



Unlocking Global Opportunities: Exploring the Impact of Digital Technologies on International Business

Happy Emmanuel Chisati¹, Dr. Kudzai Simbanegavi²

¹Masters Of Business Administration majoring In Finance And International Business, Dmi-St. Eugene University

²Lecture Ii, Dmi-St. Eugene University

ABSTRACT

Most various economic activities take place across national borders, it involves the exchange of goods and services between organization and businesses from different countries, these activities fall under what is called international business. Both developed and under developed nations are striving fast by involving themselves in international business through globalization, exporting/importing, foreign direct investments, Multinational corporations and international trade. The benefits of international business outweighs the challenges which are faced by organizations hence it is important to understand why it is important for various nations to be in the international business industry.

Digital technologies have changed the way how business can operate by creation of new opportunities and challenges, various types of digital technologies which include Artificial intelligence, Internet of Things, Block chain, cloud computing and big data analytics plays a major role in improving international business.

The study delves deeper into trying to investigate the role of digital technologies in facilitating international business; by looking at digital technologies applications which are Consumer-Centric Technologies and Business Driven Applications, risks or challenges of digital adoption and the benefits associated with such adoptions.

This study also depicts how digital technologies have greatly transformed the way business compete, operate and interact with customers globally and recommendable for a businesses to have guidelines in order to adopt and integrate digital technologies effectively. For future research it will further explore the emerging digital technologies and their applications in business, it will focus on all digital technologies that are sustainable and influential to business.

Keywords: International business, Digital technologies, Digital adoption, Sustainability.

1: Introduction

1.1. Background

The evolving of technologies in the world from the past three decades is a wider cumbersome. The transition from room-sized computers which were used in the mid 1900's to portable devices that are being used to date have a greater impact on business nowadays due to many intelligible systems and innovations all over the world. Computers in this 21st century can be regarded as portable and most used digital device always access information over the internet. The computer is just an example of one of the devices that have evolved over the past century. The nature of the current environment has impacted business in various ways for example nowadays people practice business online, and this has significantly improve international global trade.

They are various digital technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Block chain, and the Internet of Things (IoT). These digital technologies have a greater impact on international business for example AI which is the science and engineering of making intelligent machines, especially intelligent computer program using large amounts of data and human knowledge to power computer systems with the ability to categorize data, make predictions, identify errors, have conversations, and analyze information in similar ways to humans. These systems rely on business and use technologies like natural language processing (NLP), machine learning (ML), and deep learning to facilitate business operation. By utilizing AI into the business phenomena and through integration requires an individual to understand the following fundamental components: as new technologies enter the market, an existing one improve, the possible application of artificial intelligence in business grow more numerous. AI is beneficial since by integrating new technologies and human workforce will improve operating efficiency and drive business value. Block chain is another example of digital technology it is a system in which a record of transaction, especially those made in a crypto currency, it is maintained across computers that are linked in a peer-to-peer network; in business block chain is very valuable for entities that transact with each other for example with a distributed ledger technology.

1.2 Problem Statement

Despite the transformative potential of digital technologies, businesses face challenges such as: limited understanding of digital tools and platforms, inadequate digital infrastructure, security and data privacy concerns. Cultural and language barriers and navigating complex global regulatory environments. The study will take a look at how digital technologies may overcome such challenges faced by various organizations

1.3 Objectives of the Study

General Objective: Investigate the role of digital technologies in facilitating international business.

Specific Objectives:

Identify commonly used digital technologies.

Ascertain rationales for their use in corporate operations.

Assess risks associated with their implementation.

Explain their application across various business activities.

1.4 Research Questions

How do digital technologies facilitate international business operations and strategies?

What are the key digital technologies driving international business growth?

What challenges do organizations face when adopting digital technologies for global expansion?

How can organizations effectively integrate digital technologies into their operations?

1.5 Scope of the Study

The scope of international business is vast. It encompasses various activities, from exporting and importing goods and services to licensing and franchising products and brands. International business also includes moving capital, technology, and people across borders.

Globalization is making it easier for businesses to expand into new markets. This has led to a growing demand for international business expertise. Here are some key aspects that define the scope of international business

1.6 Significance of the Study

Focuses on investigating the positive and negative impacts of digital technologies, especially AI, on international businesses, with a specific emphasis on Malawi and global contexts.

1.7 Definition of Terms

- **International Business:** Commercial activities promoting the transfer of goods, services, and values across borders.
- **Digital Technology:** Digital devices, systems, and IT resources for managing data.

2: Literature Review

2.1 Overview of Digital Technologies in Business

Digital technology refers to digital devices, systems, and resources that help create, store, and manage data service. An important aspect of digital technology is **information technology (IT)** which refers to the use of computers to process data and information. Digital devices are the physical tools that can be used in processing, storing, sending, receiving and displaying of digital data; they are normally electronic tools that uses binary codes i.e. one's and zero's. Some of the examples of these devices may include personal computers, smartphones, smart watches, smart speakers, digital clocks and televisions.

The technologies are very significant since they increase operation efficiency, enhance customer engagement and enable market expansion.

2.2 Applications of AI and Digital Technologies

They are two major applications of these technologies which are consumer-centric technologies and business driven applications.

i. Consumer-Centric Technologies

This may include technologies like smart products, smart assistants and helpdesk chat-bots these may help consumers in international business by engaging the consumers and suppliers thereby increasing market expansion and efficiencies

ii. Business Driven Applications

These include facial recognition and personalized recommendations

2.3 Challenges and Risks versus opportunities in Digital Technology Adoption

Various challenges and risks are associated with digital technologies adoption however they are various benefits that outshines these challenges.

i. Cultural resistance vs. increased efficiency

Employees and management may hesitate to adopt a new technology due to fear of change discomfort with the unfamiliar or concerns about job security by automating tasks and streamlining processes it can significantly improve productivity and reduce manual work.

ii. Lack of skills and training vs. enhanced customer experience

Insufficient training on new digital tools can lead to poor adoption rates and frustration among user's on the other hand digital tools can provide personalized customer service engagement and facilitate seamless interactions.

iii. Data security concern vs. Cyber security

Integration of new technologies can introduce vulnerabilities, increasing the risks of cyber-attacks and data breaches. By using AI in cyber security it can enhance threat detection by analyzing vast amounts of data to identify anomalous patterns and behaviors.

2.4 Sustainability in digital technology,

By practicing the designing of technologies in a way that minimizes their environmental impact throughout their life cycle i.e. manufacturing, usage, and disposal while considering the social and economic factors to promote a sustainable future. Some of the examples of how digital technology can contribute to sustainability include:

- i. Smart grids which is the use of digital system to optimize energy distribution and consumption in power grids.
- ii. Smart cities which is implementing digital technologies to manage urban infrastructure, transportation and waste management.
- iii. Remote work and virtual meetings as one way of reducing carbon emission by minimizing travel through video conferencing.
- iv. Environmental monitoring through utilizing satellite imagery and sensor networks to track environmental changes.
- v. Sustainable supply chains through implementation of digital tools to track and optimize resource usage through the supply chain.

To sum up, digital technology is very essential in international business through various sectors which are economic, social, and environmental, the benefits and opportunities outshines most of the challenges and risks that are encountered in digital technologies.

The digital technologies have various sustainability by its design to make them environmental friendly throughout their life span.

Lastly statistically they are more than 25 new digital technological trends as of 2025

3: Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

Research design is a conceptual framework within which research is conducted. A descriptive research design was used in this study primarily it is used to gain an understanding of group or phenomenon being studied.

By investigating the role of digital technologies in facilitating international business descriptive research best suits since data was collected through survey, interview and observation.

A qualitative and quantitative approach was also used in studying the impact of digital technologies on international businesses.

One-on-one focus group discussions with open-ended question to gather details information on awareness of

-How digital technologies facilitate international business operations and strategies.

-What are the key digital technologies driving international business growth.

Observation by observing behaviours and interaction in a natural setting to understand context and dynamics like

-What challenges do organizations face when adopting digital technologies for global expansion?

Case studies- in-depth analysis of a specific individual, group or event to explore unique situations through

-How can organizations effectively integrate digital technologies into their operations?

3.2 Data Sources

Primary data: Primary source of data is a collection of items to which a respondent is expected to react in writing as defined by the questionnaire form. (J 2024)

This surveys and interviews were conducted with both local and international business stakeholders.

The target population was 500, out of the respondents 470 were locals while 30 were from the international.

Through random sampling data was collected as a subset of the entire participants of the population.

The questionnaire used in this research constituted of three sections A, B, and C.

Section A of the questionnaire captures general information about the international business. This information includes, total number of the respondent, the sector of activity of the international business and the period that the respondent has been in the institution.

Section B of the questionnaire captures the impact of digital technologies on international businesses both locally and internationally.

Section C of the questionnaire captures the relationship between digital technologies and international business and how the former influences the latter. The population and the sample size of the questionnaire is going to be examined here while taking into consideration the fact that the population of every sample influence the audacity of the results that is to be obtained from the study (R 2010, 61-84).

3.3 Data Collection Methods

Tools such as structured questionnaires, interviews, and secondary data reviews were conducted.

The interviews were both face to face and online

The secondary data reviews utilized in the research beyond reasonable doubts are valid, since they were collected from various case studies that were conducted in

(J 2024)

3.4 Data Analysis Techniques

The research has used three techniques in analysis of data which include statistical analysis, comparative analysis and thematic coding.

a. statistical analysis

Data from the field was compiled, sorted, edited, and coded to Excel to have the required quality, accuracy, and completeness. Data was coded and entered to the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS).

Data presentation was done using bar charts, percentages, and frequency tables. Regression analysis was also used to determine the relationship between our variables (the dependent and independent variables).

b. comparative analysis

By comparing the numbers of individuals in the major cities of Malawi and neighbouring countries who took part in the survey and looking at the period they have been in their respective industries the respondents formed major basis for analysing such useful data.

Interpretation of Tables and Graphs:

1. City of Origin

Sr. No	Particular	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Lilongwe	120	24
2	Blantyre	210	42
3	Mzuzu	80	16

4	Zomba	60	12
5	International	30	6

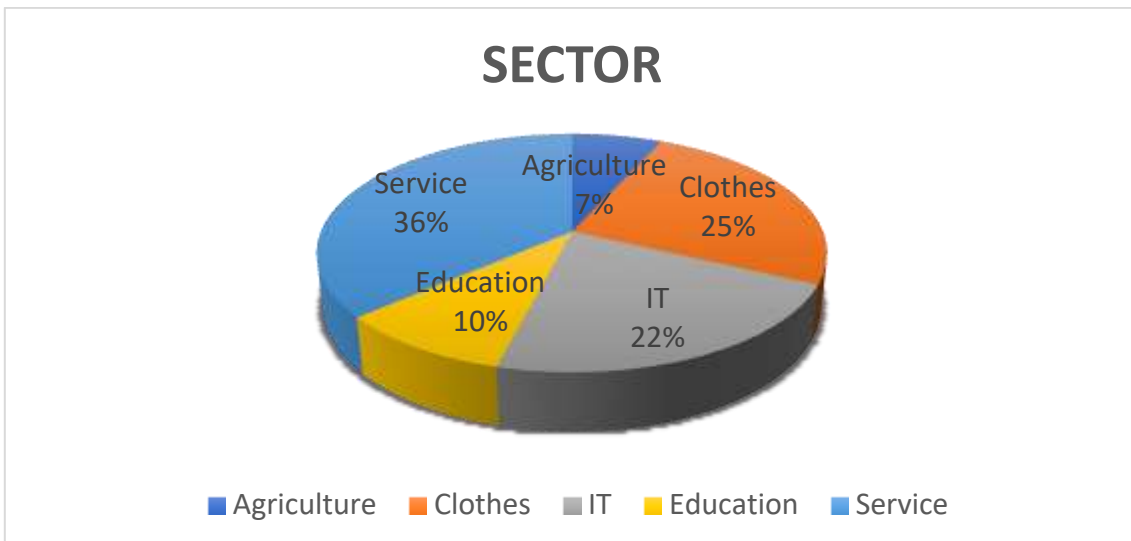


Interpretation:-

Above graph tells us that the most responded individuals who are in international business came from Blantyre which is 210, the second city is Lilongwe which is 120, Mzuzu has 80 respondents, 60 for Zomba and only 30 were international

2. Based on your knowledge which sector does international business belonging to and need to adopt digital technology?

Sr. No	Particular	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Agriculture	34	7
2	Clothes	126	25
3	IT	110	22
4	Education	48	10
5	Service	182	36

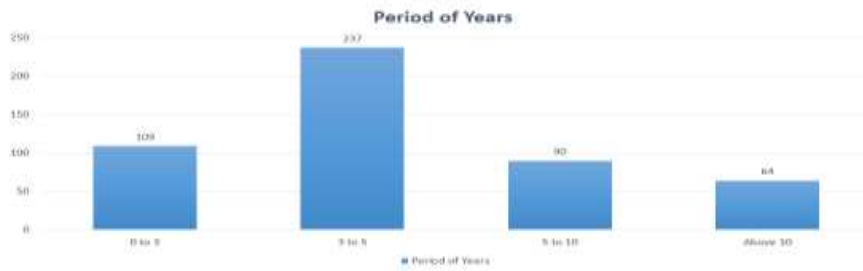


Interpretation:-

Above graph tells us that Service is the most used industry in international business, seconded by clothes, thirdly information technology, then education, agriculture being the last sector.

3. Period in the international business?

Sr. No	Particular	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	0-3	109	22
2	3-5	237	47
3	5-10	90	18
4	Above 10	64	13

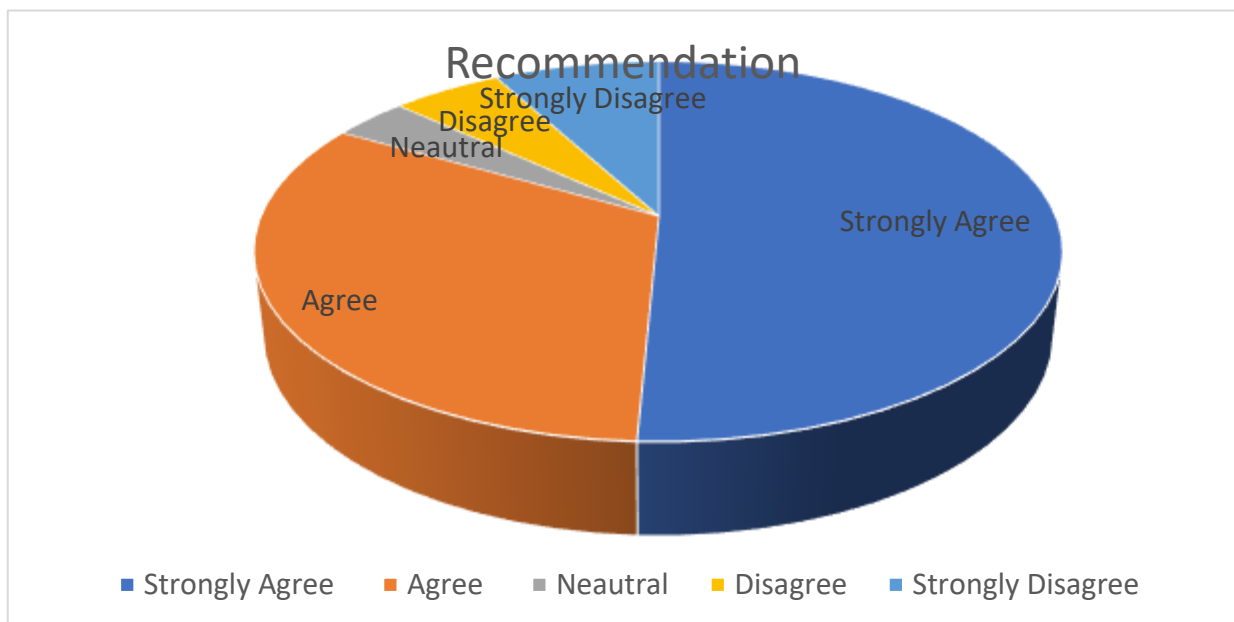


Interpretation:-

Above graph shows that most people doing international business are between 3-5years with above 10 years doing international business.

4. Do you recommend digital technologies on international business?

Sr. No	Particular	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Strongly Agree	212	51
2	Agree	136	33
3	Neutral	15	4
4	Strongly Disagree	22	5
5	Disagree	33	8

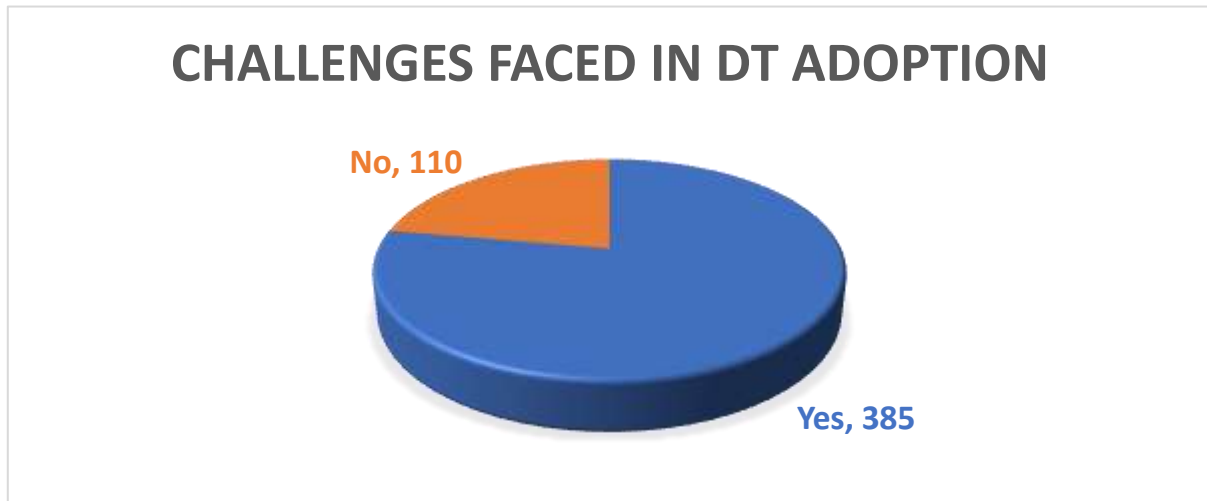


Interpretation:-

Above graph tells us that 212 of respondents are recommending digital technologies only 33 respondents do not recommend digital technology.

5. Do you think organization faces challenges when adopting digital technologies for global expansion?

Sr. No	Particular	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Yes	385	78
2	No	110	22

**Interpretation:-**

From the above graph it is shows that 385 respondents totally agree that organization faces challenges when adopting digital technologies while 110 respondents disagree.

5. Do you know key digital technologies driving international business growth throughout the world??

Sr. No	Particular	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Yes	137	57
2	No	104	43

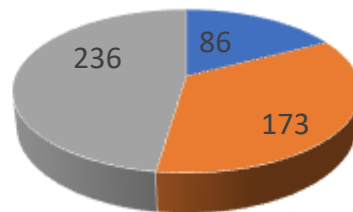
Interpretation:-

From the above graph it is shows that 137 respondents are very aware of key digital technologies driving international business however 104 are not aware of such technologies.

6. From the factors below, where do you think artificial intelligence influence international business?

Sr. No	Particular	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Improved decision-making	86	17
2	Efficiency	173	35
3	Customer interactions friendly.	236	48

AI INFLUENCE ON INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS



■ improved decision making ■ Efficiency ■ Customer Interaction Friendly

Interpretation:-

From the above analysis 86 respondents chose improved decision making, 173 chose efficiency, and 236 respondents chose customer interaction friendly.

4: Findings and Analysis

4.1 Commonly Used Digital Technologies in International Business

a. AI applications

African countries are making a strides in AI adoption, driven by various factors which are, Government commitment: governments are recognizing the potential of AI and are committing to develop national AI strategies and policies. International partnerships: collaboration with international tech firms, I research institutions, and organizations are helping to bridge the gaps in AI adoption.

Infrastructure development: investments in digital infrastructure such as data centers and connectivity, are supporting the growth of AI ecosystems

Human capital development: initiatives to develop AI skills and expertise are underway, with institutions and organization offering training and education programs.

Throughout the world most advanced countries like USA are heavily dependent on AI the technologies that are mostly used are smart products, help desk chat-bots, facial recognition, and personalization recommendation.

b. IoT integrations

The internet of things presents a variety of benefits and challenges to international business in Africa

Benefits of IoT in international business in Africa

Improved efficiency: IoT enables real time monitoring and automation, leading to an increased efficiency and reduction in costs.

Enhanced customer experience-IoT allows business to collect data and gain insights into Customer behavior, enabling personalized experience.

Increased competitiveness: by adoption IoT can give international business a competitive Edge in the market enabling them to innovate and differentiate themselves.

New business models: IoT enables new business models, such as subscription-based

Services and data driven decision making

Improved supply chain management: IoT enables real-time tracking and monitoring of Goods, reducing logistic costs and improving supply chain efficiency

Opportunities for IoT in International Business in Africa.

1. Agriculture: IoT can be used to improve agricultural productivity, reduce waste, and enhance food security.
2. Healthcare: IoT can be used to improve healthcare outcomes, enhance patient engagement, and reduce costs.
3. Manufacturing: IoT can be used to improve manufacturing efficiency, reduce costs, and enhance product quality.
4. Logistics and Transportation: IoT can be used to improve logistics and transportation efficiency, reduce costs, and enhance customer experience.

5. Energy and Utilities: IoT can be used to improve energy efficiency, reduce waste, and enhance customer experience..

Key Areas of Block chain Adoption in Africa

Financial Sector : Blockchain is being explored for cross-border payments, trade finance, and identity verification, with countries like Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa leading the charge.

Supply Chain Management: Blockchain is being used to track and verify the movement of goods, reducing counterfeiting and improving efficiency.

Identity Verification: Blockchain-based systems are being developed for digital identity verification, facilitating the global movement of people and goods.

Challenges and Opportunities:

Scalability: Blockchain's scalability across the continent remains a challenge, with a need for uniform standards and best practices.

Regulatory Frameworks: The lack of clear regulatory frameworks and laws governing blockchain adoption is a significant hurdle.

Innovation and Entrepreneurship: Africa's innovative spirit and entrepreneurial drive are expected to propel blockchain adoption, with companies like Ecobank pioneering digital payment technologies.

Overall, while there are challenges to overcome, block chain adoption in African international business is poised for growth, driven by the continent's innovative spirit and the technology's potential to address longstanding developmental obstacles.

4.2 Rationales for Using Digital Technologies

Improved decision-making through automating data collection processing, uncovering hidden patterns through machine learning algorithms, enabling real-time insights, facilitating predictive analytics.

Efficiency in a such a way that automation of repetitive tasks, leveraging data analytics to identify bottlenecks, implementing workflow management systems to streamline operations, utilizing cloud-based solutions for accessibility and enabling real-time collaboration hence reducing errors and improving productivity.

Personalization in customer interactions for example CRM systems stores detailed customer information allow business to deliver customized messages, offers, and support based on individual customer needs and preferences.

4.3 Risks and Challenges

The major risks and challenges that are faced by digital technologies are cyber security and infrastructure gap, various case studies outlines them some of the case studies may include:

- i. **Cyber security risk assessment for seaports: A case study of a container port.**
- ii. Cyber Threats to Critical Infrastructure: Assessing Vulnerabilities across Key Sectors
- iii. **The centrality of cybersecurity to socioeconomic development policy: A case study of cyber-vulnerability at South Africa's Transnet.**

4.4 Integration into Business Activities

Digital technology like block chain can digitize, secure, streamline, and ultimately accelerate operational processes and supply chains across global markets. Transactions in international trade can take up to 120 days to complete.

Digital technologies helps in marketing by improving the ability of market t analysis, pricing and management and helping to build relationships with clients to achieve things like value co-creation.

For customer services provides business access to vast amount of customer's data, through browsing behaviors to purchase histories and feedback .An entity can utilize this opportunity by making sure it meets customer needs and expectations.

5: Discussion

5.1 Implications of Findings

Digital technologies have greatly transformed the way business compete, operate and interaction with customers globally, the insights in the transformative potential of these in facilitating global strategies are digital transformation, global reach and expansions, operation efficiency and agility and competitive advantage.

Digital transformation

1. increased connectivity- business easily connect with customers, partners, and suppliers globally
2. Improved communication- digital tools that are used in communication improves real-time collaboration and communication that can be hinders geographical boundaries.
3. Enhanced customer experience-provides a personalized and seamless customer experiences across various channels.

Competitive advantage

- i. Innovation- in order to stay ahead of competitors digital technologies must rather be adopted.
- ii. Speed and agility-business can easily respond quickly to market changes with the help of digital technologies.
- iii. Customer insights-digital technologies have enabled business to gain valuable insights into customer behavior and experience.

Global reach expansion

- i. E-commerce platforms- electronic commerce is widely in use these days this is achievable through digital technologies.
- ii. Digital marketing- digital marketing channels have enabled business to target specific audience globally.
- iii. Remote work- people are able to work remotely and you can be able to hire people from the outside world.

Operation efficiency and agility and competitive advantage.

- i. Cloud computing- cloud computing improve performance of a business quickly and efficiently
- ii. AI and Automation-streamlined business processes reduce cost and improve productivity.
- iii. Data analytics-vast amounts of data helps business into informing strategic decisions.

5.2 Opportunities for Growth

Strategies for overcoming barriers and optimizing technology usage:

- i. Align technology with business goals-Ensure that technology adoption supports specific business objectives.
- ii. Implement technology roadmap-Develop a strategic plan for technology adoption and integration.
- iii. Monitor and evaluate technology performance- it is essential to assess the effectiveness of technology solutions and identify areas of improvement.
- iv. Leverage cloud computing-By taking advantage of cloud computing to increase scalability, flexibility, and cost-effectiveness
- v. Implement automation and AI-Automate repetitive task and leverage AI to enhance decision making, improve efficiency, and drive innovation

5.3 Policy and Practical Considerations

It is recommendable for international businesses and governments to support digital integration through:

- i. Innovation and Entrepreneurship- there is a need to provide startup support and innovation hubs this can accelerate a greater involvement of entrepreneurs in the digital sector.
- ii. Data protection and cyber security- there should be data protecting laws that must be enforced to protect citizenry personal data and implementation of effective cyber security measures to protect digital infrastructure and services from cyber threats.
- iii. Digital government services- by developing digital governments' platforms for government services such as online portals for tax payments, license application, passport applications and all important services.
- iv. International cooperation through global partnerships and observing global digital standards by signing memorandum e.g. recently Malawi in 2024 signed a deal with Tanzania on internet issues.
- v. Infrastructure development-government can develop high speed internets like 5G networks and ensure citizens have access to affordable and reliable broadband internet.

6: Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Summary of Findings

In conclusion the role and impact of digital technologies in international business include increased global competition that is by lowering all barriers to entry thereby enabling business from emerging markets to compete globally.

New business models such as subscription-based services, freemium models and sharing economies.

Changes in global value chains, digital technologies have made it possible for business to re-configure their global value chains, outsourcing non-core functions and focusing on core competencies

Lastly cultural and language barriers, the technologies have helped in bridging the cultural gaps which enables business to communicate more effectively with customers and partners globally.

6.2 Recommendations

It is highly recommendable for businesses have guidelines in order to adopt and integrate digital technologies effectively.

i. Planning and Strategy

- a. Align technology with business goals: Ensure technology adoption supports overall business objectives.
- b. Conduct a needs assessment: Identify gaps and opportunities for technology to improve operations.
- c. Develop a technology roadmap: Outline short-term and long-term technology plans.

ii. Change Management

- a. Communicate the benefits: Educate stakeholders on the value of new technologies.
- b. Provide training and support: Ensure users have necessary skills and resources.
- c. Address resistance to change: Encourage open communication and address concerns.

iii. Technology Selection

- a. Evaluate vendor options: Assess vendors' reputation, support, and scalability.
- b. Consider integration with existing systems: Ensure seamless integration with current infrastructure.
- c. Assess security and compliance: Verify technology meets security and regulatory requirements.

iv. Implementation and Integration

- a. Phased implementation: Roll out technology in stages to minimize disruption.
- b. Integrate with existing processes: Align new technology with current workflows.
- c. Monitor progress and adjust: Continuously evaluate and refine technology integration.

v. Ongoing Support and Evaluation

- a. Provide ongoing training and support: Ensure users remain proficient.
- b. Regularly evaluate technology effectiveness: Assess technology's impact on business goals.
- c. Stay up-to-date with technology advancements: Continuously explore new technologies and innovations.

vi. Cybersecurity and Data Protection

- a. Implement robust security measures: Protect against cyber threats and data breaches.
- b. Ensure data backup and recovery: Regularly backup critical data and have a disaster recovery plan.
- c. Comply with data protection regulations: Adhere to relevant data protection laws and regulations.

vii. Collaboration and Partnerships

- a. Foster collaboration between departments: Encourage cross-functional teamwork.
- b. Partner with technology experts: Collaborate with external experts to stay informed about latest technologies.

c. Engage with customers and stakeholders: Gather feedback and insights to inform technology decisions.

6.3 Limitations of the Study

This study, just like any other research task was significantly faced with a good number of limitations and challenges. It is therefore advisable and very important to highlight these shortcomings to enable a better understanding of the range of its results.

The first limitation is at the methodological level which refers to the use of the method of investigation with questionnaire for data-collection. This method has two disadvantages. On one hand, the measuring instrument does not seem to cover the whole of theoretical dimensions of the concepts because of the use of the closed questions. In addition, the instrument, was based on the declaratory trials to measure the perceptions of the respondents, which implies that there is strong subjectivity in the responds. The second limitation is at the level of the unwillingness of the respondents. Some of the respondents were unwilling to answer the questionnaires, while others refused to accept the questionnaires at all. This is because of their tight schedules at their workplace. Hence, some information given could be unsatisfactory-tory thus not revealing the truth of what is needed.

Lastly looking at the complexity of the topic it was tough to come up with results as one could declare them as a hasty generalization but all in all I managed to come up with strong conclusion from such facts.

All these limitations will to some extent constrain generalizations of findings. Notwithstanding, it is hoped that the study would find application in the Blantyre context and provide the building blocks for more detailed and elaborate research.

6.4 Areas for Future Research

For future research it will further explore the emerging digital technologies and their applications in business. It will focus on all technologies that are important into the business.

Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML), Internet of Things (IoT), Blockchain and Distributed Ledger Technology, 5G Networks and Edge Computing, Quantum Computing, Digital Twins

The research will look at the aspects such as benefits, risks, mitigation factors and influence to business globally.

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