be 28. In the case of reliability which is used to ascertain instrument consistency, this was ascertained through a test re-test method on some sample elements and this consistently gave an alpha of 0.84. Inferential analysis was done using Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient was used as the statistical tool to test the relationship between the variables.

Results and Discussions

Test of hypotheses stated were analyzed using the Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient as the inferential statistic.

Correlation outcome between information acquisition and service quality Correlations

		Information acquisition	Service quality
Spearman's rho	Information acquisition	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.528**
		N	28
	Service quality	Correlation Coefficient	.528**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	1.000
		N	28

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

The result in the table above, with rho = .528, shows a significant relationship between information acquisition and service quality. The study result conforms with the study outcome of Richards & Duxbery (2014), which revealed a positive relationship between information acquisition and organizational contextual factors such as organizational goals and shared vision has been established. It is argued that contextual factors influence the acquisition of information with management playing a critical role. The management role is primarily in searching for new information from external sources and grafting or appropriation this information into the organization.

Correlational outcome relationship between information sharing and service quality
Correlations

		Information Sharing	Service quality
Spearman's rho	Information Sharing	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.612**
		N	28
	Service quality	Correlation Coefficient	.612**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	1.000
		N	28

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

The result in the table above, with rho = .612, revealed a significant relationship between information sharing and service quality. The finding is supported by the result of Argote & Spektor (2011), who revealed that information distribution and information dissemination involved organizing, capturing, and actual distribution of knowledge and information to other users. Employees learn directly from their own experiences and indirectly from other each other. Although it is difficult to disseminate and formalize tacit knowledge, it creates inimitability which is a basis for competitive advantage.

Conclusion

Information is perhaps the most important resource in an organization. Information gives directive for every management function such as strategic planning, directing, coordinating and even motivating human resources. Information supports the technical know-how of all employees in an organization. Information just like other valuable resources is not cheap it requires setting up infrastructure and information technologies to enable organizations to acquire from external and internal sources, and also empower sharing the acquired information with users for effective decision-making. From the empirical analysis, this paper concludes that information integration correlates with service quality. This implies that information integration is a bedrock for organization's service quality irrespective of the sector or nature of business.

Recommendations

The study recommends that;

1. Business organizations should invest in standard information technologies that support information acquisition and sharing from multiple sources within the business environment.
2. Sourcing for information is not enough to push business to the next level, management of the business should also emphasize on the management of information resources for strategic effective decision-making.
3. Customers, clients, suppliers, and partners should encourage to share valuable information that will keep the business abreast with market demands to ascertain the level of competition in the business market.
4. Investment in sophisticated technologies is not enough for businesses, but there should be evaluated and maintained for the longtime purposes.
- 5.

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