

Gaps in Models/ Methods Used in the Assessment of Information Systems Investments
The Case of Coffee Marketing Co-operative in Tanzania

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This research project attempted to identify gaps in IS/IT investment assessment models/methods/frameworks used in coffee marketing co-operative organizations in Tanzania. The purpose was to improve on existing IS/IT assessment models/methods or propose new models/methods so as to come up with appropriately assessed/appraised IS/IT investments in the organizations.

The study used questionnaires, interview schedules and observations to collect data from a random sample of coffee marketing co-operative organizations in Tanzania. The collected data was analysed with the help of a statistical computer package for social scientists (SPSS version 10).

The major findings from the study are that, in addition to not having documented plans for information systems, no co-operative organization had pre-prepared and documented IS/IT investment assessment models/frameworks. Also, a significant proportion of co-operators did not perceive the existing information systems as effectively supporting their organizations in business communication in the present liberalized trade environment.

From the research findings it is concluded that lack of planning for IS/IT investments and hence not having appropriate IS/IT investments for business use was due to lack of entrepreneurship orientation among co-operators. This situation culminated into co-operative organizations not being able to compete in the introduced liberalized trade environment. This problem is educational and its solution lies in, first, running tailor-made programmes (TMPs) as recommended in chapter five item 5.2. I page 107. This will give an entrepreneurship orientation to co-operators and introduce them to strategic planning for business information systems. Second, co-operators be introduced to a general framework for assessing IS/IT investment proposals in their organizations. This general framework has been proposed in chapter five item 5.2.2 page 108 and illustrated in appendix G page 165. The aim of the above recommendations is to have adequately assessed/appraised IS/IT investments which can effectively support the co-operative organizations in coffee marketing and to let co-operators appreciate the importance of having appropriate information systems in their business organizations.

Since the identified problem is educational, further researches on information systems in co-operative organizations are recommended and these should use an action research approach so as to be able to make continuous improvements on the acquisition and use of ISS with time.