
Project Complexity Management, Knowledge Resources And Project Performance: Case Of The Umeme Supervisory Control And Data Acquisition System, Yaka Pre-Payment Metering System And Automated Meter Reading Projects

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Abstract

The study examined the relationship between project complexity management, knowledge resources and project performance of Umeme's SCADA, Yaka and AMR projects. This study was a cross-sectional research design which applied a quantitative research approach. Data was obtained from 67 employees of UMEME Ltd using a structured questionnaire instrument. Validity of the questionnaire was obtained through expert judgment and content validity index. Reliability on the other hand was obtained using pretesting and Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Data obtained from respondents was cleaned, edited, coded and captured in SPSS (v. 25) for analysis obtaining descriptive and inferential statistics for interpreting results. A Med Graph was also applied to test mediation. This study found out a positive relationship between project complexity management and project performance of Umeme's SCADA, Yaka and AMR projects. There was a positive relationship between project complexity management and knowledge resources among Umeme's SCADA, Yaka and AMR projects. Furthermore, the study found a positive relationship between knowledge resources and project performance of Umeme's SCADA, Yaka and AMR projects. This study established that both project complex management and knowledge resources significantly predict project performance. The better predictor was project complexity management. Additionally, the study found that knowledge resources partially mediate the relationship between project complexity management and project performance of management of Umeme's SCADA, Yaka and AMR projects. The study concludes that project complexity management and knowledge resources are crucial are important in determining project performance. This study recommends enhancing minimizing complexity associated with projects and boosting knowledge resources to boost project performance.

Keywords: Project Complexity Management, Knowledge Resources, Project Performance, Umeme Supervisory Control And Data Acquisition System

Background to the Study

Project performance is a determining factor in the provision of public services. (Christopher, Moses, Muhindo, & Komunda, 2022) confirms that the performance of public projects does not develop naturally despite the existence of established structures and objectives, but requires continuous monitoring. (Musaibah et al., 2023) showed that project performance, as assessed by completion with planned budget, estimated time, desired quality results and customer satisfaction, depends on the proper management of project complexity and knowledge resources (Joslin & Müller, 2015). . The ability to manage project complexity is critical in determining project performance and requires careful planning, attention to detail, and effective communication. According to (Christopher, Komunda, et al., 2022), through effective project complexity management structures, organizations are able to effectively carry out proper project implementation and eliminate risks. This is supported by (Alex & Kazaara, 2023), who confirmed that managing project complexity is a very important element in supporting project performance, while (Racheal et al., 2023) add that adequate project management

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needs to be focused on. complexity in public projects. Similarly, (Christopher, Moses, Muhindo, & Muhammad, 2022) suggest that knowledge resources are directly linked to public project performance because they include background knowledge, financial knowledge, and knowledge integration, which are critical aspects for project performance. Knowledge resources are containers that store explicit knowledge for sharing purposes (Ivan et al., 2023). Ahern et al., (2014) emphasizes the importance of the availability of adequate knowledge resources to maximize project performance, while (Moses et al., 2023) confirms that gaps in the management of project complexity and insufficient knowledge resources are partially responsible for poor project performance. In an effort to ensure the efficient supply of safe and reliable electricity, Umeme introduced state-of-the-art technology that instantly detects grid faults for quick remediation (Kazaara & Kazaara, 2023). According to (Isaac et al., 2023), a supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) system and other automatic switches were introduced to facilitate automatic live monitoring of the distribution and transmission of the national grid and control of the distribution network. According to (Ronald et al., 2023b) in the Umeme Power Transforming Uganda article, as well as SCADA and other automatic switches have reported some success, the danger facing the systems is that they do not adequately address the problems of power losses, load. processes of invoicing, payment of invoices and collection of revenue to customers (Gracious, 2023). The report further states that although there has been a reduction in energy losses since the introduction of SCADA and other automatic switches, energy losses have averaged 28% per year over the past eight years. Due to increasing energy losses (Ramadhan et al., 2023), they believed that they were responsible for the company's high tariffs that encouraged illegal grid connections. Although there has been a reduction in power outages in some parts of the country, the 2018 Annual Report of the Electricity Regulatory Authority showed that an increase in power outages averaging 1,500 hours per month was recorded in several areas of the country (Faridah et al. , 2023).

The Power Institute for East and Southern Africa (2019) showed that although the system failed to deliver on its promise to provide customers with continuous updates on fault recovery activities through messaging. The Energy Regulatory Office (2020) showed that the system does not allow for a quick and easy call logging process, which increases customer waiting times and many dropped calls. According to The (Faridah et al., 2023), there was no quick response and correction of defects, so the system is unable to provide full customer management and accurate communication with customers. Likewise, the challenges the system still faces have made it difficult for Umeme to monitor, manage and operate the network, increase the security of the company's assets, and improve the safety and quality of the supplied power. Like previous studies, they emphasized project complexity management and knowledge resources as some of the factors that determine project performance in public institutions (Ronald et al., 2023a). It is not clear whether these factors could explain the phenomena in the SCADA and other automatic switches in Umeme. Against this background, this study was conducted to determine the relationship between project complexity management, knowledge resources and project performance of SCADA, Yaka and Automated Meter Reading (AMR) projects.

Statement of the Problem

In an effort to improve the supply of safe and reliable electricity to customers, Umeme Ltd established the SCADA, Yaka and AMR projects (UMEME, 2019). These systems were expected to effectively detect power failures; meaningfully, they allow customers to check invoice status and make payments and effectively report

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any form of power outage within the country (Victor et al., 2022). Despite this step, the SCADA system consistently did not perform as expected. This was mainly manifested by a decrease in the effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of the system (Winny et al., 2023). Power outages and breakdowns remain common, while customers report that accessing billing information using the system is difficult (Electricity Regulatory Authority, 2020). If this is not checked, UMEME Ltd is likely to face unprecedented power losses and illegal power connections. It was hypothesized that the failure of the SCADA system to meet performance expectations could be attributed to insufficient management of project complexity and inconsistencies in knowledge resources.

Purpose of the Study

The study examined the relationship between project complexity management, knowledge resources and project performance of Umeme's SCADA, Yaka and AMR projects.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the relationship between project complexity management and project performance of the SCADA, Yaka and AMR projects.
2. To establish the relationship between project complexity management and knowledge resources of the SCADA, Yaka and AMR projects.
3. To evaluate the relationship between knowledge resources and project performance of SCADA, Yaka and AMR projects.
4. To examine the mediation effect of knowledge resources in the relationship between project complexity management and project performance of SCADA, Yaka and AMR projects.

Methodology

This study adopted a cross-sectional research approach along with a quantitative research approach (Nafiu & Ph, 2012). This research design was adopted to allow the researcher obtain quick responses within a short period to facilitate addressing the phenomenon under investigation (Jallow et al., 2021). On the other hand, the quantitative approach was used because it numerically indicates the relationship between study variables. This allows the researcher to indicate the nature, but also the degree of predictability of the studied variable against the dependent. This study population comprised employees of UMEME Ltd. These employees were 94 constituting 42 engineers, 27 team leaders and 25 managers (UMEME Ltd Human Resource Report, 2020). The study confined to these employees because they were the ones who were directly in charge of making sure the SCADA, Yaka and AMR projects perform to their expectation (Jallow et al., 2022). The highlighted employees constituted both the unit of analysis and unit of inquiry. A sample of 76 employees was used and this was determined based on the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) for selecting samples from a given population. To obtain this sample, stratified proportionate random sampling was used (Nafiu et al., 2012). This technique involved dividing the population based on employee category characteristic (engineers, team leaders, managers) to form three strata. Depending on the number of employees in every category, the researcher disproportionately distributed the targeted sample as determined by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table (Lu et al., 2013). Actual selection of the employees who participated in this study was with the help of simple random sampling. The researcher picked one employee at the time without replacing until the targeted number was obtained from each

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stratum. Stratified random sampling technique was applied because it ensures that the sample selected constitutes all members from the different categories

Table 1: Sample Size

Category	Population	Proportion	Sample Size
Engineers	42	0.45	34
Team leaders	27	0.29	22
Managers	25	0.27	20
Total	94		76

Source: *Umeme HR Report, 2020*

Data used herein was collected using a structured questionnaire instrument. This study used a questionnaire instrument because it is effective in obtaining data from a large sample. The instrument contained closed-ended questions which were gauged on a 5-Point Likert Scale (Aslam et al., 2022). Under the scale, 1 represented strongly disagree, 2 (disagree), 3 (not sure), 4 (agree) while 5 represented strongly agree. This scale was used because it allows respondents to indicate the magnitude to which they agree or disagree with Items. Data was cleaned, edited, coded and captured in SPSS (v. 25) for analysis (Nelson et al., 2022). The researcher obtained descriptive and inferential statistics to present and interpret results. Descriptive results used herein comprised strictly frequency tables used to present results in relation to demographic characteristics. Inferential statistics comprised correlation and regression analyses (Nelson et al., 2023). Correlation examined the nature of the relationship between studied variables. Regression analysis was used to confirm the predictability of studied variables on the dependent variable. To test mediation, this study used a Med Graph system to derive the Sobel z-value and p-value upon which interpretation was based.

RESULTS

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Analysis

Variable/Construct	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Project complex Management (1)	1								
Structural Complexity (2)	.510**	1							
Social political Complexity (3)	.256*	0.169	1						
Emergent Complexity (4)	.660**	.279*	0.174	1					
Knowledge Resources (5)	.557**	.406**	.245*	0.215	1				
Basic Knowledge (6)	.478**	.370**	.351**	0.185	.469**	1			
Financial Knowledge (7)	.657**	.373**	-0.102	.264*	.431**	.306*	1		
Knowledge Integration (8)	.669**	.501**	.376**	.327**	.626**	.688**	.417**	1	
Project Performance (9)	.685**	.532**	.327**	.449**	.674**	.520**	.376**	.664**	1

Note: n=67, *.p<.05 level (2-tailed), **.p<.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: *Primary Data*

Project Complexity Management and Project Performance

Results in Table 1 indicate a significant and positive relationship between project complexity management and project performance of Umeme's SCADA, Yaka and AMR projects ($r=.685$, $p<.01$). The results imply that enhancement of project complexity management is associated with improvement in project performance of Umeme's SCADA, Yaka and AMR projects. Worth noting, project complexity management has subcomponents of structural complexity, social political complexity as well as emergent complexity (Ministry of Finance, 2019). Further analysis reveals a significant and positive relationship between structural complexity of Umeme's SCADA, Yaka and AMR projects ($r=.532$, $p<.01$), social political complexity ($r=.327$, $p<.05$) and project performance of Umeme's SCADA, Yaka and AMR projects. The relationship between emergent complexity and project performance obtained correlation ($r=.449$) at 99% significance level ($p<.01$). The above results signify that each construct of project complexity management relates with project performance of Umeme's SCADA, Yaka and AMR projects.

Project Complexity Management and Knowledge Resources

Table 2 revealed that there was a significant and positive relationship between project complexity management and knowledge resources among Umeme's SCADA, Yaka and AMR projects ($r=.557$, $p<0.01$). According to these findings, having appropriate project complexity management model in place would improve knowledge resources. These results are of the implication that one of the probable reasons why some projects have better knowledge resources while others do not is due to the model of project complexity management they apply. Furthermore, the results indicated that Structural Complexity is significantly and positively associated with knowledge resources among Umeme's SCADA, Yaka and AMR projects ($r=.406$, $p<0.01$). These results meant that proper management of structural complexities would increase the propensity of improving knowledge resources. In the same way, the results obtained that there is a significant and positive relationship between social political complexity and knowledge resources among Umeme's SCADA, Yaka and AMR projects ($r=.245$, $p<0.01$). This meant that projects that are able to deal with social political complexities are more likely to enhance demonstratable knowledge resources. Nevertheless, the results indicate that much as a positive relationship prevails between emergent complexity and knowledge resources ($r=.215$ $p>0.01$), this is not significant.

Knowledge Resources and Project Performance

Correlation results in Table 2 indicated significant and positive relationship between knowledge resources and project performance of Umeme's SCADA, Yaka and AMR projects ($r=.3674$, $p<.01$). In this case, the results meant that improving knowledge resources enhances the propensity of achieving project performance of Umeme's SCADA, Yaka and AMR projects. The implication of the results is that firms must have specific knowledge resources in place in order to increase on the chances of achieving project performance. The three knowledge which were studied include; basic knowledge, financial knowledge and knowledge integration. As indicated in Table 2, there is a significant and positive relationship between basic knowledge and project performance of Umeme's SCADA, Yaka and AMR projects ($r=.520$, $p<.01$). This meant that the more projects apply basic knowledge is the more they increase on the chances of achieving project performance. Additionally, results obtained a significant and positive relationship between financial knowledge and project performance of

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Umeme's SCADA, Yaka and AMR projects ($r=.376$, $p<.01$), which meant that projects that seek to improve performance need to apply well the existing financial knowledge. Lastly, the results established that there is a significant and positive relationship between knowledge integration and project performance of Umeme's SCADA, Yaka and AMR projects ($r=.664$, $p<.01$). In essence, these results meant that appropriate knowledge integration could enhance project performance. Moreover, the significant and positive relationship established between elements of knowledge resources and project performance of Umeme's SCADA, Yaka and AMR projects implied that any knowledge resource model adopted by a project is able to increase its propensity of achieving project performance of Umeme's SCADA, Yaka and AMR projects.

Table 3: Multiple Regression Analysis

	Unstandardized		Standardized		Collinearity Statistics		
	Coefficients		Coefficients				
Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	1.580	0.288		5.476	0.000		
Project Complexity Management	0.333	0.071	0.449	4.674	0.000	0.689	1.450
Knowledge Resources	0.292	0.066	0.424	4.417	0.000	0.689	1.450
	R ²	Adj. R ²	F	Sig.			
	0.593	0.581	46.680	.000 ^b			

a. Dependent Variable: Project Performance.

b. Predictors: (Constant), Project Complexity Management, Knowledge Resources

Source: Primary Data

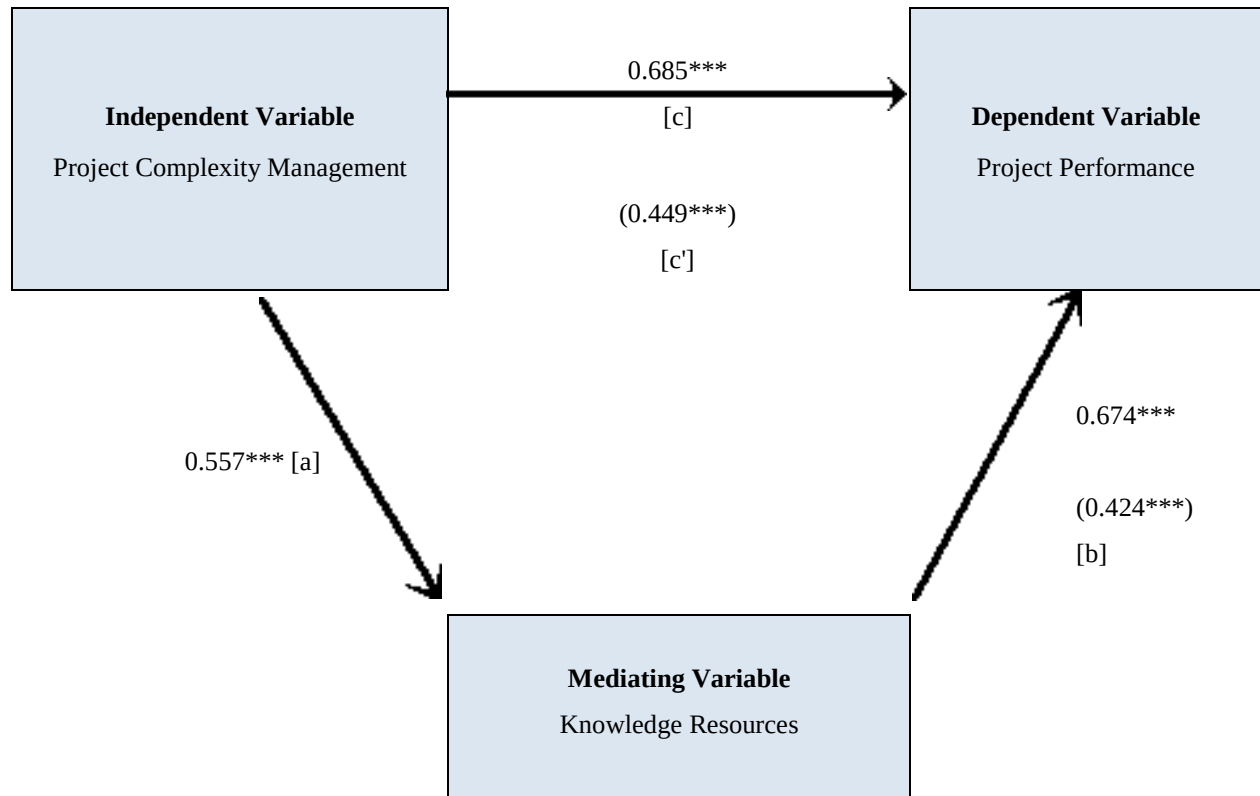
Table 3 reveals $F=46.680$, $Sig.=.000$ in relation to the predicting variables of project complexity management and knowledge resources, which signalizes a statistical ability of the model to predict the dependent variable. In addition, the overall model indicates that the variance inflation factor (VIF) for each of the studied variables is less than 5 while the tolerance is greater than 0.1. These results signify that the regression model was free from multi-collinearity. Therefore, the study implies the obtained regression statistics obtained were fit to be relied upon making conclusions and recommendations. The model further indicates $Adj\ r^2 =.581$ which implies that jointly project complexity management and knowledge resources explain 58% of the variance in project performance of Umeme's SCADA, Yaka and AMR projects.

Results in relation to the standardized coefficients indicate $\beta=.449$, $t=-4.674$, $p<.05$ corresponding to project complex management and $\beta=.424$, $t=4.417$, $p<.05$ in relation to knowledge resources. The results signify that both project complex management and knowledge resources significantly predict project performance. While this is the case, a comparative analysis of the Beta values indicates that project complexity management is the better predictor of project performance of Umeme's SCADA, Yaka and AMR projects.

Mediation Effect of Knowledge Resources in the relationship between Project Complexity Management and Project Performance

The study used a Med graph system to test the mediation effect of knowledge resources in the relationship between project complexity management and project performance. The results are presented in Figure 1.

Type of mediation	Significant	
Sobel z-value	3.423666	$p = 0.000618$
95% Symmetrical Confidence interval		
Lower	0.0749	
Higher	0.2755	
Unstandardized indirect effect		
a*b	0.1752	
se	0.05117	
Effective Size measures		
<u>Standardized Coefficients</u>		
Total:	0.685	
Direct:	0.449	
Indirect:	0.236	
Indirect to Total ratio	0.344	



Type of mediation=Partial; $n=67$; Direct=.685; Indirect=.236 *, *** significance at $p<.05$, $p<0.001$; Sobel z-value=3.423666; $p=0.000618$.

Figure 1: Mediation of knowledge Resources in the relationship between Project Complexity Management and Project Performance.

Results in Figure 1 revealed Sobel z-value= 3.423666 and p-value=0.000618 in examining the mediation of knowledge resources in the relationship between project complexity management and project performance of Umeme's SCADA, Yaka and AMR projects. From these results, it was evidenced that the Sobel z-value was greater than the p-value. In addition, the p-value obtained was less than .05 ($p<.05$). The satisfaction of these two conditions meant that knowledge resources mediate the relationship between project complexity management of Umeme's SCADA, Yaka and AMR projects. These results revealed that the beta weight for the basic relationship of project complexity management and project performance of Umeme's SCADA, Yaka and AMR projects denoted as $c(r=.685)$ was significant ($p<.05$). On the other hand, the beta weight upon the inclusion of the mediating variable (knowledge resources) denoted as $(r=.449^{**})$ was significant. These results meant that knowledge resources were a partial mediator in the relationship between project complexity management and project performance of management of Umeme's SCADA, Yaka and AMR projects.

Conclusion

It is clarified herein that one of the ways through which projects is dependent upon how project complexity management is carried out. Complexity is implied to every project, but the way project managers demonstrate efficiency in managing these complex issues will contribute significantly to increasing relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the project. As reflected herein, structural, emergent and social political complexity all pose potential threat. This teaches policy makers and project managers to be as vigilant as much as possible when examining these complexity aspects to improve performance. They should identify, assess, analyze and evaluate these complexities to advance proactive strategic decisions which are well-thought.

Additionally, this research affirms that knowledge resources should not be taken for granted as far as improving project performance is concerned. The knowledge resources emphasized herein include financial knowledge, basic knowledge and knowledge integration. Herein, we learn that financial knowledge is the apparatus for ensuring financial resources are properly accounted for and therefore not mismanaged while basic knowledge equips the project team with general knowledge necessary for proper project management. It communicates that knowledge integration is ideal because it guarantees application of generated ideas and views. Important to note, this research confirms that knowledge resources partially mediate the relationship between project complexity management and project performance. It attests that proper project complexity management requires the support of knowledge resources to ultimately influence project performance. In other words, while it is important to intensify project complexity management, it is worth to note that the project must be equipped with knowledge resources to optimize performance.

This research contributes knowledge in different spheres. From the theoretical stance, this research confirms the relevance of complexity theory in explaining the relevance of project complexity management and knowledge resources towards project performance. It unleashes that every project is prone to complexity which necessitates expression of specific knowledge resources to try and neutralize complexity to achieve performance targets. From the managerial perspective, this study proves that both project complexity management and knowledge resources play a crucial role in improving project performance, hence they should be on the top agenda. Empirically, the study adds knowledge to understanding how project complexity management and knowledge resources influence project performance in an African perspective, specifically Uganda. There has been a general paucity of knowledge to that effect.

Recommendations

Project must continuously improve minimize complexity to enhance project performance. This should be addressed by streamlining roles and responsibilities; making sure the project has a sufficient work force; aligning the project to company strategy, and motivating project team members to participate in decision making. In addition, there should be a special budget to handle emergencies and continuous project adjustments to suit prevailing demands.

Projects must enhance knowledge resources to boost project performance by making sure that all members associated to any project under implementation are equipped with basic knowledge, and financial knowledge. In this case, the project should put in place training programs, seminars and workshops for personnel.

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