

ANALYSIS OF OPPORTUNITIES AND STRENGTHS ON THE PERFORMANCE OF PROJECTS; A CASE STUDY OF SUSTAINABLE FOOD INITIATIVE PROJECT GASABO DISTRICT

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Abstract: The purpose of this research was to assess the analysis of strengths and opportunities and performance of projects and was carried out in sustainable food initiative project as the case study with the following objectives; to identify the contribution of information gathering on the performance of in Sustainable food initiative project, to find the influence of identifying strengths on performance of Sustainable food initiative project and to establish the role of identifying opportunities on the performance of sustainable food initiative project. The researcher reviewed both empirical and theoretical literature related to Analysis of strengths and opportunities on project performance. The research design used was descriptive while the population is 120 employees of sustainable food initiative project and the sample size is 92 respondents selected using purposive and simple random sampling techniques. Data collection tools were questionnaires and interviews while analysis and interpretation was based on percentages and frequencies. The researcher found out that information gathering is carried out in order to assess what can be done in the project in order to improve performance, information gathering in sustainable food initiative project is important in ensuring that the project performs, information gathering in relation to the opportunities that exist in the environment helps improve project performance and that due to analysis of the project strength based on the information gathered, the project has been able to improve its performance by using its strength to become more competitive and performing and identification of project opportunities has contributed a lot to increase in project performance and that analysis of project strength and opportunities contribute to project performance, the better the project scanning in terms of strength and opportunities the better the project performance. There is a positive relationship between identification of strength and opportunities and project performance. The researcher concluded that information gathering through its attributes contributes to project performance indicated by gathering information related to environment, information related to opportunities from environment, information related to company strengths. It provides the project with the opportunity to know the strength and opportunities that arise from the operational environment and that identifying project strengths in a project contributes to project performance through helping the project to take advantages of opportunities, helping the project to handle environmental challenges, helping the project to perform and helping the project to increase market leverage, indicated by large market share, improved performance, profitability levels and sustainability. The researcher recommended that project implementers should always ensure that they have enough information of the environment in which they perform as well as their internal strength and that projects should always take advantage of their strength to improve performance since it is a major attribute of performance.

1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

This chapter presents background to the study, problem statement, objectives and research question. The chapter further presents significance of the study, limitations and study scope. Managing a project in the home country seems to be easier than going global; however, there are certain factors responsible for improving or hampering the performance of the project operations, both at home and abroad. These factors are sometimes controllable but mostly the factors like

inflation, unemployment, and those which take place due to the boom-and-bust of economic conditions are uncontrollable (Ifediora & Nzekwe, 2014). The developing or the Third World countries mostly have to keep these external and internal factors of doing project in focus, as it may harm their economic condition or spoil their goodwill. For the purpose of identifying such underlying factors, many tools like SWOT and PEST analyses are used. They evaluate the hidden forces and enable the country or organization to judge their vulnerability of performance or failures against those factors (Uhrenfeldt & Basto, 2014). A consistent study of the environment in which the firm operates helps in forecasting/predicting the changing trends and also helps in including them in the decision-making process of the organization

Analysis of strengths and opportunities is just one method of categorization and has its own weaknesses. For example, it may tend to persuade companies to compile lists rather than think about what is actually important in achieving objectives. It also presents the resulting lists uncritically and without clear prioritization so that, for example, weak opportunities may appear to balance strong threats (Ommani, 2011).

Performance is a widely used concept in economics; usually it refers to the commitment in market competition in case of companies and performance in international competition in case of countries. In the last two decades, in parallel with recruitment of globalization, performance became one of the key concepts in which the successful participation and the phenomenon of global competition among new conditions is described in case of companies, countries and regions. Performance includes the ability to enhance project efficiency, which is the basis of profitability (profit rate). In terms of efficiency improvement, besides most important other things, development of productivity, unit labour costs, the level of used technology, utilization of capacity and flexibility of production system are really important (Ommani, 2011).

To reap the full benefits of a Analysis of strengths and opportunities, it is important to apply the tool properly. It is advisable that the analysis should provide the strategic planners with information relevant to make strategic decisions. That means, lists of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are not themselves helpful. It is only when the potential implications of this information on the organization are conducted that the planners can get really significant analysis. A Analysis of strengths and opportunities is designed to help an organization understand how it relates to its external environment. In other words, 'to act as a way of seeing if the organization is aligned with the world going on around it (Ifediora & Nzekwe, 2014).

The main advantages of conducting a Analysis of strengths and opportunities is that it has little or no cost anyone who understands the project can perform a Analysis of strengths and opportunities. One can also use a Analysis of strengths and opportunities when there is no much time to address a complex situation. This means that one can take steps towards improving the project without the expense of an external consultant or project adviser (Uhrenfeldt & Basto, 2014).

In Rwanda, many projects have failed or delayed to attain their objectives because of failure to understanding or have sufficient analysis of the environment in which they operate. This calls for sufficient analysis of the environment in which project operate so that they can effectively understand the environment in which they operate. Analysis of strengths and opportunities is done for project so that they increase and improve their sustainability and performance in the operational environment (Ommani, 2011).

Sustainable food initiative project before its commencement of activities carried out Analysis of strengths and opportunities of the environment in which they operate so that they can survive and operate effectively in relation to the nature of environment (Arslan, 2013). The project now attributes their performance on the Analysis of strengths and opportunities carried out. However, the researcher couldn't confirm this without sufficient research in this field hence the need for the research on the contribution of analysis of strengths and opportunities on the performance of projects.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

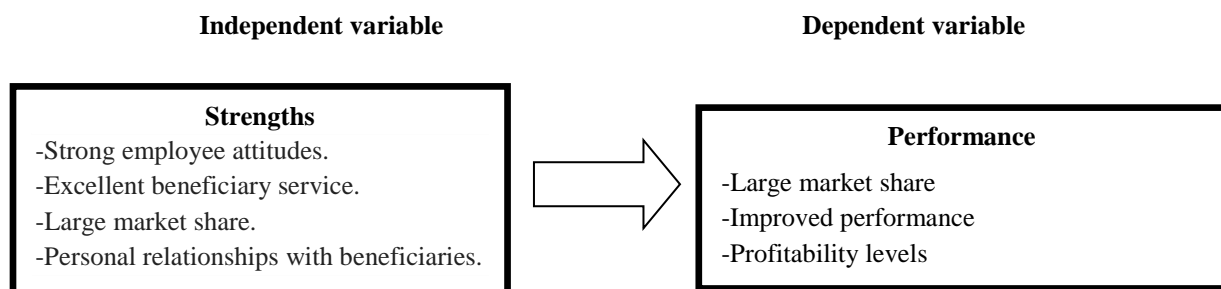
All projects operate in dynamic environments that need to be clearly assessed so as to determine the degree which they are likely to affect the project performance. In order for the projects to survive in the competitive industry, they have to assess the challenges and the opportunities in the environment to see how they will affect the project operations in relation to the project strength and opportunities. Analysis of strengths and opportunities is taken as one of the steps that increase competitive power of projects. Projects are being out competent in the market due to failure to analyze their strength and weakness as well external threats and opportunities because they do not recognize the impact of Analysis of strengths and opportunities on performance of project, there is need to identify how environmental scanning through Analysis of

strengths and opportunities helps to increase competitive power of projects because some of the employees or companies that underrate the contribution of Analysis of strengths and opportunities in their operations tend to remain behind in business. However, some projects have not given much consideration to Analysis of strengths and opportunities either because they do not have enough information on how it contributes to projects performance or they under value the significance of Analysis of strengths and opportunities. This therefore calls for a research on the contribution of Analysis of strengths and opportunities on performance of projects. It is against that background that the researcher carried out this research with reference to Sustainable food initiative project as the case study.

3. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- i. To find the influence of identifying strengths on performance of Sustainable food initiative project;

4. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



5. RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design as “a blueprint for conducting a study with maximum control over factors that may interfere with the validity of the findings. A research design is a plan that describes how, when and where data are to be collected and analyzed, the researcher used a descriptive design where issues concerning contribution of analysis of strengths and opportunities on project performance were described.

6. POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The study population depends on the problem to be investigated and on the objectives of the study. A population is a summation of all the organisms of the same group or species, which live in the same geographical area, and have the capability of interbreeding. A group of individuals or items that share one or more characteristics from which data can be gathered and analyzed. The population of this research was 120 employees of sustainable food initiative project.

7. SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

Sample size is the number of observations used for calculating estimates of a given population. Sample sizes reduce expenses and time by allowing researchers to estimate information about a whole population without having to survey each member of the population. The larger the sample size, the more accurate the results are (Kara, 2012). The researcher selected the sample size using Sloven’s formula $n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)} 2$ (Cohen and Morrison, 2002) where n is the sample size, N is the total population and e is the sampling error equivalent to 0.05.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)} 2$$

$$n = \frac{120}{1 + 120(0.05)} 2$$

$$n = \frac{120}{1 + N(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{120}{1 + 0.3}$$

$$n = \frac{120}{1.3}$$

$n = 92$ respondents

8. DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

Data collection is any process of preparing and collecting data. The purpose of data collection is aimed to obtain information to keep on record, to make decisions about important issues, or to pass information on to others. The researcher used various instruments to help in acquiring the sufficient data required from both primary and secondary sources.

Questionnaire, the researcher used questionnaires that include questions that were both open and closed. Respondents were required to express their views on the questions which the researcher later interpreted to make conclusions. The questionnaires were mainly used on lower employees with sufficient time to fill them.

Interview guide, in cases where respondents were too busy to get time to fill questionnaire especially the managers, the researcher made short and precise interviews with them using the help of an interview guide. The interview guide was mainly used on project leaders of the project. Documentary review, the researcher used documentary review to collect secondary data from reports, journals, internet and textbooks. The researcher also reviewed documents from sustainable food initiative project.

9. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table1: The extent to which respondents agree that gathering information related to company strengths is important in project performance

| Extent | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly agree | 50 | 54 |
| Agree | 30 | 33 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 10 | 11 |
| Disagree | 2 | 2 |
| Strongly disagree | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 92 | 100 |

Source: Primary data, 2019

According to table 1, respondents contacted strongly agreed gathering information related to company strength is important in project performance (54%) while 33% of respondents said they agree and 11% said they neither agree nor disagree. 2% of respondents said they disagree. When asked to give reasons for their answers, respondents said company strengths is what facilitates the project to enjoy environmental opportunities hence leading to further improvements in project performance. This led the researcher to the undersanding that information gathering on project strength is relevant in improving project performance since it provides sufficient understanding on the available opportunities.

Table 2: What stimulated the project to carry out strength and opportunity analysis

| Views | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Need to understand the market | 18 | 20 |
| To increase project performance | 24 | 26 |
| Safe custody of resources | 22 | 23 |
| To succeed in business | 18 | 20 |
| Increase sustainability | 10 | 18 |
| Total | | 100 |

Source: Primary data, 2019

According to table 2, respondents contacted revealed that they were stimulated to carry out analysis of strength and opportunities by the need to understand the market (20%) while 26% said to increase performance and 23% said safe custody of resources. 20% of respondents contacted revealed that they wanted to succeed in business and 18% said they wanted to increase sustainability. The researcher came to realize that all the factors that stimulated respondents to carry out analysis of strength and opportunities are related to increase in the project performance.

Table3: The extent to which respondents agree that expectations from analysis of project strengths have been met

| Extent | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly agree | 52 | 57 |
| Agree | 28 | 30 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 10 | 11 |
| Disagree | 2 | 2 |
| Strongly disagree | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 92 | 100 |

Source: Primary data, 2018

According to table 3, respondents contacted strongly agreed that their expectations from gathering information related to project strengths have been met (57%) while 30% of respondents said they agree and 11% said they neither agree nor disagree. 2% of respondents said they disagree. When asked to give reasons for their answers, respondents said the project is now taking advantages of the opportunities from the environment in order to increase its performance. This led the researcher to the understanding that due to analysis of the project strength based on the information gathered, the project has been able to improve its performance by using its strength to become more competitive and performing.

9.1 The influence of indentifying strengths on project performance

The researcher under this section, made a presentation, analysis and interpretation of the views given by respondents concerning the influence of indentifying strengths on project performance so that relevant study conclusions can be made.

Table4: The extent to which respondents agree that identification of project strength influences project performance

| Extent | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly agree | 55 | 60 |
| Agree | 28 | 30 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 8 | 9 |
| Disagree | 1 | 1 |
| Strongly disagree | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 92 | 100 |

Source: Primary data, 2019

According to table 4, respondents contacted strongly agreed that identification of project strength is important in project performance (60%) while 30% of respondents said they agree and 9% said they neither agree nor disagree. 1% of respondents said they disagree. When asked to give reasons for their answers, respondents said the strength should be known so as to use them in making the project competitive, sustainable and strong. This led the researcher to the understanding that identification of project strengths contributes to project performance since it facilitates using strength to make the project perform through increased sustainability.

10. CONCLUSION

The researcher concluded that information gathering through its attributes contributes to project performance indicated by gathering information related to environment, information related to opportunities from environment, information related to company strengths. It provides the project with the opportunity to know the strength and opportunities that arise from the operational environment.

The researcher concluded that identifying project strengths in a project contributes to project performance through helping the project to take advantages of opportunities, helping the project to handle environmental challenges, helping the project to perform and helping the project to increase market leverage, indicated by large market share, improved performance, profitability levels and sustainability.

The researcher concluded that identifying project opportunities contributes to project performance through helping the project to identify the growth opportunities, helping the project to have a positive culture, helps the project to increase its reputation and helps the project to have a clear understanding of its beneficiaries.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher recommended that Sustainable food initiative project should continue carrying strength and opportunity analysis because it is important in influencing project performance.

The researcher recommended that project implementers should always ensure that they have enough information of the environment in which they perform as well as their internal strength.

Projects should always take advantage of their strength to improve performance since it is a major attribute of performance.

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