

Aspects Influencing Enterprise Resource Planning Projects Performance in Retail Supermarkets in Nairobi County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

This study was carried out on aspects influencing enterprise resource planning projects on the performance of retail supermarkets in Kenya. The study had four objectives: To assess the influence of team project leadership on Enterprise Resource Planning projects project performance in Enterprise Resource Planning projects, to investigate the influence of strategy alignment on Enterprise Resource Planning projects performance, to examine the influence of stakeholder participation on Enterprise Resource Planning projects performance and to evaluate the influence of firm resources on Enterprise Resource Planning projects performance. The research adopted a descriptive approach in trying to establish aspects influencing Enterprise Resource Planning projects on the performance of retail Supermarket branches in Nairobi. The study targeted 53 supermarkets in Nairobi. A sample frame was drawn from the target population using a census survey. A pilot study was conducted to pretest the validity and reliability of data collection instruments. After data, had be collected it was prepared in readiness for analysis by editing, handling blank responses, coding, categorizing and keying into statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) computer software for analysis. SPSS software version 21.0 was used to produce frequencies, descriptive and inferential statistics were used to derive conclusions and generalizations regarding the population. A multiple regression model was used to show the relationship between the independent variables to the dependent variable. Data was presented using tables to make it reader friendly. The study found that project leadership, stakeholder participation, strategy alignment and firm resources had a positive and significant effect on enterprise resource planning projects on the performance of retail supermarkets in Kenya. The study recommends; that a competent project leader be given the responsibility to oversee the performance of the Enterprise Resource Planning project, proper guidance on the utilization of firm resources to meet the project requirements hence improving performance, the project manager and the team should formulate project strategies based on project objectives, and develop interconnections between IT projects and the organization's performance outputs to increase project success rates, development of best measures for stakeholder participation be identified to avoid conflict of interests among the project stakeholders. Lastly, there should also be adequate preparation and communication before project initiation to ensure that the project acceptance does not experience major setbacks by the project stakeholders.

Background of the Study

Projects are activities or an undertaking that need to be accomplished by certain date, for a certain amount of money and within some expected level of performance. Important aspects of a project includes “inputs” in the form of men, money, materials, and plans and “outputs” in the form of activities, products or services (Asfandyar, 2012). Abuya, (2016) argues that development projects in Kenya have become the principal mechanisms through which governments deliver public services. Understanding this strategic role is important because few politicians and citizens appreciate the role that development projects play in the delivery of essential public services.

The globalization of competition means that apart from ensuring their own successful operation, firms that hope to survive must establish highly responsive supply chains, with upstream, midstream, and downstream partners (Yang, 2009). The Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system plays the role of central nervous system in promoting globalization of enterprise operations and shortening product lifecycle. Therefore, the ERP system has become popular. Li (2009) considered ERPs enveloped software that provides various internal information for an enterprise using an efficient means that enables units at different organizational hierarchies to effectively make business or daily operational decisions.

Conceptually, many firms have implemented company-wide systems called Enterprise Resource Planning systems, which are designed to integrate and optimize various business processes, such as order entry and production planning, across the entire firm (Mabert et al., 2001). This investment has also made possible the sharing of large amounts of information along the supply chain, and has enabled real-time collaboration between supply chain partners, providing organizations with forward visibility, thus improving inventory management and distribution (Mbogori, 2010). Furthermore, many firms deploying ERP systems considered extending system scope mainly to integrate their suppliers, customers or both to the system, to provide additional e-commerce or e-business operations and to increase supply chain functionalities (Olhanger & Selldin, 2003).

When enterprise resource planning systems are fully realized in a business organization, they can be expected to yield many benefits, such as reduction of cycle time, faster transactions, better financial management, the laying of the groundwork for e-commerce, linking the entire organization together seamlessly, providing instantaneous information, and making tacit knowledge explicit (Mabert et al., 2001; Davenport and Brooks, 2004; Shang and Seddon, 2000; Murphy and Simon, 2002; Al-Mashari et al., 2003). ERP can provide the digital nervous system and the backbone in an organization to respond swiftly to customers and suppliers (Cox et al., 2000; Mabert et al., 2001).

As reported in Akkermans et al. (2003), ERP systems are widely believed to support operations in technical areas such as standardization, transparency and globalization. ERP systems are a leading tool for this purpose, and are always expected to be an integral component of operations (Nah et al., 2001; Themistocleous et al., 2004). The potential benefits of an integrated ERP system are such that many organizations are willing to undertake the difficult process of conversion.

Yurtkoru (2015) state that there have been a large number of studies on the success factors of ERP implementation. The basic underlying premise of most of these studies is that the success of ERP is largely determined by initial implementation. For this reason, most of these studies focus on the implementation activities and tend to ignore the role of the post-implementation stage that can either improve or impair the performance of ERP regardless of how successful the initial implementation was.

Statement of the problem

The Financial Year ending 2005 was a challenging one for Uchumi Supermarket Ltd. The rise in operational costs was among the factors that affected its profitability and this heavily resulted from amortization of ERP/Computerization costs, a higher depreciation charge and a number of one-off costs that included derecognizing of the deferred tax assets. The insolvency caused Uchumi Supermarkets to close for a month in 2006 but reopened after the Government lent it Ksh675 million and receiving Kshs 300 million from its shareholders (Kadzo, 2011). Uchumi has already made a retreat from Uganda, while Nakumatt is facing problems in the same market. Two of Kenya's largest retail supermarkets have closed two of their stores within a fortnight while the third one is still struggling to sell its assets to turn around its fortunes, exposing the woes facing the retail industry. Nakumatt has shut its Ronald Ngala branch among others while Tuskys Supermarket closed its Sheikh Karume branch both in Nairobi (Achuka, 2017).

Despite the perception of the benefits of ICT in both public and the private sectors, there is a sluggish rate of ICT adoption in the country to achieve performance. Only few studies have been done on supermarkets in Nairobi where ICT is linked to performance. An example is where Vendor Managed Inventory (VMI) technology was found to increase effectiveness in stock management and cash flow management (Irungu & Wanjau, 2011). Besides, the studies have been concentrated on the constraints and assessment of rate of adoption of ICT in the country and studies relating to performance aspects' influence on ERP projects in retail supermarkets in Kenya have not been done. The study aimed to fill this gap by conducting a research to establish aspects influencing Enterprise Resource Planning projects on the performance of retail supermarkets in Kenya.

Objectives of the study

General objective

The general objective of this study was to investigate on the aspects influencing Enterprise Resource Planning projects on the performance of retail Supermarkets in Kenya.

Specific objectives

The specific objectives of the study were:

- i. To assess the influence of project leadership on Enterprise Resource Planning projects performance.
- ii. To investigate the influence of stakeholder participation on Enterprise Resource Planning projects performance.

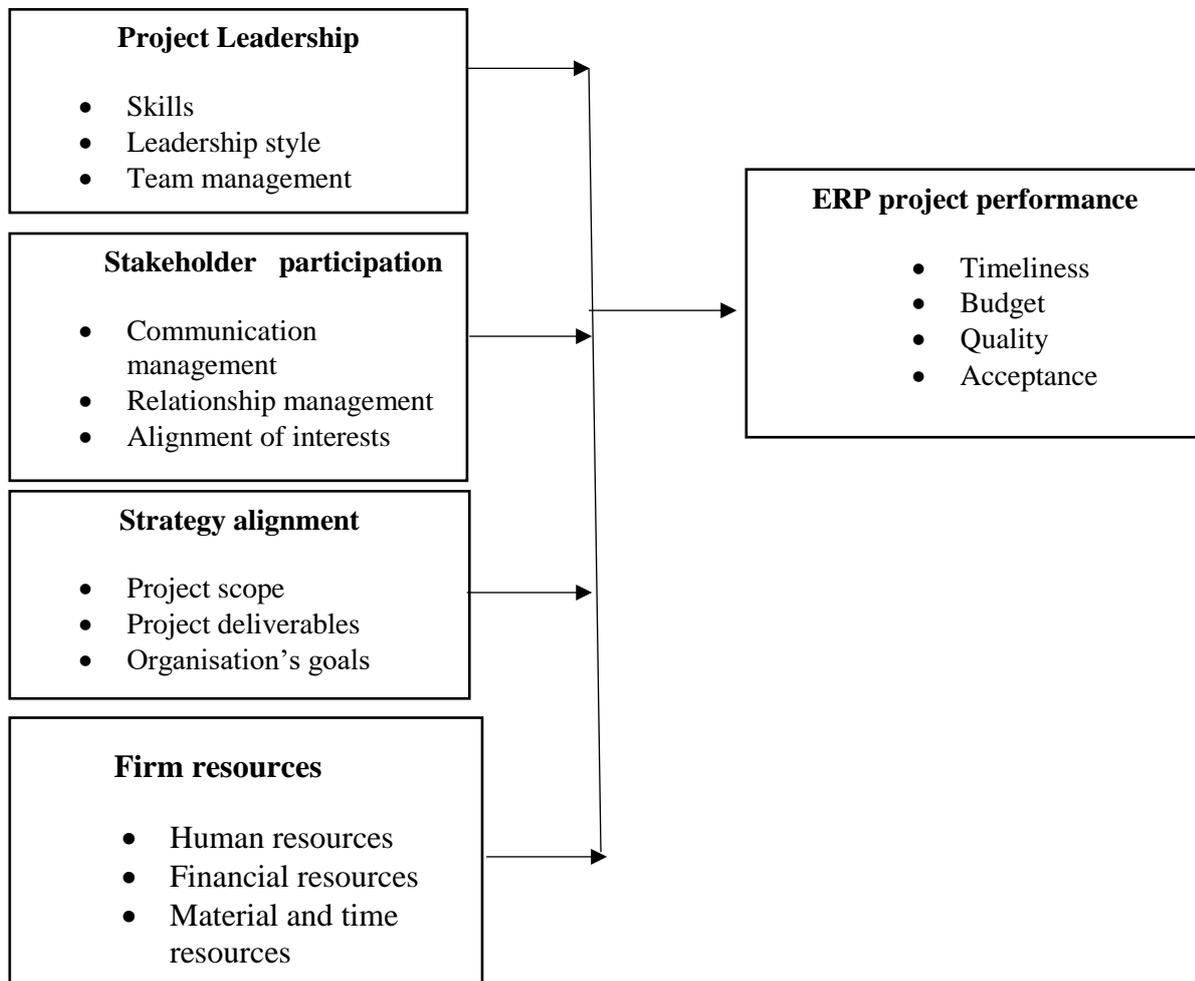
- iii. To evaluate the influence of strategy alignment on Enterprise Resource Planning projects performance.
- iv. To analyse the influence of firm resources on Enterprise Resource Planning projects performance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework indicates that the performance of Enterprise Resource Planning in supermarkets in Kenya would require effective project leadership, active stakeholder participation, management of firm resources, and good strategy alignment. However, the performance of ERP projects is not achieved to the required standards because of poor management of the project. When it comes to project leadership, the performance of ERP projects is influenced by the project manager's leadership style, the skills and how they are able to manage the project team. The project manager should also ensure that healthy relationships that add value to the project are maintained as well as effective communication management with the project's stakeholders.

In addition, there are challenges when it comes to stakeholder involvement because the project should ensure that the stakeholders' interests are aligned with the project's goals. It is important to consider the alignment of the ERP project with the organisation's strategy in terms of project scope, project deliverables, and organisation's goals. The firm's resources will also influence the performance of ERP project in relation to human resources, financial resources, material and time resources. If the above factors are to be addressed then the outcome is that there will be good performance of ERP projects with good project leadership, proper use of firm's resources, active stakeholder involvement, and effective strategy alignment.



Independent variable

Dependent variable

Figure 2.1 Conceptual framework

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopted the descriptive research design. A descriptive design is concerned with investigating the frequency with which something takes place or the correlation among variables (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Bryman and Bell (2011) assert that a descriptive design tries to find information that depicts existing phenomena by asking questions relating to individual perceptions and attitudes. According to Dawson and Montiel (2009), in a descriptive study, researchers observe, count, delineate, and classify.

Consultants, project managers and IT managers were the unit observation of large scale supermarkets in Kenya (Tuskys Supermarket Limited, Nakumatt Holdings Limited, Ukwala Supermarket Limited, Naivas Supermarket Limited and Uchumi Holdings Limited) operating in Nairobi according to the yellowpageskenya.com (2013) was used to gather information. This is because their perception is considered to be important and of value since they give the research a real picture of the problem area and it allowed the researcher to establish the aspects influencing ERP projects on the performance of retail supermarkets in Kenya. .

Target Population

Target population refers to the entire group of individuals or subjects from whom the study seeks to generalize findings (Cooper and Schindler, 2008). A target population according to Kothari, (2004) is a full set of cases from which a sample is taken. A population describes the parameters whose characteristics the research will attempt to describe. The target population of this study comprised all the 53 supermarkets in Nairobi. The unit of analysis will be the 53 supermarkets in Nairobi that have been actively involved in the implementation of the Enterprise Resource Planning project.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The study adopted a census survey design with the respect of the unit analysis which was the 53 supermarkets in Nairobi. This therefore ruled out the application of a sampling technique. The study will use census since the population of 53 supermarkets in Nairobi with Enterprise Resource Planning project projects is small and the study aimed at reaching all consultants, project managers and IT managers of the supermarkets in Nairobi actively involved Enterprise Resource Planning projects since there are the ones who are responsible for overseeing the implementation of the projects. In sampling when a sample from a population is generated there will always be margin for error, whereas in case of Census, entire population is taken into account and as such it is most accurate. This census approach is justified since according to Orodho (2009), data gathered using census contributes towards gathering of unbiased data representing all individuals' opinions on a study problem.

Data Collection

The researcher collected primary data from project managers, consultants and Information and Technology (IT) managers in all 53 supermarkets in Nairobi Kenya and any other persons carrying the same responsibility. They were considered appropriate because of their knowledge concerning ERP adoption, performance, and its integration with supermarkets activities. The data was collected by use of a structured questionnaire that will be administered to the various supermarkets in Nairobi. The questionnaire was in the form of Likert scale where respondents will be required to indicate their views on a scale of 1 to 5. The questionnaire contained 3 sections: Section A contained questions on the general information and company profile; section B contained questions on the extent of adoption of ERP system in the organisation whereas section C will contain questions on the aspects influencing ERP project performance in supermarkets in Kenya.

Data analysis and presentation

The data collected was sorted and coded then entered using the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) as it used for more than one variable. The statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 21 was used to analyze and interpret the quantitative data that was collected. The information was displayed by use of tables and in prose-form. This was done by tallying up responses, computing percentages of variations in response as well as describing and interpreting the data in line with the study objectives. Factor analysis was also used to determine the factors while correlation analysis was used establish the relationship between the factors. Thus the regression analysis was used to determine the relationship between independent variables and the dependent variables as follows;

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \sum$$

Where;

Y =Enterprise Resource planning project performance

X1 = Project Leadership

X2 =Stakeholder participation

X3 = Strategy alignment

X4= Firm resources

In the model, β_0 = the constant term while the coefficient $\beta_{ii} = 1 \dots 4$ was used to measure the sensitivity of the dependent variable (Y) to unit change in the predictor variables X1, X2, X3 and X4. The error (\sum) term captured the unexplained variations in the model

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Major Findings

This section provides a summary of the findings from the analysis. This is done in line with the objectives of the study. These objectives were; to assess the influence of project leadership on Enterprise Resource Planning projects performance, to investigate the influence of stakeholder involvement on Enterprise Resource Planning projects performance, to evaluate the influence of strategy alignment on Enterprise Resource Planning projects performance and to analyse the influence of firm resources on Enterprise Resource Planning projects performance.

A survey was made whereby researcher administered questionnaires to sampled outlets in the city. From their responses regarding delivery of the project within expected timelines, it was evident that majority of supermarkets relied on electronic mail and automated identification bar-coding systems to transact their operations more than any other systems mentioned to them. For instance, most supermarkets communicated orders through sending emails to suppliers' sales agents via emails and this hastened the period of delivery and confirmation of products being available or not. This ensured that there was regularly and constant communication via email between supermarkets and their suppliers. It was also clear that time was saved and this propelled the retail chains to gain competitive advantage in the supermarket industry After delivery of products by suppliers to supermarkets, most of the supermarkets barcoded the products using special technology that helps in their identification, stock control and sales operations, this addressed the issue of whether the ERP project helped to enhance quality. Other automated systems found to be frequently being used were electronic data interchange (EDI), e-procurement and electronic catalogue.

On the issue of determining if the ERP project met the stipulated budget, it was established that when supermarkets automate their activities, they tend to save money by cutting down the operational costs involved in the traditional form of managing sales. Moreover, accuracy of products ordered and delivered was maintained when those systems were used.

Lastly, the results established that there were various challenges stretching from; high cost of system implementation, slow user acceptance of the new ERP systems, lack of management support in adoption of new systems, inadequate IT and networking infrastructure and inadequate employee training. These among other factors mentioned affected effective utilization of automation systems on performance of supermarkets.

Project Leadership

The study sought to establish how project leadership influences Enterprise Resource Planning projects performance in supermarkets in Kenya. Majority of the respondents indicated that it is required of a leader with professional qualities to lead in the performance of ERP projects, there is need for adequate training to equip the project leader with the required skill set, for good project performance, the project leader should manage the project team with an effective leadership style in order to exert positive influence that will improve the project's performance.

Further, the study found out that project leadership is an essential requirement in the performance of ERP projects.

Stakeholder Participation

On influence of project stakeholder's participation on Enterprise Resource Planning it was established that project stakeholders are not adequately involved at initiation, planning, execution, implementation and closure of the projects. Internal and external stakeholders are not well represented during the requirement definition, kick off meeting are usually called for but the stakeholders do not turn up only allowing attendees to discuss the requirement definition. Respondents agreed on the importance of project stakeholders in performance of ERP project performance. Stakeholder interests and relationship management is an important element on performance of Enterprise Resource planning projects. Communication management between project stakeholders has been noted as a fundamental function in driving the performance of Enterprise Resource Planning projects.

Strategy Alignment

The study sought to establish the extent to which strategy alignment influences the performance of Enterprise Resource Planning projects in supermarkets in Kenya. The results of this study reinforced the argument that project alignment at the operational level directly influences project success and the overall performance of the organization. Respondents agreed that organization goals were a major setback to ERP projects performance. Majority of the respondents disagreed with project scope within projects. The social implication of these findings is that if organizational project success rates increase, the organization will benefit from the enhanced business performance.

Firm Resources

The study sought to establish the extent to which firm resources influences the performance of Enterprise Resource Planning projects in supermarkets in Kenya. Respondents agreed that firm resources have a major impact on delivery of the initiatives. Majority of the respondents disagreed with the project team understanding how to effectively use firm resources. At the point of project initiation, majority of the respondents disagreed on the utilization of the firm resources. Leiblein (2011) suggests that the discrepancies in the definitions of key resources are the potential barriers in refining the understanding of the linkages between resources, organisation, and performance. The study found out that firm resources and Enterprise Resource Planning projects performance had a positive and significant relationship. This implies that proper management of firm resources leads to better performance in Enterprise Resource Planning projects.

Conclusion of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to examine the aspects influencing Enterprise Resource Planning projects on the performance of retail supermarkets in Kenya. Based on the findings above the study concluded that project leadership, Stakeholder participation, strategy alignment and firm resources influence the performance of Enterprise Resource Planning projects in supermarkets in Kenya.

The study established a positive correlation between project leadership and project performance. The study concludes that project leadership is positively related to the performance of Enterprise

Resource Planning projects in supermarkets in Kenya. Leadership is therefore a needed necessity to ensure projects perform well.

The study established that there is a positive correlation between stakeholder participation and project performance. It can be concluded that there is a positive relationship between stakeholder participation and the performance of Enterprise Resource Planning projects in supermarkets in Kenya. The study concludes that stakeholder participation should be taken into consideration throughout the project lifecycle adequate to ensure good performance. Stakeholder participation measures should be well set and also minimizing conflict of interests as the project progresses.

The study found out that there was a positive correlation between strategy alignment and project performance. It can be concluded that there is a positive relationship between strategy alignment and the performance of Enterprise Resource Planning projects in supermarkets in Kenya. The management should ensure that project scope, project deliverables, and organizational goals are aligned with the project.

The study established that there was a positive relationship between firm resources and the performance of Enterprise Resource Planning projects in supermarkets in Kenya. The firm's resources should be monitored on a regular basis to ensure that the project runs accordingly. The project leader should manage the project team to ensure that they use the firm's resources effectively. This will ensure variance are noted and reported early for corrections.

Recommendations

The study recommends that a competent project leader be given the responsibility to oversee the performance of the Enterprise Resource Planning project. Since these Enterprise Resource Planning projects have an important role to play in ICT development of a country, the best leadership standards should be put in place to ensure effective project performance, only competent leaders can do this. The selection of project leaders should be done on merit to ensure only qualified project leaders are given the responsibility to oversee the performance of projects.

The study noted misuse of firm resources by the project team and therefore recommends that for a smooth project operation process to be carried out this challenge should be minimized at all cost. The study identified that during project initiation, there was no clear definition by the consultants on the resources required at every stage of the project. The project do not have enough technical resourcing affecting delivery in terms of time cost and quality. Therefore, the study recommends proper guidance on the utilization of firm resources to meet the project requirements hence improving performance.

The study recommends that predesigned objectives, rules, policies and work procedures are essential to ensure outcomes are met according to the project's strategy. Top-level managers develop corporate strategies that fail to align at the operational level where project implementation occurs. Subsequently, the project manager and the team formulate project strategies based on project objectives often leading to a lack of alignment. The study recommends that the interconnections between IT projects and the organization's performance outputs be examined to increase project success rates.

Lastly, this study recommends that best measures for stakeholder participation be identified, to avoid conflict of interests among the project stakeholders as noted by the study where the

management disagreed on several occasions with the project consultants. There should also be adequate preparation and communication before project initiation to ensure that the project acceptance does not experience major setbacks by the project stakeholders thus enhancing better project performance.

Areas for Further Research

The general objective of this study was to investigate on the aspects influencing Enterprise Resource Planning projects performance in Supermarkets in Kenya. Specifically, this study investigated the aspects of project leadership, stakeholder participation, strategy alignment and firm resources on performance of Enterprise Resource Planning projects. These aspects are not exhaustive on how ICT is linked to project performance hence further research can be carried out to unearth other aspects. Secondly, further studies can be done in other organisations for the purpose of making a comparison of the findings with those of the current study.

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