

E-business and e-commerce applications and trends in the retailing sector in Zimbabwe

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Abstract

This paper discusses e-commerce adoption trends in the Zimbabwean retail sector. Data were collected using questionnaire and interviews of 170 retailers and 73 customers selected in Harare. Zimbabwe's retail sector lags behind in e-business adoption. Key e-commerce applications were in administration, accounting, management and control systems with barcode-driven systems and debit card swipe technologies being most common. Mismatch between the demand for e-business solutions by customers and the supply of such solutions by retailers and a pronounced digital divide between multiple store and single store retailers in the areas of network technologies were identified. The impact of e-business on business processes and company productivity is positive for multiple store and minimal for single store operators. Internal work organisation, procurement costs of supply goods and quality of product and services impacts are minimal. Scope exists for improved adoption and development of e-business for Zimbabwean retailers through better policies and supportive legislation.