



Evaluating the Utility of Communication Software Tools in the Management of Small and Medium Enterprises in Port Harcourt Metropolis

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the utility of communication software tools in the management of small and medium enterprises in Port Harcourt. Two research questions and hypotheses were used to address the objective of the study. The study adopted correlational survey research design. Data were collected from owners and managers of SMEs. A sample size of 384 respondents was drawn from the population of 613,186 registered SMEs in Port Harcourt, using simple random sampling technique. The data collected were analysed using percentage and frequency analysis, mean and standard deviation, while the Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (ρ) was used to test the formulated hypotheses with the aid of SPSS version 22.0. The finding revealed that utility of communication software tools have a strong significant relationship with the management of SME operation with emphasis on coordination, and information dissemination as an SME functions. Based on this findings, it was concluded that the utility of communication software tools enhance effective management of SMEs operations in PHM. It was therefore recommended that SMEs business owners in PH especially those struggling to relate with their customers should acquire adequate communication software tools as it would enable them disseminate information to their customers and maintain a good relationship with them.

Keywords: communication software tools, small and medium enterprises, management

INTRODUCTION

In our fast-paced and dynamic world, communication has become more important than ever. As technological activities continue to change the world, the methods of interacting with others must be adapted to meet new challenges. Communication is the life blood of the modern world. The way communication systems of any organisation works determines the functionality of that organisation and also determines how effective and efficient ideas and information flow of the organisation are shared among participants. However humans being imperfect cannot communicate perfectly well because the act of effective communication do not come automatically to most people. Majority had failed in their assigned responsibilities to communicate and have also failed to accept that they failed. Ideas not properly communicated can always lead to inability to achieve the desired goals and objectives. Sometimes the inability to share (communicate) an idea properly can be disappointing and even disastrous. One fact that cannot be denied about communication is, that it is a dual-action activity. Like other social science concept, communication has no concise and straight definition, as there are many writers so too there are many definitions from various perspective of the writers each applying his own choice of words. Communication itself as an English word derived from the Latin word "Communis" or "Communicare" which means "common" presupposes the commonality of signs, symbols, and understanding in the act of communication (Weekley, 1967).

Pearson and Nelson (2000) defined communication as a process of understanding and sharing meaning. It can also be defined as a process of passing information from one person to the another. Communication as it were can enhance the overall management of any business if properly applied which SMEs are also part of. Management in itself refers to the act of putting together the

organisational resources to achieve a common goal. Management can also be seen as problem-solving process of effectively achieving organisational objectives through the efficient use of scarce resources in a changing environment (Das, 2015). Management can therefore be defined as an art of planning, organising, commanding, coordinating and controlling both human and material resources of an organisation to achieve the organisational goal through abiding to the set rules and regulations of the organisation.

Hence, this research centres on evaluating the utility of communication software tools such as: Ring Central, Join Me, 8 x 8 Volp, Skype and Email in the management of SMEs in its functional aspects of coordination, customer relations management and information dissemination as SME management function.

Statement of Problem

Despite the potential role of small and medium enterprises in driving accelerated growth and job creation in developing nations, their development is still stymied by a number of constraints and one of these challenging constraints among other is ready access to communication software tools. Small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs) often have difficulties in gaining access to appropriate communication software that can enhance their operation (Agwu and Murray, 2015)

In spite of numerous institutions providing training and advisory services, there is still stubborn communication-gap in small and medium business sector as a whole. This is because in most small business firms, entrepreneurs cannot afford the high cost of communication hardware and software needed for their overall operations and management. However, many other factors cripple the activities of small and medium enterprises and they include, poor education, and training system, government regulations and legislations, and poor power supply which may even make it difficult to acquire these software even when the entrepreneurs can afford them. Kumar (2014) researched on the roles, advantages and disadvantages of ICT in India and identified ICT as a crucial tool that support business operations. He concluded that ICT had brought about changes in the business environment and played a key role in the world.

Kadiri (2012) also carried a study on small and medium enterprises in relation to employment generation in Nigeria and from his findings he stated that SMEs had been fully recognised by government and development experts as the main engine of economic growth and a major factor in promoting private sector development and partnership. However, there is scanty literature on the utility of communication software tools and management of SME operations to the best of my knowledge. This has created a gap in empirical study which needed to be filled. The problem of this study therefore is to determine the relationship between the utility of communication software tools and the management of SME operation in Port Harcourt with emphasis on coordination and information dissemination as SME functions.

Research Questions

The following research question were used to guide the study:

1. To what extent does utility of communication software tools enhance coordination of SME operations?
2. To what extent does utility of communication software tool enhance information dissemination in SMEs?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between UCSTs and COSMED.
2. There is no significant relationship between UCSTs and ID in SMEs.

Concept of Communication Software Tools

Communication is the process of sending and receiving messages through verbal or nonverbal means, including speech or oral communication, writing and graphical representations such as info graphics, maps, charts and signs, signals and behaviour. In other words, communication is said to be the creation and exchange of meaning. Some media critic and theorist has defined communication as a symbolic process whereby reality is produced, maintained, repaired and transformed. All creatures on earth have developed means in which to convey their feelings and thoughts to one another. However, it is the ability of humans to use words and language to transfer specific meanings that sets them apart from other animal.

Software tools are the loose category of systems and application that allows user to exchange files and text, audio and video messages via the cloud or local network from various devices. Communication + software tool therefore refers to application that allows or assist communication flow in the organisation. The most common tools are the e-mail, chat and messaging applications. Aside from handling day-to-day message exchange, communication software are used to conduct remote meetings and discussions in real time. They often feature enterprise grade security over the infrastructure to protect sensitive data in the organisation. Communication is the driving force behind our business success online as retailers, service providers, and knowledge workers all need quality communication software to eliminate the fuss that would arise from limited information access. With programs such as Ring Central, Join Me, 8 x 8 Volp, Skype, Email etc the team or employees can actually work together saving and boosting the productivity of their business.

Concept of SME Management

Management is the process of planning, organising, directing, controlling, staffing and coordinating business activities to achieve organisational goals (Otamiri and Anele, 2015). Dawn (2003) opined that management is a process of planning goals and specializing the purpose of the agency, organising people, financing resources and activities, staffing, training and socializing employees, leading the organisation and the staff, and controlling, monitoring and sanctioning when needed. Managing small and medium enterprises is not an easy task. SMEs are defined in terms of size (such as profitability, turnover, network and number of employees) when applied to one sector can lead to the classification of all enterprises as small whereas when applied to another sector may lead to a different set of results. A common definition of the SME according to International Finance Cooperation (IFC) comprises of registered businesses with less than 250 employees (IFC, 2017). Proper management of SME business sector demands that enterprise owners and managers maintain good relationships with their customers through regular, effective and efficient communication. Without proper management it is difficult for SMEs to survive in the midst of large companies and competitors.

Many of the SMEs that have ceased from operation are victims of poor management. Therefore, it is important for SMEs to be properly managed in order to achieve their goals and survive. Effective management is the key to continuous existence of a business. When a small business is properly managed, it will grow to become a larger entity. Akande and Tinus (2013) noted that most of the large organisations we see today started as a small scale business.

Measures of SMEs Management

Management can be measured using various criteria. However, in this paper, management of SMEs is measured using coordination of SME operations (COSMED); customer relationship management (CRM) and information dissemination (ID).

Coordination of SMEs Operations

Coordination is the unification, integration, synchronization of the efforts of group members so as to provide unity of action in the pursuit of common goals. It is a hidden force which binds all the other functions of management (Mahmood & Hanafi, 2012). Coordination is an orderly arrangement of group efforts to enhance unity in the organisation. Coordination is essential for effective and efficient management in SME operation. Proper coordination of SME operations can lead to the achievement of business goals. Yu and Toa (2009) state that coordination of SME operations can be facilitated through the use of information technology. However, despite the advantages of adopting IT, the level of adoption of these technology is still low among SMEs (Yu & Toa, 2009).

SMEs are relatively slow in information technology adoption and relatively few have fully automated IT and Communication Software tools in their operations. In accessing proper coordination in SME operation, Lew (2017) stated that technological, environmental, organisational and individual aspects of the business influence the way and manner entrepreneurs coordinate their business operations.

Customer Relations Management in SMEs

To survive in the global market, focusing on the customers must be a priority for small and medium enterprises. It is an acceptable logic that it takes money, more money to acquire a new customer than to retain an existing ones to make a new purchase. Therefore, customer retention is of particular important to SMEs because of their limited resources. Another aspect of customer relation management is that knowing the customers and their problems allows you to acquire new customers more easily and facilitates targeted cross-selling. Maintaining a good customer relationship is possible for small business with few employees. But for large businesses to maintain the same impression

toward customers, a common memory (software support) is needed. It is important to note that establishing and managing customer relationship is a strategic endeavour. Having a CRM software installed does not ensure a successful customer relationships. For this to happen effectively and efficiently business processes and enterprise culture have to be redesigned to focus on the customer. CRM software can only be a tool to implement a customer strategy. Customer relations management software can be broadly divided into two categories. The first category manages customer interactions and contains applications for customer service and support, sale force and market automation. These applications allow the company to establish a personalised relationships with the customer(s). The second software category, analyses the behaviour of customers and contains report and data-mining tools. This allows to measure customer satisfaction and retention and enhances the understanding of the customers' problems and preferences.

Information Dissemination

Information dissemination is the distribution of created information followed by information organization, information sharing, application and use (Beheshti, 2004). Otamiri and Wori (2003) described information dissemination as method or system of knowledge transfer throughout or within firm, individual and group. Information dissemination practice could happen flanked by entities, organizations or groups exploiting at all sort or series of communication. Information storage and dissemination are vital tools for innovation and competitive advantage. Newly established SMEs today are facing immense competitive pressure and therefore , information dissemination and knowledge sharing is inevitable for such SMEs to compete in ever changing business environment (Kim & Lui, 2015). Davenport and Prusak, (2000) described information like fluid combination of bounded knowledge, appropriate information, values, and knowledge that offers support intended for estimating and integrating novel information and experience. Gonzalez and Martins, (2017) state that information and knowledge sharing revolves around four stages; acquisition, storage, distribution,, and utility (beneficial usage). Organisational information dissemination process is an asset that contributes significantly in attaining competitive advantage and therefore need clear and effective management. Previous studies have found that information could be utilized at numerous level of firms.

Relationship between Communication Software Tools and Management of Small and Medium Enterprises

The relationship between these two concepts have been established in literature. Communication software is the loose category of systems and applications that allow users to exchange files and text, audio and video messages via the cloud or local network from various devices. According to Ghobakhloo, Sabouri, Hong and Zulkifli (2011), communication software tools enable entrepreneurs and managers to effectively manage their business operations. They further stated that it assist managers to communicate with customers effectively. Evan & Saturday, (2018) posited that communication software tools facilitate effective management of business and ensure business growth. Agwu, (2018) stated that communication software are essential tools for effective management of SMEs operations. Communication software tools facilitate effective management of SMEs operations.

The most common communication software tools are e-mail, chat, and messaging applications. These tools enable entrepreneurs and managers to handle day-to-day messaging and exchange of information. Abudullahi, (2015) asserted that communication software tools enable SMEs managers to conduct remote meetings and in real time. They often feature enterprise grade security over the infrastructure to protect sensitive data. They may also include advanced features, such as file transfer protocol, internet platform and Voip. Communication software tools are the driving force behind business success (Willy, 2020).

Empirical Review

Ladokun, Osunwale & Olaoye (2013) examined the use of information and communication technology in small and medium enterprises. Their study investigated the factors affecting ICT adoption by SMEs in Nigeria. The structured questionnaire was use to collect data from seventy (70) respondents. The method of analysis was correlation coefficient and multiple regressions while the method of estimation was ordinary least squares (OLS) with aid of STATA software. The result

indicated that infrastructure was one of the most factors that inhibit ICT adoption by SMEs in Nigeria with the highest mean followed by government policies, management support, level of security, maintenance cost, skills and training, and investment cost respectively. It was concluded that SMEs in Nigeria have been slow in adopting ICT as they face major constraints such as poor telecommunication infrastructure, limited ICT literacy etc. The study recommended that management should play an important role in guiding and completing projects relating to ICT adoption, by providing resources for the purchases of the infrastructures required for the new ICT.

Suleiman, (2016) carried out an assessment of information and communication technology on the performance of selected small and medium scale enterprises in Ilorin Metropolis, Nigeria. The assessment of information and communication technologies (ICT) and its impact in the economic, social and personal development had become an important object of scientific researches during recent decade. The focus of the study was on "Assessment of ICT on the performance of SMEs in Ilorin, Kwara State". A sample size of 100 SMEs was selected in a cross-sectional survey research design in Ilorin, Kwara State. The returned copies of questionnaire of 74 representing (74.0%) were accordingly analysed using simple percentage and regression analysis. The major result of the hypothesis tested showed that there was a significant relationship between the independent variable (adoption of ICT) on dependent variable (SME performance) ($R = .663$, $R^2 = .440$; $P < .05$). Finding from the analysis of data indicate that SMEs has gained a significant advantage using ICTs particularly in the areas of communication and customers' satisfaction, marketing efficiency, market penetration and promptly responding to market changes, quality improvements for products and services, reducing operational costs and more importantly increasing revenue stream. In conclusion, the study opine that since ICT has been shown to be a driving force to the improved performance of SMEs, its full adoption and usage should be encouraged and aggressively pursued. Based on the findings, the study recommended that government should invest heavily on ICT infrastructure and awareness aspects related to the benefits and adoption of ICT.

Ghobakhloo, et al (2011) empirically examined information technology adoption in small and medium-size enterprises: An appraisal of two decades literature, analyzed reasons that persuade small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to adopt information technology (IT), as well as which factor and how it affects the level of IT sophistication in SMEs entrepreneurial segment. Drawing on the technology-organization-environment view of the firm, the study hypothesizes that technological, organizational and environmental factors can be viewed as the reasons for IT sophistication survey data from a sample of 121 Iranian manufacturing SMEs. Findings showed that external pressure, information processing needs, IT-enabled innovativeness and performance and competitiveness pressure are the key drivers of IT sophistication within SMEs. The findings offer valuable insights to executives and consultants on why SMEs move towards IT adoption. Likewise, the results of the study could serve as a benchmarking measures of reasons persuading SMEs to adopt sophisticated IT.

Jackson and Josphat (2016) carried out an assessment of information communication technology adoption for performance of selected small and medium enterprises in Nairobi County, Kenya. Their study adopted descriptive survey research design. Their targeted population was 4560 SMEs registered by the Ministry of Trade and Industrialization within Nairobi County. The sample size of 367 SMEs was used. The stratified random sampling was used in selecting the sample. The data was collected using structured questionnaire. The administering was on a "drop and pick later" basis. The questionnaires returned represented an approximately 70% of the sample population. The data analysis was conducted using both descriptive and inferential statistics with the aid of SPSS. Moreover, the result was presented using pie charts, bar charts and tables. From the finding ICT infrastructure, ICT user skills, ICT services, and government policies as licenses showed statistical significance in relation to ICT adoption on performance of SMEs operations.

Gap in Empirical Review

From the empirical studies reviewed, it was observed that many studies have been conducted on information and communication technology and management of SMEs but none of these studies to the best of knowledge have evaluated the utility of communication software tools in the management of SMEs in Port Harcourt Metropolis, thus, marking this present study unique in filling the needed gap in literature.

Theoretical Framework

Theory of Reasoned Action (ToRA)

Ajzen and Mudden, (1986) introduced theory of reasoned action. This scientific theory explained the relationship between attitudes and behaviours (A + B) within human actions. It is mainly used to predict how individuals will behave based on their pre-existing attitudes and behavioural intentions. An individual's decision to engage in a particular behaviour pattern is based on the gratifying outcomes the individual expects will occur as a result of performing the said behaviour. According to them, the primary purpose or aim of the theory is to understand an individual's voluntary behaviour by examining the underlying basic motivation to perform an action.

This theory is pertinent to explain that SMEs in Port Harcourt Metropolis will engage in ICT utility since they have previously formed an intention toward adopting information and communication technology. Their intentions are based on the positive outcome that, if they adopt ICT in their operations and management, their manager will perform effectively and efficiently in their competitive business environment.

METHODOLOGY

The research adopted correlational survey research design. The population for the study was 613,186 registered SMEs in PHM and sample size of 384 owners/managers were used for the study. The sampling techniques used in selecting the sample for the study was simple random techniques. The study made use of questionnaire as instrument for data collection. The data collected from the field were analyzed statistically using percentage and frequency table, mean, standard deviation and the Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (rho), the analysis was aided by SPSS version 22.0.

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDING

The data collected from the field were presented and analysis in this section. The analysis covered the demographic, univariate and bivariate analyses.

Demographic Analysis

The demographic analysis focused on the gender and position of respondents.

Table 1: Gender of the Respondents.

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	149	54%
Female	127	46%
Total	276	100%

Source: Fieldwork, 2020.

Table 2: Position of the Respondents

Position	Frequency	Percentage
Owners of SMEs	154	56%
Mangers of SMEs	122	44%
Total	276	100%

Univariate Analysis: The essence of univariate analysis is to evaluate the extent of utilization of communication software tools (CSTs) in the management of small and medium enterprise in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

Research Questions: *To what extent does utility of communication software tools enhance coordination of SMEs operations?*

Table 3: Mean responses and standard deviation of owners and managers of SMEs on the extent of utilization of communication software tools in their business.

S/N	Utility of Communication Software Tools in SMEs Items	Owners		Managers		Mean Set		SD Set	
		\bar{X}_1	SD ₁	\bar{X}_2	SD ₂	\bar{X}_1	\bar{X}_2	SD ₁	SD ₂
1.	Our business has an official website.	2.83	0.97	2.92	1.02	2.88	0.99		
2.	Our business uses 8 x 8 Volp communication.	2.61	0.81	2.71	0.89	2.67	0.85		
3.	Our business uses Skype communication.	2.41	0.59	2.47	0.63	2.44	0.61		
4.	Our business has an official email	2.91	1.06	2.84	0.98	2.88	1.02		
5.	Cloud communication tools are applied in management.	2.73	0.91	2.79	0.96	2.76	0.89		
Grand Mean		2.70	0.87	2.75	0.91	2.73	0.89		

Source: Fieldwork, 2020.

Table 3 shows the mean responses and standard deviation of SMEs owner and managers on the extent of utilization of communication software tools in their business. The table indicates that both owners and managers of SMEs agreed with item 1,2,4 and 5 listed in the table with the mean responses greater than the criterion mean of 2.50. However, both respondents disagreed with item 3 in the table with their mean responses less than the criterion mean of 2.50. Therefore, it is accepted that SMEs in PHM utilize website 8 x 8 communication, email and cloud communication technology to a high extent.

Table 4: Mean responses and standard deviation of owners and managers of SMEs on the extent of coordination of their business operations.

S/N	Coordination of SME operations Items	Owners		Managers		Mean Set		SD Set	
		\bar{X}_1	SD ₁	\bar{X}_2	SD ₂	\bar{X}_1	\bar{X}_2	SD ₁	SD ₂
6.	The coordination of business activities has improved significantly.	2.94	1.07	2.82	0.93	2.88	1.00		
7.	Our business operations are coordinated with the use of communication software tools.	2.82	0.98	2.75	0.84	2.79	0.91		
8.	All our sales activities with the use of email.	2.74	0.81	2.91	1.03	2.83	0.92		
9.	All our purchases and other related activities are coordinated with the use of communication website.	2.86	0.92	2.70	0.84	2.78	0.88		
10.	Our financial transactions of our enterprise are recorded with the use 8 x 8 Volp communication.	2.89	0.95	2.79	0.85	2.84	0.90		
Grand Mean		2.85	0.95	2.71	0.92	2.78	0.94		

Source: Fieldwork, 2020

Table 4 shows the mean responses and standard deviation of SMEs owners and managers on the extent of coordination of their business operations. The table indicate that both owners and managers of SMEs agreed with the items listed in the table since their mean responses are greater than the criterion mean of 2.50. Hence, it was accepted that owners and managers of SMEs are coordinating their business operations to a very high extent.

Table 5: Mean responses and standard deviation of owners and managers of SMEs on the extent of information dissemination in their enterprise. The table shows that owners and managers of SMEs

totally agreed with the items listed in the table since their mean responses are greater than the criterion mean of 2.50. The grand mean responses of 2.81 and 2.87 for owners and managers respectively are greater than criterion mean of 2.50. The grand mean responses of 2.81 and 2.87 for owners and managers respectively are greater than criterion mean of 2.50. Therefore, we then accept that SMEs in Port Harcourt Metropolis are practicing information dissemination to a very high extent.

Bivariate Analysis

The results of correlation analysis carried out on the independent and dependent variables are presented in this section and interpreted as well.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between utility of communication software tools and coordination of SMEs operations.

Table 6: Result of correlation analysis between utility of communication software tools and coordination of SME operations.

		Utility of communication software tools	Coordination of SME operations
Spearman Rank Order (rho)	Utility of communication software tools	Correlation coefficient sig. (2 tailed) N	1.000 .451 ^{xx} .001 276
	Coordination of SME operations	Correlation Coefficient sig. (2 tailed) N	.451 1.000 .001 276

** Correlation was significant at 0.01 levels (1 tailed)

** Correlation was significant at 0.05 levels (1 tailed)

Source: SPSS-generated output

Table 6 presents the result of SPSS correlation analysis performed between utility of communication software tools and coordination of SMEs operations. The result shows that utilization of communication software tools has moderate positive relationship with coordination of SMEs operations (rho = .451^{xx}). The symbol 'xx' signifies that correlation was significant at 0.01 level. As a result of this, we therefore reject the null hypothesis (Ho₁) and accept the alternative which state that there was significant relationship between utility of communication software tools and coordination of SMEs operations.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between utility of communication software tools and information dissemination in SME.

Table 7: Result of correlation analysis between utility of communication software tools and information dissemination in SMEs.

		Utility of communication software tools	Coordination of SME operations
Spearman Rank Order (rho)	Utility of communication software tools	Correlation coefficient sig. (2 tailed) N	1.000 .822 ^{xx} .001 276
	Information dissemination in SMEs	Correlation Coefficient sig. (2 tailed) N	.822 ^{xx} 1.000 .001 276

** Correlation is significant at 0.01 levels (1 tailed)

** Correlation is significant at 0.05 levels (1 tailed)

Source: SPSS-generated output

Table 7 shows the result of SPSS correlation analysis performed between utility of communication software tools and information dissemination in SMEs. The result indicates that utility of communication software tools has strong positive correlation with information dissemination in SMEs ($\rho = .822^{xx}$) and symbol 'xx' signifies that this correlation was significant at 0.01 level. Based on this result, we then reject the null hypothesis (H_0) and accept the alternative hypothesis which states that there was strong significant relationship between utility of communication software tools and information dissemination in SMEs.

Interpretation of Results

The following were the findings that emerged from this study:

- That, there was moderate positive and significant relationship between utility of communication software tools and coordination of SME operation.
- That, there was strong positive and significant relationship between utility of communication software tools and information dissemination in SME functions.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Based on the result of the analysis carried out, it was confirmed that a significant relationship exist between utility of communication software tools and coordination of SMEs operations. This finding was obtained from the result of the SPSS correlation analysis performed on the two variable. The result revealed that utilization of communication software tools enhances effective coordination of SMEs. This findings was supported by Akande & Yinus (2013) as the study reported that communication software tools enhance effective coordination of SMEs operation particularly in areas of communication, coordination and customer satisfaction.

This study also found a strong relationship between utility of communication software tools and information dissemination in SMEs. This finding was deduced from the result of the SPSS correlation analysis carried out on the two variables. This finding was supported by Islam (2019) and Khazanchi as both studies revealed that communication software tools enable SME's operators disseminate information effectively to their esteem customers.

CONCLUSIONS

From the findings, it was evident that utilization of communication software tools facilitates effective management of small and medium enterprises in Port Harcourt Metropolis. The results of correlation analysis carried on the variables confirmed that a positive and significant relationship was found between utility of communication software tools and management of SMEs with emphasis on coordination of SMEs operations and information dissemination as SMEs function. Based on these findings, it was concluded that the beneficial usage of communication software tools significantly enhance effective management of small and medium enterprises in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the finding and conclusion, the following recommendation were made:

1. That small and medium enterprises in Nigeria especially those in Port Harcourt should acquire adequate communication software tools as it would enhance effective management of their business operation.
2. That small and medium business owners in Port Harcourt especially those that are struggling to relate with their customers should acquire adequate communication software tools as it would enable them disseminate information to their customers and maintain a good relationship with them.
3. That small and medium business owners who do not have a sound knowledge on how to apply the communication software tools in the management should enroll for intensive ICT training programmes with reputable institution as this would enable them acquire adequate knowledge.
4. The government both federal and state should encourage small and medium business owners by providing loans and grants to them as it would enable them acquire modern communication software tools to boost their business and therefore create employment opportunities for labour class.

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