

CONTRIBUTIONS OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES TO BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Information technologies facilitate organizational, productive and decision-making processes, enabling business growth through their appropriate use. This research article aims to analyze the impact of information technologies on business development from a quantitative documentary approach. The results show that the use of technologies alone does not guarantee a business benefit. It is important that the human talent is adequately trained for their use. At the same time, it is essential that the organization has a well-defined and clarified strategy that allows it to take full advantage of the tools.

Keywords: Information technologies, business growth, organizations.

Resumen

Las tecnologías de la información facilitan procesos organizativos, productivos y de toma de decisiones, posibilitando el crecimiento empresarial a partir de su adecuado uso. El presente artículo de investigación, pretende analizar el impacto de las tecnologías de la información en el desarrollo empresarial desde un enfoque cuantitativo documental. Los resultados demuestran que el uso de las tecnologías por sí solas no garantiza un beneficio empresarial. Es importante que el talento humano esté capacitado adecuadamente para su empleo, al mismo tiempo, es clave que la organización posea una estrategia bien definida y esclarecida que permita sacarle el máximo provecho a las herramientas.

Palabras clave: Tecnologías de la información, crecimiento empresarial, organizaciones.

INTRODUCTION

Business growth is an element that is subject to various factors and variables, and the appropriate use of information technologies is

one of them. It is recognized that information technologies (IT) have transformed various spheres of social practices, one of them referring to business and the business world (Fontalvo-Herrera et al., 2019; Sixto-García,

2017). Taking advantage of technological advances is currently an important boost for companies that are constantly seeking to increase their market share. The new Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) are composed of multiple useful tools for business promotion (Carrión et al., 2021).

The use of new technologies adds value to institutions, enabling the emergent change of the internal processes of organizations thanks to the constant updating of multiple channels and work tools. This growth was born in the mid-1960s (Medina-Quintero et al., 2011) and has exponentially increased its magnitude and influence since then, meeting the needs of users along with the increase in knowledge, productivity and information.

It is unquestionable that business growth is a common goal of all organizations, which seek to grow to obtain greater benefits that allow them to increase their sustainability, enhance their corporate image, build organizational welfare, ensure their permanence and consolidation in the market (Zambrano-Vargas & Vázquez-García, 2019).

In this sense, IT represents tools that are used within the organization for the development of activities and tasks to optimize the business strategy and achieve the desired growth.

Thanks to IT, one of the main business growth strategies is the internationalization of organizations, which is possible thanks to innovation and productivity improvement that enable organizational success and stability (Luna Pereira et al., 2020; Chaparro Rodríguez et al., 2018).

In the contemporary world marked by globalization and the immediacy of communication, the world economy has led companies whose horizon is growth to look at the possibility of covering foreign markets, this being the main means of expansion provided by the current economic and social context.

METHOD

The purpose of this research was to analyze the importance of information technologies in business growth based on a theoretical-documentary study, with bibliographic design and documentary technique, used to evaluate

concepts related to information technology and economic growth.

Similarly, a quantitative analysis of the information provided by Scopus is performed under a content analysis approach on the scientific production concerning business growth and the use of information technologies identified from Latin American institutions in order to know the approach of scientific papers and the contribution that Latin countries have made to the literature concerning the study of the rise of enterprises based on the use of ICTs during the period 2016-2021.

Type of research

The type of research is theoretical-documentary. According to Arias (2004), it is documentary, since it consists of the study of problems to broaden knowledge supported by bibliographic and documentary sources. Originality is reflected in the approach, criteria and conclusions.

The identification of texts and documents allowed the selection of the units of analysis, and, based on their reading, the statements referring to the theoretical-conceptual axes (Gamboa, 2019) to information technology and economic growth were chosen, which were classified into meaningful categories through abstraction.

Research design

Bibliographic research is characterized by the use of secondary data as a source of information, since it provides knowledge of existing research -theories, hypotheses, experiments, results, instruments and techniques used- on the topic or problem to be investigated.

As a first strategy for the review of the theoretical-documentary material, a certain number of texts related to the topic under study are reviewed, to subsequently initiate a process of discarding, through which the theoretical-documentary material that will form an integral part of the research is selected. In this case, the documentary material or selected texts correspond to online scientific articles that are

available in databases and/or repositories of open access journals (Open Access Journals).

This leads to an analysis stage, through which different perspectives of different authors are contrasted, which in turn present opposing positions on the categories that make up the research.

This research does not have a sample, since the selected theoretical-documentary sources were analyzed under a single moment of collection, giving the research a trans-sectional character, because the data are collected in a single moment at the same time. Likewise, the research does not have an instrument due to its theoretical-documentary nature.

Data collection

For the proposed biometric analysis, a search is performed in the Scopus database. For this purpose, filters are established to identify the

publications most related to the topic of study of this document. The selection of articles or research papers is done by establishing search criteria:

- Research papers (articles, conference papers, books, book chapters, among others) whose variable of study is Information Technologies and Business Growth.
- Publications produced during the period 2016-2021.
- Research papers published in Latin American countries.

RESULTS

Through the use of the inductive method, a review and analysis of different scientific articles related to information technology and economic growth by various authors was carried out (Table 1).

Table 1. Selected texts on the concepts concerning Information Technology and Economic Growth.

Information technology	<p>Andrade & Campo (2007) Information technologies for digital inclusion.</p> <p>Pineda (2008) Information and communication technologies (ICT) as a source of technological development.</p> <p>Medina-Quintero, De la Garza & Jiménez (2011) Business competence with the use of information and technology.</p> <p>Díaz-Batista & Blanco-Fernández (2018) Adoption and use of Information Technologies in Cuban organizations.</p> <p>Sanchez & De la Garza (2018) Information technologies and organizational performance of SMEs in northeastern Mexico.</p> <p>Espíndola-Somasa, Fajardo-Ortiz & Romero (2020). Information and Communication Technology and export activity in manufacturing firms in Colombia.</p> <p>Villegas, Walle-Vazquez & Alvarez-Aros (2021) Use of information technologies in decision making processes: a bibliometric analysis.</p>
	<p>Gibrat, (1931). Economic inequality.</p> <p>Penrose (1962). Theory of the Growth of the firm.</p> <p>De Ravel (1972). The growth of the company.</p>

<p>Economic growth</p>	<p>Sallenave (1985). Management and strategic planning.</p> <p>Fernández, García & Ventura (1988) Analysis of sustainable growth by different business sectors.</p> <p>Correa (1999). Determining factors of business growth.</p> <p>Canals (2000). Business Growth: People and Technology in the New Economy.</p> <p>González & Acosta (2001). Determining factors of growth in Canarian SMEs: influence of size, age and sector of activity. Selection of business research.</p> <p>Charan (2004). Profitable growth, everybody's business: 10 practical tools for business growth.</p> <p>Cardona & Cano (2005). Territory, Life Cycle and Business Structure: A bridge in regional industrialization.</p> <p>Blázquez, Dorta & Verona (2006) Concept, perspectives and measurement of business growth.</p> <p>Carree & Thurik (2010) The impact of entrepreneurship on economic growth.</p> <p>Puerto (2010) Globalization and business growth through internationalization strategies.</p> <p>Galindo & Méndez (2011) Entrepreneurial activity and competitiveness: Factors affecting entrepreneurs.</p> <p>Aguilera & Puerto (2012) Business growth based on Social Responsibility.</p>
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Source: Own elaboration.

It is based on the premise that the use of IT in organizations makes it possible to increase efficiency, thereby increasing user and customer satisfaction, enabling these organizations to become more competitive as highlighted in Niebles-Núñez, Hoyos-Babilonia & De-La-Ossa-Guerra (2019). However, these technologies do not produce value by themselves, they are subject to the ability of the actors involved to use them in a creative and innovative way to generate the desired value.

Information technologies: relevance and timeliness

Contemporary society is characterized by constant flows of information and knowledge that allow real-time exchanges from different corners of the world. Today's world is global

and interconnected in a network, whose connections generate effects in different spheres: politics, economy, sports, business, among others (Avendaño Castro and Guacaneme Pineda, 2016). Andrade and Campo (2007) argue that the generation, processing and transmission of information has become the main factor of business productivity.

Any organization that requires obtaining a competitive advantage in today's world requires an adequate implementation of state-of-the-art technology, which allows it to develop capabilities for strategic market attention (Sanchez and De La Garza, 2018; Villegas et al., 2021).

IT is all forms of technology used to create, store and exchange information in its various forms, for example, images, data, audio, video, presentations, documents, among others

(Pineda, 2008; Medina-Quintero, 2011). Currently, these technologies represent a competitive advantage when used as a business strategy and for internal business processes.

The massification of IT has generated higher levels of skilled jobs, which demand constant training and updating of human talent. Pineda (2008) argues that the application of a large number of technological tools required by different sectors requires the development and training of skilled professionals to compete adequately in the international market.

IT has transformed the techniques and productivity linked to organizational and administrative processes. Similarly, their use has produced changes in organizational culture, institutions and social organization in general, thanks to the flow of information, communication and knowledge (Espíndola-Somasa, 2020).

Thanks to the above, authors such as Espíndola-Somasa (2020) allow themselves to speak of knowledge economy, in which a technical property is capable of applying new knowledge and information on the different business processes, thus generating value. Thus, the appropriate application of production techniques and methods on a specific technology becomes a transcendental factor of change and economic development.

For Díaz-Batista and Blanco-Fernández (2018), IT is increasingly used in processes such as operational management and business decision making. These tools elaborate increasingly complex activities, allowing a growing influence on all aspects of organizational development. Regarding companies, the authors point out that their use is increasingly evident in planning systems and supply chain management systems. This leads to an increase in productivity, thereby increasing the profitability of the organization thanks to the proper use of IT by its members.

However, some organizations may present the so-called productivity paradox, which refers to a contradictory relationship between the IT investments made by an organization and its performance (Díaz-Batista and Blanco-Fernández, 2018). Investments of this nature are usually costly, therefore, it is essential that

the leadership and managers efficiently attend to their adoption and use, in order to avoid unnecessary losses and make the most of them.

Technological development, according to Pineda (2008), has had an impact in recent decades in generating: 1) massive access to high-speed Internet and permanent connectivity; 2) stratification and globalization of audiences; and, 3) immediate access to different sources of communication and information.

In an organizational sense, IT enables organizations to function beyond geographic and temporal location, allowing the remote exchange of the information necessary for the fulfillment of the organization's tasks and the development of the necessary activities.

Quality management is linked to the use of innovative tools, business competitiveness and the ability to generate organizational growth go hand in hand with the proper application of IT and the maximum use of its advantages.

Innovation and business growth

There is no agreement on the definition of business growth. It is a rather diverse, complex and speculative concept. This absence of a uniform definition offers different works that approach the notion of business growth from different disciplines and thus different points of view of the same phenomenon: sociological, organizational, economic, financial, political, among others (Blázquez et al., 2006).

Entrepreneurial growth has neither a general theory nor a generally accepted conceptual definition (Correa, 1999; Pérez and Acosta, 2001). It would be inadequate to define in a homogeneous way something that in its own social nature is not homogeneous. The following is an overview of the main notions of economic growth and some of the authors who discuss it.

First of all, Gibrat (1931) points out that growth is the result of a process in which internal and external factors coincide and test the organization's capacity to take advantage of the investment opportunities offered by the market.

Penrose (1962) defines business growth as the result characterized by the complex action of

internal modifications that produce an increase in the size of the company and changes in its characteristics, specifically, the accumulation of physical and human capital. This is a process, according to this author, that is generated from the inside out: the adequate disposition of internal resources allows the potential external positioning that causes growth.

De Ravel (1972) defines growth from a quantitative point of view, linking this idea with the increase in the volume of production. This increase in the volume of production is possible because the company grows in its various organizational and resource spheres.

For Sallenave (1985), growth is an index of economic performance that measures the company's capacity to expand its range of commercial and technical opportunities.

Fernández et al. (1988) define it as the dynamic behavior of the company that evidences the expansion of its commercial, financial and technical activities in the market, characterized by high technological dynamism and high levels of uncertainty. This forces companies that wish to ensure their survival to at least match their closest rivals.

For Canals (2000), growth is the company's expansion into new markets, new customer segments, as well as new geographical areas, regions and countries. This concept is closely linked to the globalization boom of the end of the last century and the beginning of the 21st century, which summarizes business success in the ability to position itself as a global brand.

Charan (2004) asserts that growth allows an organization to recruit the best employees, building a strong competitive advantage from their skills and competencies.

Cardona and Cano (2005) define growth as an intangible process that depends on the accumulation of physical and human capital, adequately arranged in the organization and internal structure of the company.

Likewise, Blázquez et al. (2006) detail that growth is a process of adaptation required by changes in the business environment, in which an organization undertakes to expand its productive capacity by acquiring new resources or readjusting its resources. The internal

changes are of an organizational nature, seeking to adapt to the changes introduced, which allows sustaining the financial capacity of the organization and obtaining high standards of competitiveness in the market. Business growth is seen as a lasting increase in the size of an economic unit, manifested by changes in structure and system, which translate into variable economic progress.

For Aguilera and Puerto (2012), business growth is the product of knowledge of the environment, which allows taking full advantage of the business opportunities it offers.

Several of these definitions are characterized by their focus on the importance of the market. Business growth, in general, is characterized as a dynamic process that generates necessary changes for companies; these changes can be quantitative: financial growth, productive growth, market growth, among others. However, to obtain such changes, organizations require qualitative characteristics, for example, those related to structure and management and control mechanisms which are the organizational instances that are responsible for driving the rest of the changes (Aguilera & Puerto, 2012).

Business growth is fundamental to dynamize economies and favor the social and economic development of society (Miralles-Quirós, 2018). This is a desirable situation to which the leaders of large companies aim as their main objective.

Blázquez et al. (2006) argue that business growth is marked by various internal and external factors. Among the internal factors are age, size, motivation, ownership structure and knowledge management; while among the external factors, the authors highlight those related to the context (competitors, customers and suppliers) linked to demand, technological improvements, accessibility to credit, government support, among many others. From the external factors come the market opportunities that give the company the possibility to grow (Puerto, 2010).

Authors such as Carre and Thurik (2010) and Galindo and Méndez (2011) trace a direct relationship between economic growth and the organization's capacity to assume risks. Sustained growth implies a company's ability

to, firstly, identify investment opportunities in an uncertain environment and, secondly, constantly risk its capital in order to produce goods and services efficiently, contributing to an increase in productivity.

In today's world, companies that do not aspire to position their products or brands abroad will limit their growth and will be exposed in the medium term to the economic limitations of a local market (Puerto, 2010). To this end, the appropriate use of new information technologies is key.

Importance of information technology in business growth

With the emergence of new technologies, companies are faced with the need to evaluate their adoption in order to obtain benefits and increase efficiency. Technologies make it possible to reduce the level of uncertainty in a context of constant change.

These global changes mean that technology inevitably reaches every corner of business administration. Faced with the infinite diversity of technological solutions, management must generate exhaustive evaluation and decision-making processes in accordance with its capabilities and needs, in order to integrate the new resources with its different areas of operations and their diverse realities.

The introduction of information technologies in business environments allows the digitalization of administrative and communication processes, facilitating the flexibility of the organizational environment. For its optimal application it is essential to have competent and trained personnel, therefore, it is important to understand that the introduction of technological tools must be adapted to each particular context and to the specific conditions of each company.

This adaptability that companies gain with the introduction of technologies generates an effective impact on strategic decisions at the organizational level. IT changes the environment, tasks, conditions, structure, relationship with the public, relationship with employees, and more.

The expansion of IT and its ability to permeate all strata of society are generating ever wider

applications for these tools, allowing interconnection with high quality standards to practically all sectors of an organization.

The different work teams can connect through videoconferencing from any place at any time, from the most operative to the managerial levels, allowing new communication and decision-making possibilities that facilitate the organization's efficiency and with it the right answers to meet the demands of its environment.

Likewise, the ability to digitize all processes and information allows greater influence and management capacity over the processes of the organization, thanks to audio, video and text formats, a subject has a large mass of information which can be taken from one corner of the world to another in a matter of seconds. These facilities represent quantitative and qualitative advantages for organizational management and the expansion capacity of companies.

The implementation of IT generates the reduction of operating and administrative costs, as well as an increase in the quality of services, products and processes, thus improving the productivity and competitiveness of companies.

Thus, IT is a powerful and essential tool to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the market and to obtain the competitive advantage that every organization desires for the sake of its growth. Nowadays, IT is a quality standard in every large company, becoming a tool of interest, being used constantly and dynamically in the performance of tasks and for the improvement of productivity and competitiveness.

Organizations that aspire to grow rely on IT as a fundamental resource to boost their performance and increase their efficiency levels. This resource allows sustaining the business strategy in the optimal and fast performance of the daily tasks of the organization, thus facilitating the increase of performance and strengthening competitiveness. In this way, IT becomes a key strategic resource to take advantage of opportunities to expand into new markets, in addition to enabling the operation and e-commerce, allowing, thanks to the reduction of costs and increased productivity, to increase the chances of success of the company.

Classification by country (Latin America)

BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS

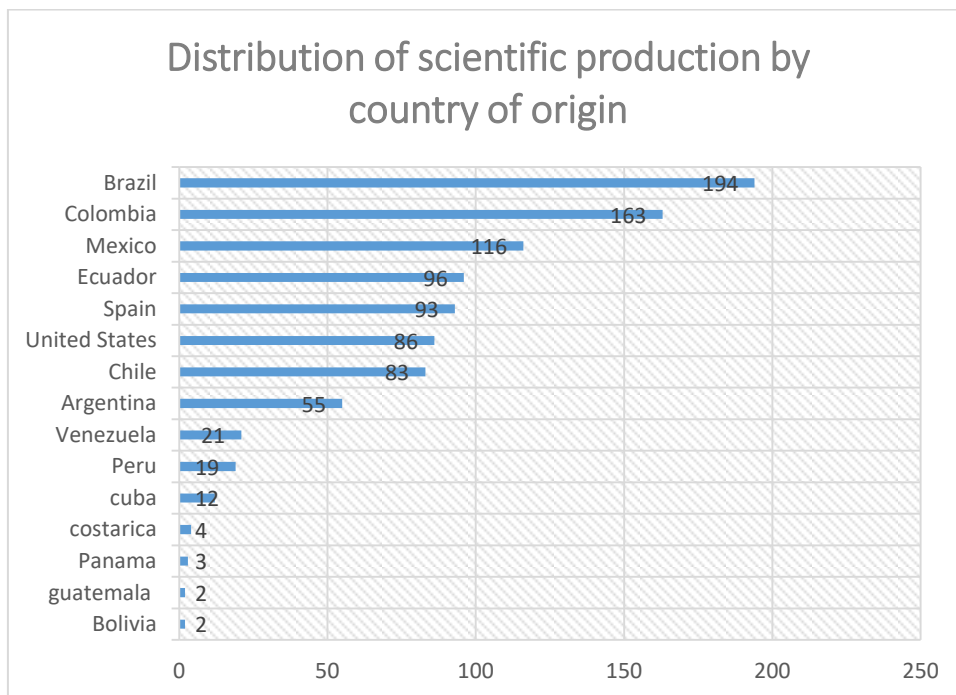


Figure 1. Distribution of scientific production by country of origin.

Source: Own elaboration (2021); based on data provided by Scopus.

Within the volume of publications identified through the application of search filters in Scopus, 716 research papers were recognized, of which 194 were published by institutions in Brazil, followed by Colombia and Mexico with 163 and 116 documents respectively, and Ecuador in fourth place with 96, within which the article entitled “Influence of investment in information technologies as a factor of competitiveness of SMEs” stands out (Troya, 2018) whose objective was to analyze the level

of investment of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in information technologies, and how such investment translates into increased competitiveness, thus recognizing that the efficient use of ICTs generates a differentiating factor among competitors but also requires investment in both fixed assets and employee training, which many companies of this magnitude are not willing to do because of the level of liquidity that is handled. However, there are government programs that encourage investment in information and communication technologies, seeking a generalized economic growth, as well as the sustainability of these companies.

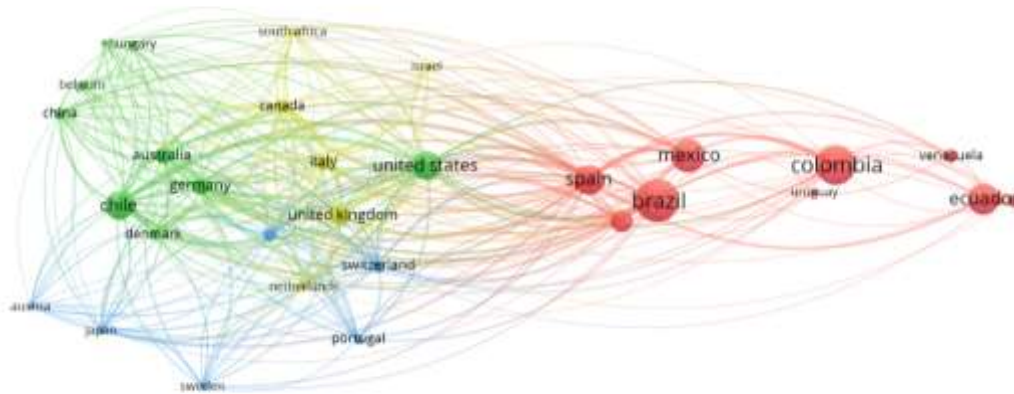


Figure 2. Co-citation between authors affiliated with Latin American institutions.

Source: Own elaboration (2021); based on data provided by Scopus.

Figure 2 shows how international cooperation has been for the scientific production of documents related to the study of Information Technologies and Business Growth, establishing a main group of Latin American countries made up of Brazil, Mexico, Colombia, Ecuador, Uruguay and Venezuela, which have generated scientific production with countries outside this community, such as Spain. Chile has presented publications with Germany, Australia, Denmark, among others.

CONCLUSIONS

The possibility of implementing technology is different for each company, just as the opportunities provided by the environment are different for each organization, so is the ability to take advantage of them. When evaluating the acquisition and implementation of new tools, organizations must consider several factors, including the cost of implementation, the demands of the environment and the behavior of rival companies.

The postponement of the implementation of new technologies delays the obtaining of benefits and distances the possibilities of increasing productivity, competitiveness and growth for the company. Thus, the cost-benefit

ratio is fundamental when evaluating the acquisition of new technologies.

The use of technologies alone does not guarantee a business benefit. It is important that the human talent is properly trained for their use, at the same time, it is key that the organization has a well-defined and clarified strategy that allows to get the most out of the tools.

Companies and organizations naturally aspire to their survival, for which it is essential to build sustained growth supported by the use of information technologies that favor better organizational performance, increased productivity and strengthened competitiveness in the global market.

Scientific research focused on the analysis of the factors involved in the success of companies and their growth is important, so knowing the current state of the production volume of research work and its impact is a vital raw material for the search for new alternatives to innovate in the processes carried out within the business activity.

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