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IMPACT OF INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) ON EMPLOYEES PERFORMANCE: A STUDY OF MTN NIGERIA TELECOMMUNICATION LIMITED

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ABSTRACT

ICT and employee performance may be regarded as complementary factors. To be successful, firms typically need to adopt ICT as part of a "system" or "cluster" of mutually reinforcing organizational approaches. It was in line with this that this research work aim at examining the impact of information and communication technology (ICT) on employee performance-a study of MTN Nigeria telecommunication limited. The study was carried out in Lagos state with One hundred and twenty (120) Questionnaires administered and distributed to both senior & junior staff of the organizations, eighty two (82) Questionnaires were found useful for the purpose of the study representing 85% of the total questionnaire distributed. Data collected was analyzed using frequency table, percentage and mean score analysis while the non-parametric statistical Pearson Correlation Coefficient was used to test the formulated hypothesis using STATA 10 data analysis software to examine the impact of ICT on employee performance and also to look at the relationship between ICT and employee performance respectively. However, the results of the findings shows that ICT practices produce a skilled and motivated work force that can adapt to and take advantage of new technologies and changing markets. ICT practices cover a range of personnel management areas including performance-based pay, job rotation, flexible job designs, employee involvement, skills training, and communication procedures. To this end, it is recommended that investment in organization and human resources skills is crucial in achieving higher levels of employee performance and business management goals.

KEYWORDS

Employee Involvement, Employee Performance, Job Rotation, ICT.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The world has been revolutionized by the rapid development and implementation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Therefore, ICT combines the disciplines of information technology and communication technology. The digital conversion of these two technologies leads to data transmission through the Internet. Likewise, the adoption of ICT is expected to influence all fields including labor relations and creation of employment in labor market, the labor process, quality of labor, and eventually income distribution. As such, systematic research on the relationship between ICT and employee performance is of paramount importance.

In recent decades, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) such as computer terminals, e-mail and the Internet and their applications have become the major drivers of innovation, growth and social change. Moreover, Colecchia and Schreyer (2001) pointed out that, in times of crisis there must be a focus on the contribution of ICT to innovation and growth.

The ongoing diffusion of new ICT and e-business technologies among firms is a current example of the dynamics of technological change and economic development (Koellinger 2006). Economic theory suggests that the diffusion of new technologies can have far reaching consequences. Most fundamentally, it may change the type of products and services that are offered and traded and it may change the production costs of existing products. Hence, virtually all economic spheres can be affected by such changes, including innovation dynamics, productivity and growth, the development of market structures, firm performance, and the demand for certain types of labor. Therefore, Organizations that continuously improve quality, recruit skilled employees and train employees within the ICT environment do better than others and have competitive advantages.

In a similar vein, OECD (2002) argues that ICT improves employee's performance by enabling organizational innovation. The greatest benefits from ICT appear to be realized when ICT investment is combined with other organisational assets, such as new strategies, new business processes, new organisational structures and better employees skills.

Empirical evidence suggests that organizational changes may improve employee performance through their mutually-reinforcing relationship with ICT. OECD (2002) argues further that ICT is key to facilitating new organisational approaches, from lean production to teamwork to customer relations. Also, ICT enable firms to introduce significant organisational changes in the areas of re-engineering, decentralization, flexible work arrangements and outsourcing. It allows firms to produce with greater flexibility and shortened product cycles to satisfy shifting consumer preferences. In fact, ICT and employee performance may be regarded as complementary factors. To be successful therefore, firms typically need to adopt ICT as part of a "system" or "cluster" of mutually reinforcing organizational approaches (Milgrom and Roberts, 1990).

Fundamentally, information and communication technology (ICT) has received a great deal of attention, not only from the academic field, but also from the business world, because of its implementation in an increasing number of companies. Nevertheless, the results found in the literature are contradictory.

There is still some degree of theoretical consensus about the existence of a positive relationship between ICT and employees performance. In particular, some authors argue that the implementation of ICT provides higher productivity, more satisfaction for the customer, more value creation, etc.

Other authors have found null or negative ICT effects on benefits, yield and share value. However, recently there is a growing new evidence that ICT adoption would generate positive return on labour productivity but these returns will vary among firms, depending on differences in region, characteristics, organizational and human resources. It is generally accepted that ICT alone is not a panacea and there still a debate about how ICT adoption can improve firms performance.

On this note, more research is still needed in developing countries like Nigeria where there is dearth of data and research on the impact of ICT on organizational performance in terms of improved labour productivity. More research is needed based on data from the country to ascertain how and when ICT adoption will increase labour productivity or production efficiency Thus the main objective of this paper is to examine the impact of ICT on employee performance in the telecommunication industry. However, the study will answer the following research questions;

- Is there any relationship between ICT and employee performance?
- How does the use of ICT influence the performance of employee in an organisation?

The null hypotheses below were generated in an attempt to develop findings about the variables.

H₀: there is no significant relationship between Information Communication Technology (ICT) and employee performance

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Prasad and Harker, (1997), Information Communication Technology (ICT) is the acquisition, dissemination, processing and storage of numerical, vocal, textual and pictorial information by a microelectronics-based combination of computing and telecommunications. ICT plays a dominant role in our present environment, enabling humans to understand the increasingly technological changing society. ICT provides learners with understanding, skills and scientific

knowledge needed for scientific research, fostering technological and economic growth in the society, where they live thus improving the standards of living. However, ICT also enables learners to acquire problem-solving and decision-making skills that provides ways of thinking and inquiry which helps in radical changes.

Basically, there have been many challenges and variations in the forces for globalization during the last decade. One that has garnered substantial attention over the past few years is concerned with the impact of information and communication technology on employee performance (OECD, 2004). The widespread diffusion of the Internet, the mobile phone and the broadband networks shows how pervasive these technologies have become.

According to much theoretical and empirical evidence, ICT offers benefits for a wide range of business processes and improves information and knowledge management within the firm, leading to better performance. Firms can manage their processes more efficiently and, as a consequence, they increase their operational efficiency. Moreover, ICT reduces the coordination costs of the firm because of lower procurement and inventory costs and closer coordination with suppliers (Tachiki et al., 2004; OECD, 2003, 2004). In addition, communication based on ICT and the Internet can also improve external communication, reducing the inefficiencies resulting from lack of co-ordination between firms, and increasing the speed and reliability of information processing and transfer. In general, ICT reduces transaction and coordination costs, maximizing the value of the transactions (OECD, 2004).

However, according to the literature review on the impact of ICT at the firm level, we can confirm the diversity of theoretical approaches and empirical evidence on the role of ICT in the improvement of the employee performance.

Much of the early literature on ICT, mainly in the 1980s and early 1990s, theoretically justified the advantages of information technologies, but they obtained contradictory empirical evidence, especially weak or with no link between ICT and employee performance (Brynjolfsson, 1993).

2.0.1 ICT AND FIRMS PERFORMANCE

The impacts of ICT on employee performance are subject to debate because not all studies have demonstrated clear payoffs from ICT investments (Chan, 2000, Kohli and Devaraj, 2003). Also, the results vary depending on how employee performance and ICT payoffs are measured and analyzed. For example, one empirical study finds positive impacts of ICT investments on employee performance, but not on profits (Harris, S.E. and Katz, J.L. 1991). Another study did not find positive effects of ICT capital on employee performance, while ICT labor positively contributed to output and profitability (Prasad and Harker, 1997).

An analysis of the profitability of ICT investments in an empirical study that explicitly considered the competitive dynamics in a market showed that the profits of non-adopters of ICT are reduced as other organizations that adopt new ICT. Furthermore, the gross profit gains of ICT adoption are related to firm and industry characteristics and the number of other users of the technology (Stoneman and Kwon, 1996). Along similar lines, another study suggests that early adopters of ICT are likely to benefit, but once the technology becomes common the competitive advantage is lost (Weill, 1992). These somewhat ambiguous results on the impact of ICT on employee performance can be explained if we drop the assumption that there is a direct link between ICT investments and employee performance. In other words, the new economy mantra "*more ICT equals better performance*" must be rejected. Instead, a more comprehensive approach is needed to explain these findings. However, recently empirical literature has begun to re assess the association between ICT ,productivity and a wide range of complimentary factors.(Arvanitis and Loukis, 2009; Aral and Weill, 2007) It was agreed that in order for ICT to be properly utilized , it must be used in conjunction with complimentary resources such as organizational structure, human and organizational resources.(Peppard and Ward, 2004; Aral et. al., 2010).

On this note, this paper aim to examine the impact of ICT on employee performance in the telecommunication industry in Nigeria

2.0.2 EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

Employee's performance is a rating system used in most corporations to determine the abilities and output of an employee. Performance is divided into five components: Planning, monitoring, developing, rating and rewarding.

In the planning stage, goals are set to help measure the employee's work time to see if they are able to maintain the goals set or reach new goals. Monitoring is the phase in which the goals are looked at to see how well one is doing to meet them. This can also be a feedback stage in which employers determine if progress is being seen or not. During the developing stage an employee is supposed to improve any poor performance that has been seen during the time frame one has been working within the organization. Generally employee's performance ratings are given out each year. The rating is to summarize the performance based on a number system to determine where on the scale a person is. At the end of the cycle is rewarding stage. This stage is designed to reward and recognize outstanding behavior such as that which is better than expected. Organisation sees employee's performance as a way to appraise the employee for their effectiveness in the company.

2.0.3 INFLUENCE OF ICT'S ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

What precisely are the impacts that ICT can have on employee performance and growth? Three effects can be distinguished. Firstly, as a capital good, investment in ICT contributes to overall capital deepening and therefore helps raise labour productivity. Secondly, rapid technological progress in the production of ICT goods and services may contribute to more rapid multifactor productivity (MFP) growth in the ICT-producing sector. And thirdly, greater use of ICT may help firms increase their overall efficiency, and thus raise MFP. Moreover, the application of ICT may contribute to network effects, such as lower transaction costs, higher productivity of knowledge employee and more rapid innovation, which will improve the overall efficiency of the Organisation.

However, organisation uses ICT practices as a strategic tool to achieve business objectives such as cost reduction as well as product development. ICT practices produce a skilled and motivated work force that can adapt to and take advantage of new technologies and changing markets. ICT invention cover a range of personnel management areas including performance-based pay, job rotation, flexible job designs, employee involvement, skills training, and communication procedures.

2.0.3.1 PERFORMANCE-BASED PAY: This links employees' pay in part to either the performance of the firm, or individual performance. It is designed to strengthen employee incentives and increased trust and commitment. There are many ways to relate pay to performance: individual incentive systems, productivity/quality gain sharing and other group incentives, profit sharing and merit pay, and skill-based pay. There is ample evidence to suggest that performance-based pay can help motivate, attract and retain outstanding performers (Lawler et. al., 1998). Performance-based pay is being used by substantial firms, particularly companies which are implementing a range of organizational changes (OECD, 2002).

2.0.3.2 FLEXIBLE JOB DESIGN AND EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT: A key objective of ICT policies is to get employees more involved in their jobs. Freeman, et al. (2000) argue that many organisation use ICT policies such as self-directed teams, quality circles, profit sharing, and diverse other programs, to involve employees in their jobs. ICT practices such as teamwork and job rotation seem to raise skill demands primarily for behavioral and interpersonal skills such as the ability to get along with others and work in teams (Cappeli and Neumark, 1999). In this paper, we consider a number of individual ICT practices including employee suggestion programs, flexible job design and job rotation, job enrichment/enlargement, and job redesign, information sharing with employees, quality circles and problem-solving teams, self-directed work groups, and joint labour management committees.

2.0.3.3 DEVELOPING EMPLOYEE SKILLS: ICT practices focus on "high skill" strategies that make better use of and continuously renew human capital (OECD, 1998). In any organisation, work requires creative thinking, self-motivation, and academic basics. Problem-solving, decision-making, business, financial, negotiating, and interpersonal skills, in addition to technical skills are essential for employee (Newton, 1996). A recent OECD (2002) study notes that firms are now developing their own customized training strategies, which are increasingly on-line. Some large firms are involved in setting up corporate universities using ICT technologies and offering some combinations of satellite-based learning, web based training, virtual reality and virtual campuses, sometimes in conjunction with more traditional methods.

ICT are playing a key role in the growth of customer relations management (CRM) practices. For example, to communicate with clients, sales forces in the field are supplemented by interactive web sites and call centres. In addition, advanced database technology, world-wide web integration, sales force automation and multi-media-based front office applications are emerging as key elements of CRM. Evidence from surveys of managers and case study literature shows that the most important reasons for investing in ICT are product quality improvements, especially customer service, timeliness, and convenience (Bresnahan et.al., 2002).

2.0.4 FACTORS AFFECTING THE IMPACT OF ICT ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

The effects of Information Communication Technology (ICT) is far reaching and cannot be overemphasized. The impact of ICT looks at how our lives have been changed, for better and for worse, by the impact of ICT. It includes both positive effects and negative effects and examine at how individuals, organisations and society are affected.

However, these effects occur primarily, or only, when accompanied by other changes and investments, including investment in skills and organisational change. This is also confirmed by many empirical studies that suggest that ICT primarily affects firms where skills have been improved and organisational changes have been introduced. The role of these complementary factors was raised by Bresnahan and Greenstein (1996), who argued that users help make investment in technologies, such as ICT, more valuable through their own experimentation and invention. Without this process of "co-invention", which often has a slower pace than technological invention, the economic impact of ICT may be limited. Aral et al., (2010) observed that to achieve a more competitive position the firm should complement ICT investments with an appropriate use of these technologies, for implicit technology resources are required. It is the complimentary investments in labor skills, organization change and innovation that are essential to making these technologies work. This section looks at some of the factors that affect the uptake of ICT and the main complementary factors for ICT investment.

Cost: the cost of using ICT may cause a number of problems for organisations. A lot of ICT hardware and software is expensive, both to purchase and to maintain. An ICT system usually requires specialist staff to run it and there is also the challenge of keeping up with ever-changing technology. These extra costs should be offset by the positive effects of using ICT, but if an organisation gets its cost-benefit analysis wrong it may lose money.

Competition: this is usually thought of as being a good thing, but for some organisations being exposed to greater competition can be a problem. If the organisation is competing for customers, donations, or other means of funding nationally or even internationally, they may lose out to other organisations that can offer the same service for less money.

Security: this is always a problem for any organisation that uses ICT. Data must be kept secure, Internet connections must be protected from attack, new viruses and other forms of malware are released nearly every day. Organisations will usually have legal obligations to protect data such as customer information. Even if the organisation does not have to comply with a specific data protection law it will usually be in the organization's interest to protect data from rivals.

2.0.5 ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE IS KEY TO MAKING ICT WORK

Closely linked to human capital is the role of organisational change. Studies typically find that the greatest benefits from ICT are realized when ICT investment is combined with other organisational changes, such as new strategies, new business processes and practices and new organisational structures. Several studies with official statistics have addressed this link to human capital and organisational change. For example, Black and Lynch (2001) found that the implementation of human resource practices is important for productivity, e.g. giving employees greater voice in decision-making, profit-sharing mechanisms and new industrial relations practices. In another study (2000), they found that firms that re-engineer their workplaces to incorporate high-performance practices experience higher productivity and higher wages.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The theoretical population of this study consist the whole GSM telecommunication companies operating in Nigeria. The regulatory body which is Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC) has divided the Operators into Four (4) different categories i.e. MTN Nigeria, Globacom Ltd, Airtel and Etisalat telecommunication limited respectively. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the researcher restricted to MTN Nigeria telecommunication limited only in the above categories.

The sampling frame of this study comprises of senior and junior staff in the relevant departments of the above selected GSM operators in Nigeria. The selection of companies was done using purposive sampling while staffs were selected at random.

One hundred and sixty (120) Questionnaires were administered and distributed to the staff of the MTN Nigeria limited. Eighty two (82) were found useful for the purpose of the study representing 85% of the total questionnaire distributed. The major instrument used in the collection of data for this research work was questionnaire.

The questionnaire consists of questions that are related to the impact of ICT on employee performance as identified in the literature. Likert five point scales ranging from 1-5 (strongly agree=5, agree=4, undecided=3, disagree=2, strongly disagree=1) were used as a basis of the questions. Data collected was analyzed using frequency table, percentage and mean score analysis while the non-parametric statistical- Pearson correlation coefficients was used to test the formulated hypothesis using STATA 10 data analysis package/software.

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table1 below reveals that, 61.0% of respondents were male, and 39.0% were females. Therefore, it shows that majority of the staff in the sample organization are males. Similarly, the table shows that 32.93% of the respondents were aged between 25-35, 26.83% of the respondents were aged 36-45, 40.24% of the respondents were aged between 46-55, and none was between 56 and above. Hence the data above shows that majority of the respondents were of between 25-35 years. However, in addition, the table signifies that 57.30% of the respondents were between level 1 & 2, while 42.70% were in cadre of level 3-4. Finally, the table support that most of the respondents are between 1-3 years in service with 45.1%. Hence this shows that majority of the respondents have not served the sector for a long time.

TABLE1: FREQUENCY AND MEAN SCORE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Variables	Number	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Sex:			
Male	50	61.0	61.0
Female	32	39.0	100.0
Age:			
25-35	27	32.93	32.93
36-45	22	26.83	59.76
46-55	33	40.24	100.00
56 & Above	0	00.00	100.00
Staff Status:			
Level 1-2	47	57.30	57.3
Level 3-4	35	42.70	100.00
Year of Service:			
Below 1 year	10	12.2	12.20
1-3	37	45.1	57.3
4-6	27	32.9	90.2
7-8	8	9.8	100.00

Source: Author's Field Survey (2013) STATA10

HO: there is no significant relationship between Information Communication Technology (ICT) and employee performance.

Hypothesis	No of Respondents	Mean	Standard Deviation	Pearson Correlation
Relationship between ICT and Employees performance.	82	4.1199	0.8512	+0.8307

- a. Predictors: (constant), ICT-Information Communication technology
- b. Dependent variable: Employees performance

Source: Stata 10 Printout, 2013

ANALYSIS OF THE HYPOTHESIS

The above table shows that the average mean for the hypothesis is 4.1199. This falls within the categories of agree and the standard deviation is 0.8512, which is less than 1. This implies that majority were in support of the statement that there is a relationship between ICT and employee performance. However, the correlation coefficient is +0.8307 and that most of the variables within the group are correlated. We therefore reject the null hypothesis (Ho) and accept the alternative hypotheses (H1) which state that there is a correlation between ICT and employee performance.

TABLE 2: LIST OF STATEMENT AND CORRESPONDING RESPONSES ON THE IMPACT OF ICT ON EMPLOYEE'S PERFORMANCE

S/N	STATEMENT	RESPONSE				
		SA	A	UD	D	SD
	RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ICT AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE					
1	Deployment of technology has increased employee performance over time?	55%	40%	5%	-	-
2	An organization with ICT has competitive advantage over other firms without ICT?	35%	50%	10%	5%	-
3	Introduction of ICT tend to bring about staff reduction in an organization?	3%	7%	5%	39%	46%
4	ICT does not positively influence service delivery of employee performance?	-	-	-	25%	75%
5	Introduction of new technology enhance employees performance?	33%	46%	15%	4%	2%
6	ICT create more job opportunity within and outside the organization?	52%	37%	6%	2%	3%
7	Work performance of employees depends on the type of ICT availability?	41%	48%	8%	3%	-
8	The use and adoption of ICT has increased the skills and efficiency of employee's performance?	38%	53%	-	5%	4%
9	ICT work environment has a great impact on employees work performance?	26%	33%	15%	13%	13%
10.	Cost, security and competition are factors affecting ICT within an organization?	59%	36%	5%	-	-

Source: Author's Computation, 2013

THE IMPACTS OF ICT ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

From the Table 2 above, the response shows that (55%) of the total respondents strongly agreed; 40% of them agreed, and 5% of the respondent are undecided to the motion that the deployment of ICT increase employee performance. Hence, this shows that there is a positive relationship between ICT and employee performance.

However, the table indicate that an appreciable number of respondents, i.e. (35%) of the respondents strongly agreed that an organization with ICT has competitive advantage over other firms without ICT, (50%) of them agreed, (10%) undecided, while (5%) also disagreed to the motion.

Also, the table2 indicate that a large number of respondents, i.e. (46%) of the respondents, strongly disagree that Introduction of ICT tend to bring about staff reduction in an organization, (39%) of them disagreed, while (5%), (7%) and (3%) were undecided, agree and strongly agree respectively motion.

Subsequently, the statements that ICT does not positively influence service delivery of employee performance was strongly disagreed by (75%) and 25% disagree respectively by respondents. Furthermore, 33% of the respondents strongly agreed, 46% agreed, 15% were undecided; another 4% disagreed, while the last 2% strongly disagreed that Introduction of new technology enhance employees performance. Hence, this show that majority is of the opinion that there is a whole lot of positive intervention of ICT on employee performance in an organization.

Similarly, from table2, 52% of the respondents strongly agreed that ICT create more job opportunity within and outside the organization, 37% agreed, 6% undecided, 2% disagree, while 3% strongly disagreed to it. Hence, it is concluded that ICT create more jobs for employees in and out of the organization.

Likewise, 41% of the respondents strongly agreed, 48% agreed, 8% were undecided and 3% disagree that work performances of employee depends on the type of ICT availability. Hence, these signify that majority support that work performance of employee depends on the type of ICT availability.

Also, 38% of the respondents strongly agreed, 53% agreed, 5% disagree while 4% were strongly disagree the use of ICT has increased the skills and efficiency of employee. Hence, the majority respondents signify that increased in employee skills and efficiency largely depends on ICT use.

Also the Table2 indicate that 26% of the respondents strongly agreed, 33% agreed, 15% undecided, 13% disagreed, and while 13% strongly disagree that ICT work environment has a great impact on employees work performance. Hence, the majority respondents imply that the introduction of ICT work environment will have impact on employee performance at work.

Finally 59% of the respondents strongly agree, 36% agree, while 5% were undecided that cost, security and competitions are some of the factors affecting ICT within an organization. Hence majority believes that ICT can be marred with these aforementioned factors.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The main goal of this research has been to gain a better comprehension of how information and communication technologies (ICT) impact employee's performance, and of the importance of other complementary factors. Since there are few studies that investigate the impact of ICT on employee's performance, as a result these present study attempts to fill this gap.

The invention of ICT over the past decade as a key technology has the potential to transform economic and social activity. It has already led to more rapid growth in organisations where appropriate policies to reap the benefits from ICT have been put in place. Indeed, economic performance is not the result of a single policy or institutional arrangement, but a comprehensive and co-ordinated set of actions to create the right conditions for future change and innovation. Policies to strengthen economic and social fundamentals are thus of over-riding importance in drawing the benefits from ICT.

The result of the findings and the hypothesis tested showed that introduction of ICT in an organization, has a positive impact on employee performance in areas like, performance-based pay, job rotation, flexible job designs, employee involvement, skills training, and communication procedures.

However, the empirical evidence offered highlights the need to consider organizational aspects, such as human resources and strategic adjustment, in order to raise the potential benefits of ICT. According to this evidence, we conclude that investment in organization and human resources skills is crucial in achieving higher levels of employee performance. Business management capabilities are growing in importance, rather than ICT alone. Thus, we can make certain practical recommendations that will be useful for all responsible agents in the management of ICT and other complementary factors.

Future prospects are also favorable. To a large extent, this is in the hands of firms and depends on the extent to which they choose to further develop their business strategies and capabilities. There are some specific issues that governments should continue to address. However, because the factors affecting ICT use and productivity gains are complex and diffuse, the appropriate stance for governments is largely to ensure that the general business environment supports the innovative use of ICT.

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