THE FACTORS AFFECTING THE ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF E-MARKETING AMONGST FMCG RETAILERS IN ZIMBABWE

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INTRODUCTION

FMCG retailers in Zimbabwe have been slow to embrace and adopt new technology in their marketing efforts, as they still mainly focus on traditional marketing strategies (Dube & Gumbo 2017) This however did not stop internationally recognised e-commerce giant, PayPal, entering into the Zimbabwean market after establishing that the Zimbabwean economy had the potential to embrace new technology effectively. Given this, most of the Zimbabwean populace now can purchase goods online from more than 203 countries, using Pay Pal (Baten & Kamil, 2019). The growth of the number of internet transactions indicates that Zimbabwe is becoming more open to online transactions. Be that as it may, the FMCG retailers in Zimbabwe have not embraced this opportunity (Dube & Gumbo 2017). Tengesa.com, an e-commerce website, experienced a premature failure before it was commercially launched. Some of the interactive e-commerce websites include Econet's Eco shop and the Food World's E-commerce are also failing to fully engage in online business (Dzoma, 2019).

Zimbabwe experienced rapid and fast-growing investments in ICT infrastructure from 2015 onwards including the expansion of broadband fibre networks, as well as data and internet expansions (Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe 2015) As a result a wide range of internet infrastructural developments was in place by the year 2018. These infrastructural developments included the rollout of 2G, 3G, 4G and G5 networks in urban and rural areas (Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe 2015). E-marketing adoption has also been a great success in countries with slightly lower internet infrastructure than Zimbabwe, such as South Africa, Nigeria and other developing countries (Dube, Chitura & Runyowa, 2018). It is, therefore, important to understand the supporting elements resulting in low-adoption and implementation of e-marketing strategies and developments (Baten & Kamil, 2019).

Limited research, however, has been conducted on the adoption of e-marketing strategies in developing countries. Conducting such a study in the Zimbabwean context should unpack other gaps of knowledge regarding e-marketing adoption. Regardless of the growing trend in e-marketing and e-marketing related studies, few studies have been done in e-marketing amongst FMCG Zimbabwe retailers. This study, therefore, aims to develop an e-marketing strategy framework to assist the FMCG retailers in Zimbabwe.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

There is no doubt that there is increased adaption and implementation of Internet technology globally, and it is therefore imperative that retailers take advantage of the opportunities offered by e-marketing.

In Africa, internet penetration grew from 200 000 people in the year 2000 to 45 million in the year 2011 in Nigeria (Abiodum, 2018). The challenges limiting the adoption

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and implementation of e-marketing in Africa according to (Abiodum, 2018) was due to cultural barriers, infrastructure challenges, fraud and security concerns, perceived risk and inadequate regulatory framework

El-Gohary (2012) also indicated that organisational and external factors such as owner skills, availability of resources, culture, adoption cost, size of the company, compatibility and government influence, had a positive impact on the adoption and implementation of e-marketing. However, According to Abiodum (2013) and Dlodlo and Mafini (2014), numerous companies in the sub-Saharan countries have adopted the “wait-and-see” attitude, and as a result only 23% of the respondents did online shopping regardless of advanced ICT infrastructure during 2013 in Nigeria..

The same trend was also observed in Zimbabwe, where the adoption of e-marketing strategies amongst FMCG retailers has been limited (Chawafambira, 2015:1; Dzoma 2016:1). The reluctance by the Zimbabwean retailers to utilise internet technology for expansion has resulted in increased competition with retailers in South Africa and China (Musonza, 2015:1).

According to the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (2015:36), the ICT programs initiated by the Government of Zimbabwe need individuals, retailer and institutes to work with ICT mobile and fixed operators. Countries in Southern Africa, particularly South Africa, Namibia, and Botswana,, embraced ICT with positive economic growth (SADC, 2019:2).

While e-marketing by FMCG retailers in Zimbabwe remained low, it is worth stating that there has been high uptake of ICT in electronic banking, electronic money transfer, smart-phone usage and international electronic purchase of consumer durable (Dzoma, 2016:1). In the context of advancement and growth in ICTs, scholars have warned that companies that embrace technology should prepare for the future, as e-marketing adoption is growing dramatically and continuously influencing customers and their behaviour (Alavion & Allahyari, 2011; Doiron, 2019). While researchers had initially predicted price transparency, as well as, driving price towards a single market standard, this could not be achieved partially because some retailers would consider transport costs, bringing variation in prices of the same commodities in different geographical locations.

Social media, has been making significant progress and creating new opportunities (Bulearca & Bulearca, 2020). Mobile phone advertisements, in the form of text messages or short message service (SMS) have been recognised as an essential form of product promotion and an attractive e-marketing approach by retailers (Rizwan et al., 2011). Increased use of the Internet as a Business to Customer (B2C), Customer to Business (C2B), and Customer to Customer (C2C) commercial tool raised interest in understanding the key issues in building relationships with customers (Corbit et al., 2018:204). Furthermore, e-marketing adoption is undergoing an evolution by adopting Web 2.0, 3.0, 4.0, and 5.0 capabilities. This adoption seems to enhance customer participation to achieve greater economic value (Huang & Benyoucef, 2016).

In Zimbabwe, retailers outside the FMCG industry, such as the beverages industry, auctioneers and hardware industries, have all developed systems that allow them and their clients to market, purchase, and supply online. In 2015, Zimbabwe was ranked amongst the technologically advanced countries–including United Arab Emirates (UAE), Lebanon, Barbados, Seychelles, Belarus, Costa Rica, Mongolia, Zambia, Australia, Bangladesh, and Oman (ITU (2015). However, the adoption and implementation of e-marketing remain low amongst the retailers in Zimbabwe.

Retailers in Zimbabwe continue to use social media as an advertising platform

with no need to develop websites and regularly update to capture the need for targeted customers (Dzoma, 2016). Furthermore, Scharl et al. (2015), explains that most retailers in developing countries have shown reluctance to embrace the opportunity of quickly adopting the use of e-marketing but still rely on traditional stores. Dzoma (2016) concludes that customers are reluctant to part with their money prior to receiving physical products, hence shunning e-retailing and prefer a traditional walk-in store.

Alavion and Allahyari (2018) and Doiron (2019), concurs and observes that, globalisation and technological developments are imminent. Within the circumstance, companies that embrace technology should prepare for the future since e-marketing is growing at a dramatic pace and is continuously influencing customers and consumer behaviour. Doiron (2019), upholds that the Internet has radically reduced the cost of collecting and distributing information. The evidence demonstrates that researchers initially predicted that the use of the Internet would result in price transparency and driving prices toward a single market price. However, this has largely not happened, partly because retailers use shipping costs to make prices less comparable. Social media has been making significant progress and creating new opportunities whilst (Bulearca & Bulearca, 2010). Musonza (2015:1) further mentions that limited use by the Zimbabwean retailers to utilize internet technology for their sustenance caused them to face stiff competition from retailers in South Africa and China.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The adoption and implementation of e-marketing by the Zimbabwean FMCG retail industry is low, although there is 99% mobile subscription and 6 900km of internet cable, linking Zimbabwean towns and cities (POTRAZ, 2015:43). There is no doubt that e-marketing is a contributory tool to marketing and transacting. While the preceding background clearly shows the state of ICTs, the causes of low adoption and implementation of e-marketing by FMCG Zimbabwean retailers are not known. It is also evident from the background of the study that the Internet provides significant benefits as a medium of interaction. Chaffey and Smith (2009) argue that customers and retailers use the Internet to engage in real-time communication, building strategic relationships and trust. Makherji and Basu (2015) warn that to survive in business, retailers need to be proactive and embrace the dynamic environment. Internet technology is growing quickly and would soon outpace traditional marketing strategies. FMCG retailers should strategically and gradually move towards e-marketing adoption and implementation to survive the current and future market forces.

Chawafambira (2015:1) stresses that a dynamic Information Communication Technology (ICT) policy is essential, as it can be used as a framework to develop e-commerce policy like other countries. Chawafambira, however, blamed the low adoption and implementation of e-marketing by retailers on the lack of an ICT framework. For Rutsito (2014:1), Zimbabwe has shown remarkable improvement in technological adoption with the growth of the Internet. However, there exists little appreciation of achievements within and amongst Zimbabwean FMCG retailers. Under these circumstances, the FMCG Zimbabwean retailers have faced a myriad of problems arising from international retailers competing for the same market using advanced e-marketing (Musonza, 2015:2).

Objectives

The primary objective of this study was to determine the e-marketing adoption challenges affecting FMCG retailers in Zimbabwe.

Secondary objectives of the study include:

- To establish how the unavailability of

ICT services affected the adoption of e-marketing by FMCG retailers in Zimbabwe.

- To identify how technology adoption cost affected the adoption of e-marketing by FMCG retailers in Zimbabwe.
- To determine how the lack of government participation affected the adoption of e-marketing by FMCG retailers in Zimbabwe.
- To identify how negative management perception affected the adoption of e-marketing by FMCG retailers in Zimbabwe.
- To establish how lack of employee participation affected the adoption of e-marketing by FMCG retailers in Zimbabwe.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Several factors affect the adoption and implementation of e-marketing. According to Michael et al. (2011:96), the retail industry has a long history of adopting and implementing technology-based applications and innovative managerial practices. It commenced with the bar-code technology in the early 1980s, moving to cross-docking, vendor management inventory practices in the 1990s and radio frequency identification in 2005 (Michael et al., 2011:96). The retail industry has demonstrated its ability to adapt and adopt ICT to build core competencies (Michael et al., 2011:96). Retailers' adoption and implementation of electronic-based facilities start with initial awareness and evaluation, implementation and finally, its acceptance or assimilation with the retailer (Michael et al., 2011:96). In that regard, e-marketing use has grown globally, but the perception of which it takes to attract, retain and satisfy the customers online remains limited (Sahney, 2018).

According to Mndzebele (2013), Relative Advantage (RA) is the degree to which an innovation is perceived as better than the idea it supersedes. In that regard, Ravi (2010:84) proposes that customers compare innovations and the extent through which innovation becomes more advantageous, over the previous innovation, before its adoption. RA thus provides benefits that customer's rate above competing retailers. These benefits motivate customers to choose products basing on RA (Ravi, 2010:232.) Retailers also need to integrate social media such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube as strategic tools of ICT adoption to improve RA over other competitors.

El-Gohary (2012) and Mndzebele (2013:243) observed that the adoption of e-marketing should offer solutions to existing customers' problems or present new products or service opportunities such as increased accessibility, improved customers' reach and closing the customers' gap. In this regard, RA remains one of the most important aspects in adopting the retail ICT industry because new innovations must be better than current options to be validated (Dann & Dann, 2011). Michan and Mazze (2010:167) further argue that understanding customer adoption and diffusion processes enable retailers to develop appropriate strategies to facilitate the online value proposition.

In addition, the Complexity of Technology (CT) is a key factor in understanding the adoption and implementation of e-marketing. Mndzebele (2013:167) stresses that CT refers to the degree to which an innovation is perceived to be relatively difficult to comprehend and use. The CT also has a negative impact on the adoption of technology, hence customers easily adapt to technology is perceived to be effort-free (Mndzebele, 2013:167). Complex technology is considered as difficult to adopt, and the more it is considered difficult to implement the more customers abstain from adopting and implementing it (Pontono, 2015:67). This view is supported by empirical studies carried by Delafrooz et al. (2009) and Rahman et al. (2013), which concluded that consumers usually prefer e-shopping to traditional stores due

to a variety of online benefits, such as free access of information, reasonable price quotations, convenience and limited time constrains. Su and Fu (2015) indicate that retailers' adoption and implementation of e-marketing yield better cash flow, resources, planning, and increased value. In addition to that, Katawetawaraks and Wang (2019 state that e- retailers need to create secure and interactive websites to convert website visitors into customers.

The compatibility of technology is also crucial in adopting and implementing e-marketing in the retail industry. According to Mndzebele (2013:473), technology compatibility refers to the degree to which technological innovation is perceived as being consistent with the existing operating practices, beliefs, values, experience and needs. Ravi (2010) adds that technology compatibility represents the extent to which e-marketing is understood as compatible with existing products and the consumption patterns, the recent experience and the needs of the potential adopter. Roger (1995:24) gives another perspective that if adoption and implementation of ICT are consistent with values, beliefs and cultural variations, there will be less resistance to adoption and implementation.

Pantano (2016) also stated that the adoption of e-marketing should capture customers' memories with the previous shopping experience to increase diffusion levels. In addition, Mairura et al. (2016) conclude that adoption of e-marketing requires customers and retailers to adjust their existing behaviour since the new technology is paralleled and more unlikely for the customers and retailers to adopt.

Another environmental context factor is government support. Yigitcanlar et al. (2010:101) mention that the significant factors affecting the adoption and implementation of e-marketing is the failure by the government to participate in the provision of ICT services. Sharma (2012:156) notes that inconsistency in government legislation contributes to insufficient implementation of e-marketing in developing countries. Governments must play a clear role in creating a conducive environment for both private and public industry (Yigitcanlar et al., 2010:101). Remarkably, governments' primary role is to thwart barriers to e-marketing adoption for both individuals and corporates to lessen the financial commitments and establish an atmosphere of ICT usages (Kamel, 2010:45). Given the above mentioned, retailers in developing countries face challenges in implementing broadband networks due to a lack of proper research and development capabilities (Zulu & Bwalya, 2012). In Saudi Arabia, retailers and customers lack clear regulations and government's supervision in support of the diffusion of e-marketing (Kim, et al., 2012).

Governments in developing countries should actively participate in facilitating the adoption and implementation of e-marketing. Its active role should be seen in removing barriers that hinder the effective use of e-marketing by retailers. Proper infrastructure and other ICT based infrastructures should be put in place to increase the use of e-marketing in the retail industry.

Adopting and participation commence using e-mail, developing the website and moving to higher e-commerce adoption. Isdoro and Juan (2015) reveal that strong support from top retail management is a key driver towards e-marketing adoption. Their study also recommends that the personal characteristics of retail managers and owners affect the willingness and capability of technology adoption. The laxity by retail organisations in the adoption and implementation of e-marketing has the potential to frustrate the expectations of consumers and employees (Pantano, 2016). The willingness of management and owners to adopt ICT assists the retailer in predicting market trends and anticipation of key success within the retail industry (Isdoro & Juan, 2015). Owners' level of

education greatly influences the diffusion of e-marketing. Retail owners are usually innovation pioneers (Pantano, 2016). Retailers in developing and developed countries have been pioneers in adopting new ICT products in line with the evolving technological landscape.

OECD (2014) states that the training and development of the retailers' workforce improve the quality of the workforce and facilitate the diffusion of ICT in retailers. In addition to this, retailers need to engage in both "on the job" and "off the job" training to have positive e-marketing diffusion. This is because on-job training improves employees' confidence and increases the employee-customer online relationship (Pantano, 2016; Vaissone, 2012). However, poor quality of the workers (lack of qualified personnel and management) significantly impedes the adoption of ICT in retailers because highly skilled employees are more accustomed to technology than unskilled employees (OECD, 2014; Pontono, 2015).

Pantano (2016) stress that retailing should improve workers' quality to adapt to the evolving retail landscape. The evolving retail landscape calls for retailers to continuously train their employees to stay in line with the evolving customer needs (Grewal, et al., 2017). In addition to this, Vaissone (2012) stresses that the use of ICT by employees while interacting with customers improves the online shopping experience and regular purchases. Berry et al. (2016) point out that retailers should train their employees and shift their attention from transacting roles to creating relationships.

Thus, employees play a crucial role in the adoption of e-marketing. Retailers need to put more resource into training their employees since the employees act as the interaction point between the retailer and customers. Trained employees have the potential of assisting customers in real-time as well as capturing online employee behaviour.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed the interpretivism paradigm. Interpretivism philosophy allows the researcher participation, and it brings rigour to the study. Bryman and Bell (2011) and Saunders et al. (2016) concur that the interpretivism paradigm/philosophy aims at understanding how people in everyday natural setting create meanings and interpret the events in the world. Saunders et al. (2012) and Greener (2008) state that the interpretivism paradigm applies qualitative research methods such as discourse analysis, unstructured interviews to investigate constructions of reality by actors in retailers i.e. employees, shareholders, and managers.

Interpretivism upholds that the social world of business management is more complex; hence it cannot be theorized by definite laws (Saunders et al., 2012). This entails that there is a need to have deep insights into the complex world through the researcher's participation in the real world. Bryman and Bell (2011) state that the interpretivism paradigm focuses on the appreciation and understanding of the research through observation of images, words not numbers. The interpretivist paradigm does not focus on objective reality but instead aims at appreciating the world naturally (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Saunders, et al., 2012; Saunders, et al., 2016).

Interpretivism paradigm application to e-marketing adoption

The researcher participated in the study by carrying in-depth interviews to ascertain the nature and characteristics of e-marketing strategy and factors affecting the adoption of e-marketing. The in-depth interviews aimed to get a deep understanding of the study and co-create informed knowledge with the participants. The approach allowed the researcher's participation in understanding e-marketing strategy adoption and implementation hence providing new thoughts and development of knowledge.

RESEARCH APPROACH

This study comprised an interpretive component that applied qualitative approach principles. The qualitative approach was used to develop an in-depth interview guide to address the first and secondary research objective. Kothari (2004) states that the qualitative research approach involves the subjective assessment of research insights, attitudes, opinions and behaviours. Questions are constructed and focused depending on the researcher's subjective assessment of the environment (Creswell, 2014). Thus, the qualitative approach is also referred to as 'situation based' because it occurs at a given location, and the findings are not generalized but transferable (Luton, 2015).

Creswell (2014) illustrates that the "qualitative approach involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected from a particular setting, data analysis inductively building from a particular setting and the researcher interpreting the meaning of the data." Saunders et al. (2012) point out that the inductive reasoning of the qualitative approach allows the researcher to have a personal appreciation of the nature of relative problems so that the result of the analysis would be used in the formulation of a theory often expressed as "conceptual framework."

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study used an exploratory research design. Bryman & Bell, (2011) define research design as "a master plan, a blueprint and even as a sequence of research tasks and activities or a plan of methods and procedures that the researcher uses to collect and analyse data." For Saunders et al. (2012), a research design is a general plan that guides the researcher in answering the research question. It specifies the research objectives, information source, and type of data, design techniques, sampling methodology, and procedures to be applied in the research to answer the problem statement (Bryman & Bell, 2011)

Creswell (2014) suggests that the research design represents the types of inquiry that are either qualitative or quantitative, used by the researcher to provide specific direction and procedures. For Kothari (2004:35), "research design facilitates the smooth sailing of research operations, thereby making research as efficient as possible yielding maximum information from minimum effort applied, time and money". There is consensus among scholars that there are several types of mixed-method designs. These designs are mostly used in generating and verifying the theory in technology adoption (Venkatesh et al., 2013). They include convergence parallel (concurrent), sequential exploratory (qualitative-quantitative), sequential explanatory (quantitative-qualitative) and embedded (qualitative or qualitative) (Bryman & Bell, 2011:440; Saunders et al., 2016:170). These designs are usually used to enable the researcher to have a wider view of the phenomenon (Vankatesh et al., 2013).

DATA COLLECTION

This research used in-depth interviews to probe information from ICT and Marketing Managers of the targeted retail shops. Guided by the principle of saturation, a total of seven ICT managers were interviewed. The interviews, which were conducted with the participants, lasted for about 30 minutes each. The in-depth interviews assisted the researcher to understand the nature and characteristics of e-marketing strategy and identify factors affecting the adoption and implementation of e-marketing strategy that would assist in developing the proposed e-marketing strategy framework.

Saunders et al. (2016) state that in-depth interviews are a qualitative research method used to comprehend the social world through probing questions between the interviewer and interviewee. The rationale behind this approach was to get rich insight into e-marketing adoption challenges affecting Omni Channel retailers in Zimbabwe. The process involved the direct participation of

the researcher with the ICT and Marketing Managers. The in-depth interview allowed the interviewer to ask questions and probe further for the explanation (Saunders, et al., 2012; Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2010). Bryman and Bell (2011) note that in-depth interviews present an extension of day-to-day personal interaction to formalized conversations. However, despite their potential to capture crucial information, in-depth interviews are often poorly executed and inadequately reported (Saunders, et al., 2012).

Although Cooper and Schindler (2014) argue that qualitative data collection is susceptible to human error and bias, concurrent mixed research design was essential in overcoming the general weaknesses. E-marketing adoption and implementation as a social science cannot be easily understood with the application of quantitative methods; therefore qualitative data collection provided the most intricate details of the research problem (Cooper & Schindler, 2014; Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2010).

The Marketing and ICT managers were chosen purposively. The judgment was based on the fact that these shops were chosen based on their market share (67%) in the Zimbabwean FMCG retail industry (Mushakavanhu, 2014). While there are debates on how qualitative sample size can be calculated and established, sampling plays a pivotal role in the research process (Shukla, 2008). Some researchers have proposed that qualitative sample size was determined by research personal judgment and knowledge of the study (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Saunders et al. (2012) posit that sample design should pose the characteristics of the total population. Cooper and Schindler (2010) argue that sampling design enables the researcher to conclude the population.

FINDINGS

The qualitative population comprised fourteen participants consisting of seven ICT and seven Marketing Managers from selected FMCG retailers in Zimbabwe. These selected participants had direct experience in the adoption and implementation of e-marketing strategies. The semi-structured questions were pilot tested with four participants comprising one Marketing Manager, one ICT Manager and two research experts. The two were drawn from the North-West University, South Africa and Africa University, Zimbabwe, respectively. This “pilot” was meant to remove ambiguous and irrelevant questions. The pilot testing thus noted and removed inconsistent and ambiguous phrases and statements. The interviews were conducted after the approval of the gatekeepers. The participants were given the interview guide before the initial interview schedule to familiarise themselves with the question. It is important to note that for consistency, the interviews were conducted at the participants’ workplace. The interviewer explained the purpose of the research, and the interviewee consented to the recording of interviews. Table 2 presents the schedule of the in-depth interviews.

The responses from the in-depth interviews

TABLE 1: INTERVIEW PROFILE

Retail code name	Position	Department	Number of participants
R1	Marketing and ICT Executive	Marketing and ICT	2
R2	ICT Executive	ICT	1
R3	Marketing Executive	Marketing and ICT	1
R4	Marketing Executive	Marketing	1
R5	Marketing and ICT Executive	Marketing and ICT	1
R6	Marketing	Marketing	1
R7	Saturation reached		

were digitally recorded with the consent of participants, transcribed into written format and coded using grounded theory principles called systematic procedure (Strauss & Corbin, 2007). Although the population consisted of 14 intended participants, saturation was reached at retailer 6, participant 7. The qualitative results were essential for a better understanding of the key e-marketing adoption components from a management's perspective. The selected participants use the e-marketing adoption strategy consistently; hence they provided insight into answering questions regarding the research objectives. The qualitative results using grounded theory principles provided an investigative and in-depth understanding of a phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 2007). The study used Strauss & Corbin (2007) grounded theory qualitative systematic design principles, which involve the following steps:

Open coding stage –involves reading through the collected data and deducing meaning.

Axial coding stage–identifying relationships amongst the coded data.

Selective coding stage – reflecting emerged core variables or themes (thematic analysis).

Selective Coding Analysis

Selective coding stage (emerged themes) The following section reflects on the emerged themes as well as secondary literature substantiation there off.

Unavailability of ICT services.

The central theme that emerged on question one (1) is the unavailability of ICT and services. The retailers have shown reluctance in purchasing the required hardware to implement an e-marketing strategy. Sadhpuria (2009) found that retailers' sustainability in developing countries requires ICT and internal resources competency. The internal resources competency reduces the switching cost of retailers in moving from the traditional store format to the virtual formats of e-marketing strategy (Sadhpuria, 2009). For Commo and Maneti (2014), retailers need to identify the merits inherent in adopting e-marketing strategy to identify the technology move advantage. Retailers adopting an e-marketing strategy must have the required ICT infrastructure that allows monitoring online competitor pricing and implementing just in time for its customers. An empirical study by Dann and Dann (2011) indicates that retailers' technology (new innovation) must be better than the current option; otherwise they will be no point in giving up the older version. This suggests that retailers make the cost-benefit analysis before they adopt a particular technology for their use.

TABLE 2: EMERGED THEMES – FACTORS AFFECTING THE ADOPTION OF E-MARKETING BY FMCG RETAILERS IN ZIMBABWE.

Question	Emerged themes	Participant interviewed
1. Challenges faced in the adoption of e-marketing strategy.	Unavailability of ICT services.	1, 2, 3 & 7
2. Government participation.	Insufficient government assistance availability.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7
3. Management perspective.	Negative management perception.	1, 2, 3, 4, 6 & 7
4. Centralisation of ICT and marketing.	Lack of employee participation.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7
5. Technology adoption cost	Adoption cost	1, 2, 3, 4, 6 & 7

Cost factor

Another theme that emerged on question one (1) is that of the cost factor. As alluded to earlier in this study, the retailers in Africa are slowly embracing the e-marketing strategy. Here, "trading for survival is a norm as few retailers are not reaping the benefits of e-marketing strategy due to the high cost of Internet cost and website maintenance (United Nation Development Programme, 2010). According to Michael et al. (2011), the retail industry has a long history of adopting and implementing technology-based application and innovative managerial practices. However, the cost factor has been the limiting factor. Michael et al. (2011) argue that regardless of these high costs associated with Internet and website maintenance, the retail industry has demonstrated its ability to adapt and adopt ICT as a way of building core competencies.

Insufficient government assistance

The central theme that emerged on question two (2) where participants were asked what the government was doing to improve the adoption of e-marketing, was inadequate government assistance. While some participants cited that the government supported the adoption of e-marketing strategy by setting up the regulatory framework for the use of the Internet, most of them felt that there was insufficient government assistance. The participants stated that the government was putting in place the relevant infrastructure such as optic fibre in different towns to allow Internet accessibility. However, the participants indicated that the assistance was not sufficient to boost the growth of e-marketing strategy amongst retailers

This theme concurs with previous findings that government plays a crucial role in creating a sustainable environment for both the private and public industry to adopt ICT related services (Yigitcanlar et al., 2010). The government should open up barriers to technology adoption by reducing financial commitments and hence coming up with an idea ICT usage framework (Kamel, 2010). Zulu and Bwalya (2012) concur with Kamel (2010) who noted that retailers in developing countries face impediments in adopting and implementing ICT systems due to a lack of government commitment to research and development. A study by Kim et al. (2012) concluded that the government should provide a regulatory framework and supervision to support the diffusion of e-marketing strategy.

Negative management perception.

The major theme that emerged from question three (3) regarding management perspective towards adopting and implementing e-marketing strategy was negative management perception. The participants indicated that although the management was using ICT related services, their perception towards adopting e-marketing strategy was on the negative side.

Available literature indicates that the stronger the management perspective towards the adoption of technology, the higher the levels of diffusion (Isdoro & Juan, 2015). This is the key characteristic and competency of management that is critical in firms' desire and capabilities to adopt the technology (Isdoro & Juan, 2015). The negative management perspective to adopt and implement technology-related services can frustrate customers' expectation due to a lack of an online value proposition (Pantano, 2016). It remains pertinent to note that management's desire to adopt technology allows market prediction and anticipation of key success within the operating environment (Isdoro & Juan, 2015). Retail management and owners are usually innovation pioneers. Therefore, their level of education is also sentimental in technology diffusion amongst retailers (Pantano, 2016).

Lack of employee participation

The theme that emerged from research question 4 was that of lack of employee participation. The retailers indicated that

the participation of employees in using the Internet would significantly improve the adoption of an e-marketing strategy. However, its availability was limited.

These results concur with a previous study by Chuang et al. (2009), who reveals that small retailers can allow employee participation in the adoption of e-marketing strategy. This is due to the fact that management can make a quick decision regarding the evolving ICT trends. Chuang et al. (2009) and Awa et al. (2011) concur that workers' participation amongst small and large retailers can be broadly affected by both internal or external to the retail environment.

Al -Somali et al. (2011) contend that although restaurants and foodservice retailers are small in size and capacity, their employee participation may be high due to the size and scope. Most retailers' limitation of innovation capacity has proved that employee participation is crucial in technology diffusion (Pantano, 2016).

RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION

Unavailability of ICT services

The unavailability of ICT services affects the adoption of e-marketing strategy. Key barriers included the unavailability of ICT hardware and software, poor Internet services and insufficient industry and government initiatives. A lack of after-sales service and online assistance was also a major significant challenge to adopting and implementing an e-marketing strategy. These ICT services are essential in ensuring that retailers adopt and implement e-marketing strategy faster.

Cost factor

Cheap and reliable Internet connectivity is essential for the adoption and implementation of an e-marketing strategy. However, the costs of establishing, updating, running and maintaining websites were relatively high. Retailers preferred easy and cheap traditional marketing methods.

Lack of government participation

Lack of government participation, which is required for the adoption and implementation of e-marketing strategy, affected the adoption of the strategies. Regardless of the initiatives done by the government in opening up the use of the Internet, poor and inconsistent Internet connections are still prevalent. Lack of government participation has prompted failure to improve customer experience and network connectivity in both, urban and rural areas.

Negative management perspective

Negative management perception affected the adoption of an e-marketing strategy. The results suggest that management should allow active Internet service use by shop floor workers. Furthermore, decentralization of e-marketing strategy activities is critical in different branches across the country. Active participation of employees at a branch and regional level is necessary as it enables employees to be in a position to use online platforms. The slow adoption of e-marketing strategy owes to management's fear of financial loss and job insecurity.

Lack of employee participation

There was generally low employee participation as the use of the Internet was centralised with top management while restricted for low-level employees. Accordingly, shop floor employees had no exposure to e-marketing strategy hence the negative impact on the adoption of e-marketing strategy.

CONCLUSION

The study results are important for the government, which has a responsibility to provide the necessary laws and regulations to facilitate the e-marketing strategy adoption and implementation. The findings are consistent with Sharma (2012:156), who posits that inconsistency in government regulations contributes to insufficient ICT policy reforms in different countries. The findings presented here urges an e-commerce bill that can act as an

instrument to boost retailers' confidence in adopting and implementing an e-marketing strategy. The primary role of the government would be to break barriers to the adoption of e-marketing strategy to both individuals and corporates to reduce financial commitments related to technology adoption.

This study also noted that accessing ICT services and hardware was still expensive for both the rural and urban populace. The results show that the use of online platforms remains expensive and unaffordable to ordinary Zimbabweans. As previously observed, the situation requires the government to institute proper research and development capabilities to understand the hidden cost inhibiting e-marketing strategy adoption among FMCG retailers (Zulu &Bwalya, 2012). During the study, there were indications that the proliferation of technology in Zimbabwe had reached high levels.

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