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Editorial: The Impact of ICT Investment and Usage

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Coles College of Business



The Impact of ICT Investment and Usage

Editorial

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EDITORIAL

This third issue of the first volume of AJIS presents two research papers examining the impact of information and communication technology (ICT) investment and Usage in microfinance institutions (MFIs) and public sector utilities firms. Both information systems practitioners and academic literature continues to devote considerable attention to the evaluation of information systems investments due to their role as complimentary resources for competitive advantage in organisations. This issue of AJIS introduces the perspective of firms in sub-Saharan Africa to the discourse in which such perspective has been fairly absent. In the first paper Ssewanyana examines the impact of ICT usage on microfinance institutions in Uganda. From a survey of MFIs in Uganda the study uses descriptive statistics to explore the type of software, hardware and network technologies used by MFIs, the benefits obtained and the barriers which influence ICT usage. The findings suggest that ICT usage in MFIs has been on the rise in Uganda and applications being used include free and open-source software which tends to be the adoption path for small MFIs as compared to large MFIs. The study also suggests that the current ICT policies such as tax exemption on computer hardware are not sufficient to achieve the desired growth in adoption and usage of ICTs in MFIs. The emphasis is on the need for progressive policies that provide relevant technical and managerial ICT training programs and advocacy for the use of free and open-software as alternative to relatively dear proprietary software applications. The study also calls for the extension of its findings in future research in other sub-Saharan countries and application of different research methods to develop more thorough conclusions from the findings.

In the second paper Ojedokun and Moahi investigate the impact of computer technology on the billing process and quality of bills produced by two public sector utility companies in Botswana. The study examined the input-output relationship with computers as one of the inputs. The other

input is labour represented by the Meter Reading Hours and the Supervisory Hours. The study drew on the economic production theory and time series approach to determine the impact of the inputs on the output. The findings suggest that there is no significant statistical evidence that computer technology is positively linked to improvement in total quality bills invoiced per month. Workplace practices – length of working hours, employee supervision, and actual work processes – tend to influence the usage of computer technology and the output, thus its impact on productivity in organisations. Hence, the study argues that computer technology alone is an insufficient predictor of productivity improvement. The study is, perhaps, the first ICT investment study or among a few, in sub-Saharan Africa to compare the impact of computer technology on productivity improvement among government utility corporations. These findings may inform the development of appropriate policies on investments in IT in organisations. The study in extending ICT in public sector research also opens opportunities for future research to examine the impact of related IT applications – billing systems, postal system and inventory systems in firms in other sub-Saharan countries.

The two papers bring us a step closer to understanding how the unique idiosyncrasies in Africa influence the adoption and use of ICT at the firm-level. There is still more to be done in terms of research to develop new or extend existing theoretical frameworks in order to build up a more practice-oriented understanding of how to develop, deploy and manage contextually relevant ICTs to achieve and sustain the potential benefits.

AJIS JOURNAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Introduction of French Section

We are very pleased to announce the introduction of a French section of the AJIS which will accept submissions in French. Article submissions can be emailed to Dr. Bangaly Kaba, International University of Grand-Bassam, Cote D'Ivoire (kaba.bangaly@uigb.org).

Note to Authors

To give the AJIS papers a consistent, high-quality content and appearance the editorial team has developed a basic [AJIS Paper Submission Checklist](#) and [AJIS Paper Template](#) which may guide authors in preparing articles for submission and also reduce the review cycles. Though these are not exhaustive, they will be of help, especially to authors and reviewers to reduce the review cycle time. Our purpose is not to create a ‘one best format’, but to offer guidelines in the preparation of articles for submission.

We therefore ask that authors follow the basic guidelines provided in the checklist and template which may be obtained from the AJIS website – www.ajisonline.com.