Chapter 3
Information Technology Usage in Internal Audit to Enhance Public Sector Sustainability

Neeta Baporikar
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0676-9913
Independent Researcher, India

ABSTRACT

Information Technology has a transformative impact on streamlining processes and enhancing efficiency is universally admitted. Collaborative and specialized tools led to a comprehensive approach to diverse computer-aided audit processes. This chapter investigates the strategic role of information technology (IT) in enhancing public sector sustainability through the internal audit lens. Adopting a constructivist research philosophy, qualitative exploratory research design, and survey methodology the objective is to explore how internal auditors actively construct their understanding of IT impact on public sector sustainability. Findings reveal that the factors affecting IT usage in internal audit are linked to organizational, cultural, technical, and leadership aspects. Recommendations include internal auditors, embracing continuous learning, and, participating, in training programs to enhance IT proficiency and tools that emphasize fostering a collaborative work environment, promoting effective communication, and teamwork dynamics.

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INTRODUCTION

The transformative impact of IT on streamlining processes and enhancing efficiency is unanimously acknowledged. Collaboration tools, such as Google Docs, and specialized tools contribute to a comprehensive approach to diverse audit processes. The benefits derived from IT usage are consistent, emphasizing efficiency gains, ease of task execution, and the transformative impact of Computer Assisted Audit Techniques (CAATs). In the ever-evolving landscape of the public sector, sustainability has emerged as a central concern, shaping policies, strategies, and practices across governmental entities (Smith & Johnson, 2019). Governments strive to fulfil their obligations to citizens while safeguarding the future, the integration of Information Technology (IT) into internal audit processes stands as an important step (Brown & Miller, 2020). The intertwining of IT and internal audit in government departments carries profound implications, not only for the efficiency of public sector operations but also for the broader societal well-being (Johnson & White, 2018). This investigation sets out to unravel the enigma of IT adoption in the internal audit sphere, dissecting challenges, mitigation strategies, and best practices, all within the overarching goal of fortifying the bedrock of public sector sustainability (Chen et al., 2022). As technology continues to reshape the contours of governance, this study seeks to illuminate the path forward for governments, internal auditors, and citizens alike, in the pursuit of a more resilient, transparent, and sustainable public sector (Smith et al., 2021). Adopting the constructivist research, employing a qualitative exploratory research design with a survey methodology this chapter investigates the strategic role of information technology (IT) in enhancing public sector sustainability through the internal audit lens. A semi-structured interview guide was used as research instrument for data collection. The study's population consists of internal auditors from diverse government ministries, selected through convenience sampling from 20 ministries. Each internal audit unit comprised an average of 2 internal auditors, 1 chief internal auditor, and 1 deputy director. A thematic analysis was employed for coding, categorizing, and synthesizing the qualitative data.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The effective use of Information Technology (IT) in internal audit is crucial in enhancing the performance and sustainability of the public sector. IT enables the automation of tasks, facilitates real-time data access, enhances data analysis capabilities, promotes collaboration among auditors, and allows auditors to analyze large volumes of data, identify patterns, and detect irregularities more effectively (Du et