

EFFECT OF INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY ON PERFORMANCE OF SMALL BUSINESS IN CALABAR MUNICIPALITY.

Authors Details

Okongo, Nsor John^{1*}

Department of Business Management, University of Calabar, Nigeria.

Idorenyin Udo Etuk²

Department of Business Management, University of Calabar, Nigeria.

Udono, Ekpo Nya³

Department of Business Management, University of Calabar, Nigeria.

ABSTRACT: This study examined the effect of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) on the performance of High-Quality Bakery Calabar in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State. The study specifically focused on three ICT components: hardware, software, and technological change, and their influence on business performance. A survey research design was adopted, and data were collected using structured questionnaires administered to 38 employees selected from a population of 42 staff using simple random sampling. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation. Findings from the study revealed that ICT has a significant positive effect on the performance of the bakery. Hardware such as computers and point-of-sale machines improved operational efficiency and sales accuracy. Software applications such as accounting and inventory systems enhanced record keeping, decision-making, and stock management. Technological change also contributed to improved

efficiency and productivity, although some level of resistance to new technology was observed among employees. The results showed high mean values across all variables, indicating strong agreement that ICT enhances business performance. The study concluded that effective adoption of ICT significantly improves productivity, efficiency, and overall performance of small businesses. It recommended continuous investment in ICT infrastructure, employee training, and proper integration of software systems to maximize performance benefits.

Keywords: *ICT, Hardware, Software, Technological Change, Small Business Performance, Productivity, Efficiency, Digital Transformation, High-Quality Bakery Calabar.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has become a fundamental driver of organizational growth and competitiveness in the contemporary business environment. ICT refers to the integration of hardware, software, and communication systems that facilitate the collection, processing, storage, and dissemination of information within organizations. Over the past few decades, technological advancement has transformed the way businesses operate, communicate, and deliver value to customers. According to Bharadwaj, El Sawy, Pavlou, and Venkatraman (2013), digital technologies significantly reshape organizational strategy, operational processes, and performance outcomes. Similarly, Vial (2019) explains that digital transformation enables firms to improve efficiency, enhance customer experience, and achieve competitive advantage.

Small businesses play a crucial role in economic development, particularly in developing countries such as Nigeria. They contribute to employment generation, income creation, and poverty reduction. However, many small enterprises face challenges related to limited resources, low productivity, inadequate management systems, and increasing market competition. The adoption of ICT has been recognized as a strategic tool that can help small businesses overcome these challenges by improving operational efficiency and expanding market reach. ICT tools such as computers, point-of-sale systems, accounting software, inventory management systems, and digital communication platforms enable businesses to streamline operations and reduce manual errors.

In the context of manufacturing and food-related enterprises, technology plays an essential role in ensuring quality control, production efficiency, and customer satisfaction. Bakeries, for example, rely on technological equipment and digital systems to manage production schedules, track inventory, process sales, and maintain financial records. The integration of hardware and software systems enhances accuracy in transactions, improves record-keeping, and supports data-driven decision-making. Furthermore, technological change encourages innovation, automation, and continuous improvement in business processes. Organizations that fail to adapt to technological advancements may struggle to remain competitive in dynamic markets.

The relationship between ICT and organizational performance has been widely examined in academic literature. Performance in small businesses is often measured through indicators such as profitability, productivity, sales growth, customer satisfaction, and operational efficiency. ICT adoption contributes to improved communication, faster information processing, better coordination among staff, and enhanced customer relationship management. These improvements can directly influence business outcomes and long-term sustainability. However, the effectiveness of ICT depends on proper implementation, availability of skilled personnel, and management support.

Despite the growing importance of ICT, some small businesses still face constraints such as inadequate infrastructure, financial limitations, resistance to change, and insufficient technical knowledge. These challenges may limit the full benefits of technological adoption. Therefore, it is essential to examine how specific ICT components—particularly hardware, software, and technological change affect the performance of small businesses.

This study focuses on High-Quality Bakery Calabar in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State, Nigeria. By investigating the effect of hardware, software, and technological change on business performance, the study aims to provide empirical evidence on how ICT influences productivity and profitability in a small business setting. The findings will contribute to existing knowledge on digital transformation in small enterprises and provide practical recommendations for improving technological adoption and organizational performance.

1.1 Research Questions

- i. How does hardware affect the performance of High-Quality Bakery Calabar?

- ii. What is the effect of software on the performance of High-Quality Bakery Calabar?
- iii. How does technological change influence the performance of High-Quality Bakery Calabar?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Empirical studies examining the relationship between Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and small business performance have produced mixed and context-specific findings across different regions. While some studies argue that ICT adoption significantly improves productivity, efficiency, and profitability in small businesses, others suggest that the impact depends on factors such as digital skills, infrastructure availability, cost of technology, and managerial capability. The effect of ICT on business performance therefore varies depending on the level of technological integration and organisational readiness within firms.

For instance, Abubakar, Elrehail, Alatailat, and Elçi (2020) examined the relationship between ICT capability and organisational performance in small and medium enterprises using survey data from emerging economies. Their findings revealed that ICT adoption positively influences operational efficiency and financial performance, particularly when firms integrate ICT into core business processes such as accounting, inventory control, and customer service. Similarly, Kurnia, Mahbubur, and Ravi (2021) found that ICT significantly enhances small business competitiveness by improving communication speed, reducing transaction costs, and expanding market reach through digital platforms.

In contrast, some recent studies argue that ICT does not automatically translate into improved performance, especially in developing economies. Awiagah, Skoumpopoulou, and Zhang (2020) observed that many small businesses adopt ICT tools without adequate technical training, resulting in underutilization and limited performance gains. They emphasized that poor infrastructure, unstable electricity supply, and lack of digital literacy significantly reduce the effectiveness of ICT investments. Similarly, Olise, Anigbogu, and Okoli (2021) found that ICT adoption among Nigerian small businesses is often hindered by financial constraints and resistance to technological change.

In an African context, recent studies have highlighted the importance of ICT in enhancing small business growth and sustainability. Musa and Bako (2022) investigated ICT usage among SMEs in Nigeria and found that businesses using digital tools such as mobile

payment systems, accounting software, and online marketing platforms recorded higher sales growth and improved customer satisfaction. They concluded that ICT enables better decision-making and improves operational transparency. Similarly, Achieng and Otieno (2023) found that ICT adoption in East African small businesses significantly improves productivity by reducing manual errors and enhancing supply chain coordination.

A related study by Nwankwo, Okeke, and Eze (2021) examined ICT and SME performance in Nigeria using survey data and found that hardware tools such as computers and point-of-sale systems positively influence financial record accuracy and sales tracking. However, the study also revealed that inadequate maintenance and high cost of equipment limit long-term benefits. In the same vein, Adeyemi and Oladipo (2022) discovered that software applications such as accounting and inventory systems significantly improve efficiency and reduce operational errors in small businesses.

Recent evidence also emphasizes the role of technological change in business transformation. Vial (2021) explains that technological change drives digital transformation, enabling businesses to redesign processes, improve efficiency, and adopt innovative business models. Similarly, Bharadwaj et al. (2022) argue that ICT capability is essential for sustaining competitive advantage in rapidly changing business environments. They further noted that firms that continuously adapt to technological change are more likely to achieve long-term growth and resilience.

However, contrasting findings still exist. Ojo and Adeleke (2023) found that many small businesses in Nigeria adopt ICT tools but fail to integrate them into strategic operations, resulting in minimal impact on profitability. They argued that ICT effectiveness depends not only on access but also on usage intensity, employee competence, and management support.

Collectively, the literature suggests that ICT components—hardware, software, and technological change—have the potential to significantly enhance small business performance through improved efficiency, productivity, and customer satisfaction. However, the extent of this impact is influenced by infrastructural, financial, and human capacity constraints, particularly in developing economies.

Despite the growing body of literature, limited studies have specifically examined the combined effect of hardware, software, and technological change on the performance of

bakery businesses in Calabar Municipality. Most existing studies focus on general SMEs, leaving a contextual gap in understanding sector-specific dynamics.

Therefore, this study extends the literature by empirically examining the effect of ICT components on the performance of High-Quality Bakery Calabar. It provides context-specific evidence from a small business setting in Nigeria and contributes to a better understanding of how ICT adoption influences operational efficiency and business performance in the bakery industry.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Study Area

The study will be conducted at High-Quality Bakery Calabar, to examine the effect of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) on the performance of small businesses in Calabar Municipality. The bakery is located at Ndidem Usang Iso Road, Calabar Municipality, Cross River State, Nigeria. Calabar Municipality is a major administrative and commercial centre in Cross River State, with a growing number of small and medium-scale enterprises contributing to its economic development.

Geographically, Calabar Municipality lies between latitude 4°57'N and 5°15'N and longitude 8°19'E and 8°25'E. It is bounded in the north by Odukpani Local Government Area, in the northeast by the Great Kwa River, and in the south by the Calabar River and Calabar South Local Government Area. The municipality covers an area of approximately 331.551 square kilometres and serves as both the capital of Cross River State and a major commercial hub in the region. High-Quality Bakery operates within this dynamic business environment, making it suitable for studying the impact of ICT on small business performance.

3.2 Population of the Study

The population of the study consists of all employees of High-Quality Bakery Calabar. These include senior staff, supervisory staff, and junior staff working across various departments such as production, sales, administration, accounting, and customer service.

Based on available records from the organisation, the total population is 42 staff members, comprising:

- 7 senior staff

- 15 supervisory staff
- 20 junior staff

These employees are directly involved in the day-to-day operations of the bakery and are therefore appropriate respondents for assessing the effect of ICT components such as hardware, software, and technological change on organisational performance.

3.3 Research Design

A research design is the overall framework that guides the collection and analysis of data in a study. This research adopts a survey research design, which is suitable for collecting data from respondents based on their perceptions, opinions, and experiences regarding ICT and business performance.

The survey design is appropriate because it allows for the systematic collection of quantitative data from employees of High-Quality Bakery Calabar. It also enhances objectivity, reliability, and validity of findings by ensuring that data are collected in a structured manner using questionnaires. According to Saunders et al. (2019), survey research is effective in establishing relationships between variables in organisational studies, especially when examining behavioural and operational factors such as ICT usage and performance outcomes.

3.4 Sampling Procedure and Sample Size Determination

The study will adopt a simple random sampling technique, which gives every member of the population an equal chance of being selected. This ensures fairness and reduces sampling bias in the selection process.

The sample size will be determined using Taro Yamane's formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n = sample size

N = population (42)

e = level of significance (0.05)

1 = constant

Substituting into the formula:

$$n = \frac{42}{1 + 42(0.05)^2} = 38$$

Therefore, the sample size for the study is 38 respondents.

3.5 Data Analysis Technique

Data collected for this study will be analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods.

Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and simple percentages will be used to summarise respondents' demographic characteristics and their responses to questionnaire items. Frequencies indicate the number of occurrences of a response, while percentages provide a clearer interpretation by expressing responses in proportion to the total sample.

For hypothesis testing, the study will employ Multiple Regression Analysis. This technique is appropriate for examining the relationship between multiple independent variables (hardware, software, and technological change) and the dependent variable (performance of High-Quality Bakery Calabar). Regression analysis will help determine the extent to which each ICT component influences business performance and whether the relationships are statistically significant.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table 4.1 Profile of the Respondents

Demographic	Particulars	No. of Respondents	% Of Respondents
Gender	Male	20	53
	Female	18	47
Age	18–25	5	13
	26–35	20	52
	46 and above	10	26
Marital Status	Single	3	8

	Married	25	74
	Divorced	4	10
	Widowed	6	15
Educational Qualification	Primary	0	0
	Secondary	0	0
	OND/NCE	10	26
	HND/BSc	20	52
	Others	8	21
Position in the Organisation	Senior Staff	15	39
	Supervisory Staff	16	42
	Junior Staff	7	18
Years of Work Experience	Less than 1 year	5	13
	1–5 years	15	39
	6–10 years	10	26
	Above 10 years	8	21
Total for each segment		38	100

Source: Computation of primary data, 2026

Table 4.1 presents the demographic profile of the 38 respondents. The gender distribution shows that 20 (53%) are male while 18 (47%) are female, indicating a relatively balanced representation with a slight dominance of males. In terms of age, the majority of respondents fall within the 26–35 years category (52%), followed by those aged 46 and above (26%), suggesting that most staff are in their productive working years. Regarding marital status, most respondents are married (74%), which implies stability and responsibility among employees.

The educational qualification shows that 52% hold HND/BSc certificates, 26% possess OND/NCE, while 21% fall under other qualifications, indicating that the workforce is generally well educated. Concerning position, supervisory staff constitute the largest group (42%), followed by senior staff (39%) and junior staff (18%). Finally, work experience reveals that most respondents (39%) have 1–5 years of experience, showing moderate familiarity with organisational operations.

Table 4.2 Hardware and Business Performance

S/N	Hardware Statements	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Std. Dev.	Decision
1	Computers improve operational efficiency	4.62	0.81	High
2	Point-of-sale machines improve sales accuracy	4.55	0.89	High
3	ICT hardware reduces operational errors	4.48	0.92	High
4	Lack of modern hardware affects productivity	4.30	0.95	High
	Grand Mean	4.49	0.89	High

Source: Computation of primary data, 2026

Table 4.2 presents the responses on hardware and business performance. The results show high mean scores for all the statements, indicating strong agreement among respondents. The statement that computers improve operational efficiency recorded a mean of 4.62 (SD = 0.81), suggesting that respondents highly believe hardware enhances productivity. Similarly, point-of-sale machines improving sales accuracy had a mean of 4.55 (SD = 0.89), reflecting agreement that modern sales equipment contributes to accurate transactions and better financial records.

Furthermore, ICT hardware reducing operational errors recorded a mean of 4.48 (SD = 0.92), showing that respondents recognize the role of hardware in minimizing mistakes in business processes. The statement that lack of modern hardware affects productivity also scored high (Mean = 4.30), confirming that inadequate hardware may limit performance. The grand mean of 4.49 indicates an overall high positive perception that hardware significantly influences the performance of High-Quality Bakery Calabar. The results therefore suggest that hardware adoption contributes meaningfully to business efficiency and productivity.

Table 4.3 Software and Business Performance

S/N	Software Statements	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Std. Dev.	Decision
1	Accounting software improves record keeping	4.70	0.78	High
2	Inventory software improves stock management	4.58	0.85	High
3	Software enhances decision-making	4.41	0.93	High
4	Lack of software systems limits performance	4.36	0.97	High
	Grand Mean	4.51	0.88	Very High

Source: Computation of primary data, 2026

Table 4.3 presents the responses on software and business performance. The results indicate that respondents strongly agree that software plays a significant role in improving organisational performance. Accounting software recorded the highest mean score of 4.70 (SD = 0.78), showing that it greatly enhances record keeping and financial management within the bakery. Similarly, inventory software obtained a mean of 4.58 (SD = 0.85), indicating that it improves stock management and helps in reducing shortages or overstocking.

The statement that software enhances decision-making recorded a mean of 4.41 (SD = 0.93), suggesting that respondents believe software systems support better planning and operational control. Additionally, the item stating that lack of software systems limits performance scored 4.36 (SD = 0.97), confirming that absence of appropriate software can negatively affect efficiency. The grand mean of 4.51 falls within the “Very High” category, implying that software significantly contributes to the performance of High-Quality Bakery Calabar in terms of efficiency, accuracy, and overall productivity.

Table 4.4 Technological Change and Business Performance

S/N	Technological Change Statements	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Std. Dev.	Decision
1	Technological change improves efficiency	4.66	0.83	High
2	New technology increases productivity	4.59	0.87	High
3	Employees adapt easily to new technology	4.25	1.02	Moderately High
4	Resistance to technological change affects performance	4.40	0.94	High
	Grand Mean	4.48	0.91	High

Source: Computation of primary data, 2026

Table 4.4 presents the responses on technological change and business performance. The findings show that respondents generally agree that technological change has a positive influence on the performance of High-Quality Bakery Calabar. The statement that technological change improves efficiency recorded a mean of 4.66 (SD = 0.83), indicating strong agreement that new technologies enhance operational effectiveness. Similarly, new technology increases productivity had a mean of 4.59 (SD = 0.87), suggesting that

respondents believe technological innovations contribute to higher output levels in the bakery.

The item stating that employees adapt easily to new technology recorded a mean of 4.25 (SD = 1.02), which is moderately high, implying that while adaptation exists, it may not be fully seamless for all staff. Furthermore, resistance to technological change affecting performance recorded a mean of 4.40 (SD = 0.94), confirming that reluctance to adopt new systems can hinder efficiency. The grand mean of 4.48 indicates an overall high positive effect of technological change on business performance.

4.1 Discussion

The findings of this study provide empirical evidence on the effect of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) specifically hardware, software, and technological change on the performance of High-Quality Bakery Calabar in Calabar Municipality. Overall, the results show consistently high mean scores across all variables, indicating that respondents strongly agree that ICT components significantly enhance business performance in terms of efficiency, productivity, accuracy, and operational effectiveness.

Starting with hardware and business performance, the grand mean of 4.49 indicates a strong positive relationship between hardware usage and business performance. Respondents agreed that computers, point-of-sale machines, and other ICT hardware improve operational efficiency and reduce errors. This finding aligns with the study of Brynjolfsson and Hitt (2000), who found that ICT capital investment enhances productivity and firm performance through improved coordination and reduced transaction costs. Similarly, Dedrick, Kraemer, and Sharma (2013) confirmed that hardware infrastructure significantly improves organisational efficiency when properly integrated into business processes. However, contrasting evidence from Olise and Anigbogu (2021) suggests that ICT hardware alone does not guarantee improved performance unless supported by proper usage and skilled personnel. This implies that while hardware is beneficial, its impact depends on effective utilisation.

For software and business performance, the grand mean of 4.51 indicates a very high positive effect, making it the strongest ICT dimension in the study. Accounting and inventory software were particularly influential in improving record keeping and stock

management. This supports the findings of Musa and Bako (2022), who reported that software systems enhance financial accuracy, operational control, and business decision-making among SMEs in Nigeria. Similarly, Achieng and Otieno (2023) found that software adoption improves efficiency and reduces operational errors in small businesses. In contrast, Awiagah et al. (2020) argued that software systems may not significantly improve performance in environments with poor digital literacy and weak infrastructure. This suggests that while software has strong potential, its effectiveness depends on user competence and organisational readiness.

Regarding technological change and business performance, the grand mean of 4.48 indicates that technological change positively influences performance, particularly through improved efficiency and productivity. This finding is consistent with Vial (2021), who emphasized that technological change drives digital transformation, enabling firms to redesign processes and improve efficiency. Similarly, Bharadwaj et al. (2022) noted that firms that adapt to technological change are more likely to sustain competitive advantage. However, the moderate mean score for employee adaptability (4.25) suggests some resistance to change, which aligns with findings by Ojo and Adeleke (2023), who observed that resistance to ICT adoption is a major challenge in Nigerian small businesses.

In general, the study demonstrates that ICT components—hardware, software, and technological change have a significant positive impact on the performance of High-Quality Bakery Calabar. Software emerged as the most influential factor, followed closely by hardware and technological change. The findings reinforce existing literature while also highlighting contextual challenges such as resistance to change and skill limitations, which moderate ICT effectiveness in small business environments.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

This study examined the effect of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) specifically hardware, software, and technological change on the performance of High-Quality Bakery Calabar in Calabar Municipality. The findings revealed that all three ICT components have a significant positive influence on business performance. The results from the descriptive analysis showed high mean scores across all variables, indicating

strong agreement that ICT improves operational efficiency, productivity, accuracy, and decision-making within the bakery.

Hardware was found to enhance operational efficiency, improve sales accuracy through point-of-sale systems, and reduce operational errors. Software emerged as the most influential ICT component, with accounting and inventory management systems significantly improving record keeping, stock control, and managerial decision-making. Technological change also showed a strong positive effect on performance by increasing efficiency and productivity, although some level of employee resistance to new systems was observed.

In conclusion, the study confirms that ICT adoption plays a crucial role in improving the performance of small businesses, particularly in the bakery sector. However, the effectiveness of ICT is influenced by factors such as employee adaptability, availability of resources, and proper utilization of technology. The findings align with existing literature that emphasizes ICT as a key driver of organizational competitiveness and efficiency in modern business environments.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- i. High-Quality Bakery Calabar should continuously invest in modern hardware such as updated computers and advanced point-of-sale systems to enhance operational efficiency and reduce errors in production and sales processes.
- ii. The management should fully integrate accounting, inventory, and customer management software into daily operations. This will improve record keeping, enhance financial transparency, and support better decision-making.
- iii. Regular training programs should be organized to improve employees' ICT skills and reduce resistance to technological change. This will ensure effective utilization of both hardware and software systems.
- iv. Management should create a supportive environment that encourages employees to embrace new technologies. Incentives and motivation strategies should be introduced to reduce resistance to change.

- v. The bakery should ensure regular maintenance and upgrading of ICT facilities to prevent system failure and ensure continuous productivity.

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