Implementation of ICT Strategic Plans in Public Organizations of Developing Countries: A Case of Tanzania

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ABSTRACT

This article describes how many public organizations today are embracing ICT; the use of ICT has become widespread in every aspect of the organizations’ endeavors in supporting and evolving public service delivery. The widespread use of ICT has caused a serious reliance on ICT, which in this atmosphere involves business reengineering, change of organization culture which requires good management. ICT strategic plans as a managerial tool will rationalize ICT solutions and coordinate all efforts. It is noticed that public organizations in Tanzania are marginally use ICT; therefore, this article identifies internal control mechanisms and ICT challenges that affect ICT strategic plan implementation. Four public organizations were chosen and 24 respondents were interviewed from these organizations. Analysis of data showed both internal control mechanisms and ICT strategic plan executor capabilities affects ICT strategic plans implementation. Lastly, this article recommends public organizations to put in internal control mechanisms for successfully implementing ICT strategic plans as well as to address executor issues.

KEYWORDS

ICT, ICT Strategic Plans (ISPs), Public Organizations, Tanzania

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INTRODUCTION

Implementation of ICT Strategic Plans (ISPs) is what drives an organization along a conceived path to allow the organization to seize and fully exploit information technology to the opportunities manifesting in the market place. According to Chetty (2010), the ability to implement a strategy is more crucial than the quality of the strategy itself. A well formulated ISP can only put an organization on a competitive map but a solid execution can keep it there. Therefore, the success of ISPs is realized only when ISPs are well implemented. Studies revealed that three out of five of organizations rated weak strategy execution in their specific organizations; therefore, various studies suggested that the real value of a strategy can well be seen through execution (Rojco et al., 2011; Rajasekar, 2014; Baqir et al., 2015; Keter, 2015). In the same regard, researchers agreed that the ability to implement a strategy is more important than even the strategy itself. This is merely because if a strategy is good and is not well executed then its quality is meaningless to the organization (Rajasekar, 2014; Ziembka and Oblak, 2014).

However, national ISP and organizational ISPs need a proper ICT implementation institutional framework, which will govern and reinforce its implementation. This is because when you have an ICT implementation institutional framework, will provide an enabling environment that ensures the implementation of the ISPs, by creating accountability environment. Therefore, implementation frameworks should consider the following three institutional level elements which are (1) coordination, (2) action plans, and (3) monitoring, evaluation and review. Aaltoren and Ikavaloko (2011) stipulate four types of implementation tactics used by managers in making planned changes: intervention, participation, persuasion, and edict. Intervention refers to strategy adjustments made during the implementation stage by introducing new practices and norms. Participation includes formulating strategic goals and nominating a task force that can develop and propose the corresponding implementation options. Persuasion is the tactic which uses involved parties to convince the employees about the desired course of actions. While edict is strategy implementation tactic which focus on how directives are issued and communicated during the course of strategy implementation. Rumelt (2014) considers the implementation tactics as genuine organizational behavior based on the assumption that implementation in general is dependent on the environment, and various strategic and corporate variables. Tanzania ICT policy (2003) institutional, legal and regulatory framework focus matter, however, was to set up an enabling legal framework to promote ICT in the country. Numbers of acts have been enacted to achieve this objective, therefore it is high time for an organization to ensure their ISPs have institutional environmental which will reinforce the implementation of these ISPs. Successful implementation of the ISPs depends on the ICT institutional framework that is in place to develop tools for operationalizing, enforcing, monitoring and evaluation to ensure there is expected results (Tanzania National ICT Policy, 2016).
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