

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY: A MODERN APPROACH FOR REPOSITIONING UNIVERSITIES ADMINISTRATION IN RIVERS STATE

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Abstract

The main purpose of the study was to identify the Information Technology (IT) systems available for repositioning university administration in Rivers State of Nigeria- Two hundred and fifty three (253) senior non-academic administrators from the university of Port Harcourt (UNIPORT) and Rivers State University of Science and Technology (RSUST) were involved in the study. A twenty (20) item questionnaire , Information Technology and University Administration (ITUAQ) with reliability index of 0.82 was used • for data collection. The participants comprised of 200 senior non-academic administrators (100 from UNIPORT and 100 from RSUST) respectively. There was no significant difference between the opinion of senior non-academic administrators at the UNIPORT and their counterparts al RSUST on the types of Information Technology systems available for repositioning university administration in Rivers State. It was recommend that the two institutions should procure large IT systems (mainframe computers) for economy, increased speed of information processing and a greater capacity to reposition university administration to changes in the super-highway of new information technology.

Introduction

The information needs of Universities institutions are rapidly changing. Presently, the success of any of these institutions may depend more on its ability to manage information rather than on its ability to control administrative departments and academic programmes,

Information technologies, generally, are the instruments, which permit purposeful acquisition and application of information. These technologies, data communication, tele communication, computers, software and the like allow the various forms of information to be processed, transmitted, manipulated, stored and retrieved with speeds, accuracy and efficiency. The use of these technologies are now accepted to be the heart-beat of development in the developed nations throughout the world. For instance, the efficient use of these information technologies enables countries like Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, Russia Sweden and the United States of America to cope with continuous social, economic, political and technological changes (Okebukola, 1990).

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Information Technology (IT) is a network which offers a steadily expanding range of new services that have major economic consequences for the standardization in the universities information. For example, most industrialized countries and an increasing number of developing countries, now use new information technology in areas as diverse as macroeconomic planning, public administration education, health care, manufacturing, finance and banking transportation, commerce, publishing, energy conservation, and environmental management

In addition, the global information technology industry is characterized by fast pace of technological development, rapidly declining service prices, large research and development expenditure and an extensive global reach with expanding consumer in the industrialized and developing nations in the world (Patterson, 1995). This rapid change in the global information technology,-has a significant relationship on the development, improvement and administration of Nigerian Universities mainly in the areas of research and leaching activities (Nwafor, 2004).

Information has always been necessary for the task of Universities administration. The volume of information required today for the administrative task has increased. One of the main reasons for this increase in volume of required amount of information is the increased size and complexity of today's higher education institutions. For instance, these modern institutions are larger in

terms of the number of employees, the number of operating units, academic departments and divisions. Certainly, larger institutions require larger volumes of information than the small ones. The additional information enables the many departments and activities of the larger institutions to be properly co-ordinated,

Information technology system cut across various stages of university administration. For instance, in the university system the senior administrators battle with several important decisions to be taken. For any vital decision taken, a choice has to be made from several other alternatives. The choice of which decisions to be taken can only be accepted where there is efficient information technology system where data are available. Thus, the different departments, units and decisions of the universities are all faced with problems of taking good records on issues such as student enrolment and admission, staff recruitment and promotion, payment of fees and salaries, accounts and finances examinations and result compilation certificates and documentation, public relations and publicity, research and publishing monitoring and evaluation of programmes. These are some of the crucial areas of responsibilities of which the senior non-academic administrators have to contend with.

The purpose of this study was to identify the Information Technology (IT) systems available for repositioning administration of the universities in Rivers State. Thus, a research question was posed and one null hypothesis was formulated for this study.

Research Question

What are the types of information technology available for repositioning administration of universities in Rivers State?

Hypothesis

There is no significant difference between the opinion of non-academic administrative staff, at the University of Port Harcourt (Uniport) and their counterparts at the Rivers State University of Science and Technology, (RSUST) on the types of Information Technology systems available for repositioning administration of universities in Rivers State.

Method

The descriptive survey research design was used for this study. The population consisted of 253 senior non-academic administrative staff (Executive assistant to the vice-chancellors, Deputy Registrars, Bursars, Librarians and other senior clerical personnel of the university of Port Harcourt (135) and the Rivers State University of science and Technology (118) respectively. The entire small population participated in the study. One instrument in likert forced choice format called "Information Technology and University Administration Questionnaire" (ITUAQ) developed by the researcher and validated by other administrators at the university of Port Harcourt and the Rivers State University of Science and Technology with a reliability index of 0.82 was used to collect data. The response patterns were available = 2 points and non-available - 1 point. Out of 253 questionnaires administered, 218 were collected. Finally, 200 (100 from each of the two universities) were duly completed and used for data analysis. The research question was answered with (percentages) while the only hypothesis for the study was tested using t-test statistics at 0.05 level of significance and 198 degrees of freedom.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the types of information technology systems available for repositioning university administration in Rivers State?

Table 1: Frequency, Percentage and Mean Distribution of Senior Non-academic Administrators Responses on the types of Information Technology Systems available for Repositioning University Administration in Rivers State

S/No	Information Technology system	UNIPORT (N=100)				RSUST (N=100)					
		Available		Non-available		-X	Available		Non-available		-X
		NO	%	NO	%		NO	%	NO	%	
1	Mainframe computer	2	2	98	98	1.20	3	3	97	97	1.03
2	Mini-computer	82	82	18	18	1.82	92	92	8	8	1.92
3	Micro- computer	94	94	6	6	1.94	96	96	4	4	1.96
4	Word processing computer	92	92	8	8	1.92	88	88	12	12	1.88
5	Basic website	86	86	14	14	1.86	93	93	7	7	1.93
6	Facsimile (fax)	24	24	76	76	1.24	32	32	68	68	1.32
7	Teleconferencing	3	3	97	97	1.03	14	14	86	86	1.14
8	.. Internet	98	98	2	2	1.98	99	99	1	1	2.00
9	Intranet	52	52	~ 4 8 ~	48	1.52	54	54	46	46	1.54
10	e-mail	96	96	4	4	1.96	98	98	2	2	1.98

An examination of table 1 reveals that for each of the test items, the available response is above 50% except for items 1, 6 and 7 which had 2 (25), 24 (24%) and 3 (3%) respectively for the university of Port Harcourt and (3%), (32%) and (14%) for the Rivers State University of Science and Technology respectively. On the overall, (63%) responses indicated that all the information technology systems for repositioning university administration in Rivers State are available at the university of Port Harcourt whereas (37%) held contrary view.

In-addition, (67%) on the average of responses from the Rivers State University of science and Technology, Port Harcourt indicated that all the information Technology, (IT) systems for repositioning university administration in Rivers State are available while (33%) held contrary view.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to identify the information Technology (IT) systems available for repositioning University administration in Rivers State of Nigeria. The results of the research question show that the two universities (UNIPOT and RSUST) have the basic IT systems for repositioning the administration of the institutions. In addition, the two universities do not have the advanced IT system such as mainframe computers for repositioning administration of the institutions for the global IT revolution and enhance their status in what is now widely called as Global village. Technological innovation has contributed to globalization by infrastructure for trans-world connections. Ajayi (2000) pointed out that the revolution taking place in information technologies have been the central and driving force for the globalization process. One of the key by - products of the globalizaiton period of rapid technological development and on-going information revolution is the dynamic change or repositioning which is occurring in nearly all facets of human existence and affecting the underlying structure of the society. The global village has removed geographical barriers and led to the shrinking of the frame. Schotte (2000) revealed that large-scale and rapid globalization has depended on a host of innovations relating to coaxial and fater fibre- optic cables, semiconductor devices, computer software and so on. In other words, global relations could not develop among the universities, without information technology tools to effect cross-planetary contracts.

Recommendation

Based on the finding of (his study, the following recommendations, should be considered: 1. 1
The two universities in Rivers State should at present, negotiate for "shared-time¹" with the
multinational oil companies in Port Harcourt which currently have the mainframe computer
systems.

2- These universities should procure large information technology systems
(mainframe computers) for economy, increased speed of information processing administration to changes
in the super-highway of new information technology revolution.

Conclusion

This paper regards information technology (IT) as one of the basic resources for repositioning
university education/ administration in Nigeria. It is just as important as the other resources of
manpower, machine, money, material and management.

As Information Technologies continue to leap forward, senior non-academic administrators
have learned to make the most of the IT systems which increase their efficiency, effectiveness and
productivity. The reason could be traced to the fact that the administrators who participated in this study
indicated that their institutions have the basic information technology (IT) systems for repositioning
administration of the Universities, but do not have the most expensive mainframe computer
information technology systems to face the challenges of globalization and information revolution,

The use of IT as a strategic administrative and cognitive tools is critically important if
Universities in Rivers State wish to be run efficiently, access information through worldwide
networks, and be globally competitive. Thus, these institutions should procure large information
technology systems (mainframe computers) for economy, increased speed of information processing
and a greater capacity to adapt or reposition university administration to changes in the super-highway of
new information technology revolution.

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