

ENTERPRISE CONTENT MANAGEMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY OF TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA

ORISAH-GODFREY Lillian Anyanagba

Department of Office and Information Management

Faculty of Administration and Management Rivers State University, Port Harcourt.

Email: Lillian.orisah-godfrey@ust.edu.ng; 08038666969

Abstract

The study examined the relationship between Enterprise Content Management and sustainability of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The study adopted the dynamic capability theory as the theoretical foundation. Several articles were reviewed and based on articles reviewed the study findings revealed that organisations that encourage enterprise content Management are most likely to experience growth and quality service. Based on this finding, the study concluded that enterprise content Management is a critical tool to enhance the sustainability of tertiary institutions. Based on this finding and conclusion, the study recommended that the management of tertiary institutions should adopt Enterprise Content Management as it is most likely to trigger sustainability.

Keywords: Enterprise Content Management, Sustainability, Growth, Quality Service

Introduction

The business world today is in a state of constant change leading to uncertainty of the business environment and as such, sustainability becomes a critical chase as both large and small businesses have made it a focal point with a view to remain relevant in business. Today's organisations constantly deal with various contents ranging from text documents, spreadsheets and e-mails and organisations who are able to maneuver these contents in the best way such that seamless access is assured is in the path of sustainability. The trend towards working in virtual teams and teleworking requires easy digital access to the content to enable work and collaboration from a distance (Bentley & Yoong, 2000). According to Klegova and Rabova (2015) the concept of Enterprise Content Management is a relatively new within the field of information systems. As such, there are not many definitions about the concept. ECM represents a relatively young field in both academia (Tyrva"inen et al. 2006) and practice (Dilnutt 2006). This becomes particularly apparent in the lack of a widely accepted understanding and definition of the concept of ECM, or as Smith and McKeen (2003) put it "if there is one thing that all the experts agree on, it is that no one really knows exactly what ECM really is" (Gilchrist 2001). Therefore, this study looked at different scholarly views of Enterprise Content Management with a view to given an understanding about the concept.

According to Grahlmann et al. (2012) Enterprise Content Management comprises the strategies, processes, methods, systems, and technologies necessary for capturing, creating, managing, using, publishing, storing, preserving, and disposing content within and between organisations. It also involves an "integrated approach to managing all of an organisation's information including paper documents, data, reports, web pages and digital assets, strategies, tools, processes, and skills an organisation needs to manage all its information assets over their lifecycle" (Smith & McKeen, 2003). ECM is increasingly perceived as the state of the art for storing and retrieving content and documents in practice (Aleksy & Schwind 2006). Organisations constantly deal with various forms of contents that aid their operations and when not managed properly can cost organisations dearly. Therefore, Enterprise Content Management offer large potential benefits for organisations to manage these contents considering this "this era is marked by the influx of data, modern businesses rely heavily on Enterprise Content Management to streamline intricate processes and efficiently manage vast amount of content data" (Market Trend, 2023). These processes being streamlined and managed efficiently consequently leads to cost minimization, growth and quality services which are indicants of sustainability.

Sustainability is the ability of an organisation to grow and maintain growth over time while successfully meeting the needs of various stakeholders is referred to as organisational sustainability

(Neubaum & Zahra, 2006). Organisational sustainability hinges on the principle of strengthening the environmental, social as well as the economic systems within firms' operation (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, 2012). This principle is considered important, as Colbert and Kurucz (2007) view the concept of sustainability relatively with continuous business operations as well as assisting firms prosper without devaluing organisations' future needs (Boudreau & Ramstad, 2005). Organisational sustainability has been gaining recognition as it offers not just competitive advantage but as well as creates value for organisations and society. Today, many authors refer to the sustainability concept as ambiguous and subject to debate or controversy; even though, there is consensus that, in general, sustainability refers to the ability or capacity to endure (Broekhuis & Vos, 2003; Giannettia, Almeida, & Bonilla, 2010; Geelsa, 2010). Considering the uncertainty of the business environment, businesses and organisations work towards sustainability, that is, being able to remain in business or having a continues business operation and tertiary institutions are not left out.

Tertiary institutions are an invaluable part of every nation's economy and as such, the greatest investment a nation can make for the development of its economic, sociological and human resources is that of education (Aminu, 2006). The history of university education is dated back to 1948 when the first higher institution – University of Ibadan was established then followed by the second-generation Universities from 1960 to 1962 and the third and fourth generation Universities from 1975 to 1980 and from 1980 to 1990 the fourth generation Universities. Overtime, the growth of tertiary education continued with more federal, state, and private universities. Polytechnics and colleges of education were not left out. As at 2012, there are 37 federal universities, 38 state universities and 50 private universities (NUC 2012). There are also 52 colleges of education and 44 polytechnics in Nigeria.

Despite the proliferation of tertiary institutions in Nigeria, they are not without problems. According to Olaleye (2012) higher education in Nigeria like other systems of education especially in developing countries is going through a series of challenges. And these challenges have affected their ability to operate efficiently. Similarly, Saint et al (2003) also observed that the potential of higher education systems in developing countries to fulfill its responsibility is frequently thwarted by long-standing problems. These problems amongst other factors deal with the inability of tertiary institutions to efficiently manage their contents ranging from emails, text documents, and spread sheets electronically. The problems of inadequate infrastructural facilities amongst other problems are another major constraint to the Universities education development in Nigeria. This is due to inability of these institutions to embrace or integrate technological advancement in managing its contents, resulting to poor sustainability. Therefore, this study investigated the relationship between Enterprise Content Management and sustainability of tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Not many studies have been carried out on the concept of Enterprise Content Management due to the concept is relatively new in information management discipline resulting to limited literature on the concept. However, Arshad et al., (2012) looked at understanding the use of Enterprise Content Management systems in coordination type of organisations. Salamntu and Seymour (2015) did a review on Enterprise Content Management: Growth and maturation of ECM from the year 2001 to 2011. Whereas, Zykov (2015) investigated Enterprise Content Management: theory and engineering for entire lifecycle support. Nevertheless, none of these studies have really looked at Enterprise Content Management and Sustainability of Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria. Therefore, this was the gap this study is set to close. Below is the conceptual framework that guided this study;

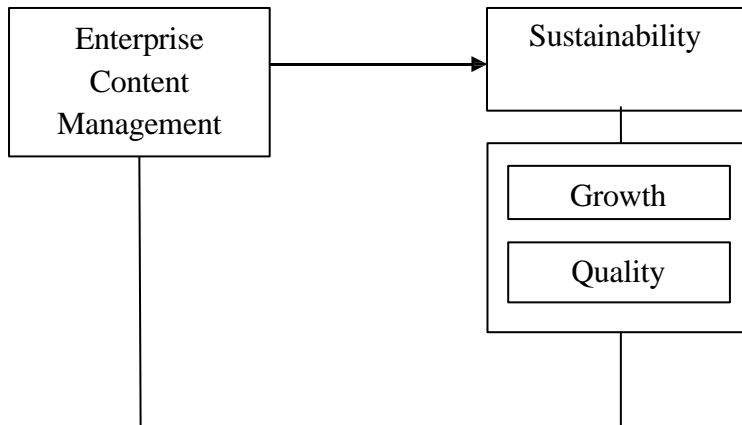


Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework of the relationship between Enterprise Content Management and sustainability of tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Source: (AIIM, 2010; Colbert and Kurucz (2007))

Dynamic Capability Theory

The dynamic capability theory postulates an organisation’s ability to adapt in dynamic market conditions as the critical source of superior performance. Dynamic capability affirmed the firm’s ability to recognize, integrate, develop, envisage, and reconfigure internal and external capabilities to deal with environmental dynamics (Pavlou & El Sawy, 2011). Dynamic capabilities theory proposed by Teece and Pisano (1994) is the extension from resource-based view (RBV) of the firm (Barney, 1986, 1991). The definition of dynamic capabilities as define by Teece et al., 1997) is the ability of the firm to combine, develop and reconfigure external and internal expertise in order to respond to speedily changing environment. Previous research has provided significant definitions on dynamic capabilities.

From international business perspective, Luo (2000) discovered that the exploitation of dynamic capabilities can increase the firm expansion in international market and simultaneously increase firm performance. Managerial and technological capabilities can offer sustainable competitive advantage in rapidly changing markets only through sensing the tendency of the changes and understanding their consequences, and reconfiguring firm-specific resources and processes continuously to match environmental requirement. (Jiao et al., 2010).

The process of maintaining competitive advantage is limitless and it is the dynamic process (Hung, Yang, Lien, McLean, & Kuo, 2010), hence scholars has proposed that in order for the firm to remain competitive in the market, the firm need to develop specific capabilities and continuous learning (Argyris & Schon, 1978; Hammer, 2001; Jashapara, 1993; Senge, 1990; Zott, 2003) which is from dynamic capabilities point of view especially in the new or changing market environment (Wilden et al., 2013). The lack of dynamic capabilities will prohibit the firm to maintain their competitive advantage especially in the changing environment (Gnizy et al., 2014).

Eisenhardt and Martin (2000) define dynamic capabilities as the process of using resources to create new resources that can create market change. Additionally, in the turbulence and fast-growing market, the firm resources must be dynamic and the managers need to know how to adjust the strategy with the environment in order to create new skills that can meet the dynamic of the market (Monteiro et al., 2017). Dynamic capabilities are regarded as composed of four components: environmental sensing capabilities, change and renewal capabilities, technological flexibility capabilities and organisational flexibility capabilities. Therefore, the choice of this theory is dependent on the following capabilities; technological flexibility and change and renewal capabilities. These components are capable of fostering growth and enhancing service quality. Thus, when organisations deploy Enterprise Content Management in their business operations, they are bound to experience growth and quality service.

Enterprise Content Management

Organisations in one way or the other deal with contents of different forms and these contents includes organisational web pages, e-mails, pictures, and texts documents amongst others that organisations use in its daily or routine operations. However, overtime, these contents were traditionally managed which placed organisations in difficult situations such as high cost of managing these contents, difficulty in accessing these contents leading to poor service quality, redundancy and slow growth. Therefore, according to Grudin (2006) the increasing of content to be managed and the scatteredness of content throughout the organisation have made professional management of content near impossible. Overtime, files are often stored locally making accessibility, consistency and publication control of content difficult (Scott et al., 2004; Vidgen et al., 2001). As such, there is need for Enterprise Content Management. Although, organisations are beginning to embrace technologies such as Enterprise Content Management to enable them better manage their structure, semi structure and unstructured contents, the awareness of Enterprise Content Management is still minute.

The concept Enterprise Content Management was first introduced by the association for information and image management (AIIM) (Blair, 2004). And has since been widely adopted by vendors, end users and analysts in the market (Blair, 2004). Additionally, the concept originates in pioneering efforts of the mid-1990s to manage corporate web content with in-house systems (Boiko, 2002). Looking at the newness of the concept, defining Enterprise Content Management has not been easy to come up with something all encompassing. With this in view, several definitions and views from different scholars were reviewed. According to Herbt et al. (2014) Enterprise Content Management is used to refer to the management of all types of documents and their contents in an enterprise. Despite this view, it is still not an easy task in developing a complete definition on the concept. As scholars like Suzanne, Mescan, Vasont Systems" and Vice President of Marketing amongst others, are calling for a firm definition (Mescan, 2004).

According to AIIM Enterprise Content Management comprises the strategies, processes, methods, systems, and technologies that are necessary for capturing, creating, managing, using, publishing, storing, preserving, and disposing content within and between organisations (Knut et al., n.d). Similarly, Päivärinta and Munkvold (2005) concluded that ECM is an integrative concept of information management that tackles different related areas, such as information resource management or electronic document management (Munkvold et al. 2006). According to Gartner, ECM refers both to "a strategy to deal with all types of enterprise content and a set of software products for managing the entire life cycle of that content" (Bell et al., 2010). Nordheim and Päivärinta (2006) define ECM as representing "a modern concept of Information Re-source Management in general, addressing the integration of semi- and unstructured data with the management of formal databases". Tyrväinen et al. (2003) describe ECM as focusing "on the management of textual and multimedia content across and between enterprises, emphasizing the coexistence of technical and social aspects within the content management. ECM certainly represents more than just a piece of software (Augustyniak et al. 2005).

In the course of daily business, organisation shares enormous volumes of business-related information within and between business units and with stakeholders. Business-related information such as inventory list is often shared to complete end-to-end processes (Jenkins 2006). Failure to share this type of information during business process executions may affect a business for example it can delay a decision-making process (Dilnutt 2006b; Gupta et al. 2001; Sprehe 2005). Because of this, organisation finds it very important to efficiently share information during business process executions. Tyrväinen et al. (2006) position ECM as a field of IS research, aggregating research results of diverging subjects such as retrieval algorithms, usability issues, or implementation methods. Nordheim and Päivärinta (2006) and Päivärinta and Munkvold (2005) regard ECM as a sub-field of knowledge management, since ECMSs can be used to capture and utilize content that contains explicit knowledge in repositories or to manage organisational knowledge resources. However, even Munkvold et al. (2006) and Päivärinta and Munkvold (2005) themselves argue that ECM incorporates fields that are distinctly different from knowledge management, such as the long-term storage of content or managing scanned invoices. By definition, this kind of content is not organisational knowledge which only exists in the heads of humans.

The reports by leading research organisations evolved from using terms like EDMS to ECM and one such organisation is Gartner as it has used the concept EDMS in 2003 but by 2004 was already using ECM as a concept (Shegda et al. 2004). ECM has the capability to integrate all of these systems into one component (Päivärinta & Munkvold, 2005). The integration of the system is meant to support activities such as content creation and capture, content editing, review, approval, content indexing, classifying and linking, content distribution, publication and use, update and retention (Tyrväinen et al., 2006). It is widely perceived that ECM helps organisations to manage not only structured and (unstructured content (Roy et al. 2005), but also „„records; knowledge generation, codification, and distribution; collaboration; and business processes across an enterprise““ (Andersen, 2008). Therefore, ECM concept goes beyond technological solutions, also including “the strategies, tools, processes and skills an organisation needs to manage its information assets over their lifecycle” (Smith & McKeen 2003). O’Callaghan and Smits (2005) distinguish ECM from related approaches and thereby reinforce the perception that ECM is an integrative concept for managing the entirety of an organisation’s information assets, which also underlies the present study.

Gartner (2001) states that most of the data captured today is unstructured (75–80%) and can be hardly found when needed (as cited in O’Callaghan & Smits 2005). So, it has been estimated that information workers spend up to 30% of their working day searching for data and approximately 15–25% on non-productive, primarily information-related tasks (Burnett et al. 2006). As a consequence, a so-called „„information chaos““ caused by large amounts of unstructured data and compromising the ability to manage and control information is the rule rather than the exception in contemporary organisations (Swartz 2007a). Tyrväinen et al. (2006) further specify the content lifecycle to include “activities such as content creation and capture, content editing, review, approval, content indexing, classifying and linking, content distribution, publication and use, update, preservation, format transformation for long-term archival, and retention”. Enterprise Content Management Systems (ECMSs) are positioned as (technical) solutions for the organisation-wide management of all types of content (Tyrväinen, Päivärinta, Salminen, & Iivari, 2006). ECM tools and strategies allow the management of an organisation’s unstructured information, wherever that information exists” (AIIM, 2010).

Concept of Sustainability

Tertiary education in Nigeria has witnessed rising and falling within the past three decades with the attendant loss of status both within the sub-Saharan Africa and the world at large (Akubuilu & Okorie, 2013). And this most times is due to lack of sustainability plans such as embracing technological advancement in its operations. Sustainability has been gaining its rightful recognition and importance as it offers competitive advantage and creates value for organisations, their stakeholders, and society. A lot of organisations are yet to embrace such futuristic thinking, the benefits cannot be overstressed. There are a lot of definitions as it relates to the concept of sustainability, however, this study reviewed few of these definitions with a view to give a clear understanding about the concept.

According to Neubaum and Zahra (2006) sustainability is the ability of a firm to nurture and support growth over time by effectively meeting the expectations of diverse stakeholders. On a similar level, Funk (2003) noted that organisations that are sustainable are those ones whose characteristics and activities are intended to bring a desirable future state for its stakeholders. In the same vein, Marshall and Brown (2003) defined sustainable organisations ideally as the ones which take a systems perspective to ensure that natural resources are not consumed faster than the rates of renewal, recycling, or regeneration of those resources. Whereas, Hart and Milstein (2003) described sustainability as the contribution of organisations in the process of achieving human development in an inclusive, equitable, and secure manner by delivering simultaneously economic, social, and environmental benefits. However, this study will be relying on the definition of sustainability given by Colbert and Kurucz (2007) that the concept of sustainability relatively with continuous business operations as well as assisting firms prosper without devaluing organisations’ future needs. This means that organisations that embrace sustainability are prone to stay in business as well as experience growth. And this is possible when organisations begin to embrace technology such as

Enterprise Content Management that will help them management their contents as well as streamline their operational activities digitally.

According to Hahn and Scheermesser (2006) organisations face constant changes in the environment as well as experience difficulties from legislation and society, forcing them to seek alignment with sustainability. Therefore, there is need for tertiary institutions to embrace Enterprise Content Management in other to remain efficient in their daily operations. Organisations that are efficient are bound to be sustainable. Sustainability hinges on the principle of strengthening the environmental, social as well as the economic systems within firms" operation (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, 2012). For organisations to keep functioning, they must be sustainably conscious because it is one of the ways with which growth, quality service, profitability, and cost reduction is achieved.

Growth

Growth is something for which most companies, large or small, strive towards. However, growth as a concept can mean a lot of things and this was confirmed by for Oladosu (2016) organisational growth means different things to different organisations. And that is why there are many parameters a company can select to measure its growth. The most meaningful yardstick is one that shows progress with respect to an organisation"s stated goals. The ultimate goal of most companies is profit, so net profit, revenue, and other financial data are often utilized as "bottom-line" indications of growth (Oakland, 2014). In the same vein, there are many parameters an institution may use to measure its growth ranging from profit, service quality, expansion and positive customer satisfaction amongst others.

According to Hillman (2004) growth is the process of evaluating an organisation alongside a copy for non-stop maturity in sort to underline what has been achieved and what needs enlightening. Growth according Penrose cited in Ikoromasoma and Agwuma (2022) is the product of an internal process in the development of an enterprise and an increase in quality and expansion. Therefore, with the deployment of Enterprise Content Management organisations are most likely to experience expansion, improve operations and render quality services.

Quality Service Delivery

Services delivery is an important pursuit for service providers that seek to create and provide value to their customers (Grönroos & Ravald, 2011). Through the provision of high levels of service quality, institutions can achieve increased public satisfaction, loyalty and therefore long-term profitability and sustainability (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2000). Quality service according to Newman (2001) is the degree and direction between customer service expectations and perceptions. Similarly, Ikoromasoma (2023) see quality service as "the perceived perception of service rendered as opposed to actual expectations". He further reiterated that a service is said to quality based on certain indicants customers look out for in a service rendered.

According have to Silver (2022), higher quality results to higher performance, loyalty, revenue, and customer satisfaction. Therefore, organisations that deploy the use of Enterprise Content Management in managing not just their contents but as well as their administrative processes and procedures are bound to achieve quality in rendering services as well as experience growth which are indicants of sustainability. Additionally, Organisations that adopt Enterprise Content Management are bound to be sustainable because it enhances service delivery, reduced costs, and increased availability of efficient operations, improved service quality.

Discussion

Based on the articles reviewed, the study found that organisations that encourage the deployment of Enterprise Content Management are most likely to improve service quality, experience growth and minimize cost. This agrees with the findings of Seymour and Salamntu (2015) that Enterprise Content Management increases efficiency, user satisfaction, improve business process and cost reduction amongst others.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The study concluded that there is a significant relationship between Enterprise Content Management and sustainability. Therefore, Enterprise Content Management go beyond mere tool for managing the contents of an organisation but as a critical driver of sustainability. With this in view, the study recommended that management of tertiary institutions should adopt Enterprise Content Management as it is most likely to trigger sustainability.

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