

The Level of E-commerce Implementation and SMEs Performance in Ibadan city Nigeria

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Abstract: The performance of SMEs is inextricably linked to the strengthening and enhancement of Nigeria's development. However, some Nigerian SMEs perform poorly as a result of futile e-commerce implementation. The purpose of this paper is to investigate the level of e-commerce implementation and SMEs performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Ibadan city, Nigeria. The data was collected from owners/managers of 370 SMEs in Ibadan using structured questionnaires sent via mail. The questionnaire data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The findings revealed that the level of e-commerce implementation and SMEs performances in Ibadan city, Nigeria were at good level. SMEs' owners/managers were aware of the benefits of e-commerce implementation and effectively implemented the various practices to improve their performance. As a result, the study recommended that the government provide support and guidance to these SMEs in utilizing and implementing e-commerce practices by improving the level of e-commerce implementation of SMEs in the country, keeping them abreast of the latest technology as it relates to their businesses, sharpening their information retrieval skills, business development skills, security issues, use and applications of various e-commerce implementation practices, among other things.

Keywords: E-Commerce Implementation, SMEs Performance

1. Introduction

In Nigeria, SME performance plays a significant role in the Nigerian economy, accounting for approximately 48% of national GDP in the last five years. With a total population of approximately 17.4 million, they account for approximately 50 percent of industrial jobs and nearly 90% of the manufacturing sector. On the other hand, the number of businesses is a major driver of job growth and wealth creation within the country's financial system (Nigeria Bureau of Statistic, 2017; Abiodun and

Harry, 2016). The performance of SMEs is inextricably linked to the strengthening and enhancement of Nigeria's development (Olujide & Philip, 2020). However, some Nigerian SMEs perform poorly as a result of futile e-commerce implementation, such as a lack of adequate infrastructures, insufficient financing, high costs of web access, trained manpower and management skills, an unstable policy environment, entrepreneurs' socio-political ambitions, and market failure (Ladokun, 2019).

The implementation of e-commerce is important for SMEs in developing countries, including Nigeria, because it will increase the SMEs' needed impact on the country's economic development (Aderemi & Fakokunde, 2018). Organizations in Nigeria's Oyo state have begun to implement e-commerce via social media, fax, emails, and electronic payment. Nonetheless, large corporations, particularly financial institutions and business homes, primarily used e-commerce implementation (Ibam *et al.*, 2018). As a result, at the turn of the millennium, many SMEs joined their counterparts in e-commerce implementation, offering a wide range of products and services (Idris, 2015).

Therefore, this study focuses only on Ibadan city where businesses have access to different shared information sources regarding their experiences and recommendations. However, they still do not use them wisely to improve e-commerce and SMEs performance. As a result, this study will focus on the level of e-commerce implementation and SMEs performance among SMEs in Ibadan, Nigeria, to the best of our abilities and knowledge. Given this problem, it is urgently necessary to investigate the current level of e-commerce implementation and SMEs performance in Ibadan, Nigeria. This research will attempt to investigate the extent on e-commerce implementation and SMEs performance in Ibadan. Following that, the study will discuss the literature of e-commerce implementation and SMEs' performance. Finally, the results and discussion will be discussed, and a conclusion will be provided.

2. Literature Review

2.1 SMEs performance

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are widely recognized as the foundation for economic growth and development in both developed and developing countries. SMEs contribute to job creation, GDP growth, and export earnings. Previous studies in the Nigerian context, such as Gulan and Usman (2012), CBN (2020), and Kayode Ogundele *et al.* (2013), defined SMEs in terms of asset base, annual turnover, and employee count. According to Gulan and Usman (2012), a small-scale business is one with less than N250,000 in total assets (capital, equipment, plant, and working capital) and fewer than 50 full-time employees. SMEs, according to Kayode Ogundele *et al.* (2013), have a minimum of 5 employees and a minimum capital outlay of N5,000.00. However, for the purposes of this study, SMEs are defined as businesses with fewer than 50 employees and capital of less than \$600,000. The cost of machinery and equipment is all-inclusive and owned separately with the expectation of making a profit and meeting sales targets (CBN, 2020).

SMEs performance is the evaluation of a company's success in achieving its goals. The performance of a corporation is defined as a company's ability to act and produce acceptable results (Abdullahi *et al.*, 2015). The alliance between entrepreneurship, technologies, growth and the performance of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in a given economic system has been historically known as a critical catalyst and driver towards contributing to the economic transformation and maturation of many nations globally, which has long been the primness in business management and economics literature. The global view of the performance of the SME sector is equally an important force of driving the economic transformation, development, technology innovation, and employment creation in developing and developed states are easily documented (Abiodun and Harry, 2016).

Boundless research has been done to analyse the needs and characteristics of the performance measurement system in a large organisation. Still, there is insufficient published research relating to

SMEs, especially in Oyo State, Nigeria (Adebiyi *et al.*, 2017). Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) need to evaluate their performances frequently, which is an applicable operating procedure to measure, control, plan and make pertinent and suitable decisions. Irrespective of its size and nature, the performances of a company could be evaluated using financial or non-financial elements or a combination of both (Tieber *et al.*, 2019). In terms of performance, most SMEs in Nigeria are affirmed to exhibit competitive advantage through differentiation while some exhibit it through cost. From inception, SMEs did not give adequate attention to creating competitive advantage, but recently there have been better improvements and they are performing at their best. Possibly, some SMEs in Nigeria are successful. At the same time, some are not successful because there are problems such as the financial factor, strategic management factor, management experience factor, marketing factor, applied science and innovation factor, and many others (Eniola *et al.*, 2014).

2.2 E-commerce Implementation

The use of digital technology to conduct financial transactions online is known as e-commerce, and it is primarily a method of doing business that involves transactions over the internet (Altameem and Almakki, 2017). The use of the Internet has increased to the point where numerous opportunities in the field of e-commerce are being created. Because of the positive effects of e-commerce on retailing, many organisations have reaped significant benefits from incorporating e-commerce into their traditional offline businesses (Moon *et al.*, 2017).

In 2015, Omar discovered that the worldwide rate of e-commerce is 16.8% while Africa's e-commerce expansion is increasing at a rate of 25.8%. Nigeria, the Republic of South Africa, and Kenya are the highest three countries that shop online, contributing immensely to the expansion of their economies. Ibam *et al.* (2018) observed that e-commerce is at the elementary stage in Nigeria, having an amazing impact on business transactions within the country. In line with this discovery, the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics reported that ICT validates online businesses which contribute about 8.4% of Nigeria's GDP and recorded a 16.4% growth in 2014, and it is estimated about 300,000 online orders are made daily. However, it is paramount that while enumerating the benefits of e-commerce to the Nigerian economy, its weaknesses should also be measured because the challenges of e-commerce are yet to be solved.

E-commerce implementation research is always linked to either e-commerce adoption or e-commerce implementation. The use of e-commerce within organisations is steadily increasing. However, as organisations grow with size, e-commerce becomes more complicated and difficult. Furthermore, Deborah *et al.* (2016) stated that the relative advantage for organisations is the main barrier to implementing e-commerce because it plays a critical role in adoption decisions rather than the cost in general. Furthermore, organisations fail to recognise the organisational and management structure changes that may be required because of e-commerce implementation as they do not typically integrate any e-commerce strategy that would allow them for effective e-commerce implementation. To ensure the success of e-commerce implementation, Sin *et al.* (2016) propose a more up-to-date and comprehensive representation of the implementation process.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

A research design is a detailed master plan used to guide a research study towards its objectives, and the process of designing a research study involves many interconnected decisions (Coolican, 2014). This study used a quantitative research design with a questionnaire as the primary instrument. To investigate the level of e-commerce implementation and SMEs performance, the descriptive method was used to describe the data set that measures central tendency and measures variability or dispersions.

This study involved a total of 370 SMEs in Ibadan City, Nigeria. The owners-managers of SMEs in Ibadan city are the intended respondents for this study. The convenience sampling technique was used in this study, which is a non-probability sampling technique. Despite their disadvantages when compared to probability samples, non-probability convenience samples are still used in developmental science and are likely to remain so in the future because probability samples are expensive and most available probability samples are unsuitable for investigating developmental questions (Jager *et al.*, 2017).

To achieve the paper's objectives, the level of e-commerce implementation and SMEs performance is measured by 27 items based on a standard questionnaire used in numerous previous studies. With regard to evaluating the constructs of e-commerce implementation and SMEs performance, respondents were required to assess each question in terms of the level of e-commerce implementation in their company using a five-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= neutral, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree), and whereas for SMEs performance is (1= very low, 2= low, 3= neither low nor high, 4= high, and 5= very high). For research instruments, SMEs' e-commerce implementation includes 18 items adopted from Ivanov (2012) and SMEs performance that consists of 9 items adopted from Gupta and Govindarajan (1984).

3.2 Data Collection

The questionnaire was used to collect data for this study from the 370 SMEs that were chosen. Due to Covid-19 constraints, the study used the mail method to administer questionnaires and as a backup to increase the response rate to reach the respondents. Email distribution of questionnaires is a cost-effective and efficient method of reaching out to respondents.

From the data interpretation, there are a total of 255 (68.9%) male respondents and 115 (31.1%) female respondents. In the age category, the majority of the respondents are from the age group 36-45 years, with 224 respondents (60.6%), followed by the age group of more than 55 years, with 106 respondents representing 28.6% of the study. The minority of the respondents are from the age groups 26-35 years with 40 respondents representing 10.8% of the study. Most of the respondents are aged 36 to above 46 years, which represents about 89.2% of this study. This is because the questionnaires were targeted to the top owners and or managers of SMEs in the Ibadan city metropolis using email, instant messenger, Facebook. For marital status, there are 42 single respondents, 221 who are married, 56 respondents are divorced, and 51 widowed respondents, which represent 11.4%, 59.7%, 15.1%, and 13.8%, respectively. While in the job position category, the majority of the respondents are owner-manager, followed by managing director, and manager, with 131, 115, 93 respondents representing 35.4%, 31.1%, 25.1% respectively. The minority of the respondents are in other positions with 31 respondents representing 8.4% of the study.

The majority of the respondents are the targeted top owners and managers, and the age group is from 36 to above 55 years old, therefore, most of them are at the top management level. For working experience, most of the respondents have more than 9 years of working experience, with 51.1% or 189 respondents participating in this study. This is followed by those with 7-9 years of working experience, with 142 respondents representing 38.4% in this study. The minority of the respondents have fewer years of 3-6 working experience with 39 respondents representing 10.5% in the study. And for the category of SMEs, respondents who have 30 to 50 employees including the respondent himself/herself, are the majority, with 181 respondents or 48.9%, having this micro size, followed by respondents who have 50 to 100 employees with 152 respondents, or 41.1%, having this macro size. The minority of the respondents have a medium size with 100 to 250 employees, being 37 respondents representing 10% of the study. While for the location of company, the majority of SMEs are located at Ibadan North, Ibadan North-East, Ibadan South-West, and Egbeda with about 45, 40, 38, 38 respondents or 12.2%, 10.8, 10.3%, 10.3% respectively which are known as the most populous business hub. This was followed by Oluyole and Ibadan South-East with about 35 and 34 respondents or 9.5% and 9.2% respectively. In

the third rank, Ibadan North-west, Ona-ara, and Akinyele have equal participants with 29 respondents or 7.8%, respectively. The minority of the respondents are SMEs located at Lagelu and Ido with only 28 and 25 respondents or 7.6% and 6.8%, respectively.

3.3 Data Analysis

The descriptive analysis was done with the help of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 25). The data analyzed are then presented in summaries as a mean and standard deviation to investigate the level of e-commerce implementation and business performance among SMEs in Ibadan City, Nigeria.

4. Results and Discussion

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 25) was used in this study to compute the mean score value of the constructs as well as to test the reliability and validity of each construct. The reliability results are shown in Table 1. Cronbach's alpha values in this study were all greater than 0.7 (range, 0.931 to 0.952), indicating high internal consistency of the measurements.

Table 1: Reliability Analysis

Variables	Number of valid questionnaires	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha	Explanation
Ecommerce implementation (ECI)	370	18	0.952	Excellent
Business performance (BP)	370	9	0.931	Excellent

In this study, to analyze the scaled perception responses, the mean score decision interval was adapted from Kassim and Ramayah (2015) and Hassanain and Iftikhar (2015) from which the following interval decisions were deduced.

- i. Mean score interval between 1.00 and 1.80 represent very poor/very dissatisfied
- ii. Mean score interval between 1.81 and 2.60 represent poor/dissatisfied
- iii. Mean score interval between 2.61 and 3.40 represent moderate
- iv. Mean score interval between 3.41 and 4.20 represent good/satisfied
- v. Mean score interval between 4.21 and 5.00 represent very good/very satisfied

4.1 Results

(a) The level of e-commerce implementation

Table 2 presents the means and SD for ECI. Mean scores were calculated by equivalently weighing the mean scores of all items. The SD ranged from 0.681 to 1.000. Overall, we can see that e-commerce implementation was at a good level of implementation among SMEs in Ibadan City, Nigeria. The highest average of ECI was EC14 (*Our company uses email communication inside the company*= mean value 4.30), followed by EC10 (*Our company fill in and send electronic forms*=mean value 4.24), and EC18 (*Our company using the internet to search for new suppliers* = mean value 4.22). This indicates that most SMEs in Ibadan City, Nigeria had implemented and performed e-commerce practice well in their business operation. Many of them are familiar with a well-using email to communicate with each other within the company, using electronic forms, and searching or finding new suppliers through the advantage of the internet.

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of E-commerce Implementation (ECI)

No.	Code	Items	Std. Deviation	Mean	Explanation
1	ECI1	Our company have an e-commerce application.	.899	4.09	Good/satisfied
2	ECI2	Our company have a good internet connection.	.924	4.19	Good/satisfied
3	ECI3	Our company use other language version of the website or information in different language than English.	1.000	4.12	Good/satisfied
4	ECI4	Our company use email communication inside the company.	.681	4.30	Very Good/satisfied
5	ECI5	Our company use email communication with partners and customers.	.934	4.01	Good/satisfied
6	ECI6	Our company publishes information on web pages such as products, catalogues, brochures.	.939	4.05	Good/satisfied
7	ECI7	Our company using Internet and website to promote company's products.	.846	4.16	Good/satisfied
8	ECI8	Our company using internet to search for new suppliers.	.787	4.22	Very Good/satisfied
9	ECI9	Our company electronically interaction between the company and government agencies.	.930	4.11	Good/satisfied
10	ECI10	Our company fill in and send electronic forms.	.974	4.24	Very Good/satisfied
11	ECI11	Our company send electronic invoice.	.973	4.04	Good/satisfied
12	ECI12	Our company receive electronic invoice.	.998	4.17	Good/satisfied
13	ECI13	Our company using electronically technologies to share information about sales for use for inventory control, accounting or distribution channel.	.950	4.08	Good/satisfied
14	ECI14	14. Our customers place orders by website.	.983	4.16	Good/satisfied
15	ECI15	Our customers place orders by other forms, like e-mails, EDI type messages or others.	.924	4.07	Good/satisfied
16	ECI16	Our customers pay electronically through website.	.999	4.19	Good/satisfied
17	ECI17	Our company order electronically from suppliers.	.930	4.00	Good/satisfied
18	ECI18	Our company using electronic technologies for administrative procedures inside the company.	.952	4.16	Good/satisfied
Grand Mean				4.13	Good/satisfied

(b) The level of business performance among SMEs

Business performance was divided into nine items. To study the opinions of SMEs owner-managers on the financial perspective criteria with the five-point Likert scales were used: (1) = very low, (2) = low, (3) = neither low nor high, (4) = high, (5) = very high. Table 3 presents the means and SD for BP. Mean scores were calculated by equivalently weighing the mean scores of all items. The SD ranged from 0.951 to 1.242. Overall, we can see that the level of SMEs performance in Ibadan City, Nigeria

was at a good level of performance. The highest average of BP4 was “*Return on Investment*” with a mean of 4.02 which is good.

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Business Performance (BP)

No.	Code	Items	Std. Deviation	Mean	Explanation
1	SME_PER1	Cash Flows	1.209	3.78	Good/satisfied
2	SME_PER2	Sales Growth	1.212	3.79	Good/satisfied
3	SME_PER3	Return on Sales	1.242	3.59	Good/satisfied
4	SME_PER4	Return on Investment	1.170	4.02	Good/satisfied
5	SME_PER5	Return on Shareholder Equity	1.216	3.71	Good/satisfied
6	SME_PER6	Gross Profit Margin	1.146	3.52	Good/satisfied
7	SME_PER7	Net Profit from Operation	1.012	3.97	Good/satisfied
8	SME_PER8	Profit to Sales Ratio	.951	3.92	Good/satisfied
9	SME_PER9	Ability to Fund Business Growth from Profits	1.098	3.84	Good/satisfied
Grand Mean				3.79	Good/satisfied

4.2 Discussions

Descriptive analysis through mean score was used to assess the level of e-commerce implementation and SMEs performance among SMEs in the Ibadan city. The result indicates that the e-commerce implementation dimension possessed a high level of significance in terms of enhanced performance in SMEs in the Ibadan city metropolis based on the research participants' perception. This finding is similar to previous studies (Ajao *et al.*, 2018; Altameem and Almakki, 2017; Aderemi and Fakokunde, 2018). Based on the related findings, it can be established that there is a statistically significant influence between the owners/managers' perception of SMEs in Ibadan city metropolis regarding the e-commerce implementation dimension as an indicator of achieving a high level of business performance in SMEs. The verdicts relating to this study come to an agreement with most of the literature on e-commerce implementation, such as Aderemi and Fakokunde (2018) who concluded that e-commerce implementation is one of the most important dimensions bases on owners/managers' perceptions, in their study to measure e-commerce implementation in Nigerian enterprises.

In addition, Idris (2015) also concluded that there are significant differences between Nigerian SMEs in perceiving the e-commerce implementation dimension. No doubt, e-commerce implementation to Nigerian SMEs principles plays a vital role in creating a good assessment of the business performance in SMEs. Altameem and Almakki (2017) suggested that common key enablers for successful implementation of e-commerce systems are IT Infrastructure, Enterprise Integration, Compatibility, Security, Convenient Website, IT Agility, Omni-Channel, and Innovation Adoption, which in return influence and enhances business performance. However, Ajao *et al.* (2018) suggested that devotion to technological factors on e-commerce adoption and implementation was the primary motivation for most owners/managers dealing with SMEs in Nigeria. Thus, e-commerce implementation remains a very important dimension in this study as well, which scored a high mean value in the case of SMEs in the Ibadan city metropolises.

The result also indicated that there is a good level of performance which is based on the perception of the SMEs owners/managers regarding the business performance dimensions. Based on its mean value, the result further indicates that e-commerce implementation is a very important dimension to enhance better business performance. This indicates that owners/managers of SMEs in Ibadan city metropolis have confidence with their respected SMEs employees with regard to their ability to use e-commerce implementation toward solving problems on time and that the SMEs has fast and efficient

online skills to create innovations with consistency in dwellings across all of the sections within the company. The provision of fast and efficient e-commerce implementation strategies is the key motivation for SMEs owners/managers toward selecting other companies to deal with in order to enhance better business performance (Ladokun, 2019).

5. Conclusion

The global rise of e-commerce issues is causing SMEs to continuously improve their level of strategic capability in their business activities and to implement innovative e-commerce practices to improve SMEs performance. This study focuses on the level of e-commerce implementation and SMEs performance in Nigerian SMEs, especially in Ibadan. The findings will assist owners/managers in determining which e-commerce implementation practices will have the greatest impact on SME performance practices, as well as which levels of e-commerce implementation practice require further improvement. Through this analysis, SMEs in Ibadan may be able to focus and improve directly on the potential e-commerce implementation practice or item to effectively implement e-commerce to enhance and improve SMEs performance. As a result, the implementation of e-commerce and SMEs performance should be considered not only within SMEs in Ibadan city but also by the government to ensure long-term SMEs sustainability throughout the country. In addition, the researcher suggests understanding the perception level of e-commerce implementation practices and SMEs performance both locally and globally towards achieving a dominant edge in the business environment is very necessary. As a result, the researcher believes that this paper will contribute to the factors and items involved in increasing the level of e-commerce implementation and SMEs performance, also provide assistance in future suggestions for owners/managers, scholars, and government at the level of e-commerce implementation toward the direction of SMEs performance studies.

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