Preface

In the last two decades, much work has been done on organisational politics, as well as on strategic information technology (IT), often separately articulated and presented. Thus, what has been missing is the interaction between strategic IT and organisational politics, making many of the major IT challenges in organisations to remain unresolved. Some of the IT challenges include how networks of both human and non-human actors are formed; how the actors’ interacts; structural diverse; and manifestation of environmental factors in the development, implementation, management and use of information systems and technologies in the organisations. It is in this area this book focuses upon, for the benefit of both the academic and corporate domains.

The book presents its contribution from three perspectives, theory, methodology and practice for the benefits of academics and practitioners in both business and IT fields. This was done within context and relevance, to understand how Strategic Information Technology Governance and the associated Organizational Politics could be employed to enable, support and manage modern businesses.

The theoretical contribution comes from both basic and applied research, as presented in this book. The studies explored and examined the ontological and philosophical assumptions to develop models, to improve effectiveness and efficiency of business through IT, while keeping eye on the “necessary evil” called organisational politics. The book reveals that in practice activities in the business world are influenced by conscious and unconsciousness actions of actors, to control and manage processes, using different tools such information technology. These were shown through various frameworks in the book. Methodologically, the studies demonstrate empiricalism from theoretical and practical perspectives, showing how the researches were underpinned. Theoretically, organisational transformation through IT was underpinned to understand that the joint effect of the actions of individuals’ interacting within institutional structures is fundamental to the business achievements. That both human interaction and institutional structures enable and at the same time constrain the daily actions and thought processes of people, but do not wholly determine the results, which manifest business outcome.

ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

The first chapter, “Towards a Contingency Model for assessing Strategic Information Systems Planning success in Medium Enterprises”, presents a model which can be used in the development of effective long-term use of information systems, including measuring the success of strategic information systems planning in the context of medium enterprises. The model was guided by contingency theory, as an analytical lens.
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Chapter 2 focuses on the interaction between human and nonhuman agents in the development and implementation of information technology strategy. Thus, how the activities of the agents enable and constrain IT strategy in organisations were examined, from both technical and nontechnical perspectives.

In Chapter 3, two sociotechnical theories, Structuration Theory and Actor-Network Theory were complementarily applied as lenses, to examine and understand the impact of organisational politics on the development and implementation of information technology strategy. One of the largest financial institutions in Africa was used as the case study, to investigate how organisational politics determine the success or failure of the IT strategy. The chapter presents that relative instability of the actor-networks, implementation of the IT strategy can be expected to become increasingly difficult, and that human action produces and reproduces structures which defines IT strategy over time and space.

Chapter 4 covers information systems outsourcing from multi-layered and multifaceted perspectives. The study explores strategic management of information systems outsourcing of resources, such as knowledge, on one hand. On another hand, the impact of retention was examined. The chapter presents knowledge requirements in an IS outsourcing arrangement based on a case study which was conducted in a telecommunication company in South Africa.

Chapter 5 examines how a captive offshore center becomes a separate business arm of the parent company, which is wholly owned, to provide IT solutions to its parent company. A Some Chicago based Company (sears Holdings), which considered the approach to be a strategic move, was used as the case in the study. The chapter presents how a Sears Holdings lunched a successful captive offshore IT center and why they received outsourcing best practices award from the industry. The result was evaluated against previous research on offshore best practices and many correlations were found.

Chapter 6 presents the value of reference process models versus current process models. The empirical data was gathered from an Enterprise Conceptual Model of a medium-sized Namibian Freight Forwarder. The case study exemplifies that an Enterprise Conceptual Model has actually helped to translate strategic goals and operational needs into business processes and at the same time helped to ensure that imminent processes fit to the software-given processes.

Chapter 7 examines why organizations continue to invest in technology, and place less emphasis on non-technical factors in the development and implementation of software. In the study, the lens of ANT, moments of translation was systematically employed in the data analysis to unveil the criticality of the interactions among actors. The study revealed how network of people were consciously and unconsciously formed heterogeneously. This will assist manager to trace activities in order to avoid pitfall, and increase competitiveness.

Chapter 8 covers, from Costa Rica perspective, the roles of actors in E-government development. The study introduces a model which guides the development of E-government project. The success or failure of the E-government development was evaluated based on political issues, which were carried out by the actors.

Chapter 9 focuses on the role of EA in organisations, with specific concentration on monitoring and management of business processes, information flow, technology selection and deployment. In the chapter, a detailed discussion is provided on how the Business and IT units’ alignment and organisational structure often have an impact on the deployment of the EA. A framework which could be used to address factors influencing EA deployment in the organisations.
Chapter 10 contributes to the much work that has been done on IT governance practices in small medium enterprise (SME) over the years, through findings from a study that was conducted in South Africa. Based on the empirical evidence from three regions of the country, a conceptual model was developed, as presented in this chapter. The model can be used to evaluate the operational and strategic value of IT to SMEs.

Chapter 11 empirically unveils the criticality and signification of telecommunication infrastructures sharing in rural areas of South African communities. The chapter highlights that the processes and influencing factors of shared telecommunication infrastructures involve socio-technical factors and the interplay between human action and social systems.

Chapter 12 covers the adoption of mobile technology for teaching and learning in academic institution. It presents a framework which highlights the factors which can guide the adoption of the mobile technology for efficiency and effectiveness purposes. In the chapter, it well emphasised that without the appropriate infrastructure facilities, equipment and staff expertise it will be impossible to adopt mobile technology in academic libraries.

Chapter 13 introduces three dimensions to E-competences for Organisational Sustainability Information Systems. They includes obtaining an initial understanding regarding the sufficiency of the sustainability e-competences (Sustainability Development), which is proposed by the European e-Competence Framework 2.0, for addressing sustainability issues in an organisation; identifies the possible need for other e-competences for addressing sustainability issues in an organisation; and provides a theoretical basis for further development and implementation of NeSPA 2013.

In chapter 14, the authors applied diffusion of innovation to examine how competitive Intelligence and Information Systems seem to have a common focus, to meeting the needs of the users in an organisation. It is highlighted that information systems in many ways enables the gathering of information that later becomes competitive intelligence within the environment. Also, competitive intelligence facilitates the creation of information system innovations in the way it is used during the process of improving products and services.

Chapter 15 examines how socio-technical factors manifest themselves, which impacts and sometimes derailed the selection and deployment of competitive intelligence products in the organisation. It presents the factors which are critical but are never understood, or are often taken for granted during the selection and deployment of CI products by some of the stakeholders, but are of great importance.

This book will benefit both academic and industry practitioners. The book will be most useful as a learning curve for managers and other IT specialists in the organisations, in terms of understanding why things happen in the way that they do, consciously or unconsciously in the development, implementation, management of information systems and technologies for organisational objectives. Thus, they are able to have deeper understanding and grip of the IT factors that influences their business processes and activities, from both operational and strategic perspectives. Similarly, the academic will benefits from the book, particular from case study perspective. The book can be used to develop and enhance IT related courses curriculum and content, as academics continue to respond to business needs.
In summary, this book presents the criticality and significance of strategic information technology governance and organizational politics in modern businesses. Thus, the book reveals how information technology is strategically used to govern processes and activities in organisations. In addition, the book contributes to the field of information technology, primarily in the analytical manner it focuses on the factors which manifests themselves into organisational politics, and how the factors are representatively applied in their various contexts of significance. The above points has major impacts on modern businesses, from the perspectives of strategic information technology and governance in organisations.