

Degree of ICT Integration on SMEs in Health Services: A Study of Mahara Divisional Secretariat, Sri Lanka

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Integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is very widespread in businesses of all sizes. As is the case with all technologies, small businesses are slower than large ones to adopt new ICT. Known fundamental reasons for non-adoption are lack of applicability and little incentive to change business models when returns are unclear. Also trust and transaction security, and challenges in areas of management skills, technological capabilities are significant barriers to adaptation of ICT in to SMEs.

This research focuses on the degree of ICT integration on SMEs in health services at the Mahara Divisional Secretariat - Sri Lanka. The degree of ICT applications in SMEs observed according to the use of ICT at each level in the business (inbound logistics, operation, outbound logistics, marketing and sales, services), include: readiness for ICT, infrastructure facilities for ICT, available ICT.

Response data of a sample of 50 SMEs in health services have been gathered through interviews with the help of structured questionnaires. There is a high usage of ICT in their background infrastructure for support inbound logistics, operation, outbound logistics, marketing and sales, services (Telephone -100%, Fax-90%, VOIP – 0%, Dial up connection - 22%, ADSL – 0%, Leased line - 0%, Fiber – 96%, Laptop or Desktop PC – 100%). Also there is a favorable usage of ICT applications in marketing and sales, services (Office package – 100%, E-mail / social media – 100%, Own Website / systems – 0 %, POS – 62%, Online payment – 0%). In conclusion, more than 50% of SMEs in health services use ICT facilities in their business processes. They have accumulated strong customer relationships through ICT and have reduced non value adding activities and wastages.

Keywords: eHealth, SMEs in health services, ICT integration to Healthcare

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