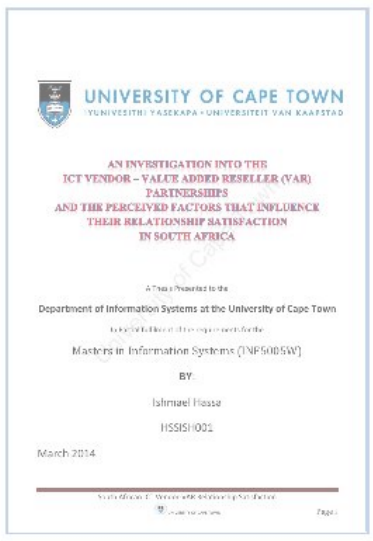
An investigation into the ICT Vendor–Value Added Reseller (VAR) partnerships and the perceived factors that influence their relationship satisfaction in South Africa

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AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE ICT VENDOR – VALUE ADDED RESELLER (VAR) PARTNERSHIPS AND THE PERCEIVED FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THEIR RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION IN SOUTH AFRICA

A Thesis Presented to the Department of Information Systems at the University of Cape Town

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BY:

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Abstract

The purpose of the study is to explore the perceived factors that contribute to relationship satisfaction between Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) downstream supply chain management (SCM) Vendors and Value-added Resellers (VARs) in South Africa. In addition, the study investigates the motivation for Vendor-VAR relationships as this exposes the antecedent and consequences of the perceived factors. By exploring and exposing the relationship quality in an under-researched industry and country context, the study shall illuminate the challenges faced in these critical dyads. ICT is integral to South Africa's social, economic and technological progress. The successful diffusion and adoption of ICT in South Africa hinges on Vendor-VAR relationships.The dissertation pursued qualitative research methods in which relevant experts from both ICT Vendors and VARs were interviewed. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data. This allowed deep and underlying thoughts and feelings to be exposed without restrictions. The study draws on existing knowledge in SCM, interpersonal and business relationships. Importantly, the study utilises existing theory, which is the Interaction Approach (IA). IA is suitable for the research as it concentrates on business interactions and the outcomes thereof as they are influenced by individuals, organisations, networks and the environment. The findings of the study indicate that the four-relationship satisfaction factors contained in the "atmosphere" variable within the theory is not comprehensive enough when interpreting business relationships in the ICT industry in South Africa. There are some critical factors, which emerged, such as profitability, communication and value, that are antecedent and consequent factors to other perceived relationship satisfaction factors. For these reasons, the IA model is extended to reflect interesting and important factors that emerged from the study. In addition, the findings revealed that the "environment" variable within IA does not sufficiently represent the ICT industry in South Africa. The South African context exposes unique "environment" issues such as Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) that has a bearing on relationship satisfaction in the ICT industry. An unexpected finding is around the deep influence ICT customers have on SCM .This inquiry minimises the gap in knowledge and is intended to encourage discussions between stakeholders and be a catalyst for further research.

Keywords

Information Systems

Reference:

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