

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Impact of ICT Adoption on the Performance of Small and Medium Scale Food and Beverages Firms in Nigeria

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Abstract

SMEs are designed as individual self-help and empowerment vehicles for employment Opportunities. Testing the impact of ICT on Business operational activities and ICT in Nigeria is expected to serve as a basis for attainment of SMEs growth. This paper attempts to investigate the strength ICT adoption on performance of food and beverages SMEs operation. The study was carried out in Lagos State, using multi-stage sampling technique, with a sample of Two hundred and twenty-five (225) Questionnaires administered and distributed to both Owner & staff of the selected Food and Beverages SMEs, Fifteen (15) respondent each was picked from the fifteen (15) selected Food and Beverages SMEs. Two hundred (200) Questionnaires were found useful for the purpose of the study representing 80% of the total questionnaire distributed. Data collected were coded and analyzed using frequency table and Simple percentage while non-parametric statistical test, ANOVA was used to test the formulated hypothesis using SPSS analysis package. The study concludes that ICT has a positive effect on the performance of selected Small and Medium Scale food, fruit drink and Beverages Firms operation in Nigeria, buttressing the significance relationship between ICT and performance in the selected food and beverages business enterprises. To this end, it is recommended that government make the business environment ICT friendly through provision of ICT Infrastructures which will facilitate expansion. Further, entrepreneurs should be educated and informed about the important of ICT and how it could be used to increase operational efficiency.

Keywords: *Firm Performance, Lagos, Nigeria, Small and medium scale Food and beverages Firm, SMEs Growth.*

Introduction

The great expansion of information and communication technologies that has taken place during the last decade has set the stage for a new age of opportunities and challenges in many economic regions. ICTs provide speedy, inexpensive and convenient means of communication. The adoption of quality technologies such Internet, mobile telephony and broadband networks in many developed countries has been found to have positive effect on the organization's performance. But not all countries are taking advantage of this kind of revolution in the same way and at the same pace. According to The function of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) has become very significant in developing countries, and Information communication technology (ICT) adoption have benefits for the growth of SMEs as evidenced from Oladejo, [1] and Oladejo and Adereti, [2]. SMEs can benefit as users of ICT through increased productivity, faster communications, and reaching new customers. One of the main factors that influences the success or failure of Enterprises is technology.

According [3], through the application of ICT, firms will become more competitive, new markets will be accessed, and new employment opportunities will be created and it will generate wealth and sustainable economic growth. Akande and Yinus [4] also argued that Information technology has effect on Business operation. Determining the level of ICT adoption in the Nigerian SMEs food and beverages, factor for adoption as well as adoption influence on SMEs performance worthy of investigating in the era of globalization.

Statement of the Problem

According to Galdo and Torero, [5] ICT-Firm Performance connection remains elusive, with contradictory results from study to study. Some authors are still doubtful on the empirical relevance of ICT effects on firm performance. In many countries, including much of the developed, these effects have yet to materialize. Also, from different perspective of researchers, [6] a relatively number of studies have focused on ICT

adoption and business performance in developing country such as Nigeria, and some questions remain unanswered regarding their relationships. The extent to which SMEs food and beverages have benefited from explosion of Information communication Technology (ICT) is worthy of studying. . The influence of ICT Adoption on the performance SMEs food and beverages has not been greatly considered in Nigeria. Few studies in Nigeria focus on ICT Investment in SMEs and more on ICT adoption and Usage in the Health, Communication Industry and Financial Sector. This is because Information Communication Technology (ICT) is just gaining recognition in Nigeria SMEs. More so, Oladejo and Adereti [2] mentioned in their study that little research has been carried out on the impact of ICT on SMEs. For this reason, the study will focus factors influencing ICT adoption in the Small Medium food and beverages industry and its influence on their performance in the developing countries such as Nigeria. Specifically, the study will answer the following research questions:

- What are the factors influencing Adoption of Information Communication Technology by SMEs?
- How does Information Communication Technology Adoption influence the growth of SMEs?
- Is there a relationship between Information Communication Technology and SMEs operational performance?

Hypotheses of the Study

The hypothesis for this study are stated in the null form

- Ho: There is no significant relationship between Information communication technology and performance of Food and Beverages SMEs

Literature Review, Theoretical Review and Conceptual Explanation

Innovation Diffusion Theory (IDT)

Diffusion of Innovations is a theory that seeks to explain how, why, and at what rate new ideas and technology spread through cultures. The Innovation Diffusion Theory (IDT) is a model that explains the process by which innovations in technology are adopted by users. Rogers [7] defines innovation as an idea, practice or object that is perceived as new by individual or other unit of adoption. It follows that IDT focuses on explaining how new ideas and concepts gain widespread adoption.

In line with the diffusion of innovation theory a set of attributes associated with technological

innovations that affect the rate of widespread adoption which are, Relative advantage i.e. the degree to which an innovation is perceived better than the idea it supersedes.

Compatibility i.e. degree to which an innovation is perceived as consistent with the existing values, past experiences and need of potential adopters, and

Complexity: the degree to which innovation is perceived as relatively to understand and use. Among these attributes, only relative advantage, compatibility and complexity are consistently related to innovation adoption [8].

Since this theory focuses on ICT adoption and majority of Scholars has appraised it in health Industry, financial Institution such as banking sector and insurance. this research work intend to exploit how the construct and structure can work well for adoption of ICT in the Nigeria Small and Medium Food and beverages Enterprises and it effect on their performance.

Concept of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)

In a global context, a general definition of SMEs using size and scale of operation is not easy, but within the fixed co-ordinates of national boundaries, it might be relatively easier. At the 13th Council meeting of the National Council on Industry held in July, 2001, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) were defined by the Council as follows: Small-Scale Industry is an industry with a labour size of 11-100 workers or a total cost of not more than N50 million, including working capital but excluding cost of land. While Medium Scale Industry is an industry with a labour size of between 101-300 workers or a total cost of over N50 million but not more than N200 million, including working capital but excluding cost of land.

The National Association of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (NASME) defines a small scale enterprise as a business with less than 50 people employed by the enterprise and with an annual turnover of N100,000,000(100 million Naira). NASME further defines a medium scale enterprise as a business with less than 100 employees and with an annual turnover of N500, 000,000 (500 million Naira). Also, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and the Small and Medium Enterprises Equity Investment Scheme (SMEEIS) define SMEs as any enterprise with a maximum asset base of N200, 000,000 (200 million Naira) excluding land and working capital with the number of staff employed by the

enterprise expected to be not less than 10 and not more than 300 [4]. Previous research [9] agreed that SMEs is widely recognized because of its contribution to economic growth and job creation in both developed and developing countries. Researchers argued that SMEs play a major role in poverty alleviation in developing countries and also stimulate domestic and regional economic growth in national and regional economies [10] In Nigeria, SMEs also play a significant role in terms of economic development as they provide the cornerstones on which Nigeria's economic growth and stability rests [11].

Role of Small and Medium Enterprises on the Economy

It has been widely recognized that SMEs not only play an important role in the economy of a country, but are crucial to the country's economic stability. SMEs have been considered as the engine for promoting equitable development. The major advantage of the sector is its employment potential at low capital cost. The labour intensity of the SME sector is much higher than that of the large enterprises. Besides, the growth potential of SMEs and its critical role in the manufacturing and value chains. There widespread in Nigeria and the multiplier effects they have on the rest of the economy enable them to be the engine of economic progress. SME sector is also the main driving force behind Job creation, Poverty reduction, Wealth creation and reduction in disparities. SMEs also formed the vanguard of the modern enterprise sector and presents the propelling force of economic modernization and growth in Nigeria.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

ICT refers to a wide range of computerized technologies. ICT is any technology that enables communication and the electronic capturing, processing and transmission of information (Williams,2005).Technologies include products and services such as desktop computers, laptops, handheld devices, wired or wireless intranet, business productivity software such as text editor and spreadsheet, enterprise software, data storage and security, network security and so on [12] According to Brynjolfsson and Hitt, L.M. [13] ICT is described as technologies that support the communication and co-operation of "human beings and their organizations" and the "creation and exchange of knowledge. Furthermore, Yu [14] considers ICT as a range of technologies that allow the gathering, exchange, retrieval, processing, analysis and transmission of

information. In order words, ICT can be described as any tool that facilitates communication, process and transmit information and share knowledge through electronic means.

Williams [15] advocate that ICT encompasses a range of electronic digital and analog devices such as radio, television, telephones (fixed and mobile), computers, electronic-based media such as digital text and audio-video recording, and the internet, but excludes the non-electronic technologies. In Nigeria, commonly used ICTs include Internet, Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs), Automated Teller Machines (ATMs), mobile phones and smart cards. SMEs usage of ICT ranges from basic technology such as radio and fixed lines to more advanced technology such as email, e-commerce, and information processing systems. Using advanced ICT to improve business processes falls into the category of e-business (World Development Report [10]).

Effect of ICT on SMEs Operations

As technology enhances with high pace, new Information Communication Technologies (ICT), especially Internet, have become a major investment area for small and large organizations alike. New technologies enable organizations to share and disseminate information between various users simultaneously without much effort, customize functionality and achieve higher levels of interactivity [16]. In addition, new technologies help organizations to reduce their operation costs, enhance customer service levels, and satisfaction, hence providing higher quality of information for better decision making abilities to managers. ICT in general are considered as an enabler of organizational changes [17]. In the age of recent ICT, organizations have developed new means of communications and information flow among their partners and customers for a total paradigm shift in their organizations.

SMEs typically have limited resources. Generally, small businesses face greater risks than large organization in ICT investment and implementation, since they have limited resources and training in ICT [18]. Further, organization sizes and locations are causes of Indifferences in ICT satisfaction levels, whereas some managerial related others factors such as age, gender and education levels of managers revealed some interesting differences in the perception of organizational ICT infrastructure and investments

ICT has helped in customer service; huge corporations like Microsoft attend to customer

needs through email and chat services. Networking internal and external in organizations has improved the working of businesses. Staffs and clients likewise can get in touch with the managers for feedback, progress reports and extensions. These days Business requires a lot of planning, due to high tech organization systems on computers. With ICT embraced system, Business plan can be done on an organized pattern, with schedule formats, grant charts etc. Huge databases can now be controlled and stored on network and backup drives.

Problems Facing Adoption of ICT by SMEs in Nigeria

There are a number of factors that hinder SMEs from adopting ICT in Nigeria. For examples in developed countries, ICT has been used to change the way businesses are conducted in order to have a strategic advantage in their various operations. However, the investment returns of ICT in developing countries have fallen short of the potential. Researchers have attributed this problem to organizational factors, environmental factors and lack of technical skills, among others. Problems that affect developing countries from adopting ICT are lack of skilled human resources, economic constraints, lack of systems infrastructure and application problems. Lack of skilled human resources has been described as a principal barrier blocking the diffusion and effective exploitation of ICT in developing countries [14].

Considering the enormous potentials and immense contribution of the SME sector to sustainable economic development, Nigerian SMEs still fall below expectation [19]. There are many factors affecting the performance of Nigerian SMEs and these factors increase their rate of failure. Mahmood and Gary [20] also state that SMEs are hindered in adopting technologies as a result of the barriers that arise in the organization. The factors affecting Nigerian SMEs include lack of infrastructural facilities, cost of implementation, lack of funds, lack of awareness among owners managers, lack of skills and training, cultural factors, lack of government policies that support ICT adoption in SMEs, electricity constraints among others [21-22] Issues of the SME sector in Nigeria and its development have been handled with levity by the government [19] Infrastructural inadequacy has been identified as a key constraint to private sector development. The state of infrastructures, especially telecommunications infrastructure, poses a major hindrance to the use of ICT in Nigeria, with Nigeria having one of the lowest

tele-density in sub-Saharan Africa even though the rate increased exponentially between 2002 and 2006 [9] Another factor that has been identified to be influencing adoption decisions is the cost of implementation and these can be defined as the total amount that will cost business organisations to implement a new technology [4]. Many Nigerian SMEs struggle with the high cost of ICT implementation hence they sometimes ignore the adoption of ICT and rather use their resources for other purposes that would bring about fast profits [4]. SMEs owner-managers also try to determine the investment rate of return, as these types of investments are carried out over relatively long periods of time. Lack of funding and non-utilisation of ICT is another factor that affects the development of Nigerian SMEs. Akande and Yinus [4] stated that there was a need for SMEs to embrace change and utilize ICT to aid the growth of their businesses. Access to funding, proper utilisation of information technology and ability to embrace change in the business environment would stimulate the growth of SMEs in the country. He further stated that there was a need for a centralized agency like Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency to coordinate the collation of information, whereby SMEs could obtain relevant information on the sector.

In Nigerian SMEs, there is reluctance among owner-managers to invest on training their employees because these owner-managers are afraid that following the completion of such training and having improved their qualifications, these employees will leave and find employment in large companies that offer better salaries. Notwithstanding, owner-managers need to conduct training sessions for staff that will assist in creating awareness on the benefits of adopting technology in organizations. Cultural barriers are part of challenges facing by Nigerian SMEs in Adoption ICT [22]. It was further emphasized by [2] that lack of supportive organizational culture and structure may hamper technology initiatives in any Business Enterprises.

Methodology

As at February 2013, there are (15) the fifteen registered medium scale food, Fruit and beverages in Lagos, Nigeria. (www.moneyhub.net/food). All these fifteen food and beverages SMEs will make up the population of this research. The sampling frame of this study comprises of staffs and entrepreneurs of the (15) fifteen selected food and beverages SMEs. Lagos was because is a commercial nerve centre with second largest population in Nigeria (population Census Report

2006). The selection of food and beverages SMEs was done using purposive sampling while food and beverages SMEs staffs were selected at random. Two hundred (225) Questionnaires were administered and distributed to the staff of the fifteen food and beverages SMEs, Fifteen (15) staff each was picked from the fifteen (15) SMEs. Two hundred (200) were found useful for the purpose of the study representing 80% of the total questionnaire distributed. The questionnaire consists of questions that are related to ICT

Adoption, investment and SMEs Performance as identified in the literature. Likert five point scales ranging from 1-5(1=strongly agree &5=strongly disagree) were used as a basis of the questions. Data collected coded and analyzed using frequency table, percentage and mean score while non-parametric statistical test (ANOVA) was used to test the formulated hypothesis using SPSS data analysis package/software.

Table 1: List of the food and Fruit drink SMEs in Lagos state as at 2012

Food company	Main products	Location	Sampled
Chi Limited	Fruit drink	Oshodi, Lagos	Sampled
Choppee Fruit Limited	Pineapple drinks	Alakuko/Sango Otta	Sampled
Classic Beverages Limited	Virgin soft drinks	Amuwo Odofin	Sampled
Formosa Bottling Company	Sparkling fruit juice	Victoria Island	Sampled
Fumman Agric. Product Ltd	Fruit drinks	Ikeja Lagos	Sampled
Scoa Foods Limited	Fruit juice	Isolo Lagos	Sampled
Crown Drinks Ltd	Fruit drinks	Ikoyi, Lagos	Sampled
Best foods Global Nig Ltd	Fruit drinks	Victoria Island	Sampled
Consolidated Foods & Bev.	Food drinks	Okokomaiko	Sampled
De-United Foods Industries	Food and Beverages	Apapa Lagos	Sampled
Diamond Foods Industries	Foods and beverages	Apapa Lagos	Sampled
Delta-R Nig Ltd	Foods and beverages	Ilupeju Lagos	Sampled
Rosula Foods Ltd	Foods and beverage	Surulere Lagos	Sampled
Sunny Foods and Beverages	Foods and fruit	Lagos Island Lagos	Sampled
Sino Foods Nigeria Ltd	Foods and beverages	Victoria Island	Sampled

Source :(*Nigeria moneyhub.net/food*; retrieved on the 16th June, 2014)

Number of Medium scale Foods Business in Lagos = 15

Number sampled =15

Results and Discussions

The Influence of ICT on SMEs food & Beverages Enterprises in Nigeria

From table II, it was revealed that ICT has the potential to increase operational efficiency because it makes the operations of small and medium scale easier to be carried out. Also, through the use of ICT, business transactions are speed up because they tend to attend to more customers within short period of time. Other observations are easy access to records, and

creation of new competitors and services. The table also revealed that ICT helps to reduce the likely errors that would have been made in reporting business transactions, while recording transactions manually or reporting results. Further INCT can also be deduced from the table that information technology provides up to date information to its users. The overall result from the table II, it confirms that information communication technology plays important role as performance inducer of small and medium food and beverages business in Nigeria.

Table 2: Influence of ICT on SMEs food & beverages enterprises in Nigeria

Questions	Strongly agree		Agree		Uncertain		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Information technology is to help increase operational efficiency.	110	55	87	43.5	3	1.5	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Information technology is to speed up the business transactions and creates new competitors and services	55	27.5	124	62	19	9.5	2	1.0	Nil	Nil
Information technology should reduce the likely errors that would have been made in reporting business transactions	76	38.0	107	53.5	15	7.5	2	1.0	Nil	Nil

Information technology provides up to date information.	94	47	100	50	6	3.0	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Information technology helps the manager to monitor the work of their subordinate without them knowing	80	40.0	95	47.5	21	10.5	4	2.0	Nil	Nil

Source: Computations based on Authors' Field Survey (2014).

ICT Effect on Managerial Practice of SMEs food & Beverages Enterprises in Nigeria.

Table III below showed that the consequence of information communication technology on SMEs is to increase competitive advantage i.e. to have competitive advantage over its competitors (SMEs that make use of information technology have competitive advantage over other SMEs). It also shows that the use of ICT minimizes inconvenience, recording of transactions and payment for ordering of goods and other things have been made convenient for SMEs because transactions can now be recorded through the use of computers, payments can now be made through the use of automated machine card at

supermarket, and ordering for goods online. It can also be deduced that information technology facilitates quick responses to transactions and customers. Customers are now promptly and fairly attended to through the use of information technology. And also that information technology minimizes cost of transaction in small and medium scale enterprises. The table III also support that the benefits derived by small and medium business enterprises from the use of information communication technology outweigh the costs.

Finally, from the table, it confirms that ICT has impact on the managerial practice of small and medium Food& Beverages business enterprises.

Table 3: Effect of ICT on managerial practice of SMEs food & beverages enterprises in Nigeria

Questions	Strongly agree		Agree		Uncertain		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
The primary impact of information technology in SMEs is to increase competitive advantage.	60	30.0	106	53.0	20	10.0	11	5.5	3	1.5
The use of information technology minimizes inconvenience.	54	27.0	119	59.5	17	8.5	8	4.0	2	1.0
Information technology facilitates quick responses.	75	37.5	112	56	10	5.0	3	1.5	Nil	Nil
Information technology minimizes cost of transaction.	57	28.5	105	52.5	19	9.5	17	8.5	2	1.0
The benefits derived from information technology in business enterprises outweigh the cost	73	36.5	103	51.5	19	9.5	5	2.5	Nil	Nil
The use of information technology saves time	101	50.5	92	46.0	5	2.5	2	1.0	Nil	Nil

Influencing Factors of ICT Adoption by SMEs

From the table IV, it showed that finance affects the adoption of information communication technology by small and medium scale enterprises; lack of professionals in the field of information communication technology affects the adoption of information technology by small and medium scale enterprises; the type of business also affect the investment on information communication technology; complexity of ICT makes small and medium scale enterprises to avoid its use; employees' knowledge about ICT affects

small and medium scale enterprise investment on information technology.

Finally from the table IV below, it can be concluded that there are various factors influencing ICT adoption by small and medium business enterprises including finance, lack of professionals in the field of information technology, types of the business, complexity of IT, employees' knowledge about information technology, and ease of use.

Table 4: Factors influencing ICT adoption by SMEs

Questions	Strongly agree		Agree		Uncertain		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Finance is a setback for adopting information technology	86	43	105	52.5	8	4.0	1	0.5	Nil	Nil
Lack of professionals in the field of information technology affects the adoption of IT.	73	36.5	99	49.5	17	8.5	9	4.5	2	1.0
Types of the business affect the investment on information technology	72	36.0	111	55.5	12	6.0	3	1.5	2	1.0
Complexity of IT makes SMEs to avoid the use	70	35	86	43	28	14	16	8.0	Nil	Nil
Employees' knowledge about information technology affects SMEs investment on IT.	68	34	103	51.5	18	9.0	4.0	4.0	3	1.5
Information technology is user friendly or easy to use.	84	42	105	52.5	8	4.0	3	1.5	Nil	Nil

Source: Computations based on Authors' Field Survey (2014).

Test of Hypotheses and Interpretation of Results

Ho: There is no significant relationship between Information communication technology and performance of SMEs food and beverages.

From table V, F-calculated value is 6.464 and the tabulated value at 5% level of significance is 2.37,

since F-calculated value is greater than the tabulated value, we reject H_0 and accept H_1 it is concluded that there is significant relationship between ICT and Food and Beverages SMEs. It also has the potential to improve the performance of small and medium enterprises especially in the food and beverages SMEs.

Table 5: Analysis of variance (ANOVA) on relationship between ICT and SMEs Performance

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	10.489	4	2.622	6.464	.000
Within Groups	79.106	195	.406		
Total	89.595	199			

Source: Field Survey 2014

Conclusion

The study concludes that ICT positively Influence the performance of selected food, fruit drink and Beverage SMEs operation in Nigeria. The result of hypothesis tested showed that there is significant relationship between ICT and SMEs performance in the selected food and beverages business enterprises. Findings from the study show clearly that ICT has the potential to increase performance of Food and Beverages SMEs in Nigeria. ICT makes the way business operates less complicated, time saving, and

disclose the new trends of business. Further, the adoption of ICT would bring about enormous opportunities for Nigeria SMEs

In view of the above finding the following recommendation are suggested:

- The government should make business environment ICT enabling by providing ICT infrastructure which will facilitate expansion.
- Entrepreneurs should be educated and informed about the importance of ICT and how it could be used to increase operational efficiency.

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