
The nexus between Leadership and the Adoption of Information Communication Technology (ICT) by Law Firms in Harare

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Abstract

This study explored the role of leadership in the adoption of information and communication technology in law firms in Harare. The study investigated the role played by the leader in acceptance and hence adoption of ICTs, and to recommend ways for ensuring integration of ICT in day to day running of a law firm. The review of literature explored the concepts of leadership and technology acceptance. The researchers also explored literature on how law firms in the other parts of the world and the region are taking advantage of advancement in ICT to obtain competitive advantage and retain customers. A mixed methods approach was used to collect data for the study. Findings showed that, while there is high awareness of the use of ICT in law firms, there are divided opinions on the contribution of leadership to the adoption of ICTs. It appears leaders are wary of the risks associated with technology advancements. The study recommends a proactive approach when adopting ICTs, with firms taking time to conduct in-depth research that includes looking at reviews from other firms that have used the technology before.

Key Words: *technology adoption, legal services, leadership.*

Introduction

The importance of technology Information Communication Technology (ICT) for business competitiveness cannot be overemphasized (Makiwa and Steyn, 2016) with others stressing the need for speed, accuracy, security and proper management of information in legal practice (Owoeye, 2011). ICT encompasses technical communication methods, including personal computers, telephone systems, internet, and applications like e-commerce and video-conferencing. Olise, Anigbogu, Edoko, and Okoli (2014) further emphasize the importance of ICT in capturing, processing, storing, and accessing information. In today's competitive world, businesses must follow clients' expectations and adapt to their needs, as failure to do so may lead to losing clients to competitors. Leadership, as defined by Northouse (2016) and Yukl (2010), involves an individual influencing others to facilitate activities and relationships, emphasizing the interactive nature of the relationship between leaders and those being led.

Law firms provide a wide range of services to clients, including defending clients in courts, drafting contracts, and providing legal advice on partnership formation and trust documents. The availability of digital resources, such as online libraries, court judgments, and statutes, allows for quick access to information and faster data analysis (Owoeye, 2011). ICTs facilitate efficiency, accountability and reliability in businesses. However, the adoption of ICT depends on owner-manager support and the need for a leader who encourages employees to embrace and adapt to technology. Many employees are sceptical about ICT adoption due to fears of technology taking over their jobs and job redundancy. The International Labor Organization (ILO) has provided examples of how technology has caused job redundancy and job losses (ILO, 2023). To ensure employees feel their jobs are not under threat, decisive and concerned leadership is needed. Empathy is also necessary in handling situations where technology may result in job redundancy or re-assignment. Changes in the workplace can disrupt the equilibrium, and people need a trusted guide to navigate these issues .

The legal sector in Zimbabwe has been slow to adopt ICT due to its traditional approach to business. The legal profession interacts with companies in other sectors such as banks, manufacturing, and education, which have advanced ICT systems. International jurisdictions like Germany and France have been conducting international arbitrations remotely using teleconferencing since 2005 (Giupponi 2022). In Zimbabwe, this trend is only recent as restrictions on movements due to Covid-19 have increased the need for ICT innovations to reduce backlogs of legal cases at courts. Kenyan lawyers have had to quickly adopt new ICT systems due to corporate clients' demands for ease of communication and the massive backlog of court cases in Kenya. This led Kenya Justice System to introduce virtual court sessions and electronic case management systems to clear the adopted backlog of cases (Njuguna, 2021). In Zimbabwe, law firms adopted Zoom, WebEx, and Microsoft Teams online meetings to hold discussions with clients during the Covid-19 lockdown period.

In Zimbabwe the first phase of the Zimbabwe Integrated Electronic Case Management System (IECMS) was launched on May 1, 2022, covering the Constitutional Court, Supreme Court, and Commercial Court. The Labour and Administrative Courts were to follow on February 1, 2023, allowing for online application filing and document submission (The Judiciary Service Commission 2022). However, it is important to note that other countries had started using electronic filing and eJustice several years before Zimbabwe did. For example, in France, the French Administrative Court started using electronic case filing in 2005

(Velicogna, Errera and Derlange 2013). This shows that Zimbabwe is lagging behind in terms of ICT adoption.

The use of ICT in law firms has been slow, with many adopting basic telephones and computers as word-processors due to the conservative nature of the legal profession. Only a few firms have adopted video-conferencing, online meeting tools, applications that automatically convert audio files to text files, comprehensive accounting systems, automated billing, online law libraries, and online filing of documents. This slow adoption is deliberate, as increased efficiency will lead to less billable hours for lawyers.

The slow uptake of ICT usage leads to frustration among law firm employees who may have to work long hours manually. Some clients have been inconvenienced due to delays in getting their cases heard in the courts. To address some challenges, law firms have adopted email communication, which is less costly, and telephone calls for urgent issues. Many law firms have an online presence through websites, but these are more marketing tools than providing in-depth information. Many ICT tools are not being used to full capacity, and users often do not receive proper training on how to use gadgets or proper usage. This study aims to explore the link between leadership and ICT adoption in law firms to explain the slow progress of ICT systems that have worked for law firms in other countries. Leaders are supposed to inspire their followers to work towards achieving set goals. More specifically, the study aims to determine the awareness of ICT options available to law firms in Harare, examine factors affecting ICT adoption by law firms, and ascertain the role of the senior partner (leader) in acceptance and adoption of ICTs. The research assess ICT options available for law firms to improve efficiency and record-keeping, as well as actual adoption of the available technologies based on some Harare law firms. The study's significance lies in its focus on the role of leadership in the adoption of ICTs by law firms, as well as the awareness of ICT tools that may lead to improved efficiency and early, proactive adoption of ICTs for business competitiveness and continuity.

Literature Review

Leadership is a complex process that involves mutual respect and understanding between leaders and their followers. Northouse (2016) defines it as a highly sought-after and valued commodity, while Kouzes and Posner (2017) argue it is a relationship between those who lead and those who choose to follow. The main concepts of leadership are influence, power, and motivation. Leaders are responsible for running organizations and are expected to

influence their followers to handle greater responsibilities and uncertainties while remaining within the organization's goals and vision. The common ground between these two positions is mutual respect and understanding.

Davis (1989) model explains the use and acceptance of information systems and technology by individual users, based on their opinion and ease of use. The adoption of ICTs in law firms involves the end user must accept the acquired tools and learn to use them for tasks assigned to them. However, individual opinions may not be as significant as the decision to adopt ICTs is made at the organization's level. Leaders may seek the opinions of their followers before making decisions to acquire ICTs or research their usefulness to a law firm. Overall, the adoption of ICTs in law firms depends on the organization's level of decision-making.

Theoretical Framework

Several leadership theories have been put forward. Leadership is a complex concept that encompasses three key attributes: the leader's characteristics, the characteristics of the followers, and the characteristics of the situation or circumstances. Trait theories, based on innate traits such as intelligence, alertness, insight, responsibility, initiative, persistence, self-confidence, and sociability, suggest that a leader's traits are innate but not necessarily determining their leadership abilities. However, studies have shown that leadership also depends on the circumstances, and traits can be inborn or learned.

Behavioral theories, on the other hand, focus on the leader's behavior, which evolved from trait theories and assert that an individual can learn characteristics to enable them to lead people. Research focuses on task and relationship behaviors, with the behavioral approach evaluating leadership as a form of behavior that combines task and relationship aspects (Northouse, 2016). The situational theory of leadership focuses on how a leader behaves in a given situation, suggesting that a leader may need to adapt to prevailing circumstances to influence followers. This type of leadership is practical and useful in leadership trainings, as it considers the unique characteristics of each individual and their ability to influence others.

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is a theory that explains how people and companies view and accept technology use in their jobs (Ajibade, 2018). It was developed by Davis (1989) and assumes that when a technology is perceived as user-friendly and useful, users are more likely to use it. However, the TAM's application in companies may not be suitable due to the fact that employees perform tasks as directed by their superiors or job descriptions, which follow company policies. Personal factors that shape human behavior and

the inability to measure and re-measure consistently due to personal factors are not considered. In the workplace, company policies restrain attitudes and perceptions, leading employees to make adjustments to excel in their jobs. Personal experience with in-house ICT systems allows individuals to modify personal goals to align with organizational goals (Ajibade, 2018)..

Empirical Literature Review

According to Northouse (2016), leaders contribute significantly to the organizational culture through the accomplishment of mutual goals, which in turn contributes to the bottom line. Yukl (2010) posits that an ethical leader leads by example, creating an environment that aids the development and dissemination of a code of ethical conduct and allows for free discussions on ethics and integrity. Leadership styles tend to be related to the internal culture, both organizational and community. Zimbabwe, being in sub-Saharan Africa, has a high score on humane orientation and in-group collectivism, which means that people are generally expected to be considerate and sensitive to the needs of others. In Zimbabwe, the spirit of Ubuntu guides many workplace relationships. Each person has a SHAPE or purpose for being alive, which includes special or spiritual gifts, heart, abilities, personality, and experiences. A few leadership types will be discussed below.

Transformational leadership involves considering emotions, values, ethics, standards, and long-term goals while constantly evaluating what drives followers (Northouse, 2016). It creates personal and professional commitments towards self-esteem and self-actualization, leading to noticeable changes in followers' personal goals. However, transformational leadership is rare in law firms due to profitability being rated higher than growth (Rhodes, 2013). Autocratic leadership is more common, leading to lack of trust and high turnover. In Zimbabwe law firms, managing partnership is usually on a rotational basis, leading to tense work relations and a lack of respect for others. Lack of succession planning and leadership development programs can lead to a leadership vacuum, potentially leading to firm splitting or collapse. Transformational leaders reduce stress in followers by showing idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass and Riggio 2006). Pseudo-transformational leaders are often seen as the opposite, using followers for personal gain and not truly caring for their followers (Waziri, Ali & Aliagha 2014).

Adaptive leadership is a leadership style that emphasizes adaptability to new circumstances and challenges (Northouse, 2016). Leaders must guide followers through uncertain times, providing support and understanding the need for change. Adaptive challenges

are crucial, as followers often resist them due to fear of the unknown. To make progress, leaders must observe their people's struggles and organizational goals, understand their requirements, advise the best way, and move forward. Adaptive leaders take time to understand their followers' concerns and provide necessary support or push to make progress (Northouse, 2016).

A leader's effectiveness can be measured by their influence on people, the organization, and the achievement of organizational goals. Other factors include changes in follower behavior and leader respect (Waziri et al., 2015) For instance, a new leader who leads by example may change an employee's lateness habit, demonstrating the power of leadership. This approach helps leaders achieve their organizational goals effectively. Mpofu and Watkins-Mathys (2011) argue that the decision to adopt new ICT systems is directly influenced by leadership within an organization, and lack of leadership support hinders the adoption of ICTs.

A leader's primary goal is to achieve organizational goals, and they exert influence over their followers to achieve a common outcome. This influence can occur through words and actions, exemplary behaviour, and a vision that inspires the target (Northouse, 2016). An agent's influence on organizational culture is higher in situations involving significant change, such as merging two law firms. Yukl (2010) proposes four levels of conceptualization to describe leaders and their influence on followers. These levels include commitment, compliance, resistance, and power. Power refers to the extent to which a leader can exert influence over things, events, attitudes and behavior. Northouse (2016) states that power is part of the influence process and is essential for leader to effectively manage their followers and achieve organizational goals. Motivation is a vital aspect of leadership, driving individuals to work towards set goals. Leaders must coach their teams and provide timely feedback to keep followers motivated. An example of motivation is the SpeechExec application, which faced skepticism but was adopted by the managing partner, leading to faster turnaround and less typing for the secretary (Kouzes and Posner 2016).

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) incorporating digital technology that includes personal computers, printers, operating systems, accounting packages, the internet, file and document management systems, telephone, and network devices has also been used to solve challenges in the justice system in France, such as e-Justice and electronic signatures, making access to justice easier and faster (Velicogna, Errera and Delange, 2013). Effective use of ICTs in law firms simplifies the task of keeping in touch with clients and processing paperwork. Today's tech-savvy customers often look for reviews or references

online before engaging with a company. Law firms have adopted an online presence through websites and social media chat services, allowing ordinary citizens to ascertain the legal status of their concerns and decide whether to consult a lawyer. Individual lawyers also write articles in newspapers, online blogs, and maintain an online presence on sites like LinkedIn to attract and retain clients. Speech-to-text applications and optical character recognition (OCR) technologies save time in law firms by automatically converting speech to text. Online meetings have become increasingly popular due to Covid-19 restrictions, allowing law firms to meet in person via Zoom, Teams, and WebEx. Proper accounting is crucial for law firms, and online libraries like LexisNexis, Optima, and South African Law reports make research easier and provide in-depth knowledge (Chomiak-Orsa et al., 2019).

Electronic sources of legal information, such as knowledge bases and blogs, are essential for clients to understand legal standing and for the functioning of law firms. Zimbabwe law firms use Optima, South African Law Reports, and online judgments from high courts and the Supreme courts. Electronic discovery or eDiscovery is an ICT tool used to identify, collect, and produce electronically stored information for use in law suits or investigations (Kerikmae, Hoffmann and Chochia, 2018). An example of eDiscovery is seen in a high-profile divorce case before the Harare High Court, where lawyers for one litigant presented evidence that the man was legally married to another woman at the time of the civil marriage.

Integrated IT solutions are essential tools used in law firms to ensure smooth operations. These include accounting packages, word-processing tools, and speech-to-text applications. Case management software helps lawyers manage client and case information, simplifying communication and making all relevant information accessible. The Zimbabwe IECMS system, supplied by eSynergy, is used for the online court system used by the Administrative Court and the Labour Court (Judicial Service Commission 2023). Lexware, a package that includes case management, client relationship management (CRM), knowledge management, and billing, is also used by local law firms.

Law firms are renowned for their expertise in creating and transferring legal information assets, which requires proper document management to prevent wrong filing, overwriting, or corruption. Document management systems are part of knowledge management systems used by firms and institutions. Some law firms have created a repository of precedents, an example of knowledge management. However, competition is forcing law firms to adapt

and move away from traditional methods. A database of precedents safeguards against loss of valuable information gained from years of experience in the legal field (Evans and Price, 2017). Comprehensive and timely backups of all information are crucial for law firms, as information assets are vital for court justice delivery and business continuity. ICT backup tools are essential for mitigating disasters and fulfilling statutory requirements for keeping financial information and client files for at least five years (Ntengenyane and Khayundi, 2021).

IT solutions for image creation fall into two categories: creating an image for the company or branding, and creating images of documents for archiving and easier retrieval. Branding for a law firm can be achieved by engaging a consultant to create a company website, which is accessible globally and available 24/7 (Du Plessis, 2011). Credibility of the law firm is enhanced by having links to relevant authorities in the justice system, such as the Law Society of Zimbabwe or the Zimbabwe Judicial Services Commission. Law firms can be ranked on internal online websites like Chambers Global and HG.org, making them visible internationally. This allows clients and international law firms to check rankings before making a decision. Additionally, law firms can convert physical documents into electronic format using scanners and OCR software, allowing them to create electronic copies of historical files. This process falls under document or knowledge management.

The availability of legal information, court judgments, and precedents over the internet is forcing law firms to prioritize information management and ensure the quality of their services (Evans and Price, 2017). Lawyers in law often set targets such as revenue, closed cases, and new business volume, leading to a focus on workload over knowledge sharing. Some lawyers view sharing knowledge as risking losing their competitive edge. Additionally, the challenge of making copies of documents for relocation between law firms is another issue (Evans and Price, 2017).

Law firms in Zimbabwe are facing pressure to adopt new ICT technologies due to compliance issues and outdated equipment. The adoption of IECMS by the Zimbabwe courts has forced firms to adopt systems compliant with the Judicial Service Commission's IECMS system (Gono, Harindaranath & Ozcan, 2019). In Zimbabwe, financial systems must comply with the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority's system. An international law firm used an Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) system for invoice processing and payment. Old equipment may not connect to new technologies, such as replacing an old printer with a USB-only one, requiring a new printer.

Law firms in Zimbabwe are increasingly relying on cloud technology for document storage, which can lead to system failures and loss of critical information. This has raised cybersecurity concerns, as hacking and other cyberattacks can lead to sensitive information loss. To protect sensitive documents, encryption and authentication are necessary. Law firms should choose a provider with a solid professional track record and specify safeguards for their data in the cloud service contract (Kolb, 2018). Cloud services can be used for applications, file storage, business continuity, email and collaboration, and document or knowledge management (Sohal and Gupta, 2020). It is crucial for law firms to specify safeguards and steps to be taken in case of a data breach.

Conceptual Framework

This study explores the roles of leadership in the adoption of information and communication technology (ICT). The framework is based on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) adapted by Ajibade (2018). The study's conceptual framework is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

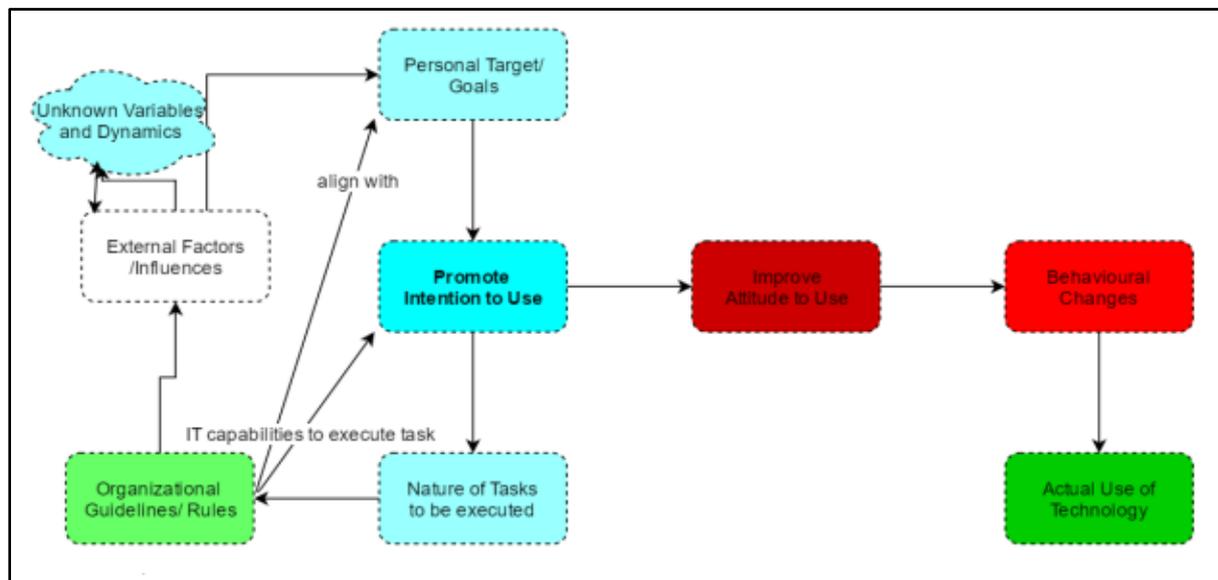


Figure 1; Modified Technology Acceptable Model (Source: Ajibade 2018)

The diagram illustrates how organizational rules and guidelines impact an individual's personal goals, which in turn, influence the nature of tasks to be executed using ICT technology. This interaction leads to an improved attitude towards ICT use, behavioral changes, and actual use of technology.

Methodology for The Study

The researchers chose a pragmatic approach to the study with the mixed methods research design being adopted integrating quantitative and qualitative methods. The researchers used simple random sampling to come up with a sample of 24 support staff and 6 senior leaders from 6 different law firms, making a total sample of 30 from a population of 2000 members operating in private practice, commerce, or civil service. for the study according to the Law Society of Zimbabwe.

This study utilized structured interviews and questionnaires to gather extensive data on the adoption of ICT in law firms. The questionnaires were based on the Likert scale, allowing participants to choose one of five responses. A semi-structured interview guide was used to gather more detailed data from managing or senior partners of the selected law firms. Triangulation was used to collect data from leaders and followers to understand their views on ICT adoption in law firms. The data was organized and analysed in SPSS, considering ethical considerations such as confidentiality and maintaining separate responses from different individuals to avoid conflict. Informed consent was obtained from participants. The study's findings could be applied to other law firms due to their similarity in nature.

Research Findings

Research participants were drawn from both males and females. For the purpose of the study, the only distinction made was on the position held at the law firm. Participants fell into two broad groups. The main informant group was made up of leaders (people who hold influence in making decisions regarding ICT adoption or rejection at the law firm) and followers (support staff comprising secretaries, accounts personnel and clerks). The actual ages of the participants was not a factor in choice of participants. People in the leadership group are holders of at least a Bachelor's degree in Law. The educational level of the support staff was not taken into consideration. Out of the six law firms targeted for key informant interviews, all of them responded enhancing the validity of the results. For the support staff questionnaire, the target sample was 30 people, with an 80% response rate. Likert scale data was collected from the questionnaires with means being calculated to measure the degree of agreement with the statements given. The key findings are presented below.

Table 1: Responses from Support Staff Questionnaire

Question	N	Mean	Std Deviation
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ICT Enables you to work efficiently	24	4.50	0.722
There are more technologies that the firm could use but is not	24	4.08	0.584
The technologies that the firm has not adopted would make me work more efficiently	24	3.54	1.103
ICTs are an integral part of business	24	4.58	0.54
Overall mean		4.12	

The table above shows the responses from both management and support staff demonstrate a high awareness of ICT options that are available to law firms in Harare. The mean for the statement about ICTs being an integral part of business is quite high at 4.58. This, in conjunction with the response to the first statement on whether ICT makes the participant work efficiently (with a mean of 4.50), shows a great appreciation of the role ICT plays in performing of day-to-day tasks. They revealed a number of applications for instance, Optima which is an application that is installed on the computer and allows a lawyer to look Zimbabwe case law and law reports. SpeechExec is another software that enables dictation of instructions or documents into a Dictaphone. The audio may be automatically converted into text, thereby cutting down on time spent typing, when the Dictaphone is connected to a computer that has the software installed. Audio files can be shared via email, WhatsApp or other means of file sharing. Fiscal software refers to the software and hardware used by the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority to record tax that is due from invoices paid by a company's clients.

On factors that affect the adoption of ICTs by law firms in Harare, respondents demonstrated great awareness of factors that affect the adoption of ICT in their law firms. Efficiency was mentioned by all respondents showing that law firms take their work seriously. This may be due to awareness that sloppy work may lead to longer turnaround times on mandates. This is likely to result in loss of clients who may feel frustrated because of the long waiting times. One firm demonstrated a forward-looking position as implied by the firm having a designated IT resource to constantly research on available and emerging technologies. One respondent stated that "regulations pushed firms to adopt the use of business software" (Key

Informant R2). The compulsory requirement by the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (ZIMRA) for registered companies to make use of fiscal devices forced companies to implement accounting systems that are compatible with the system used by ZIMRA. Key Informant R4's response that ICT adoption is due to the need to keep with international standards is confirmed by du Plessis (2011), who states that "many clients of law firms increasingly demand sophisticated online legal service delivery platforms" (du Plessis 2011, p. 2).

Table 2: Responses from Support Staff Questionnaire

Statement	N	Mean	Std Deviation
ICT adoption is hindered by lack of funds	24	3.29	.999
ICT adoption is hindered by resistance to change	24	3.50	1.474
ICTs lead to changes in the firm	24	4.63	.495
Employees are required to test new ICT technologies before adoption	24	3,58	1.018
Overall mean		3.75	

The table above shows the mean of responses to ICT adoption being hindered by lack of funds is 3.29 with a standard deviation of 0.999. This implies that support staff members generally do not agree that ICT adoption in law firms is hindered by lack of funds. A similar result is shown on responses to whether ICT is hindered by resistance to change where the mean is 3.50 and standard deviation is 1.474. However, there is an almost unanimous agreement on ICT leading to changes in the firm with a mean of 4.63 and standard deviation 0.495.

To ascertain the role played by senior or managing partner (the leader) in acceptance and hence adoption of ICTs, key informants indicated that the person responsible for the day to day running of the law firm has the final say in whether an ICT tool is adopted or the proposal

for acquisition is rejected or set aside for future consideration. The leader usually arrives at the decision to adopt ICT tools in consultation and agreement with other partners. One response pointed to a leader who prefers to avoid adopting new technologies in order to avoid risks that may come with implementation (Key informant R3). This response may be explained by Kolb's (2018) claim that a large number (80%) of the big law firms in the United States have been hacked since 2011. Such scary statistics may make leaders of law firms hesitant to adopt ICTs.

Table 3: Responses from Support Staff Questionnaire

Statement	N	Mean	Std Deviation
ICT adoption is dependent on leadership direction	24	3.62	1.377
ICT adoption is a product of the leader's vision	24	3.50	1.251
Leaders are willing to lead in adoption on ICTs	24	3.13	1.296
Leaders are more interested in the bottom line	24	3.38	1.135
Leaders take time to explain new technologies to employees	24	2.50	.933
Overall mean		3.26	

The table above shows the statement about ICT adoption being dependent on leadership direction had a mean of 3.62, while the statement on adoption of ICTs being a product of the leader's vision had a mean of 3.50 and a standard deviation of 1.251. This shows that staff are generally not sure if adoption of ICTs is a result of leadership direction or vision. The same could be said about the statement on leaders being more interested in profits or the bottom line. This statement has a mean of 3.38 and a standard deviation of 1.135. With a mean of 2.50 and standard deviation of 0.933, responses from support staff members indicate that leaders do not normally take time to explain new technologies to employees. This may be due to the hesitation mentioned earlier on because the leader may not be confident of the technology adopted on whether it will expose the law firm to security breaches or not.

While the leaders responded that the leader has the final say on ICT adoption, the followers were not sure. This could be due to the fact that the person in charge of day to day running authorizes capital expenditure (Capex), while the followers see ICT adoption merely as a result of compliance issues or a matter of necessity. Responses from key informants would support the hypothesis that leadership has a significant role in ICT adoption by Harare law

firms, while responses from the questionnaire tend to be “not sure” judging from the overall mean of 3.26. The hypothesis that leadership has no significant contribution to the adoption of ICTs in law firms in Harare must therefore be rejected. It can, therefore, be concluded that leadership has a significant contribution to the adoption of ICTs in law firms in Harare.

On key recommendations, the respondents felt that the adoption of new ICTs in law firms is a significant investment that must yield positive results. To assess the return on investment, efficiency of employees and time taken by lawyers to complete mandates are crucial factors. One firm reported low utilization of existing ICT tools, such as Microsoft Word for email and Excel for spreadsheets. This resistance could be due to lack of knowledge, which can be corrected through training (Ruvunga and Zhou 2014). Senior lawyers in the law firm may prefer traditional methods, possibly due to the conservative nature of the legal profession (Njuguma 2021). Resistance to change is another issue that law firms should address. Leaders should focus on the end user when making decisions about adopting and implementing ICTs. Training, highlighting positive benefits, and having discussions with their followers demonstrate a caring attitude towards influencing followers to embrace changes and navigate uncertainties.

One firm did not have a budget for ICTs, leading to chaotic ICT functions. However, the firm has a wealth of legal expertise, with many senior lawyers with years of experience in the industry. If the leader is not conversant with ICT, they may perceive it as an accessory or unnecessary expense rather than an integral part of the business. Key informants R1 and R2 shared their experiences with the use of newer IT technologies, such as Microsoft Teams for client meetings and cloud backups. They believe these technologies simplify and speed up processes, leaving more free time for the office. This leadership's position demonstrates adapting to the times and adopting suitable technologies for the smooth flow of business.

Table 4: Responses from Support Staff Questionnaire

Statement	N	Mean	Std Deviation
People resist ICT adoption because they will be forced to learn new skills	24	3.46	1.733
Leadership support is necessary to navigate changes brought about by ICT adoption	24	4.50	.834
A budget for ICT is required annually	24	4.58	.504

ICT adoption is a matter of necessity	24	3.96	1.233
New ICTs are adopted regardless of employee input	24	4.04	.690
Employee innovation is encouraged	24	3.50	.978
Comprehensive training is carried out when new ICTs are adopted	24	3.46	1.103
Overall mean		3.93	

From the results table above, it can be seen that the statements “Leadership support is necessary to navigate changes brought about by ICT adoption”, and “A budget for ICT is required annually” have high means (4.50 and 4.58 respectively). This may be interpreted to mean that participants mostly agreed with these statements. A mean score of 3.46 on the statements stating “comprehensive training is carried out when new ICT are adopted” and “people resist ICT adoption because they will be forced to learn new skills”, indicates that many participants either disagreed or were not sure. This is supported by Bhalerao and Patil (2021) who posit that where the person in the lead is not conversant with ICT, that person tends to think that ICT is meant for conglomerates, is just an accessory for business or unnecessary expense, and not an integral part to business. For any new ICT system to be useful to a law firm, training is a necessity. Training demystifies technology and that leads to changed perceptions.

Some respondents to the questionnaire for support staff made additional comments that pointed out that senior members in their law firm partnership did not trust new technologies. This fact is confirmed by literature where senior individuals in higher positions are perceived to be less familiar with technology and prefer working the way they have always worked instead of moving with the times (Abbasi et al. 2015). However, mistrust in technology is also justified as systems are known to malfunction or fail outright. Another participant commented on the fact that, at their law firm, important documents are being backed up onto portable flash disks. Firms like this need to start formulating and implement a business continuity plan before disaster strikes.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study aimed to determine the role of leadership in the adoption of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in law firms in Harare. The research focused on the

availability of ICT options, factors affecting ICT adoption, the role of leadership in ICT adoption, and ways to integrate ICTs into the day-to-day operations of a law firm. Using a mixed methods approach data was obtained from a sample of 24 support staff through a questionnaire and six key informant interviews involving senior managers/leaders in the legal fraternity. The data was analyzed in SPSS.

Results indicate that both the legal practitioners and their support staff are highly aware of ICT options available to them and they appreciate the desirable effects of using these ICTs on day-to-day work. Findings from the study have shown that law firms where senior partners make most decisions are mostly running using the traditional way. Due to limited experience with technology, these senior lawyers tend to regard new ICT offerings with suspicion. Failure to accept and use modern ICT may negatively impact law firm growth and may have pushed away tech-savvy clients.

Sometimes focusing on the bottom line is counter-productive because lagging behind in technology may actually lead to increased turnaround times resulting delays in fulfilling clients' mandates. This in turn may frustrate customers who will protest by giving their business to someone else. Loss of customers translates to loss of revenue which results in shrinkage of that bottom-line. ICT adoption must not be taken blindly.

Compliance issues also come into play. For example, when installing a backup power generator in an office park, there is need to assess sound and emission levels acceptable to other tenants as well as abide by terms and conditions of the lease agreement.

However, some are not fully utilizing resources that they have. From the results of this study, the following recommendations can be pursued;

- (i) There is need for training for users so that they can make use of the available resources. Leaders need leadership training. The potential benefits of some ICTs already adopted are not being fully exploited.
- (ii) The researchers recommends semi-retirement for senior legal practitioners where the seniors will play a consultancy or advisory role while allowing energetic younger tech-savvy partners to take leadership roles to guide law firms into the future, keep abreast with technology and be globally competitive. As suggested by Rhode (2013), most senior lawyers still want to work although income is not the main driver. These seniors may be included in the firm to handle pro bono work.

- (iii) A deliberate pro-active approach to ICT adoption is beneficial to law firms. This allows for proper planning of systems to purchase and when to purchase.
- (iv) Law firms need to set up of a disaster recovery plan. This approach will come in handy and will assist with business continuity should some aspect of ICT fail.

Future research may focus on exploring leadership training options for lawyers to fully embrace the ICT revolution and ensure optimal usage of the available ICTs.

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