

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO LOW LEVELS OF ICT ADOPTION BY SMES IN GWERU CITY, ZIMBABWE.

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ABSTRACT

Information communication technology has made immense contributions to economic development across the globe. But the adoption of ICTs among many SMEs faces many challenges that have left many governments' developmental goals in limbo. The main purpose of this study is to explore factors contributing to low levels of ICT adoption by SMEs in Gweru city, Zimbabwe. The qualitative research approach was used in this study. The study used open ended questionnaires, face to face in-depth interviews, focus groups and document analysis in line with the merits of data triangulation to authenticate the collected data. 30 purposively selected participants came from building material shops, micro business shops, small steel businesses, car spare shops and grocery shops. The issues emerged from the data were analysed thematically. The research revealed a low capacity of ICT adoption among entrepreneurs and this has been ascribed to lack of finance, poor supply of electricity, inadequate infrastructure, inadequate support from government and other financial institutions. Due to the immense contribution to economic development the government and other stake holders must support, sustain and fund ICT adoption among SMEs to revive the economy. Minimization of excessive regulations, bureaucracy and red tape in accessing loans and policies that maintain stable operating rules for SMEs must be the way to go. However, it is the author's view that a national survey research be conducted to authenticate these results without any reservations of bias.

Key words: ICT usage, SMEs, adoption, ICT skills.

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