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Adoption and Use of Cloud Computing in Small and Medium Enterprises in Kenya

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Abstract: The recent development of Cloud Computing provides a convincing opportunity for organizations to outsource their ICT. Although its popularity is increasing rapidly, there are concerns that must be taken into account. This paper ascertains the most relevant issues associated with the political, economic, social and technological factors concerning adoption of cloud computing and presents a framework of the factors involved in adoption of cloud computing. The aim is to explore the potential of cloud computing in transforming and automating the business processes of small and medium enterprises in Kenya. Promotion of adoption and use of cloud computing is an important matter for policy makers and regulators since cloud computing has benefits for the Kenyan government, service providers, the industry and also research institutions.
Keywords: Cloud computing, Small and Medium Enterprises, Information Technology adoption, SMEs.

1. Introduction

Small and medium enterprises in Kenya are defined as enterprises with fulltime employees not exceeding 100 or annual sales turnover not exceeding Ksh 150 million [6]. Development of competitive and resilient small and medium enterprises (SMEs) forms an integral component of Kenya's initiatives to be globally competitive and prosperous nation with a high quality of life by 2030.

SMEs play a major role in economic development in every country, including in African countries. Studies indicate that in both advanced economies and developing countries SMEs contribute on average 60 percent of total formal employment in the manufacturing sector [1]. For African economies, the contribution of the SME sector to job opportunities is even more important. Taking into account the contribution of the informal sector, SMEs account for about three-quarters of total employment in manufacturing [1].

Kenya's policies on (SMEs) clearly shows that the sector is not only a provider of goods and services but also a driver in promoting competition, innovation and enhancing the enterprise culture which is necessary for private sector development and industrialization[13]. The sector should effectively respond to challenges of creating productive and sustainable employment opportunities, promoting economic growth and poverty eradication in the country. It is important to have a framework that will support research and development to boost access to appropriate technologies, encourage innovation and promote product design, development and quality control [13]. SMEs will play a significant role in contributing to the national goal of wealth creation and making Kenya an industrialized country.

Cloud computing is a new formula of delivering computing resources, not a new technology. Specifically, cloud computing provides computing resources as on-demand

services that are hosted remotely, accessed over the Internet, and generally billed on a per-use basis [12].

The physical organization of the chapters and concepts in this paper are as follows;

Section one highlights the introduction of adoption and use of cloud computing in small and medium enterprises in Kenya. It brings out the definition of SMEs in Kenya which is an enterprise with fulltime employees not exceeding 100 or annual sales turnover not exceeding Ksh 150 million. Section two lists the objectives that are expected to be met at the end of this research.

Section three reviews the methodology used in the research. The primary aim of the study is, interpreting the implications caused by adoption and use of cloud computing by small medium enterprises, this is by gathering data from key players in small and medium enterprises by use of interviews.

Section four identifies the technology used in adopting and use of cloud computing. Three models are described. They are; Infrastructure as a service, Software as a service and Platform as a service. Section five describes the various developments derived from the research.

Section six discusses the results of the research. Discussion of the interviews is given and the results analyzed. Section seven reviews the business benefits of adopting and using cloud computing by SMEs.

Section eight discusses the conclusion which has the summary of the achievements, further work needed and recommendations provided.

2. Objectives

The objectives of this paper:

1. To determine the extent of adoption of cloud computing by SMEs in Kenya.
2. To determine whether Small and Medium Enterprises have the capacity to introduce and ensure adoption of cloud computing.
3. To investigate the impact of adoption of cloud computing in SMEs in Kenya.
4. To suggest a model for adoption of cloud computing technology by SMEs.
5. To make recommendations for effective adoption of cloud computing by SMEs.

3. Methodology

This study adopts an interpretative kind of exploratory study [2]. The primary aim of the study is, through interpreting the implications caused by adoption of cloud computing by small medium enterprises. The paper aims at gathering data from key players in small and medium enterprises adopting a snowball strategy [6], explicitly ask the interviewees who else they recommend to talk to, as well as receiving the interviewees' spontaneous recommendations. The paper considers this design appropriate since it will facilitate gathering of reliable data.

3.1 Population Sampling

Target population is the entire set of units for which the study data are to be used to make inferences. It defines those units for which the findings of the study are meant to generalize [2]. The target population will be ten small medium enterprises in Kenya namely; Karen Country club, Online biz online Kenya, Siana Springs Limited, Tracom Services Limited, Abt Associates Limited, Ol Pejeta Conservancy, Global pay limited, Pete's Coffee, M:Lab East Africa and Rev Webolutions.

The study population comprises of Operations Managers, Information Technology managers and Information and Communications and Technology support staff.

Table 1:People to be Interviewed

Category	Population Size	Sample	Percentage %
Operations Managers	10	10	100
I.T Managers	10	10	100
I.C.T Support Staff	30	10	30
TOTAL	50	30	

Kenya has about 1.6 million registered SMEs that make 60 % of all businesses in the country [3]. Approximately 100 SMEs use cloud computing, the researcher sampled 10 SMEs and came up with the below data. The SMEs are;

- Online Biz Online Kenya Limited.
- Ol Pejeta Conservancy.
- Tracom Services Limited.
- Abt Associates Programme.
- Siana Springs Limited.
- Karen Country Club.
- Global pay limited.
- Pete's Coffee.
- M: Lab East Africa.
- Rev Webolutions.

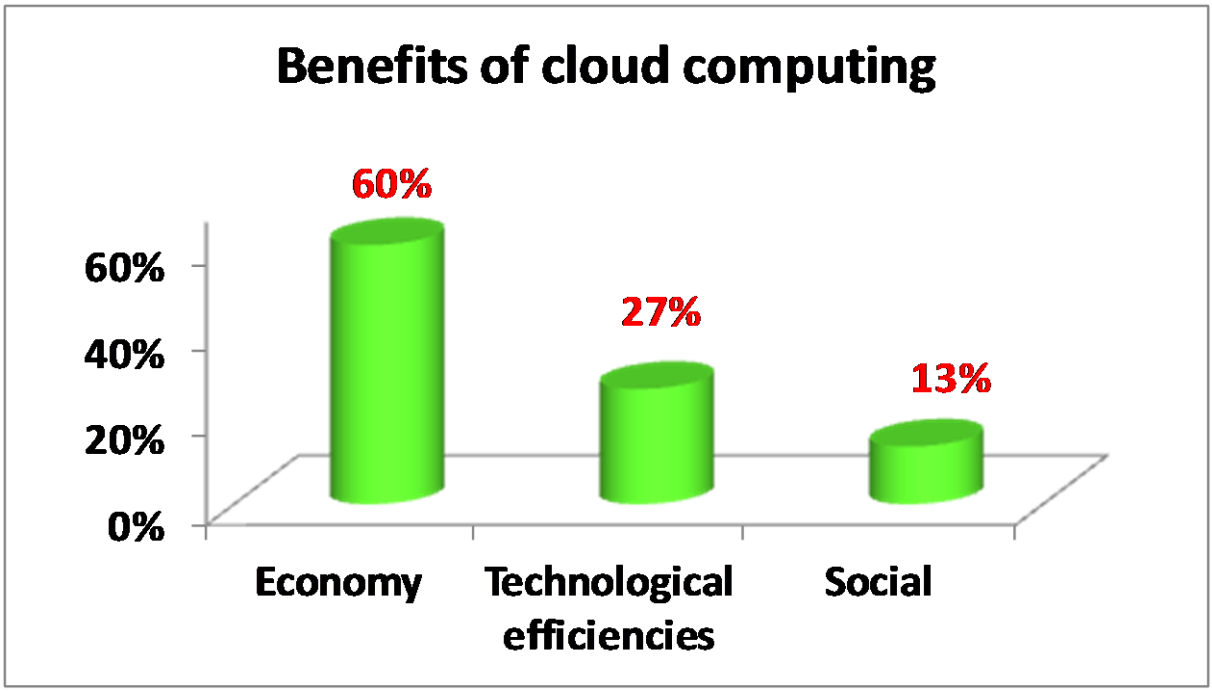

Figure 1:Benefits of Adoption of Cloud Computing

60% of the respondents of the sample data for cloud computing found Economy as the main benefit they receive. The economic benefit received comes in the form of saved costs of servers that would have been purchased, energy costs to run the machines, personnel costs to man the equipment and a general reduction on fixed overhead costs.

Technological efficiencies at 27% meant that the respondents found it easy to do their daily tasks without having to engage to complex processes that need trouble shooting and networking

Social benefits ranked the least at 13% meant that most SMEs do not need these benefits. However there are those that find it rewarding, since they feel that it adds value to

their personnel by them gaining new skills and helps them to be marketable and hence retain the existing talent by ensuring they concentrate on more value adding job profiles that keeps employee loyalty up.

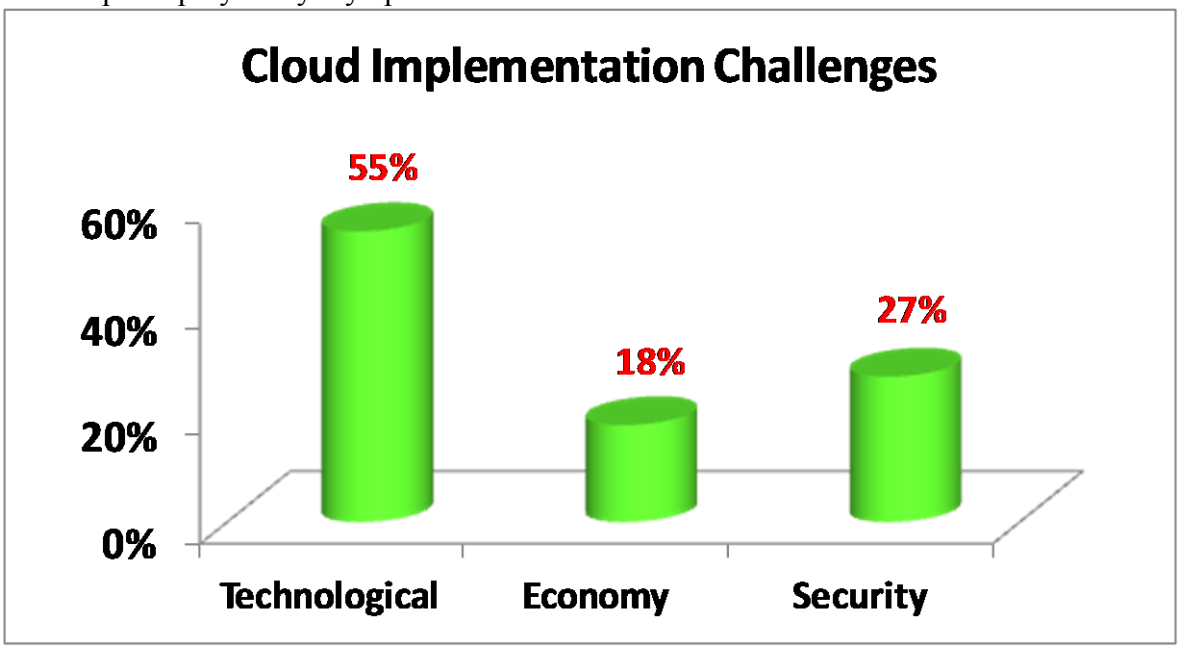

Figure 2: Challenges of Adoption of Cloud Computing

Technological challenges ranked the highest at 55% of the respondents for cloud computing. This is because their personnel did not have the necessary expertise required to deal with cloud computing. Some areas did not have good internet connection since fiber optic had not been installed near them and yet good internet connection is a key prerequisite in cloud computing, power supply problems in some areas, lack of necessary infrastructure and also low bandwidth.

Security ranked as the second highest challenge at 27% of the respondents, this meant that many people felt that large amounts of data stored in the cloud could be attacked by hackers. Some of them still maintain an offsite back up of their data because they fear that their data could be attacked. However the small and medium enterprises are now making service level agreements with their service providers and also encrypting their data before storing it in the cloud.

Economy ranked as the least challenge at 13% of the respondents. This meant that most of the users were prepared to migrate to cloud computing and had therefore budgeted for it. However migration to cloud computing requires additional and unexpected costs. Transfer of large volumes of data to the cloud can be very expensive especially in terms of bandwidth consumption.

Software as a service (SaaS) and Infrastructure as a service (IaaS) ranked highest at 40%. This is because Infrastructure as a service (IaaS) gives the SMEs access to secure, computing infrastructure that can be efficiently managed and scaled to meet different needs. This allows them to purchase computing resources on a pay as you go basis.

Software as a service (SaaS) is widely used by the SMEs especially when accessing web-based email or sharing documents online. Users are able to access these applications online through a web browser on a personal computer or mobile device, rather than through software installed and run on a local desktop or server. Using SaaS, customers can access software on-demand and pay for it on a pay as u go basis, such as based on the level of usage or the number of users.

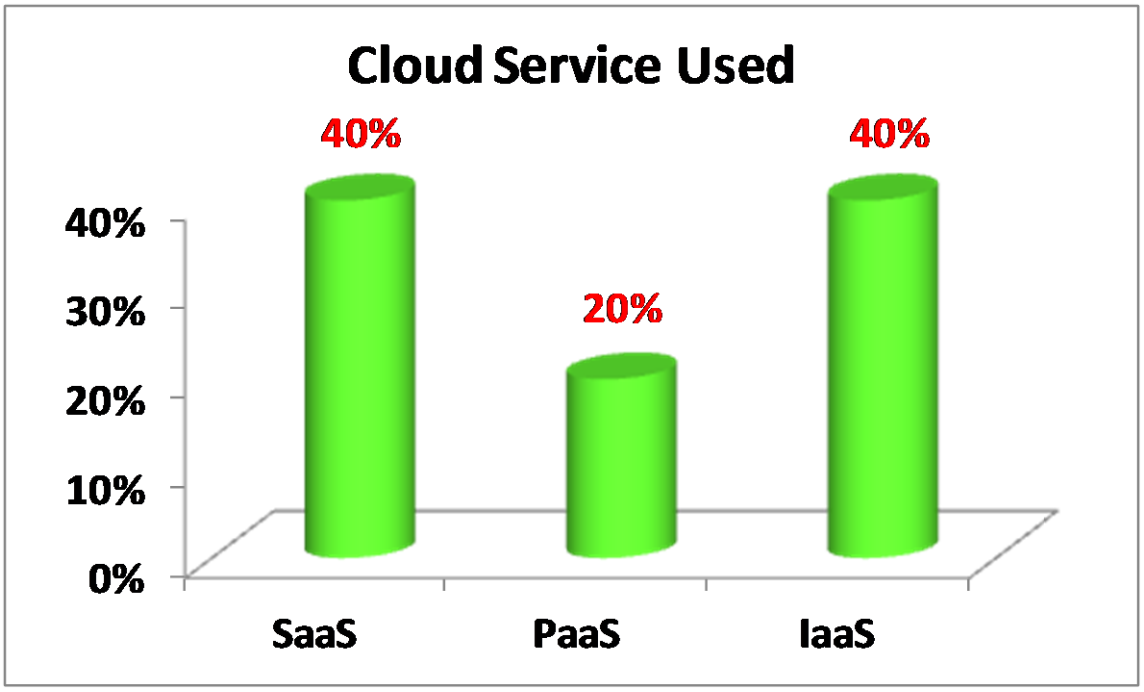

Figure 3: Cloud services used by SMEs

Platform as a service (PaaS) ranked the least at 20%. This can be well explained because most SME's are afraid to adopt PaaS because of security. From Table 5 below, Security was the highest challenge for PaaS users. That resonates well with the low uptake. Service providers need to package cloud services to this group with security as a service and assure the businesses that their concerns will be addressed.

Table 2: Base for the Analysis

SMES	Benefits of cloud computing			Cloud Implementation Challenges			Cloud Service Used		
Company Name	Economy	Technological efficiencies	Social	Technological	Economy	Security	SaaS	PaaS	IaaS
Online Biz Online Kenya Limited	yes	yes	yes	yes		yes	yes		
Ol Pejeta Conservancy	yes			yes					Yes
Tracom Services Limited	yes		yes			yes		yes	
Abt Associates Programme	yes			yes					yes
Siana Springs Limited		yes		yes	yes		yes		
Karen Country Club	yes			yes					yes
Global pay limited	yes				yes	yes		yes	
Pete's Coffee	yes	yes					yes		
M: Lab East Africa	yes	yes					yes		
Rev Webolutions	yes			yes					yes

3.2 Sampling Design

There are two alternative approaches for determining the size of a sample [7]. The first approach is to specify the precision of estimation desired and then to determine the sample size necessary to insure it. The second approach uses Bayesian statistics to weigh the cost of additional information against the expected value of the additional information.

3.3 Research Instruments

Interview schedules were used for this research. The interview targeted the Operations managers, Information Technology managers and information technology support staff of

the identified SMEs [7]. This is because the people who were interviewed were few and this made use of interviews the best research instrument to be used.

4. Data collection

In this paper, interviews were conducted so as to find out the adoption process and the decision behind it, the research is an exploratory research [7].
Interviews can be done in different ways when it comes to research. Open ended, closed, standardized, general and informal interviews. The researcher opted to gather most of the information and data in form of interviews. It could be good to have some sort of other gathering method to get better reliability but interviews worked as a good source [14].

The researcher conducted interviews with Karen Country club, Online biz online Kenya, Siana Springs Limited, Tracom Services Limited, Abt Associates Limited, Ol Pejeta Conservancy, Global pay limited, Pete's Coffee, M:Lab East Africa and Rev Webolutions and the approach was mostly informal in the first interview with some initial questions that were done in beforehand. The purpose of the approach was that the researcher wanted to have the interviewees to take part and talk freely about the subject. Trying to get as much data as possible from the sessions, interviews were written down from the talk so it was in text. It had to be done right away so as to not lose any data. This process was done two times to make it more reliable and to make sure that no data was lost.

Table 3: Interview Information

No	SMEs Interviewed	Role of the interviewee(s)	Duration	Purpose
1.	Online Biz Online Kenya Limited	Operations Manager I.T Manager I.C.T. Support Staff	43 min	Introduction of the business. Benefits and challenges of cloud computing.
2.	Ol Pejeta Conservancy	I.T Manager	28 min	Introduction of user, use of cloud services, benefits and challenges.
3.	Tracom Services Limited	I.T Manager I.C.T. Support Staff	35 min	Adoption of cloud computing, challenges and benefits of cloud computing.
4.	Abt Associates Programme	I.T Manager I.C.T. Support Staff	45 min	Introduction of the business. Benefits and challenges of cloud computing.
5.	Siana Springs Limited	I.T Manager I.C.T. Support Staff	35 min	Introduction of the business. Benefits and challenges of cloud computing.
6.	Karen Country Club	I.T Manager I.C.T. Support Staff	50 min	Introduction of the business. Benefits and challenges of cloud computing.
7.	Global Pay limited.	I.T Manager I.C.T. Support Staff	45 min	Introduction of the business. Benefits and challenges of cloud computing.
8.	Pete's Coffee.	I.T Manager I.C.T. Support Staff	35 min	Introduction of the business. Benefits and challenges of cloud computing.
9.	M: Lab East Africa	I.T Manager I.C.T. Support Staff	40 min	Introduction of the business. Benefits and challenges of cloud computing.
10.	Rev Webolutions	I.T Manager I.C.T. Support Staff	45 min	Introduction of the business. Benefits and challenges of cloud computing.

5. Technology Description

The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) defines cloud computing as " a model for enabling convenient, on demand network access to a shared pool of configurable computing resources (e.g., network, servers, storage, applications and services) that can be rapidly provisioned and released with minimal management effort or service provider interaction. This cloud model promotes availability and is composed of five essential characteristics and three service models and four deployment models" [4]. The use of cloud computing therefore benefits many small medium enterprises and they are able to store their data at a low cost.

5.1 Cloud Computing Delivery Models

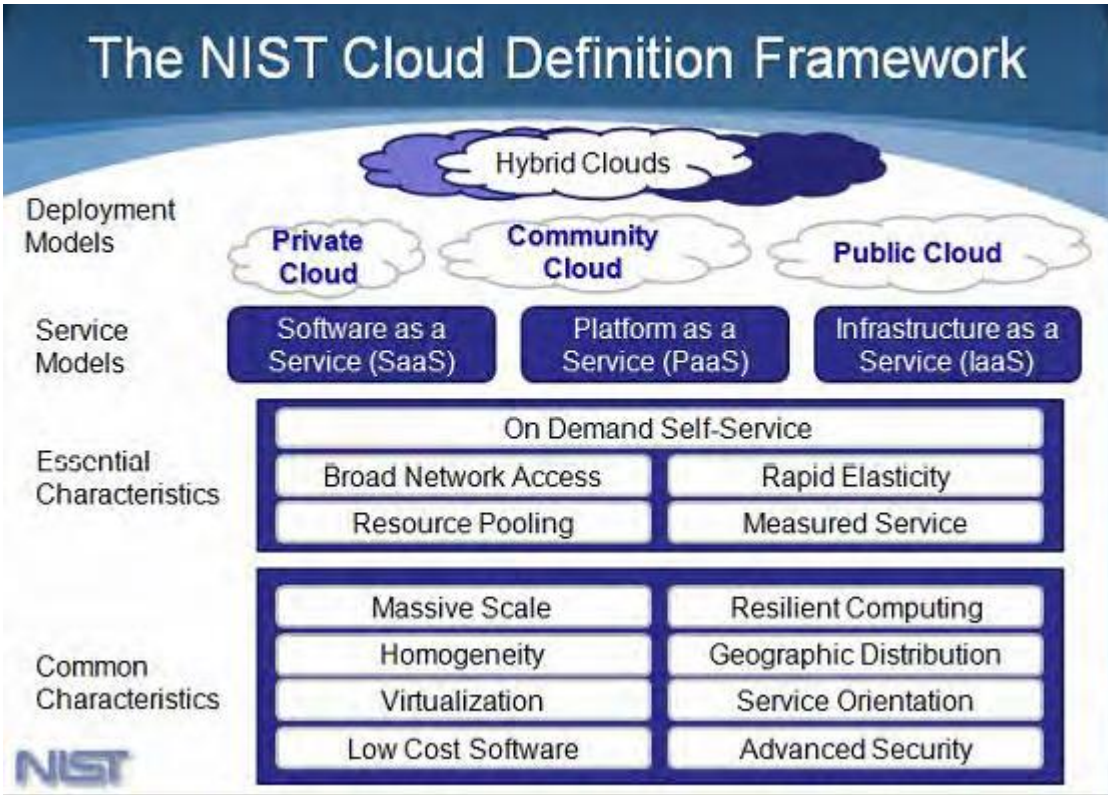

Figure 4:Cloud Computing Definition (Grance, 2010)

Three types of computing resources have been provided in the cloud [4]:

Software as a Service (SaaS): This is application software that is hosted by third parties and provided as a service over the Internet. Examples of SaaS include Google Docs, Salesforce.com, and Web mail services such as hotmail.com. Cloud computing allows one to start up or grow a small business quickly. This happens in the model software as a service in which applications are hosted by a vendor or service provider and made available to customers over a network, typically the internet. The small medium enterprises will therefore benefit by adopting it since they will not need to buy expensive servers.

Platform as a Service (PaaS): These are platforms consisting of development tools and a runtime environment. Cloud customers use the development tools to program their own applications.

Application Programming Interface (API) of the runtime environment. Subsequently, the applications are deployed to the runtime environment where they are executed. Examples of PaaS include Microsoft Azure, Force.com, and Google Apps. This will enable the small medium enterprises to use the platform resources and the development tools to

program their own application. They therefore do not need to purchase the tools which are expensive.

Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS): These are low level computing resources such as virtual machines or storage which are provided on-demand over the Internet. The small medium enterprises will therefore not need to invest a lot of capital in buying large servers for storage of their data, they use the software as a service resource for storing their data.

It is a lot easier and faster to sign up for a cloud computing application than to buy a server, get it up and running and install software on it. One does not need to buy hardware and software making start up or expansion is cheaper. Cloud computing is a type of outsourcing, where a client transfers the custody of parts of its information system to a service provider. The service provider assumes responsibility for the client's information system and operates it in accordance with the contractual terms that the client and provider agreed upon [4]. These contractual terms, which define the cooperation between outsourcing clients and providers, are called Service Level Agreements, or SLAs.

Lack of access to technological innovation is a major constraint inhibiting the growth of SMEs. Cloud computing will therefore make sure that small and medium enterprises will be able to use world-class infrastructure without the need for purchasing hardware and maintaining large support teams. Pay-per-use also gives them the agility and flexibility to grow quickly when demand increases. Also in case of decreasing demand, cloud computing provides a convenient way to reduce capacity and avoid sunk costs. This model is especially interesting for start-up companies, because these usually do not want to make big upfront investments, have no interest in building large operational teams, and need scalability to adapt quickly to changes in demand. With cloud-based solutions, SMEs can reinvest their time and resources into product, sales, marketing, and other revenue-generating areas. This not only makes businesses easier to manage, but makes them more efficient as well.

6. Developments

6.1 Data Analysis

There are many different techniques for evaluating and analyzing data obtained in a research. There are special techniques that fit for quantitative research and those that fit for qualitative research. The data analysis technique must match the general research approach and the collection technique. There are a number of ways to evaluate and analyze data you obtain. Data analysis can often be either confirmatory or exploratory when analyzing data. Either explore the area or confirm recent studies [10].

Exploratory data analysis is an approach that describes data in a better form so it is easier to understand. We will focus on analyzing our interviews and the data we collected from meetings with companies along with the secondary data provided directly from the source and also external secondary data that we have found reviews, articles and other literature relating to cloud computing [2].

When analyzing data it is important for us to understand the interview we have done and all the information we have gotten from it. The researcher analyzed data ensuring that the results were easy to understand.

The analysis technique that is most fit to our approach is the data display and analysis approach. It is most fit to analyze by investigating the answers from the interviews along with secondary data to get more data sources and get better reliability.

7. Results

Ten different interviews were done with ten different small and medium enterprise, operations managers, information technology managers and information and

communications technology support staff. The interviews with the ten small medium enterprises namely are; Karen Country club, Online biz online Kenya, Siana Springs Limited, Tracom Services Limited, Abt Associates Limited, Ol Pejeta Conservancy, Global pay limited, Pete's Coffee, M:Lab East Africa and Rev Webolutions were done because they are users of cloud computing services. They are situated in Kenya with most of them having offices in Nairobi Kenya.

7.1 Interview

The researcher came in contact with the companies via email and had a meeting with them. The researcher wanted to get to know the company and also introduce the subject of cloud computing. Interviews were conducted to the Operations Managers, information technology manager and also the Information and Communications Technology support staff.

First, the meeting started with the Operations Manager and information technology manager introducing their company´s background and their business idea to the researcher. The Information Technology Manager and the Support staff further explained on the adoption of cloud computing, the benefits they had realized and also the challenges they had encountered.

7.2 Users IT structure

Beginning with how their IT structure look, because it is good to understand where the need of cloud computing comes into the picture. Most of the SMEs uses thin clients and do not have anything stored locally at their workplace. They use a central storage that is outsourced from service providers like Safaricom Limited Company, Kenya Data Networks, Info Connect or other local providers that have partnered with multinational organizations like Internet Solutions limited and Plus People Kenya. They have several staff who work in the information technology department. They use Citrix enterprise resource planning system for running their enterprise and others use Avamar systems. The employees have their own accounts with the environment. The application works totally by itself and does not need much interaction from the user.

7.3 Users Adoption Decision of Cloud Computing

The implementation and decision behind these systems being adopted is not extensive either. The user decides to adopt an outsourced service like cloud computing and do not really care how the provider does the results.

The operations manager emphasized that the important aspect for them as a user is not important who is maintaining and providing a service, the important thing is that the work that they want done is supported by the service that is provided. If the service is a cloud service or another type of service is not important. Although the decision behind the adoption of the service came for the purpose of not having to physically do some processes and instead use a service to save time and focus on other tasks in the company.

7.4 Security and Integration of the User

The issue on security and what their view on it was also addressed. The business owner explained that security is still a big issue because one feels that they have no control over their data. However, they explained that they always back up their work else to avoid loss.

7.5 Political

The operations managers explained that it is good if regulatory models are put in place to regulate the telecommunication monopolies as alternatives, which will offer cloud computing services at more economical rates.

7.6 Economic

The operations managers also noted that cloud computing was an efficient operation with a significant cost reduction and savings. Cloud computing solutions had minimized their investment in owning hardware, software and also maintaining them.

7.7 Social

The Information technology managers noted that cloud computing had provided them with opportunity for support managers, engineers, sales and marketing staff to develop new skills; working with new and potentially prestigious technology, which may lead to career progression and increased job satisfaction.

7.8 Technological

The Information Technology managers agreed that cloud computing offered service that are high quality, always accessible anytime, at any device (mobile and fixed), at any connection (via fixed and wireless connections) and from any place.

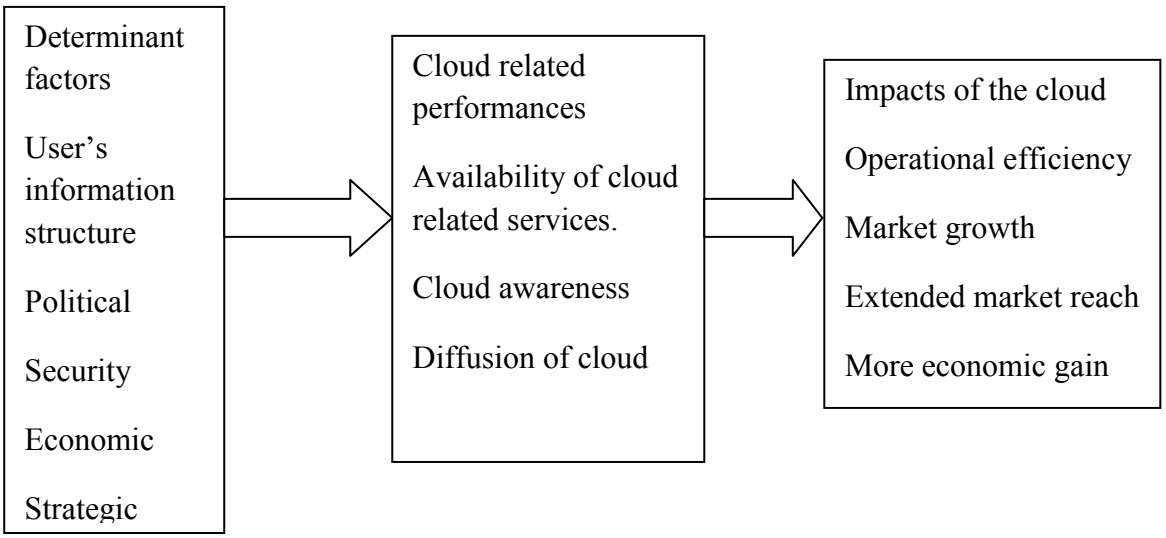

Figure 5: A Framework for Cloud Related Indicator in Small and Medium Sized Enterprises

All small and medium enterprises face data storage challenges. However, cloud computing has the potential to provide storage services that are affordable and which are relevant to the needs of the entrepreneurs.

8. Business Benefits

Cloud computing has started to obtain mass appeal in corporate data centers as it enables the data center to operate and use the Internet through the process of enabling computing resources to be accessed and shared as virtual resources in a secure and scalable manner.

For a small and medium size business, the benefits of cloud computing are many. In the small and medium business sector there is often lack of time and financial resources to purchase deploy and maintain an infrastructure (e.g. the software, server and storage).

In cloud computing, small businesses can access these resources and expand or shrink services as business needs change. The common pay-as-you-go subscription model is designed to let small and medium business easily add or remove services and they will only pay for what they use.

In comparison of cloud computing for SMEs in Kenya to other developed cloud markets in the cloud market like United States, North America, Japan, Asia Pacific region. United States of America is the largest consumer of cloud services. North America accounted for 61 percent of cloud revenues in 2010, followed by Western Europe (23 percent), Japan (10 percent), and other countries in the Asia Pacific region (3 percent). The United States is also the leading market for public cloud services. Cloud computing is already a source of significant revenue for U.S. exporters and multinational firms. The developed countries have the infrastructure and expertise needed to implement cloud computing. They have therefore benefited from it in many diverse ways [12]. The SMEs in Kenya are also in the process of migrating to cloud computing.

There are many opportunities and advantages for small and medium enterprises in using cloud computing, such as opportunities to test new software, evaluate third party applications, increase resources on demand to satisfy seasonal or temporary demand and offer software to customers as Software as a Service. Other benefits include time saved dealing with technology issues, allowing staff to focus on core competencies. Many of the same functions can be performed faster and more efficiently by using modern IT infrastructure and software than traditional in-place data centers. As a result, Cloud computing is likely to be an attractive option for many SMEs, particularly in the current global economic crisis, due to its flexible cost structure and scalability.

Cloud Computing fits specific SMEs needs as follows:

- Being available off the shelf;
- User friendliness;
- Ubiquitous systems;
- Low price;
- Having a variety of options to choose from;
- Customer support/communication;
- Availability of staff to work with and maintain the system;
- Strategic impact; Software already existing to implement customizable Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP);

The PEST factors, combined with external micro-environmental factors and internal drivers, can be viewed as a combination of both opportunities and threats. Nevertheless, this methodology addresses only external factors and their influence on organizations‘behavior not taking into account the role that internal variables can play in this context. In this sense and for future research, a SWOT analysis is recommended, when studying the mix of internal and external factors concerning the adoption of Cloud Computing by SMEs.

9. Conclusions

Cloud computing will therefore benefit Small medium enterprises in Kenya. Cloud computing offers customers more access to power. This power is not ordinarily accessible through a standard personal computer. Applications now use virtual power. Users can even build virtual assistants, which automate tasks such as ordering, managing dates, and offering reminders for upcoming meetings. Cloud computing is taking sales productivity to a whole new level, while at the same time, providing their sale representatives with high quality, professional devices to motivate them to do their jobs well. The paper concludes that SME that use cloud computing have improved growth and thus more SMEs should be encouraged to use this form of technology if the country has to achieve its vision 2030.

The experiences of SMEs investing in innovative technologies, such as Cloud Computing, should provide additional evidence concerning patterns of adoption [9]. It becomes obvious from the PEST analysis that the emerging systems of Cloud Computing have the potential to multiply the productivity, efficiency and profitability of small scale enterprises. However, some SMEs remain reluctant to avail themselves of broadband services, or consider the possible advantages of Cloud Computing, due to perceptions (or misconceptions) regarding possible capital investment, fear of complexity, lack of understanding of the potential benefits, and lack of technical resources.

The factors that form the frame work can be viewed as a combination for both opportunities and threats. Nevertheless, this methodology addresses only external factors and their influence on organizations' behavior not taking into account the role that internal variables can play in this context. In this sense and for future research, a SWOT analysis is recommended, when studying the mix of internal and external factors concerning the adoption of Cloud Computing by small and medium enterprises.

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