

THE VALUE OF MULTI-STRATEGY RESEARCH METHODOLOGY IN CONDUCTING FIELDWORK STUDY INTO INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IMPLEMENTATION IN SUDANESE BANKS

By

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the value of multi-strategy research methodology and design adopted in investigating the implementation of (Information Technology) IT in a developing country like Sudan. The paper aims to present and appreciate the value of multi-strategy research methodology (mixed methods) in conducting empirical research in Sudanese banks. Despite the fact that banking has been practiced in Sudan for more than a hundred years, little is known about the daily operations of banking and the development of IT in the Sudanese Banking Industry (SBI). Primary data were collected from fieldwork in Sudan and this was combined with secondary data that were collected from a number of conventional sources. The study design used mixed methods that comprised a combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques in order to investigate and explain how IT is introduced and implemented in the SBI so as to achieve data triangulation. This approach has generated useful data within limited time, enabled integration of key findings from both the questionnaires and the interviews, and minimized the fieldwork cost. Thus in so doing, the paper presents the value of a dual methodology to new and emerging fields of study.

المخلص:

تستعرض هذه الورقة أهمية إستراتيجية منهجية بحثية مزدوجة وتصميم البحث الذي تم تبنيه

في اختبار تطبيق تقنية المعلومات في دولة نامية كالسودان. فبالرغم من أن النظام المصرفي طبق في السودان

منذ أكثر من مائة عام، إلا أن ما يعرف عن عمليات الصرافة اليومية والتطور الذي حدث في استخدام تكنولوجيا المعلومات في صناعة الصرافة السودانية ما زال محدوداً.

جمعت البيانات الأولية لهذا البحث ميدانيا من السودان وتم ربطها بأخرى ثانوية جمعت من عدة مصادر تقليدية معتادة. وقد استخدم في تصميم الدراسة منهجية ثنائية كمية ونوعية لأجل اختبار وتفسير الكيفية التي تم بها إدخال وتطبيق تقنية المعلومات في القطاع المصرفي السوداني. وتهدف هذه الورقة علي إبراز قيمة وأهمية المنهجية المزوجة في دراسة جوانب معرفية جديدة ومستقبلية.

INTRODUCTION

The wide-ranging implementation of Information Technology (IT) is a major challenge facing business organizations seeking to sustain competitive advantage in dynamic business markets. This challenge is compounded in developing countries where business organizations have to handle problems such as lack of investment, absence of technology awareness, and poor training. The study is necessarily exploratory and descriptive, as there is paucity in research into the area of IT in banking in the developing economies. The few such studies conducted in this area (For example: Ha, 1994; McConnell, 1996; Kamhawi, 1998; Uchupalanan, 1998; Abu-Musa, 2001) seem to lack an overall comprehensive view, as well as a fundamental theoretical framework. In examining the available material, the SBI is found to be one of the most important industries that plays a crucial role in the economic development of Sudan. The SBI has been selected because it is the most regulated sector compared to other sectors in Sudan. In general, the banks operate in an information system context whereby financial institutions are critically dependent on IT activity for their daily operations. Selecting one industry sector such as SBI offers some advantages to research, since respondents in the same sector are working in similar environments and are more likely to have similar skills and back-grounds that may promote homogeneity of the data. The researcher was engaged in a discourse that the discovery of oil, which has become part of the Sudanese economy in 1997, attracted and continues to attract investors into the country. This development in turn requires the Sudanese banks to improve the financial services, that can be done through the introduction of IT in the SBI. Whilst examining the organizational context of Sudanese banks, it could be

