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THE IMPACT OF ELECTRONIC BANKING ON THE OPERATIONS OF NIGERIAN BANKS

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Abstract

This paper examines the impact of e-banking on the operations of Nigerian banks. Five banks were randomly selected for the study, while one hundred and fifty (150) questionnaires were distributed to respondents, but only one hundred and twenty seven (127) were retrieved. The study reveals that the adoption of electronic banking has enhanced the banks efficiency by making it more productive and effective. These enhanced the fortune of the bank through bank charges, cheque withdrawal slip and withdrawal charges. Also, the study reveals that electronic banking has improve the bank customer relationship by rendering effective services throughout the week. Customers can now have access to their account outside working hours to make withdrawal to attend to their needs. The recommendation is that the banks must be focused in terms of their needs and using the right technology to achieve goals, rather, than acquiring technology of internet banking because other banks have it.

Keywords: Banks, electronic banking, productivity, customers

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External System

Introduction

The ability of Nigeria banks to satisfy and retain their customers in the present post-reform era no doubt depend largely on the development of their information technology (IT) infrastructure. Since the outset of the human era, technology has been one of the most essential and most important ingredients that facilitate the development of mankind (Coombs et al, 1987). Technology is a powerful force that drives the world toward a converging commonality (Levitt, 1992). The application of information technology techniques, policies and implementation strategies to banking services has become a subject of fundamental importance and concerns to all banks and indeed a prerequisite for local and global banking. This according to Oyedijo (2012) is one of the recent developments in management of organizations. With the adoption of Information Technology banks have been in the forefront to improve their products and services.

Shittu (2010) states that the advancement in information technology has played an important role in improving service delivery standards in the banking industry. Ashtiani and Iranmanesh (2012) added that the use of new technologies has led to the spread of commerce, easier economic ties, facilitate activities of small and medium-sized enterprises, improving productivity, reducing costs and saving time. The adoption of electronic banking as a channel of distribution for financial services in Nigeria was due to rapid advances in information technology and competitive banking markets (Auta, 2010). Electronic Banking (i.e. e-banking) offers different online services like balance enquiry, request for cheque books, recording stop payment instructions, balance transfer instructions, account opening and other form of transitional Banking services. Thus, Nigerian banks today are seriously into new electronic delivery channels for banking products and services with a view to delivering better services and satisfying customers the more. Banks that cannot offer these services are increasingly losing their customers.

The growth in the application and acceptance of internet-driven technologies such as electronic banking means that delivering an enhanced service is more achievable than ever before, but it is also more complex and fraught with potential costs and risk. Past experiences have shown that customers of banks are not interested about safety of their funds and increase returns on their investments only. Customers also demand efficient, fast and convenient services. Customers want a bank that will offer them services that will meet their particular needs (personalized banking) and support their Business goals for instance; businessmen want to travel without carryout cash for security reasons (Shittu, 2010). They want to be able to check their balance online, find out if a cheque is cleared, transfer funds among accounts and even want to download transaction records into their own computer at work or home. Electronic

banking offers opportunities for achieving this. Besides, some banks still fail to recognize the potential benefits that new technologies offer towards the attainment of their corporate objectives.

However, an exposition of Nigerian commercial banks recently have revealed that banks have not live up to their expectation of meeting customers satisfaction and stakeholders objectives in spite of huge investment on information technology. Queues are still seen in the banking halls, bank customers still handle too much cash, and hardly people talk about the electronic banking products that are available in Nigeria (Dogarawa, 2005). Also, the recent cashless policy intended to reduce cash carriage and promote electronic banking in Nigeria is impeded by customers exposure and lack adequate usage of Information Technology tools. The problem here is: does the adoption of electronic banking has any effect on the operations of banks in Nigeria? It is imperative therefore to find out whether or not e-banking has any effect on the daily operations of banks in Nigeria.

Conceptual Framework

Electronic banking, also known as electronic funds transfer (EFT), is simply the use of electronic means to transfer funds directly from one account to another, rather than by check or cash. Some of the uses of EFT include: direct payment of cheque into customers account or credit union checking account; withdrawal of cash and confirmation of account balance from an ATM machine with a personal identification number (PIN), at a convenience; payment of bills; transfer of payment; e-payment; and direct use of computer and personal finance software to coordinate individual total personal financial management process, integrating data and activities related to the income, spending, saving, investing, recordkeeping, bill-paying and taxes, along with basic financial analysis and decision making.

Oluyemi (2004) perceives electronic banking is the provision of banking service by financial institution to their customers via electronic devices. It is a paperless method of banking that offers an alternative to the traditional systems which rely on physical presence and involve the use of cheques. E-banking is the totality of the deployment of modern IT and communication systems to record financial transactions as well as deliver financial service to customers. Daniel (1999) said that electronic banking is the provision of banking services to customers through Internet technology (Daniel, 1999). Through the use of IT, banks now employ different channels such as internet technology, video banking technology, telephone banking, Automated Teller Machine, and WAP technology to deliver their services. Report on e-banking system in Nigeria reveals that e-payment machinery, especially the card technology, is presently enjoying the highest popularity in Nigeria banking market.

Babalakins (2005) expressed that electronic banking is virtual banking instead of waiting in line at branches and office, bank customers around the world are finding telephone with computer screen, and Automated Teller Machine they can trade stocks, and even video conferencing by experts on everything from mortgage. Auta (2010) defines electronic banking as the automated delivery of new and traditional banking products and services directly to customers through electronic, interactive, communication channel. Electronic banking is a general term that describes the system that enables financial institution customers, individuals or business to access accounts, transact business, or obtain information on financial products and services through a public or private network, including the internet. It is an outgrowth of e-commerce (Shittu, 2010). Ovia (2001) argued that Electronic banking is a product of e-commerce in the field of banking and financial services. Salehi and Zhila (2008) viewed electronic banking as an electronic connection between bank and customer in order to prepare, manage and control financial transactions.

The Central Bank of Nigeria (2003) conceived electronic banking as a means whereby banking business is transacted using automated process and electronic devices such as personal computer, telephone, fax machines, internet, card payment and other electronic channels. Some banks practiced electronic banking for information while others facilitate funds transfer and financial transactions, many systems involve a combination of these capabilities. Dogarawa (2005) seen electronic banking as the delivery of banking services and products through the use of electronic means irrespective of place, time and distance. Such products and services can include deposit-taking, lending, account management, the provision of financial advice, electronic bill payment, and the provision of other electronic payment products and services such as electronic money.

The benefits of electronic banking encompass a broad range of functions and include: (i) electronic mail (E-mail), improves communication between individuals and the bank, within the bank, between banks and external parties and between banks; (ii) the availability of online information (i.e. provides bankers and customers with a powerful vehicle of research; and (iii) banking process is made more effective by integrating other aspects of banking operations such as treasury management and financial control. The success of electronic banking, as argued by many researchers, depends probably on bank service quality, customer preferences and satisfaction. Recent studies found that consumer behaviour is changing partly because of more spare time. The way of use of financial services is characterised by individuality, mobility, independence of place and time, and flexibility (Seitzm and Stickel, 2004).

Electronic banking provides the facility of accessing customer accounts from anywhere in the world by using a home computer with Internet connection, is particularly fascinating to Non-Resident Nigerians and High Net worth Individuals having multiple bank accounts. The growth potential is, therefore, immense. Further incentives provided by banks would dissuade customers from visiting physical branches, and thus get 'hooked' to the convenience of armchair banking.

Researches have shown that electronic banking affects financial institutions by easing payments (Mohammed, et. al, 2009), saving time (Akinyomi, 2010), improving service delivery (Auta, 2010) and making transactions easier around the World (Shittu, 2010). In recent decades, investment in IT by commercial banks has served to streamline operations, improve competitiveness, and increase the variety and quality of services provided (Dauda and Akingbade, 2011). For instance, Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) and deposit machines allow customers to carry out banking transactions beyond banking hours. In India the result of a study conducted by Malhotra and Singh (2007) indicates that larger banks, younger banks, non-governmental banks, and banks with more fixed assets, banks with more deposits, and the banks with lower number of branches are more eager than other banks to present electronic banking services. The online banking services allow individuals and customers to check their account balances and make payments without having to go to the bank hall. This has made possible the recent cashless policy in Nigeria created by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), where people no longer have to pay for all their purchases with physical cash.

Some Electronic Banking Tools

Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) also called 24-hour tellers are electronic terminals which give customers the opportunity to bank at almost any time. To withdraw cash, make deposits or transfer funds between accounts, a consumer needs an ATM card and a personal identification number. Some ATMs charge a usage fee for this service, with a higher fee for customers who do not have an account at their institution. If a fee is charged, it must be revealed on the terminal screen or on a sign next to the screen.

Direct Deposit and Withdrawal Services allow customers to authorize specific deposits, such as pay checks or social security checks, to their accounts on a regular basis. It is also possible to authorize the bank, for a fee, to withdraw funds from your account to pay your recurring bills, such as mortgage payment, instalment loan payments, insurance premiums and utility bills.

Pay by Phone Systems let customers phone their financial institutions with instructions to pay certain bills or to transfer funds between accounts.

Point-of-Sale Transfer Terminals allow customers to pay for retail purchase with a check card, a new name for debit card. This card looks like a credit card but with a significant difference—the money for the purchase is transferred immediately from your account to the store's account. Customers no longer have the benefit of the credit card "float", that is the time between the purchase transactions and when you pay the credit card bill. With immediate transfer of funds at the point-of-sale, it is easy to overdraw your checking account and incur additional charges unless you keep careful watch on spending.

Personal Computer Banking Services offer customers the convenience of conducting many banking transactions electronically using a personal computer. Customers can view their account balances, request transfers between accounts and pay bills electronically from home.

Theoretical Framework

The study is based on diffusion theory of innovation and technology acceptance model (TAM). The theory of diffusion of innovation is a model developed to predict factors influencing adoption of information system (Rogers 1995). Literature in IT diffusion emphasizes the importance of perceived relative advantage and improved organizational performance as enablers of adoption of new innovation. According to Rogers (1995), the greater the perceived relative advantage, the faster the adoption. The diffusion of innovation theory posits that potential adopters evaluate an innovation based on innovation attributes such as relative advantage, compatibility, complexity (ease of use), trialability, and observability. All the attributes were found to be positively related to its rate of adoption, while the perceived complexity of an innovation is negatively related to its rate of adoption (Rogers, 1995).

The technology acceptance model (TAM) on the other hand posits that user's attitude towards and acceptance of a new information system is important to the successful adoption of the information system (Davis, 1989). It posits that attitude towards a particular system is based on two major constructs: perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. The quality, effectiveness and success of a system can only be validated by its level of users' acceptance through its ability to satisfy their needs (Pikkarainen et al., 2004).

Electronic Banking and Nigeria Banking Sector

Many banks in Nigeria, in recent time have embraced electronic banking because it believed that it drives down their costs and increased customers service. For example, new technologies is believed to have allowed costs to be reduced through compression of the supply chain, eliminate all redundant and non-value added steps between demand and its fullfilment. Furthermore, customer service has been enhanced by

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making valuable business information available quickly, easily and in a meaningful format both to the employee servicing the customers and to the customers themselves. Dagorawa (2005) using chi-square, it found that electronic banking products and services have significantly improved customer satisfaction. The study finds that many banks' customers in Nigeria are fully aware of the positive developments in information technology and telecommunications which led to the introduction of new delivery channels for Nigerian commercial banks' products and services. Ayo et al. (2007) conducted a survey of electronic banking product and service in Nigeria and found that all the banks have at least one particular form of electronic service including e-banking service, Internet banking service, and m-banking. Though, various e-banking systems have been implemented and accepted by customer, e-payment remains the most widely used of the e-banking solutions (Adesina and Ayo, 2010).

Methodology

The data, from which the information constitutes the findings, were collected from five banks, randomly selected in Nigeria. These include Oceanic Bank Plc, Stanbic Bank Plc, Zenith Bank, Diamond Bank and Access Bank. Data were obtained from both the primary and secondary sources, which includes; interviews, structured questionnaire, journal publications, newspapers, internet facilities. A total of 150 questionnaires were administered to bank officers in the credit department. 127 questionnaires were retrieved, representing 84.67% of the total distributed. Furthermore, personal interviews were conducted with some of the banks managers and supervisors in the IT department so as to gain an appreciation of what type of delivery channels were available in the banks. The responses were measured with a rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA) = 5; Agree (A) = 4; Undecided (UN) = 3; Strongly Disagree (SD) = 2; Disagree (D) = 1.

Analysis of Responses and Discussion of Results

The analysis of the data collected will be descriptive in nature. It would include tabulation, frequency counts and percentages.

Table 1: Assessment of Electronic banking system

Question	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Mean
How can you assess the overall performance of electronic banking system in your bank?	14.3	77.15	8.6	0.00	0.00	3.59

The assessment of electronic banking system in the surveyed banks are shown in table 1 above. 77.15% of the 127 respondents have the opinion that electronic banking system are very good, while 14.3% excellent and 8.6% considered it as a good and none of the respondent opined that it is either fair or poor. The mean of 3.59 confirmed that electronic banking system is very good and it is transforming the financial industry in terms of the nature of core products/services and the way the services are delivered to the customers.

Table 2: Information Technology Training Program

Question	SA	A	UN	D	SD	Mean
Banks have training programme on information technology for its staff?	14.3	74.2	8.6	2.9	0	3.94

Table 2 above shows the responses of cashiers from the banks surveyed with respect to the level of information technology training development program. About 74.2% of the respondents were of the agree opinion, 14.3% strongly agree, 8.6% undecided and 2.9% disagree and none respondent opened on strongly disagree. The mean of 3.94 confirmed that the banks have training development programme for training of staff on electronic banking facilities operations. This shows that the the bank have information training development program for its staff because 88.5% of the respondent were of the agree opinion.

Table 3: Level of Electronic Banking

Question	SA	A	UN	D	SD	Mean
Introduction of electronic banking has eased banking transaction.	31.45	62.9	5.7	0	0	3.63

From Table 3 above, 62.9% of respondents were of the agree opinion that electronic banking system has make banking transaction more easier, 31.45% strongly agree while 5.7% were undecided and none of the respondents is either of the disagree or strongly disagree opinion. The mean of 3.63 confirmed indicates that the banking transaction has been made easier with the introduction of electronic banking.

Table 4: Influence of electronic banking on improvement of customer satisfaction as perceived by the cashier

Question	SA	A	UN	D	SD	Mean
The introduction of electronic banking has improve customer satisfaction	37.1	60	2.9	0	0	3.47

Table 4 above gives responses on the influence of electronic banking on improvement of customer satisfaction as perceived by the cashier. 60% of the respondents were of the agree opinion that electronic banking have improve customers satisfaction, 37.1% strongly agree while 2.9% of the respondents were undecided and non respondent on the opinion of disagree or strongly disagree. The mean of 3.47 confirms that electronic banking has really improved customer satisfaction.

Table 5: Perception of cashier on the impact of electronic banking on effectiveness and efficiency of banks

Question	SA	A	UN	D	SD	Mean
Electronic banking hence its effectiveness and efficiency of banks	85.5	14.5	0	0	0	3.63

Table 5 above shows that 14.5% of customers agreed that electronic banking encourages the effectiveness and efficiency of banks. Also, 85.5% strongly agreed that electronic banking eases banking transactions. The mean of 3.63 shows that some of the respondents agreed that online banking is a convenient way of operating banking transaction. It saves time and reliable.

Table 6: Effects of electronic banking on the overall performance of the bank

Question	SA	A	UN	D	SD	Mean
The bank electronic banking have impact on its overall performance of the bank	43.2	39.9	17.7	6	0	3.15

Table 6 shows that 76.9% of the respondents agreed with the view that electronic banking have impact on the overall performance of the bank, 17.7% are indifferent to the question while 6% disagreed with the view, with a mean of 3.15.

Table 7: Effects of electronic banking on the fortune of the bank

Question	SA	A	UN	D	SD	Mean
Adoption of electronic banking would enhanced the fortune of the bank	45.8	37.3	6.9	7.3	2.7	3.12

The implementation of information technology and communication networking has brought revolution in the functioning of the banks and the financial institutions. From table 7 above, 83.1% agreed that online banking as positive influence on the fortune of the bank, while 10% disagreed and 6.9% are indifferent. The mean of 3.12 confirmed that online banking really affect banks networking, service delivery, banks competitiveness, customers responses and profitability.

Table 8:Electronic banking and productivity of the banks

Question	SA	A	UN	D	SD	Mean
Electronic banking increases banks productivity	44.2	37.3	13.8	4.6	0	3.98

From table 8 above, 81.5% of the respondents agreed that the adoption of electronic banking increases bank productivity in that with the adoption of electronic banking, the bank can attend to a lot of customers since IT speeds up cashiers work. The mean of 3.98 shows that online banking has a positive effect on the growth and productivity of the banks.

Table 8: Effects of electronic banking on the interaction between cashiers and customers

Question	SA	A	UN	D	SD	Mean
Electronic banking improves the bank, customers relationship	41.6	31.3	7.7	4.6	0	3.15

Table 8 shows that 72.9% of the respondents agreed with the view that online banking has reduced the interaction between cashiers and customers, 7.7% are indifferent to the question while 15.4% disagreed with the view, with a mean of 3.15.

Findings of the Study

The study differs from previous works because it majorly focused on perceptions of bank staff on adoption and implementations of electronic banking. The study finds that there is high level of usage of electronic banking system among commercial banks in Nigeria and it is transforming the financial industry in terms of the nature of core products/services and the way the services are delivered to the customers. Today, hardly can we found a bank without IT sections or unit.

However, the finding revealed that there is low level of effectiveness and efficiency in service delivery and operations of commercial banks due in Nigeria. There are still queue and delay in service to customers. Customers wait-in-line for several minutes before they are served in spite of availability of electronic banking system. Personal interviews with the customers reveal that customers prefer to come into banking hall to make transactions than using ATM or other IT tools because of ineffectiveness of ATM and other transactional devices. Also, some huge transactions cannot be completed through electronic means without proper documentations. There is also problem of internet fraud which often interferes with online transaction.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined the impact of electronic banking on the operations of banks in Nigeria. It specifically considered the perceptions of banks staff on the impact of electronic banking on the banks. The study revealed that the adoption of electronic banking has not increasingly enhanced the efficiency of the banks by making them more productive and effective. This influenced the fortune of the bank through bank charges, cheque withdrawal slip and withdrawal charges. Also, the study revealed that electronic banking has improved the bank-customer relationship by rendering effective services to customers. Customers can now have access to their account outside working hours to make withdrawal to attend to their needs. However, the study finds that electronic banking is fraught with some challenges which are capable to reducing bank operational performance and productivity.

In view of the findings of this study it is concluded that electronic banking in Nigeria is yet to create any significant impact on operational efficiency and service delivery, which will consequently lead to improved performance and customer satisfaction. Therefore, we recommend that:

Adequate publicity and orientations should be given to customers on the implications and benefits of internet banking to improve their level exposure. Banks must be focused in terms of their needs and using the right technology to achieve goals, rather, than acquiring technology of internet banking because other banks have it. Skilled manpower and computer wizard should be employed by every bank, in other to stop, prevent fraudulent personal and hackers from manipulating the banks data, stealing money from the banks accounts, and reducing interference with electronic banking devices. Banks should put in place maintenance and service unit in each of their branch offices and cash points to address complaints of ATM problems and other defectiveness, rather than asking customers to go to headquarter or main branch for corrections and redress. All or majority of customers should directly or indirectly be encouraged to use ATM cards in order to promote electronic banking services and sharpen their attitude.

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