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Electronic Administrative Indicators: Corollary for Sustaining Manufacturing Businesses in Rivers State

Mr. Peter Mezenye Alikornwo; & Mr. Goodluck Chidi Adiele

Department of Office Technology and Management, Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic, Rumuola, Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

Corresponding Author: *peter.alikornwo@ust.edu.ng*

Abstract

The study investigated the relationship between e-administrative indicators and sustainability manufacturing firms in Rivers State. Using two dimensions of digitization and workflow management, while profitability and growth measured Sustainability; the population of this study comprised of the 78 managers censused from twenty six (26) manufacturing firms operating in Rivers State. Data gathered with structured closed ended research questions from the targeted respondents were analyzed using the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Statistical tool and presented with the aid of statistical packages for social science (SPSS) version 23.0. The p-values were calculated to determine the significance of the hypothesized relationship. Analytical outcomes revealed statistically positive and significant relationships between the dimensions of our predictor variable-administrative indicators and the measures of the criterion variable-sustainability. Based on the findings, the study concluded that e-administrative indicators have a positive significant relationship with sustainability of manufacturing firms in Rivers State. The study further recommended inter-alia that Managers of manufacturing firms should prioritize the critical role of digitalization in their operations to support their business sustainability.

Keywords: E-administration, Business Process Management, Sustainability, Digitization, Workflow Management

Introduction

In today's world, organizations face major business challenges such as the advent of technology. So organizations move with time and all other organizations try to follow the trend. Nwinyokpugi (2015) believes that the concept of e-administration refers to the process of transforming the administration and management of the organization into an electronic state through the use of technology, thereby improving the stability

of the organization. Over the years, this concept of electronic management has turned into a virtual organization due to its technological and electronic systems, and electronic organization connections that can exist within and between organizations beyond traditional organizations have become widespread (Bourne, 1998). This allows employers and managers to monitor the performance of the organization without the need for physical meetings and interaction. It is an ICT tool designed to make the office uninformed and improve the efficiency and sustainability of the organization. Electronic management strategies include workplace communication and collaboration. Technology is changing the way we work, rest, relax, socialize and do almost everything. It changed our way of life. E-administration is one of the new forms of administration put into practice by technology. Technologies enable communication and inequality and/or interaction in a variety of ways, enabling (new) fast and efficient processing, storage, distribution and creation of (new) information in an organization. The impact of e-administration on corporate sustainability worries many. Some organizations recognize that this removes the burden of coordination and monitoring face-to-face relationships and provides quick, easy management unlike traditional management processes. All aspects of production are managed to be effective in a challenging and highly competitive and global market. Among the factors of production, human resource use is the biggest problem. Because compared to other materials, the management of employees needs to control their thoughts, feelings and emotions to ensure the highest level of safety. E-administrative strategies play an important role in this challenge. The inability of organizational leaders to maintain the best and appropriate management of relationships and relationships between employees and employers causes stress and confusion among employees, resulting in inefficiency, thereby affecting its sustainability.

ICT methods in public and private administration have been made effective through the use of electronic administration strategies, providing a good platform to reduce waste, limit work more and less fatigue, reduce costs and expenses by reducing personnel and waste. As electronic control strategies accelerate efficiency and data flow, investment banking is also uninterrupted, controlling insecurity and improving access to personal data and information. The use of e-administration strategies should be customer-oriented rather than organization-centered, dependency on specific people should be eliminated, and the business process package should be taught. According to Nwinyokpugi and Alikornwo (2022), the concept of e-administration refers to any concept that replaces paper processes in traditional offices with electronic processes in order to create a paperless office.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

E-administration is the management of all resources necessary to create and maintain a suitable, efficient and effective business environment that meets business objectives and makes people work best every day. Tella, *et al.,* (2007) argues that well-managed workplaces often view ordinary employees as the key to good performance and productivity. These organizations focus on human investment, not capital investment; employees become the focus of progress. In order to achieve this development, employees must be satisfied and involved in their work, and for this, the workplace must be well managed. A poor work

environment affects employee morale and motivation, and anything that affects morale and motivation can affect sustainability, so managing the workplace can directly affect employee productivity, comfort, morale, health, and engagement. Extensive research has been done, including the impact of e-administration and organizational efficiency, and most studies have found that many factors that can be beneficial to employee engagement such as workplace ergonomics, workplace technology, design, and workplace communication have not been overlooked. E-administration can also be thought of as any activity involving the planning, creation, use and disposal of things around the office through electronic and intertwined links in order to improve the use of resources and facilities to assist employees in their daily work. E-administration is one of the best ways to reduce company costs and increase productivity. Therefore, it is important for successful employees to understand what e-administration is and how to use the e-administrative approaches. E-administration is the process of planning, designing, using and disposing of products around the workplace designed to help employees plan event dates and improve the use of resources and facilities through technological and collaborative linkages (Linman, 2010). E-administration includes specific management and planning to understand the challenges at work and solve problems that may affect productivity in the workplace, while ensuring that people have what they need to fulfill their duties and responsibilities through technological adaptations. This is the key to being more efficient and effective by organizing things around you in your office. Being efficient in office management means you are more efficient at daily tasks, meeting deadlines, communicating and collaborating with colleagues and management. Moreover, e-administration is a great way to improve your organization's profitability, service quality and time management. Organizations that want to be effective in planning and management every day must learn to manage the workplace and keep things organized electronically. For example, Your Company hires an IT service provider to handle all of its IT needs, such as the Internet, office network, telephone, web conferencing tools, and communications tools through advanced communications and information management. In this example, your company saves time and money as IT-related issues in the workplace can be resolved by contacting the service provider.

Digitization

Technology brings many advances to our workplace and operations today. These advances focus on digitizing the organization's data, information and content management. This became the starting point for our research. In this study, data digitization is defined as the process of converting data from analogue format to digital format with the help of technology. Digitization simply creates a computer representation of the print simulation. There are many ways to digitize, and there are many types of advertising that need to be digitized. However, the main focus is mainly on text and images, as they are important components in the digitization process; that is; the original product is transformed into another form. Technically, the digitization process will convert analogue images to corresponding numbers (Morrison *et al.*, n.d.). Digitization is understood as part of digitalization. Digitization refers to the technological process of embedding digital artifacts into technological products (Pfeiffer & Jarke 2017); basically, digitization is used for documents, microfilms, images, sounds, etc. It can be understood as the creation of digital versions of physical objects (Abu-Shanab, Abu-Shehab & Khairallah, 2015). Digitization is a concept used to describe the process of

converting data into a digital format for storage or use in information systems. The world is known as the Information Age, and technology plays an important role in enabling schools to develop new ways to manage their content and operations. In response to the pace of technological change the world is going through, business organizations leverage information technology to digitally innovate and change their work routines, leading to ideas and innovations such as digital transformation (Bianco & Covino, 2018). . Digital transformation has been studied since the concept of digital transformation first emerged in the 1960s (Schwertner, 2017). According to I-Scoop (2017), digital transformation is "a major change in business and operations, processes, capabilities and standards, strategy and values, most often to capitalize on the changes and opportunities of the interconnection between digital technologies and their faster interconnection impact, including previously existing and future changes". From a business perspective, one of the main reasons for this change is to provide businesses with a competitive advantage and to manage their content, processes and performance (Hinings, Gegenhuber & Greenwood, 2018). In the current literature, many researchers use digital innovation and digital transformation to mean the same thing, but the two terms are not necessarily the same thing. While digital innovation means the creation and use of appropriate technologies to digitally support all aspects of company operations (Demirkan, Spohrer, & Welser, 2016), digital transformation leads to trends and transformations by integrating various digital transformations values and beliefs that modify or complement existing business processes in an organization (Hinings *et al.,* 2018; Solis & Littleton, 2017). This shows that digital transformation goes beyond digital innovation and includes the complete digitization of processes and the transformation of the workplace into a digital workplace. Although these two terms are mostly used in the private sector (Markovitch & Willmott, 2014), they also affect public institutions that respond to social and public problems using one or more of the challenges and public challenges.

Workflow Management

Organizations, like people, struggle to survive in business environments. Due to changes such as technological development, growing and changing customer needs, competition, employee turnover, environmental problems and policies, it is important for organizations to be able to respond and adapt to this dynamic environment quickly (Bart & Zaviri, 2002). In order to survive and stay competitive, businesses create new ideas, improve performance, create new products and technologies, and do all this to grow and be better now (Malone, 2002). Workflow means the execution and operation of a business process in which business, data or information is transferred from one actor to another for action based on standard procedures. Organizations use automation to coordinate people's work and synchronize information between systems to increase organizational performance, productivity, and profitability. Workflow automates the flow of worker tasks and activities, reducing the time required to complete the process and potential errors caused by human-computer interaction (John-Otumu, Konigene, & Imhanlahimi, 2015). The Workflow makes the process efficient, seamless, agile and visible by ensuring that every process step is clearly explained, timed and optimized for maximum productivity. With insightful, up-to-date information, managers and employees can make faster and better decisions (John-Otumu *et al.*, 2015). The workflow enables business users and information technology to work together to quickly adapt processes and processes to reflect changing business conditions. The application of technology in mobile computing, management control, multi-data, building construction, technology, operations and management has been widely discussed in (Leymann & Roller, 2000). Workflows describe business processes at the conceptual level necessary to understand, measure, and

redesign business processes. Workflows, on the other hand, can capture the knowledge work and the process-level knowledge process that should define people's skills (John-Otumu *et al.*, 2015). Workflow management or business process management (BPM) is the practice of evaluating, improving and monitoring business processes for continuous business improvement (Houy, Fettke, & Loos, 2010). In other words, operations management is a way of monitoring what types of operations exist in an organization and how they are and how they are performed. In addition, BPM helps organizations manage the significance of results and identify opportunities for improvement and improvement (Dumas, La Rosa, Mendling, & Reijers, 2013; Rosemann & De Bruin, 2005). Therefore, BPM can be broadly defined as a provider of services and methods to effectively manage business processes (Huang, van der Aalst, Lu, & Duan, 2011). Since BPM can enable the interaction, control, analysis and optimization of processes (Smith, 2003), it plays an important role in the advancement of organizations that focus specifically on business processes (Kohlbacher, 2009). Workflows are part of every organization that determines how the organization will do business together. Design and execution affect customer approval and performance of the service (Dumas et al., 2013). Today, the behavior and expectations of customers are changing rapidly due to many factors such as technological changes and innovations (Brzychczy, 2017). Therefore, performance should be constantly monitored and relevant changes introduced. The origins of Workflow management can be traced back to "process management" in the 1980s (Strvinskiene & Serafinas, 2020). The concepts of "Porter's value chain" and "Deming flowchart" guide the management process to a more powerful way to change the business process (Chuntalas & Lagodimos, 2018). In the 1990s, the concept of business process recycling (BPR), which includes reengineering processes, emerged. This move of BPR highlights the importance of managing interrelated processes, not just processes (Naslund, 2008). Operational management is based on a process-centred organizational view" (Dumas *et al.,* 2013). Business transformation (BT) is defined as the review, review and improvement of existing processes to gain competitive advantage in operations (Javidroozi, Shah, & Feldman, 2019), a new term used in the context of operational management (Strvinskiene & Serafinas, 2020). BT is used in project management itself to manage the complexity of the business, especially in large organizations.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundation for this study shall be based on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) of Davis, (1986).

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

Davis (1986), a proponent of the TAM theory, hypothesizes that technology acceptance is predicted by user behavior, which in turn is influenced by perceptions of the usefulness and ease of use of technology at work to make a decision. TAM examines the impact of technology on user behavior and was developed by Davis (1986) to develop a theory of computer technology users (Rauniar, Rawski, Yang, & Johnson, 2014). The model is based on another theory discovered by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975). Rauniar *et al.*, (2014) called "Rational Action Theory" (TRA), which explains a person's behavior through thinking. While the TRA model aims to develop a theory that describes human behavior in general, TAM focuses on the factors that affect human acceptance of computer systems. TAM has two main factors, "perceived usefulness" (PU) and "perceived ease of use" (PEU), which affect an individual's intention to use technology (Davis, 1986; Liu, Chen, Sun, Wible, & Guo, 2010). Venkatesh and Davis (2000) extended the original TAM model by constructing TAM2 to include additional factors such as "social influences (formal, voluntary and apparent ease of use)" (p. 187). In fact, their

work has shown that the TAM2 model provides more information than the vanilla TAM model by explaining the core concepts of the value proposition (for example, the basis of usage behavior) (Venkatesh and Davis, 2000). However, TAM only provides a holistic view of the adopter's technology (Liu *et al*., 2010).
This study conceptualized the following framework as a guide through the study.

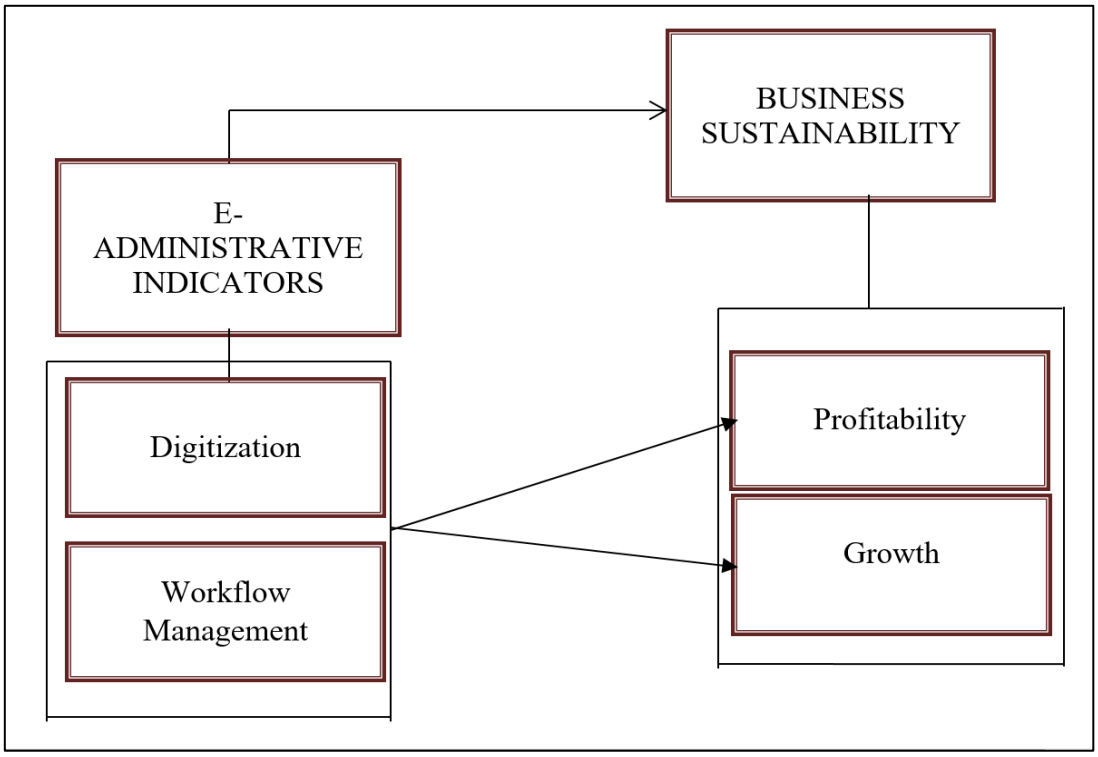


Fig. 1: Framework of e-administrative indicators and business sustainability of manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.
Source: Researchers' Conceptualization, 2024

METHODOLOGY

This study is a descriptive study as such adopted a cross-sectional survey design suitable for this study. The study population comprised of the twenty six (26) manufacturing firms operating in Rivers State as enlisted in the Nigerian Directory and Search Engine (2024). This study adopted the census technique considering the number of respondents who are basically opinion leaders or principal officers of the organization studied. Three respondents were censused from each of the 26 manufacturing firms giving a total of 78 respondents. Thus, 78 copies of the structured close ended 4point lykert scale questionnaire were administered on the categories of employees that formed the respondents mainly Top and Senior Managerial Cadres. The reliability test of the structured questionnaires was ascertained through Test-re-test in which a pilot administration of the questionnaire was made on a portion of the chosen sample and administered after two months and relationship between the two results determined by correlation coefficient, through SPSS version 20. Our reliability test was also anchored on the Cronbach Alpha at 0.7. At the primary level of our analysis, this study adopted the use univariate descriptive statistical tool such as mean, standard deviation, frequency tables, simple percentages, bar charts and histograms to present the data that was generated while for bivariate inferential statistics, the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was employed at the

secondary level of analysis, to test the hypothesized statements. All the statistical analyses were performed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0.; because this version has the ability to transform scaled data into discrete or continued data and vice versa.

Decision rule
Reject Ho if PV< 0.05
Accept Ho if PV > 0.05

Table 1 Showing Strength and Direction of Relationship between Variables

Range of values	Degree of relationship
$\pm 0.00 - \pm 0.19$	Very weak
$\pm 0.20 - \pm 0.39$	Weak
$\pm 0.40 - \pm 0.59$	Moderate
$\pm 0.60 - \pm 0.79$	Strong
$\pm 0.80 - \pm 1.00$	Very strong

Test of Hypotheses
H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between Digitization and profitability in manufacturing firms in Rivers State

Table 2: Relationship between Digitization and Profitability

		Digitization	Profitability
Digitization	Pearson Correlation	1	.843**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	78	78
Profitability	Pearson Correlation	.843**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	78	78

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

From the SPSS output on Table 2, it can be observed that there is a correlation coefficient of 0.843** between Digitization and profitability, indicating a very strong and positive relationship between Digitization and profitability. More so, the probability value (0.000) is less than the critical value (0.05), this shows that there is a very strong, significant relationship between Digitization and profitability. This further implies that most of the profitability experienced among manufacturing firms in Rivers State is caused by their Digitization while others are caused by externalities. Based on this, we reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between Digitization and profitability of manufacturing firms in Rivers State and incline to the alternate hypothesis that there is a very strong, significant relationship between Digitization and profitability of manufacturing firms in Rivers State.
H_{02}: There is no significant relationship between Digitization and growth in manufacturing firms in Rivers State

Table 3 Relationship between Digitization and Growth

		Digitization	Growth
Digitization	Pearson Correlation	1	.869**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	78	78

Growth	Pearson Correlation	.869**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	78	78

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

From the SPSS output on Table 3, it can be observed that there is a correlation coefficient of 0.869** between Digitization and growth, indicating a very strong and positive relationship between Digitization and growth. More so, the probability value (0.000) is less than the critical value (0.05), this shows that there is a very strong significant relationship between Digitization and growth. This further implies that most of the operations in growth among manufacturing firms in Rivers State are caused by their Digitization while others are caused by externalities. Based on this, we reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between Digitization and growth of manufacturing firms in Rivers State and incline to the alternate hypothesis that there is a very strong, significant relationship between Digitization and growth of manufacturing firms in Rivers State.

H_{03}: There is no significant influence of workflow management on profitability in manufacturing firms in Rivers State

Table 4 Relationship between Workflow management and Profitability

		Workflow management	Profitability
Workflow management	Pearson Correlation	1	.748**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	78	78
Profitability	Pearson Correlation	.748**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	78	78
****. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**			

From the SPSS output on Table 4, it can be observed that there is a correlation coefficient of 0.748** between workflow management and profitability, indicating a strong and positive relationship between workflow management and profitability. More so, the probability value (0.000) is less than the critical value (0.05), this shows that there is a strong, significant relationship between workflow management and profitability. This further implies that most of the profitability achieved among manufacturing firms in Rivers State is caused by their workflow management while others are caused by externalities. Based on this, we reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant influence of workflow management on profitability in manufacturing firms in Rivers State and incline to the alternate hypothesis that there is a strong significant influence of workflow management on profitability in manufacturing firms in Rivers State.

H_{04}: There is no significant influence of workflow management on growth in manufacturing firms in Rivers State

Table 5 Relationship between Workflow management and Growth

		Workflow management	Growth
Workflow management	Pearson Correlation	1	.862**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	78	78
Growth	Pearson Correlation	.862**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	78	78

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

From the SPSS output on Table 5, it can be observed that there is a correlation coefficient of 0.862** between workflow management and profitability, indicating a very strong and positive relationship between workflow management and growth. More so, the probability value (0.000) is less than the critical value (0.05), this shows that there is a very strong significant relationship between workflow management and growth. This further implies that most of operations of growth in manufacturing firms in Rivers State are caused by their workflow management while others are caused by externalities. Based on this, we reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant influence of workflow management on growth in manufacturing firms in Rivers State and incline to the alternate hypothesis that there is a very strong, significant influence of workflow management on growth in manufacturing firms in Rivers State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The analysis of the study revealed a correlation coefficient of 0.843** between digitization and profitability, indicating a very strong and positive relationship between digitization and profitability. More so, the probability value (0.000) is less than the critical value (0.05), this shows that there is a very strong significant relationship between digitization and profitability. The analysis results also revealed a correlation coefficient of 0.893** between digitization and growth, indicating a very strong and positive relationship between digitization and growth. More so, the probability value (0.000) is less than the critical value (0.05), this shows that there is a very strong significant relationship between digitization and growth.

The analysis of the study revealed a correlation coefficient of 0.748** between workflow management and profitability, indicating a strong and positive relationship between workflow management and profitability. More so, the probability value (0.000) is less than the critical value (0.05), this shows that there is a strong significant relationship between workflow management and profitability. The analysis results also revealed a correlation coefficient of 0.862** between workflow management and growth, indicating a very strong and positive relationship between workflow management and growth. More so, the probability value (0.000) is less than the critical value (0.05), this shows that there is a very strong significant relationship between workflow management and growth.

CONCLUSION

In tandem with the findings of this study and to the extent of its consistency with results of similar previous studies, we conclude that e-administrative indicators have a positive significant relationship with sustainability of manufacturing firms in Rivers State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study and to the extent of its consistency with the result of similar studies we make the following recommendations.

1. Managers of manufacturing firms should prioritize the critical role of digitization in their operations to support their business sustenance.
2. Managers of manufacturing firms should seek to build strong workflow management techniques in tandem with their policies and practices focused on sustaining their businesses through generations.

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