ABSTRACT

Digital transformation projects often face a common challenge: low success rates. Globally, IT professionals have become resigned to considering project failure as virtually inevitable. However, there's a notable distinction in the trend between developed and developing economies. Developed economies show a tendency toward a reduction in digital transformation failure rates, while in developing economies like Uganda, these rates persistently remain high.

In the dynamic global educational landscape, the Government of Uganda, through Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions, actively promotes integrating digital technology to enhance skills. However, the harsh reality is that approximately 70% of digital transformation projects worldwide fail, resulting in substantial financial losses. To put it in perspective, this equates to a loss of UGX 9.9 million for every UGX 1 billion invested in these projects. This study delved into digital transformation projects in Uganda that encountered comparable challenges.

One primary reason for these failures is the lack of process quality, which is deeply intertwined with the inadequate implementation of IT governance. This issue remains a significant obstacle to successfully executing digital transformation projects, particularly in developing economies like Uganda.

Traditional approaches and established frameworks have shown their limitations in addressing this pervasive challenge. A potential solution lies in embracing the principles advocated by agency theory. These principles emphasize the need for controls and checks to ensure agents act in the best interests of principals. This includes meticulous monitoring and the enforcement of quality standards, which are essential for ensuring that processes meet the required level of quality. This underscores the importance of maintaining organization-wide oversight when extensive simultaneous changes are impractical.

To address these challenges, this study introduces a specialized "Framework for Improved Success of Digital Transformation Projects" tailored to meet the specific requirements of TVET institutions

in Uganda. The primary objective of this framework is to reduce the high rate of project failures and cultivate an environment conducive to the success of digital transformations.

This study has three key objectives: i) Identify the critical components for a successful digital transformation framework in Ugandan TVETs; ii) Develop a fitting framework designed to accommodate the unique context of Ugandan TVETs; iii) Evaluate the effectiveness of the designed framework for digital transformation in Ugandan TVETs.

To achieve these objectives, a comprehensive sequential mixed-methods approach was employed. Quantitative data was collected through structured surveys using SPSS software, targeting key stakeholders in Ugandan TVET institutions. In addition, qualitative data was gathered through in-depth interviews and content analysis using NVivo, focusing on gaining insights into the intricate challenges and opportunities associated with digital transformation in this context. A structured walkthrough was conducted, and results from the structured walkthrough showed that this newly crafted framework was usable with high usability scores.

The study was underpinned by influential theories such as agency theory, dynamic capabilities theory, and the Delone & McLean theory, providing a robust theoretical foundation.

In conclusion, this research underscores the critical role of process quality in achieving successful digital transformation within Ugandan TVET institutions. As technology continues to advance at an unprecedented pace, ensuring the success of these projects becomes increasingly crucial. The study sheds light on the impact of process quality on project success, emphasizing the importance of improved communication, goal alignment, enhanced task programmability, and reduced inefficiencies.