

***Utilization of e-accounting Systems by Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in Pankshin
Local Government Area of Plateau State***

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Abstract

This study attempted to determine strategies to be adopted in implementing e-accounting usage by Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) in Pankshin Local Government Area of Plateau State. A survey research design was adopted to sample 41 SMEs using a non-probability sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection was an adapted structured questionnaire. Results of the study indicated a wide acceptability of benefits of e-accounting by the respondents with a grand mean of 3.41 and standard deviation of 0.50 in all items measured. Moreover, the respondents agreed to facing challenges in deploring the programme for ease of their business transactions with a grand mean of 3.64. Consequently, respondents agreed to the suggested ways of improving the use of e-accounting with a mean of 3.85. It was then recommended, among others, that Government should ensure that there is adequate power supply in Pankshin community, and embark on sensitization and training programmes for SMEs' entrepreneurs in e-accounting procedures.

Keywords: utilization, e-accounting, systems, Small, Medium, Scale, Enterprises

Introduction

Keeping of accounting record determines the success or failure of business enterprises; if proper accounting system is maintained there is high hope for the business to thrive. Keeping of proper records and writing of financial statements have enormous benefits for Small Scale Enterprises. They serve as an important management tool for every business because they provide an accurate reflection of financial performance of the business. They also serve as a means to monitor performance and measure the accuracy of income and expenditure (Adjei, Anokye, Mintah & Offeh, 2014).

Accounting are concerned primarily with methods of recording transactions, keeping records, performing audits, reporting and analysing financial reports to the management, and receiving advice on tax matters. As a result, organisation puts in place a systematic process that identifies, records, measures, classifies, verifies,

summarizes, interprets and communicates financial information. This reveals the profit or loss for a given period, and the value and nature of the organisation's assets, liabilities and equity. Accounting provides information on the resources available to a firm, the means employed to finance those resources, and the results achieved through their use. Manual accounting systems provide a useful way of recording business transactions and can deliver an accounting information system for the small and medium enterprise business owner. Even though the manual accounting system requires a greater understanding of how to book keep, it can be easier to manage once the key concepts of double entry bookkeeping have been learnt.

Tavakolian (1995) emphasized that the manual accounting systems consisted of book ledgers and calculators. However, with this system it was possible for errors to be introduced into the data since they could go undetected for quite some time. With the help of electronic-accounting, this error can be minimized drastically. It is against this backdrop that the researcher made an attempt to determine strategies to be adopted in implementing e-accounting usage by Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in Pankshin Local Government Area of Plateau State.

Primarily, accounting involves the record keeping of financial transactions of a business firm. Accounting records of business firms were being carried out manually over the years until the introduction of e-accounting. Wikipedia (2015) sees e-accounting or online accounting as the application of online and Internet technologies to the business accounting function. Similar to e-mail being an electronic version of traditional mail, e-accounting is "electronic enablement" of lawful accounting and traceable accounting processes which were traditionally manual and paper-based.

E-accounting involves performing regular accounting functions, accounting research and the accounting training and education through various computer based/internet based accounting tools such as digital tool kits, various internet resources, international web-based materials, institute and company databases which are internet based, web links, internet based accounting software and electronic financial spreadsheet tools to provide efficient decision making.

Roberto (2017) defines electronic accounting, or e-accounting as any accounting system which is based on information communication technology for the capture and processing of a business' financial data. In view of this definition, it means that it can not be performed without the use of computer and internet services. Amidu, Effah and Abor (2011) refer to e-accounting as an accounting system that relies on computer technology for capturing and processing financial data in organisations. Differently put, Relhan (2013) defines e-accounting as any accounting system that depends on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for performing its information

system functions. This view extends the scope of e-accounting from using computer technology to perform accounting operations to using available ICT tool in performing accounting functions. ICT tools include the Internet, mobile and online technologies. This definition comprises all what entails e-accounting.

Yukcu and Gonen (2009) admit that for e-accounting to efficiently meet the information requirements of management and interested parties, it must have the attributes of ease of data retrieval, increase in data accuracy, less paper work and high reliability of information. Likewise, Relhan (2013) agrees that e-accounting is characterized by its ability to provide multi-user access, multi-site access, multiple shared database, zero system administration for end users and the capabilities of providing economical service to a large number of clients for an efficient accounting process.

This researcher holds the view that e-accounting has to do with recording, analysing, processing, interpreting, communicating accounting transactions and information relating to business activities in order for entrepreneurs to make precise decisions. This study captured the presence of an e-accounting system based on one or all of the following platforms: the use of spread sheets, accounting software and web based accounting. Mohd (2012) highlights some of the benefits of e-accounting to include:

- 1) With e-accounting, account of more than one company from any place of the world can be created.
- 2) With e-accounting, accounting information from any place of the world can be shared and viewed.
- 3) With e-accounting, it is easy to perform work of accounting. It means one accounting project can be complete by more than one person from different places.
- 4) With e-accounting, it is easier to audit the accounts from any place of the world.
- 5) With e-accounting, it can give better input data to finance manager for good future financial plan.
- 6) With e-accounting, the result can easily be displayed from any place of the world. Anyone can know what will be the profit or loss figure after each transaction.
- 7) In e-accounting, everything online, there is no need to invest money in purchasing papers again.
- 8) In e-accounting, it requires small number of accountant. Same accountant can be promoted for other analysis work.
- 9) In e-accounting, all old data can be retrieved more fastly for analysis purposes.
- 10) In e-accounting, imported raw accounting data can be imported from other system.

From the above it can be summarized that it saves time and space since the data can be processed within a short period of time. It also creates job opportunities for

software programmers. It is paperless and organisation's accounting records can be easily outsourced.

Business outfits can be categorized into micro, small or medium sizes depending on its capital formation and number of employees. Small businesses remain an important part of the business environment (Holmes & Nicholls, 1988; Norwell, 1998; Mitchell, Reid & Smith, 1998). Cochran (1981) uses a variety of criteria from different perspectives which include total worth, relative size within industry, number of employees, value of products, annual sales or receipts, and net worth. There is no single, uniformly accepted, definition of a small firm (Storey, 1994). Firms differ in their levels of capitalization, sales, and employment. Hence, definitions which employ measures of size (number of employees, turnover, profitability, net worth, etc.) when applied to one sector could lead to all firms being classified as small, while the same size definition when applied to a different sector could lead to a different result.

Small Scale enterprises have been variously defined, but the most commonly used criterion is the number of employees of the enterprise. An alternate criteria used in defining small and medium enterprises is the value of fixed assets in the organization. In Nigeria, the National Council of Industry (2003) in Etuk, Etuk and Baghebo (2014), categorized enterprises based on three areas summarized below:

Size	No. of Employees	Total Cost including Working Capital but excluding Land
Micro	1-10	Less than 1Million
Small	11-35	1million – less than 40million
Medium	36-100	40million - less than 200million
Large	101 and Above	200million and above

But in Nigeria, the asset based formation is more considered. Some enterprises may be labour intensive and equally large in terms of number of workers employed, while on the other hand, a capital intensive firm may be large in terms of asset base but have fewer workers. And since all businesses are tailoring towards making profit or loss, there is no need for categorizing small and medium enterprises.

Weber (2011) points out that accounting can be divided into two basic categories: those which apply manual accounting and those which prefer computerized accounting systems. A system is a set of detailed methods, procedures and routines created to carry out a specific activity, perform a duty, or solve a problem. Ron (2019) defines a system to be a procedure, process, method, or course of action designed to achieve a specific result. Its component parts and interrelated steps work together for the good of the

whole. Creating effective business systems is the only way to attain results that are consistent, measurable, and ultimately benefit customers. Hartzell (2006) defines system as “any series of interconnected elements forming an organized whole with a common objective”.

An accounting as an information system (AIS) is a system of collecting, storing and processing financial and accounting data that are used by decision-makers. An accounting information system is generally a computer-based method for tracking accounting activity in conjunction with information technology resources (Wikipedia, 2019). Business Dictionary (2018) sees accounting system as an organized set of manual and computerized accounting methods, procedures, and controls established to gather, record, classify, analyse, summarize, interpret, and present accurate and timely financial data for management decisions. Every organization must operate an accounting system due to the fact that it is generally recommended for companies to report on its financial position to the stakeholders for better decision-making and other policy implementations. The decision to choose whether a company would operate a manual or computerized accounting system depends on the company itself.

Whether manual or computerized, accounting in itself is known to have a cycle that includes the following steps: journalizing the transactions; posting them to ledger accounts; preparing a trial balance; making adjustment entries; preparing adjusted to end-of-period trial balance; preparing financial statements and appropriate disclosures; journalizing and posting the closing entries; and preparing after-closing trial balance (Weber 2011). From the first look of the accounting cycle, it is simple to manipulate, but when there are thousands or millions of transactions to be handled, the situation dramatically toughens. Lots of transactions that must be processed in the accounting cycle make this process routine and even a little mistake or inaccuracy can cause all the cycle from the very beginning to fail which will therefore require extra effort to find and correct the mistake.

Purpose of the study

The general purpose of the study was to determine the strategies to be employed in implementing E-accounting system by Small-Medium Scale enterprises in Pankshin L.G.A. Specifically, the study sought to:

- 1) Identify benefits of e-accounting to small and medium scale enterprises in Pankshin L.G.A.
- 2) Determine the problems and challenges of e-accounting on Small and Medium scale enterprises in Pankshin L.G.A.
- 3) Find some ways of improving the use of e-accounting by small and medium scale enterprises in Pankshin L.G.A.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

- 1) What are the benefits of e-accounting to small and medium scale enterprises in Pankshin L.G.A?
- 2) What are the problems and challenges of implementing e-accounting by small and medium scale enterprises in Pankshin L.G.A?
- 3) What are the ways of improving the use of e-accounting in Pankshin L.G.A. among small and medium scale enterprises?

Methodology

A survey research design was adopted for this study as the study sought the opinions of respondents on the e-accounting System usage by Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in Pankshin Local Government Area of Plateau State. Survey research design was suitable for the study because survey study utilizes questionnaire as an instrument for data collection. This was considered appropriate since the respondents are free to pick their choices. The population of this study comprised of all business outfits in Pankshin environs but those that fall under the category of small scale would be considered for this study. For the purpose of the study, a non-probability sampling design in the form of a convenience sampling method was employed and considered to be appropriate to gather primary data. The rationale for using this sampling method was on the basis of easy accessibility and availability of respondents, as well as the fact that it is less time consuming and inexpensive to gather the research information. The sample size was 42. However, 41 copies of the questionnaire were retrieved.

The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire adapted from Amidu, Effah and Abor (2011). Two additional benefits were added to Amidu and et al namely ease of information sharing among branches and easier auditing of account. This study was conducted in a Local Government in Nigeria while theirs was conducted in Ghana. The questionnaire consists of 2 parts, A and B. A was designed to elicit information on the background of the respondents while B had 13-items which was generated from the research questions designed to elicit responses on the subject. The questionnaire adopted a four point scale of response options and scoring of strongly agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1). The instrument was administered to the small scale enterprises. The mean and standard deviation were employed in answering the research questions. Any mean above the criterion mean of 2.50 was regarded as agree while any item below 2.50 was regarded as disagree.

Presentation of results

Research question 1: What are the benefits of e-accounting to small and medium scale enterprises in Pankshin L.G.A?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation ratings of respondents on the benefits of e-accounting to small and medium scale enterprises in Pankshin L.G.A

S/ No	Benefits of e-accounting	Mean N = 41	S.D.	Decision
1	Timely information management	3.51	0.51	Agree
2	Large storage capacity	3.51	0.51	Agree
3	Reduction of clerical work	3.50	0.51	Agree
4	Cost effectiveness	3.29	0.55	Agree
5	Ease of information sharing among branches	3.43	0.50	Agree
6	Easier auditing of account	3.24	0.43	Agree
Grand Mean and Standard deviation		3.41	0.50	Agree

The data in table 1 show that all the 6 items on the benefits of e-accounting received mean scores above criterion value of 2.50 while the grand mean of 3.41 shows that all items are accepted as benefits of e-accounting in Pankshin L.G.A. of Plateau State. The grand standard deviation of 0.50 shows that the respondents are very close in their responses on the benefits of e-accounting.

Research question 2: What are the problems and challenges of implementing e-accounting by small and medium scale enterprises in Pankshin L.G.A?

Table 2 reveals that all the 5 items had their mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50. The mean ranges from 3.24 to 3.95. The grand mean of 3.64 shows that the respondents agreed that all the 5 items are the problems and challenges of implementing e-accounting by small and medium scale enterprises in Pankshin L.G.A. of Plateau State. The low standard deviation of 0.41 is an indication that the respondents are very close in their ratings.

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation ratings of respondents on the problems and challenges of implementing e-accounting by small and medium scale enterprises

S/ No	Problems and challenges of e-accounting	Mean N=41	S.D.	Decision
1	Inaccuracy of reports	3.51	0.51	Agree
2	Constant breakdown of the system	3.95	0.21	Agree
3	Inadequate power supply	3.95	0.21	Agree
4	Inability to fully understand and interpret the results	3.56	0.50	Agree
5	Inability of the system to support large volume of data	3.24	0.62	Agree
Grand Mean and Standard Deviation		3.64	0.41	Agree

Research question 3: What are the ways of improving the use of e-accounting in Pankshin L.G.A?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation ratings of respondents on the ways of improving the use of e-accounting

S/No	Ways of improving the use of e-accounting	Mean N = 41	S.D.	Decision
1	Adequate enlightenment on the usage of e-accounting should be given	3.95	0.21	Agree
2	Training centres should be made available within the reach of the people.	3.95	0.21	Agree
3	Cost of trainings in e-accounting should be highly subsidized.	3.56	0.50	Agree
4	Accounting curricular in schools should contain e-accounting	3.95	0.21	Agree
Grand Mean and standard deviation		3.85	0.28	Agree

Data in table 3 reveals that the grand mean of the responses of the ways of improving the use of e-accounting in Pankshin L.G.A. on the four identified ways with mean of 3.85 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.50. This indicates that the respondents agreed that all four suggested ways of improving e-accounting are very essential.

Discussion of findings

The results of research question 1, presented on table 1, showed that the benefits of e-accounting are very important to the small and medium enterprises in Pankshin L.G.A. This finding is consistent with findings of Adjei, Anokye, Mintah and Offeh (2014) who concluded that accounting practices have a significant effect on the operation of SMEs. According to them, businesses are required to keep proper books of account and prepare financial reports which give a true and fair view of the businesses financial affairs. Though financial reporting practices come with cost and challenges, the benefits derived from its practice far outweigh its cost. Mohd (2012) also agrees that data can be easily retrieved and money spent on paper can drastically be reduced.

The results of research question 2 as presented on table 2 showed that the challenges have various mean score rating from 3.24 – 3.95. Among the problems are the constant breakdown of the systems, inadequate power supply, inability to fully understand the result contributed to the problems of respondents in fully embracing the use of the programme. Since the primary objective of any business entrepreneur is to make profit, no one likes to invest in a shallow business venture that will not yield any positive

result. Spending additional money to purchase fuel just because of recording their record can discourage the user of e-accounting but where there is constant power supply, the number of users will greatly increase.

The results of research question 3 as presented on table 3 showed that there are ways of creating awareness on electronic accounting such as adequate enlightenment on the programme, training centre within the reach of the users and inclusion of the electronic-accounting in all school curricular.

Conclusion

Anything worth having is worth working for. A business enterprise proprietor that desires a good and proper accounting record keeping needs to update his knowledge on electronic accounting and makes proper arrangement of equipping the firm with necessary technological garget which will promote the use of this new technology of e-accounting. However, it was discovered from the study that majority of small scale and medium enterprises in Pankshin Local Government were not aware of the e-accounting.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made:

- 1) Government should ensure that there is adequate power supply for its citizenry so as to promote the use of electronic accounting in our society.
- 2) Government and accounting professionals should ensure that adequate enlightenment on the programme is carried out in order to bring about the awareness of the programme to the general public.
- 3) Government and accounting professionals should ensure that training centres are located within the reach of the business enterprises in order to update their knowledge on this new technology.
- 4) Curriculum planners, teachers and professional bodies should ensure that this new technology of electronic-accounting is inclusive in all the school curricular in Nigeria.

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School Environment and Teachers' Job Performance in Social Studies in Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated school environment and teachers' job performance in social studies in Cross River State, Nigeria. One research question and one hypothesis were used to guide the study. The population of the study consisted of 280 Social Studies teachers in public secondary schools in Cross River State, Nigeria. The sample comprised of 280 Social Studies teachers in the state of which each school was represented by at least a teacher. Teachers' Job Performance in Social Studies Questionnaire (TJPSOSQ) which had two sections (A&B) was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by 3 experts in Measurement and Evaluation in the University of Calabar. Cronbach alpha reliability was used for ascertaining the reliability coefficient which yielded 0.74-0.89. Data obtained were coded and analyzed with Pearson Product Moment Coefficient using SPSS. The result showed a significant relationship between school location and teachers' job performance in Social Studies in public secondary schools in Cross River State, Nigeria. From the findings, it was recommended that Government should endeavour to create good and access roads in rural areas especially at places where schools are located in order to boost the working conditions of teachers in rural settings.

Keywords: School, Environment, Job, Performance, Social, Studies

Introduction

The school environment which includes classrooms, libraries and technical workshops are variables that affect teacher's job performance. Hence, the school environment remains an important area that should be studied and well managed to enhance teachers' job performance in social studies. The issue of poor job performance of teachers has been of much concern to government, parents and other relevant stakeholders in the educational sector. The quality of education does not only depend on the teachers as reflected in the performance of their duties, but also in the effective co-ordination of the school environment (Asao, 2001). The school environment which also include instructional material planning, administrative planning, the teachers as well as the students are essential in teaching/learning process. The extent to which

teachers perform their job could be enhanced depending on their location within the school compound, the structure of the classroom, availability of instructional facilities and accessories. It is believed that a well-planned school will produce expected outcomes of education that will facilitate good social, political and economic emancipation. Orderly classroom environment brings about effective job performance. A comfortable and caring environment also contributes to teachers' job performance.

The physical characteristics of the school have a variety of effects on teachers, students and the learning process. Poor lightening, noise, high level of heat due to overcrowding in classrooms and inconsistent temperature make teaching and learning difficult. These factors can adversely affect student's behaviours and lead to high level of frustration among teachers and poor learning attitude among students. A fascinating school environment is one where they are adequate and qualified human and material resources. The prevailing condition in some school environments is far from satisfactory and this affects teaching and learning. It is indisputable that the school environment is an important factor that contributes to the learning and assimilation of students. It has the potential to determine how well a child or a teacher is able to realize or destroy his or her goal in life. Some school environments can be loving or frightening, stimulating or boring, conducive or inhibiting to the achievement of the purpose and goal for which it was established.

Teachers' job performance manifests in the students' poor learning outcomes as shown in internal and external examinations, school dropouts, and students' engagement in various anti-social behaviours like cultism and even examination malpractice of different forms. It has also been observed that some teachers have a lukewarm attitude toward their job; they are not punctual at work, attendance registers are not marked, many of them do not write their notes of lesson, the scheme of work is not always covered in a term, some of the teachers do not even go to school, while some are not regular in school. School diaries are not filled, students' note books are not marked, some of the teachers do not even have notes to give to the students and the resultant effect is the poor output of the students.

Owoeye (2011) looked at location of schools as it relates to academic performance of students and teachers' job performance in Ekiti State of Nigeria between 1990 and 1997. The study used results of the West African School Certificate Examination (WASCE) conducted between 1990 and 1997 in 50 secondary schools in both rural and urban areas of the state. One validated instrument "student location questionnaire (SLQ)" was used for data collection. One hypothesis was formulated and tested. Data were analyzed using mean and t-test. The result showed that there was a significant difference between students' academic achievement of rural and urban secondary schools in senior school certificate examination ($t=273, p<0.05$). The study had proven