

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Since the advent of organizational use of information technologies (IT), the responsibility to acquire, implement and maintain technology investments has belonged to the specialists within Information Systems departments. Yet current IT research suggests that the management of IT should be shared between IT professionals and line managers. Business managers are now expected to deploy IT effectively and strategically, to assume ownership of IT projects within their domain of business responsibility to develop a partnership with IT professionals, and to take the leadership in IT implementation.

Many practitioners also suggest that keeping a company technologically competitive is a responsibility that should be shared by every member of the management team. The Gartner Group notes that IT competence is required for an organization to prepare for its future. It is becoming increasingly evident that a “business cannot afford technology-illiterate managers any more than it can afford business-illiterate IT professionals”. The importance of having IT-competent line managers was empirically shown in a recent study that found shared knowledge between line managers and information systems (IS) professionals to be an important factor in bringing business objectives and IT objectives into alignment.

The notions of line-technology leadership and technologically-competent managers are simple to prescribe, but difficult for an organization to implement without a roadmap and a clearly understood target. The concept of “core competence” has been defined and studied at the organizational level in the management literature as well as in information systems, as exemplified Sambamurthy and Zmud’s work on managerial IT competence. These latter authors state that such competency enables an organization “to effectively acquire, deploy and leverage its IT investments in pursuit of business strategies and in support of business activities” and helps fulfill the objective of aligning IT strategies and business strategies. However, competence at the individual level is required for the creation of core competence at the organizational level. Research on this individual component is incomplete. This paper explores the concept of the IT competence of individual business managers. Based on an examination of the literature in several disciplines and consultations with business and IT managers, we define the IT competence of business managers and identify its sub-dimensions. We also present a theoretical model of the link between IT competence and business-led technology leadership. The model is designed to be empirically tested and used to explore differences in the managers’ leadership in IT projects and partnerships with IT departments.

Overtime in the business world, information technology has grown to be one of the cardinal pillars. The importance of information technology cannot be overemphasized in the 21st century. Information technology was known to be indispensable in stretching from the early 19th century. Information technology simply put can be regarded or defined as the application of computers to store, retrieve, transmit and manipulate data, often in the context of a business or other enterprise.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has been identified as a vehicle with the potential to improve the competency of managers and every staff as well as the efficiency and service delivery of organizations both in the developed and developing countries. Information and communication technologies have changed the face of the world we live in (Benson, 1998).

ICT enables people to communicate with family, friends and colleagues around the world instantaneously, gain access to global libraries, information resources and numerous other opportunities. Nelson, 2010 opined that information systems strategy is still not properly understood while ethics and behavioural issues are of concern. There are still staggering losses involved in information technology investment. Competence is defined as the knowledge and skills required for performing and supporting business processes. They represent the basis for creating value in an organization. The following competencies are needed to achieving organizational and managerial success in the field of information technology; Technical Knowledge, Work Coordination, Problem Solving and Prevention, Communication and Service encompass and Accountability which eclipses those skills and abilities required to make decisions and take responsibility for work.

Since the year 2001, there has been a revolutionary growth in the telephony industry which is a major branch of information technology in Nigeria. Two years after the introduction of GSM in Nigeria, some researchers conducted an interview among medical practitioners in some organisations to find out the current level of utilization of telephones for customer care service delivery. They noted that managers of the organizations used their personal mobile phones to facilitate customer care at their own detriment. Currently, the number of GSM service providers in the country has increased significantly and all of them keep rolling out several service options or packages including internet services with varying benefits to attract customers (Agboola, 2003).

Statement of the Problem

The poor performances of businesses in organizations have grossly affected the overall gross domestic product of economic productivity of Nigeria; this has led to the present harsh economic condition, this May be as a result of the poor knowledge and application of information technology in businesses and organizations There is a problem of complexity of managing information technology and systems especially in the corporate environment where a lot is required in the effective application of information technology which has a lot to do with the competency of managers in the adoption of information technology.

Aims and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to research on information technology competence on business managers. Meanwhile, the main objective of this study is to know the effect of Information technology competency on business managers. Specific objectives are:

- To know whether business managers can competently use information technology in carrying out their duties.
- To determine the level of competence in information technology among business managers.
- To know whether business managers are up to date with technological trends.
- To ascertain the factors limiting the use of information technology by business managers.

Research Questions

- Can business managers competently use information technology in carrying out their duties?
- What is the level of competence in information technology among business managers?
- Are business managers up to date with technological trends?
- What are the factors limiting the use of information technology by business managers?

Research hypotheses

Hypothesis I

Ho: Business managers cannot competently use information technology in carrying out their duties.

H1: Business managers cannot competently use information technology in carrying out their duties.

Hypothesis II

Ho: The level of competence in information technology among business managers is very low.

H1: The level of competence in information technology among business managers is very high.

Significance of the study

This research will serve as a resource base to other scholars and researchers interested in carrying out further research on information technology and its effect in the business world. This study also seeks to unravel the importance of information technology and the level of competency of business managers in terms of the applicability of information technology.

Scope of the study

This study centers on information technology competency on business managers using IPNX Nigeria limited as the case study.

Definition of terms

Information: Knowledge communicated or received concerning a particular fact or circumstance

Communication: The act or process of *communicating*; fact of being communicated

Technology: The branch of knowledge that deals with the creation and use of technical means and their interrelation with life, society, and the environment, drawing upon such subjects as industrial arts, engineering, applied science, and pure science

Manager: Someone who is in charge of a business, department, etc

Accounting: It is a systematic process of identifying, recording, measuring, classifying, verifying, summarizing, interpreting and communicating financial information.

Business Sector: Is that portion of an economic system that is controlled by national, state or provincial, and local governments.

Competency: The ability to do something successfully or efficiently.

Business: A person's regular occupation, profession, or trad

Knowledge: This means facts, information, and skills acquired by a person through experience or education; the theoretical or practical understanding of a subject.

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INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMPETENCY ON BUSINESS MANAGERS (A CASE STUDY OF IPNX NIGERIA LIMITED)

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