ABSTRACT

This study aims at finding how higher learning institutions can realize and employ software as a service (SaaS) to solve the problem of acquisition of expensive traditional on-premise ICT infrastructure. The dissertation report consists of five chapters.

Chapter one covers the introduction of the study, chapter two the literature review and chapter three the research methodology. Chapter four concerns the presentation and discussion of the findings. This chapter answers three research questions which are: 1. Do higher learning institutions realise the opportunity that SaaS provides to reduce the cost of ICT infrastructure?, 2. How can higher learning institutions benefit from SaaS as compared to on-premise ICT infrastructure?, and 3. What are the problems that hinder higher learning institutions from adopting SaaS? Chapter five covers the conclusion, recommendations, policy implications and critical evaluation of the study.

There were three objectives of the study arranged in the order of their importance. The main objective was to explore the awareness of SaaS in higher learning institutions. The second objective was to establish how SaaS can be a better alternative compared to traditional on-premise ICT (Information and Communications Technology) infrastructure. The third and final objective was to identify problems that hinder higher learning institutions from adopting SaaS.

The findings generally show that there is awareness of SaaS as an opportunity to cater for expensive traditional on-premise ICT infrastructure but the rate of adoption of SaaS is not convincing. However it is evident that higher learning institutions are gradually adopting SaaS. To establish how SaaS can be a better alternative compared to on-premise IT solutions the main focus was the total cost of ownership (TCO) of both models. On the other hand there are problems that hinder higher learning institutions from adopting SaaS as were identified in the study.

It is recommended that higher learning institutions adopt SaaS and other cloud computing services to reduce the cost of ICT infrastructure and by so doing enabling these institutions to focus on their mission critical activities or core business processes.