

Managing Organizational Change in a Multicultural Context: The Introduction of Systems Applications and Products (SAP) at the African Union Commission (AUC)

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Abstract

Organizations today are operating in a more competitive environment and adapting increasingly to various challenges in the environment. This calls for the implementation of change either in a radical manner, or on a small-scale in a continuous manner. This study therefore examines how change management initiatives in a multi-cultural environment are influenced by national cultural values in an organization such as the African Union Commission (AUC). The study was also narrowed down to Systems Applications and Products (SAP) Project, as the major case study on how the dynamics of national culture manifest themselves in change management initiatives at the African Union Commission. The study is a descriptive case study that uses cross-sectional survey. Using a Simple Random Sampling technique, 131 respondents (employees) were selected from a total population of 1743, with the sampling frame of 700. Primary data were collected using a Self-Administered Questionnaire (SAQ) complemented by a Semi-Structured interview which was subject to subsequent statistical analysis using SPSS –version 20. Research findings generally reveal that awareness of the landscape in which the change takes place is essential. Power influences, and leadership dynamics are key aspects in the political landscape. In the social landscape, communication plays a key role in the implementation of change, and the availability of adequate financial resources is a prerequisite for the success of change initiatives.

Keywords: Change management, National values, Systems Applications & Products (SAP)

Introduction

Today's organizations operate in a turbulent environment and must constantly introduce change initiatives in order to cope with competition (Savolainen, 2013). Change is now a key agenda of most business organizations. However, most of these corporate change efforts have had limited success, even though companies regularly strive to make themselves into significantly better competitors (Kotter, 1995). Dealing with waves of organizational change is not a choice, but a must. In view of the constantly changing business environment (external and internal) in which organizations operate, they are forced to respond appropriately to survive. The environment is characterized by factors such as globalization, technological advances and changing economic situation that call for organizations to seek competitiveness either through planned or unplanned change (Burnes, 2004). The public sector has embraced change management in a bid to improve on service delivery (Maram, 2008).

Organizations do not exist in a vacuum but in a specific culture or socio cultural environment. Culture is a concept rooted in Anthropology and Sociology, where it is a key term in explaining the existence and nature of social order. Hofstede (1993) defined culture as "the collective programming of the mind and distinguishes the member of one group or category from another". Savolainen (2013) underscores the importance of national culture in the implementation of change in a multi-national and multi-cultural set up as she asserts that change implementation goes beyond merely dealing with organizational culture and that an understanding of different national cultures is extremely crucial.

Therefore, organizations should understand and predict the psychological reactions of employees to change because psychological reactions to a particular change influence the behavioral tendency of employees toward the change (that is, support or resistance to change), and are key issues in successfully implementing change (Klein and Sorra, 1996) and (Chen and Wang, 2007)

Organizational operations in the 21st century are characterized by ever increasing global competition, customer expectations, and change. Many organizations face a dilemma where they 'either change or die' (Beer and Nohria, 2000). Change is now a key concern of most business organizations, but the management of this change is a Herculean task, extremely challenging and in most cases, poorly understood. Research has shown that, the management of cultural differences is partly responsible for this weakness. Nowadays, organizations are undergoing at least one major business transformation (Romano, 1995). However, while the management of change has become an increasingly important area of focus for management attention, the downside is that it seems to suffer high failure rates (at times above 70%: Stanton, 1993).

Public sector organizations worldwide are under pressure and public scrutiny to increase efficiency,

transparency and accountability, while delivering improved and integrated services (Crawford, Costello, Pollack, Bentley *et al.*, 1998). The public remains a central vehicle for development in both developed and developing countries. The new millennium has been marked by an understanding that traditional work arrangements are inadequate to address the challenges of organizations, particularly those encountered in the public sector today. The shifts from an industrial to information based society, and from a manufacturing to a service economy, compounded by the forces of globalization, have propelled revolutionary changes in work place arrangements. Successful organizations remain in the learning mode in order to cope with change (UNDP, 2006). According to Bryman and Bell (2007), change initiatives are pivotal for improvements in the management of public sector resources as well as for strong and transparent reporting and increased accountability.

The African Union Commission, like many organizations worldwide is increasingly undertaking radical change processes to adapt to the ever increasing internal and external demands of its working environment.

In the light of the above, this study attempts to assess the issue of managing organizational change in a multicultural context by focusing on the AUC and its SAP project. For this purpose, scientific research methodologies and procedures are used. By doing so, the research aims at offering valuable insight to the Leadership and Staff of the Commission in developing and implementing organizational development process strategies.

Review of Related Literature

Organizations are required to deal with changes ranging from “routine operational improvements to major radical, transformational changes” (Michalak, 2010). In most cases, it is a combination of both which makes the entire process of change management a complex process.

Researchers attempt to understand organizational change from two broad perspectives: how it occurs and its nature. Understanding change from the perspective of how it occurs is referred to as the Development Process Theory and understanding it through its nature is the Development of Content Theory (Dibella, 2007). There are several theories and models for change management. For the purpose of this study, Kurt Lewin’s 3 Step Model (Wursten, 2005) and Kotter’s 8 Step Model (Kotter, 1995) can be mentioned.

National Culture and Change Management

From the 1960s through 1980s, businesses relied wholly on strategic planning in driving change with managers placing great emphasis on strategic planning as the key process in driving their business in turbulent times, but the role of strategic planning has been surpassed by other elements such as corporate culture (Zeffane, 1996). Like corporate culture, national culture is gaining increasing importance in influencing the activities of organizations; particularly in the face of growing globalization of businesses. Leaders are now required to look beyond corporate culture and explore ways of understanding different national cultures and behavioural skills (Savolainen, 2013), as well as further integrate cultural inquiries into change initiatives (Dooley, 1998 & Wursten, 2005). Recognizing the importance of social culture is an essential factor to successful change management (Michalak, 2010). Wursten (2005) further emphasizes this position when he states that cultural differences cannot be underestimated because they are in fact a major source of misunderstanding in change management. Employees bring ideologies, beliefs, norms, values, attitudes and behaviour from their national cultures which strongly influence the ability of an organization to implement changes (Savolainen, 2013). In this study, Geert Hofstede’s (1993) approach to national culture serves as the main framework for analyzing cultural differences.

Culture and Change Resistance

Successful change management and implementation is influenced by several factors which are broadly categorized as: the methodology of implementation; the complexity of the change itself and social factors; an example of social factors being people and how they react to the proposed change particularly the resistance aspect (Michalak, 2010). Fear of the unknown with regard to what will happen to their positions and power or whether they will have the skills to implement the proposed transformation is one of the factors that leads to resistance (*Ibid.*). It is against this backdrop that organization and management literature asserts that part of a successful change management programme can be attributed to dealing with resistance.

According to Wursten (2005), resistance is culturally sensitive and the different motivational styles that are usually employed to tackle resistance work differently across different cultures. In highly individualistic societies, one can minimize resistance by understanding the self-interest of individuals and relating it to the change accordingly. In societies where people exhibit a high degree of autonomy from their leaders (low Power Distance), and have considerably high power to resist, negotiation and agreement are good strategies to motivate those who resist change (Michalak, 2010). A participatory approach is also the key to overcoming resistance hence the importance of encouraging the active involvement of all stakeholders in any initiative right from the beginning. Involving people in decision-making processes and obtaining their opinion as to what direction the

change will take increases their commitment to the process and in return reduces chances of rebellion (Zeffane, 1996). In High Power Distance countries, a lot of power is vested in the leader or manager and the overriding factor is making decisions guided by a proper understanding of the common interest of the subjects. Directives are decided on at the top and then cascaded down to the bottom (Wursten, 2005). Coercion and manipulation can also work for these circumstances because the initiators possess considerable power (Michalak, 2010).

Change Management Context

Change implementation, regardless of its magnitude, is about two essential components, which are: firstly managing the environment for change and, secondly implementing the proposed change (UNDP, 2006). Understanding the environment of the organization helps define the context in which the Change Initiative takes place. “The context of organizations clearly is important not only because it contributes to more meaningful interpretations of behavior, practices and policies that emerge within those contexts, but because an informed understanding of the contextual dynamics is a necessary condition for effective implementation of organizational change” (Ferris *et al.*, 1989).

This therefore builds a case for understanding the context in which the proposed change is going to take place, which in turn facilitates the matching of the preparation process with any identified expectations from stakeholders and existing sensitivities. The triggers for change originate from the environment, performance, characteristics of top managers, structure and strategy (Huber cited Weick & Quinn, 1999). The characteristics of an organization have a key role in determining its change capacity (Gravenhorst *et al.*, 2005). The performance of an organization has been partly attributed to its climate (Goleman cited Andre, 2013) and this is the basis for exploring the political, social and economic landscape in the context of change management.

Conceptual Framework

Based on the research question and preliminary literature review, the Conceptual Framework contains the independent variable(s) represented by five dimensions: Power Distance (PD), Individualism vs. Collectivism (IDV), Uncertainty Avoidance (UA), Masculinity vs. Femininity (MAS) and the dependent variable(s) commitment to change and readiness to change moderated by demographic factors.

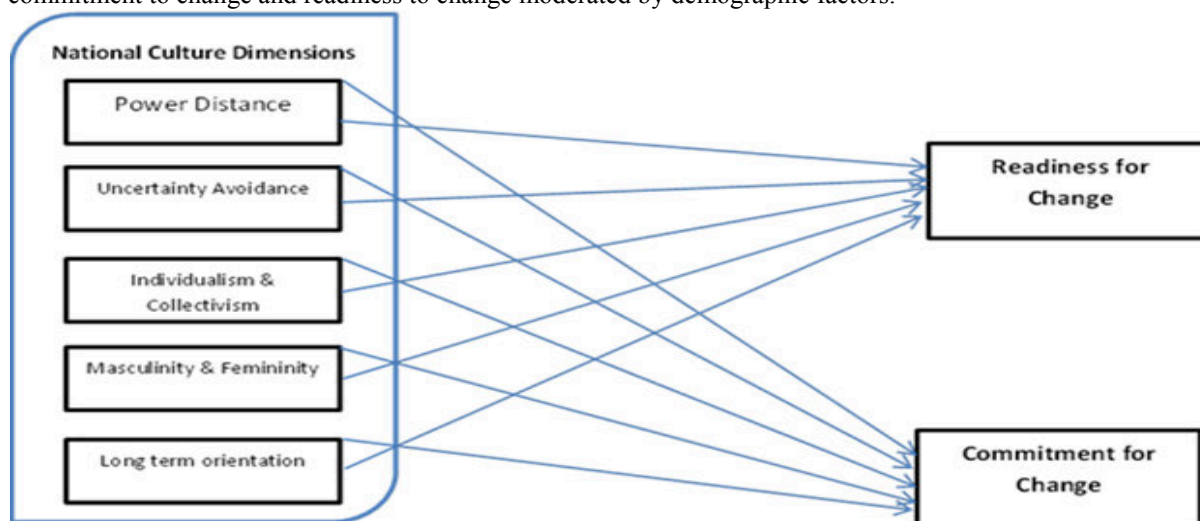


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Source: Hofstede, G. (2001).

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to assess the impact of national cultural values on the organizational change initiatives within the African Union Commission (AUC).

The specific objective of the study is to addresses the following specific issues:

- Study the influence of national cultural values on commitment to organizational change and individual readiness for change;
- Examine the wider context or environment and understanding of the political, social and economic landscape, and specifically assess aspects such as leadership, power influence, communication, structure and size;
- Assess factors that trigger change (driving force) in the AUC;
- Identify national cultural values that potentially influence change management.

Research Design and Methods

The study is a descriptive case study that uses cross-sectional survey and collects both data quantitative and qualitative data.

Study Population

The primary focus of this study is the African Union Commission hence the primary population. This includes senior management, professional and general service staff category. The total population is 1743.

Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

As indicated above in the Study Area Description, the sampling frame (SAP users) is drawn from the total staff population (1743) of the AUC. As such, 700 SAP users in the AUC made up the sampling frame. The sample frame includes all active SAP users located in Headquarters, whose total size was 700. As such, it incorporated senior managers and non-managerial staff of the Commission working in Finance, Human Resources and Procurement Units who have been working on the SAP System and have sufficient knowledge of the System.

After organizing the sampling frame, the sample selection within the frame was done probabilistically. Thus, a Simple random sampling technique was used in this study.

In the determination of the sample size, the most common technique is to compute the number of sampled representatives by considering the total population size, required minimum confidence level, and tolerable sampling error (Yemane, 1967, cited Abdukadir, 2014). These considerations were incorporated in the following standard sampling formula.

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

Where: n = sample size

S = size of sampling frame (users of SAP at AUC in Addis Ababa)

N= total population size of the organization

e = sampling error/level of precision

As such, the sample size of this study was computed at a 95% confidence interval (most common in descriptive studies), 5% standard error, total population size of the organization (1743), and size of sampling frame (700).

$$n = \frac{700}{1+1743(0.05)^2}$$

Therefore, 131 participants were selected.

Source of Data and Data Collection Instruments

Data were collected from primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected from employees of the African Union Commission in Addis Ababa representing the five regions, namely North, Southern, East, West and Central Africa. Secondary data was drawn from the AUC database and publicly available sources, which includes the SAP-IMIS Post Implementation Report, publications available at the AUC Knowledge Management E-Library.

The principal data collection tool was an online Self-Administered Questionnaire (SAQ). For this study, 131 questionnaires were distributed and 111 (85%) were completed and returned for further analysis. The SAQ, based on the 5- point Likert-Scale, was designed in a standardized manner and has pre-defined answers from which respondents can select a response.

In addition to SAQ, a Semi - structured interview was conducted. An interview was chosen to enable the researcher to obtain in-depth information to supplement what was in the questionnaire.

Secondary data was collected to enrich this research and supplement what was collected from the questionnaire and interview.

Data Reliability and Validity

Reliability refers to the extent to which data collection techniques or analysis procedures will yield consistent findings. The researcher ensured that the data collection instruments were consistent and standardized in order to avoid risks such as subject or participant error or bias, observer error and bias, by using the appropriate data collection techniques and analysis procedure.

The result of the reliability test is depicted below:

Table 1: reliability test

| Reliability Statistics | |
|------------------------|------------|
| Cronbach's Alpha | N of Items |
| .827 | 43 |

In order to achieve validity of the data, the researcher conducted pilot survey to ensure the content, sequence, friendliness, and quality of the questionnaire.

Data Analysis and Presentation

Data was automatically recorded into an Excel sheet into an in-built Google Forms spreadsheet as respondents filled the online questionnaire. For analysis, the data was exported to SPSS version-20. Descriptive statistics such as Standard Deviation and Means were obtained. The variables were then subjected to univariate analysis. Data was displayed through tables.

Results and Discussions

The Organizational Landscapes of AUC as Change Contexts

To understand the context of change management at the AUC, this section has focused on reflecting the Social, Political and Economic Landscapes of the organization.

Social Landscape

In order to better understand the social landscape, key attributes defining the social landscape were considered for this study. These were: size and structure of the organization, language of communication, and existing communication systems or structures. This section attempts to assess the communication practices of the AUC within the context of its social and structural background. The proposals made in this regard are summarized below.

To start with a more positive perspective of respondents regarding the communication practices of the organization, the study established a mean score of 3.25 (SD = 0.890) to the statement that the Management communicates and shares information on new reforms like SAP in good time. However, their view shifts significantly more towards critical with regards to the other elements of communication practices of the organization. For example, on whether consultants help explain the reforms throughout the process, a mean score of 2.55 (SD = 0.983) is observed. The results imply the limited satisfaction of respondents with the performance of consultants in handling their role of helping to explain the reforms throughout the process. Nonetheless, the relatively high SD indicates that there are still some who appreciate the help of consultants in the process.

Political Landscape

Like the social structure, the political landscape of an organization such as AUC has a great influence on the process and outcome of change management. Therefore, in order to understand the political landscape of the AUC, two major aspects were examined. These were Leadership Style and Power Bases or influences.

Average mean score of 3.41 (SD = 0.951) of respondents agreed that the AUC leadership encouraged staff to make the best of their skills and capacity. On whether the AUC Leadership had communicated the Mission and Vision of the Organization a mean score of 2.59 (SD = 0.805) was recorded. Similarly, below average mean score of 2.57 (SD = 0.829) is shown in relation to the Leadership's open mindedness and willingness to listen to ideas from all categories of staff. As shown on Table 3 above, there is a strong statistical evidence with chi square tests and level of significance as summarized above the findings further implied that the respondents' regional background were closely related to their views and experiences regarding the leadership style and its influence in change management in the AUC.

Power Influence

With respect to powerbases, strategies and their influence on change management at the AUC, above average mean score of 4.15 (SD = 0.473), 3.29 (SD = 0.850) and 3.05 (SD = 0.887) is recorded for Legitimate Power, Expert Power and Coercive Power respectively.

The summarized chi-square and significance levels (df = 16) of results further implied that the regional backgrounds of the respondents have a significant impact on their value and experience regarding the implication of Power bases, strategies and their influence on change management in the AUC.

Understanding power bases and how these influence decision-making and compliance is considered important for successful change management (Munduate and Gravenhorst, 2003). In the context of the AUC, five types of power influences were tested.

Economic Landscape

In order to rate the importance of finances to a change management initiative, respondents were also asked whether they thought money/finance was key to the implementation of SAP at the AUC.

The results indicate a mean score of 4.40 (SD = 0.528), showing that having a strong financial base is of paramount importance for the implementation of major initiatives such as SAP. The result is consistent with the

information gathered through an interview with the SAP Project Manager who indicated that the approximate cost was US\$9 Million.

With a chi-square of 10.25 (df = 8) and significance level of 3.5%, the findings further implied that the regional background of respondents have significant impact on to how they view the importance of finance and there is strong statistical evidence that shows funding or a strong financial base is important in the implementation of major initiatives such as SAP.

The AUC's economic landscape was largely tested on the AUC's budgetary provisions and funders. According to the interview of the project manager, the project had consumed approximately US\$9 million since its inception in 2012. In addition to this, the survey showed that in implementing SAP, a strong financial base was a key.

This basically confirms the literature which states that the availability of strong financial resources has a direct effect on strategic change (Kraatz & Zajac, 2001).

Factors that drive change/reform at the AUC

Having looked at the broader context and having an idea of the bigger picture of the AUC, this research question aims at establishing to what extent certain internal and external factors as examined in the literature review contribute to the introduction of reforms at the AUC.

The results on the factors that derive change show average mean scores in all proposals. To begin with the highest mean score, 4.77 (SD = 0.519, implies respondents believe that the need to meet international standards is a factor which drives change and reforms such as SAP. A mean score of 4.73 (SD =0.557) is indicative of the view of respondents that improving efficiency was a major driver of change. Similarly a mean score of 4.69 (SD = 0.502 implies that keeping abreast of technological advances was an important driver for change. In addition, the need to respond to donors/partners requirements, with a mean score of (SD = 0.668) was also considered one of the significant drivers of change, while the availability of adequate financial resources (mean score of 4.53; SD = 0.687) and the response to the requirements of Member States (mean score of 4.51; SD = 0.734) were considered of some significance. The overall result indicates that both internal and external factors have an impact on driving change.

Additionally, a chi-squares and significance levels further implied that the regional backgrounds of respondents have a significant impact on how they view the importance of both internal and external factors in driving change and reforms at the AUC.

Cultural Dimensions as Factors for Change

The main objective of this study was to assess the impact of national cultural values on organizational change initiatives within the African Union Commission (AUC). This objective was guided by the research question: How are change management initiatives in a multi-cultural environment influenced by national cultural values? More specifically, such Cultural Dimensions as Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, and Individualism vs. Collectivism and Masculinity vs. Femininity were assessed in terms of their potential roles in the Commitment and Readiness for change of the AUC staff. According to Zedatol (2008), cited by Oumar Mohammed (2012), mean score 3.80 is high, 3.40 – 3.79 is moderate and below 3.39 is low. Therefore, the National Culture Dimensions in the study are considered according to the above thresholds.

Summary of Univariate Analysis Results of Cultural Factors

This section presents Descriptive Statistics in the form of Mean and Standard Deviation for the various components of National Culture Dimensions and Commitment and Readiness for Change.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Components of National Culture Dimensions and Commitment and Readiness for Change

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--------------------------------|-----|------|----------------|
| Power Distance | 110 | 3.10 | .644 |
| Uncertainty Avoidance | 110 | 3.91 | .526 |
| Individualism vs. Collectivism | 110 | 4.48 | .669 |
| Masculinity vs. Femininity | 110 | 4.56 | .731 |
| Commitment for Change | 110 | 3.69 | .781 |
| Readiness for Change | 110 | 3.80 | .886 |

Source: Own survey, 2016

Table 2 shows the Mean and Standard Deviation of the National Culture Dimensions such as: Power Distance (PD); Uncertainty Avoidance (UA); Collectivism vs. Individualism; and Masculinity vs. Femininity Index (MAS) rated by respondents. The results indicate that the level of Masculinity vs. Femininity among AUC employees has a high mean result of 4.56 with 0.73 SD. Based on the fact that mean of 3.80 is indicative of high

level of Masculinity on this scale, it can be concluded that the dominant values of the employees are "masculine". According to Zedatol (2008), mean score, the result of this study shows that the high mean result for Individualism (M=4.48, SD=0.66), Power Distance (M=3.10, SD=0.64), Uncertainty Avoidance (M=3.91, SD=0.52), and Readiness for Change (M=3.80, SD=0.88) and moderate mean scoring variables such as: Commitment for Change (M=3.69, SD=0.78). The low SD indicates that the mean value is representative of the rate given by the majority of the respondents.

Cultural Dimensions as Factors of Commitment and Readiness for Change

This analysis is used to assess the relationship between National Culture Dimensions and Commitment and Readiness for Change. The measurement of cultural factors was guided by Hofstede's Model on Cultural Dimensions (Hofstede, 1993). In this study, the following dimensions were considered: Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, and Individualism vs. Collectivism and Masculinity vs. Femininity. Therefore, the researcher attempted to ascertain whether there are any identifiable national cultural values that have a potential influence on commitment to organizational change and readiness for change. Using the Analysis of variance (ANOVA), the impact of the variables is investigated. The discussions on the theoretical as well as empirical implications of the results are presented under the tables of the respective cultural dimensions/factors.

Power Distance (PD)

ANOVA was used to test the effect of the four cultural dimensions. Power Distance was the first Hofstede Dimension that the researcher was interested in. As seen from the literature, Power Distance means the level of tolerance of social inequality between the leader and the followers including the relationship with authority. It is used to assess the relationship between leaders and subordinates.

Table 3: Overall Facets of Power Distance

| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|------|------|
| Between Groups | .925 | 4 | .231 | .547 | .702 |
| Within Groups | 44.362 | 105 | .422 | | |
| Total | 45.287 | 109 | | | |

The results show that the above ANOVA test is not significant $F(4,105) = .547; p > 0.05$. This indicates that the level of tolerance of inequality between the leader and the followers (PD) does not differ significantly according to the regions. The Power Distance Dimension essentially helps to understand the subordinate-employer relationship. The results of this study indicate low power distance across the regions in the African Union Commission. Low PD means that people have a low tolerance for inequality between employers and subordinates. These points to the fact that any change initiative in the low power distance cultures should take into account the people's preference for autonomy and encourage a more participative approach as opposed to a dictatorial approach in change implementation. Consultation is also a key issue and it is on this basis that Wursten (2005) suggests that unfreezing is essential. The purpose of the change must be clearly explained and the people should be convinced that it is for the good of the organization. Relating these findings to the SAP case study used in this research, this research has shown that employees were not satisfied with the communication and information-sharing by the Organization in its attempt to explain the benefits of SAP prior to its introduction. In addition, respondents did not agree with the statement that management offered them full involvement and was open to their inputs at all stages of SAP introduction and implementation. A relatively significant number of the respondents stated that they were not satisfied with their level of involvement in SAP implementation. This goes to show how much importance the employees attach to the participative, consultative approach and how perhaps, this unfreezing act has been a high factor for success in the implementation of SAP.

Uncertainty Avoidance (UA)

Then, the interest was whether or not Hofstede's Uncertainty Avoidance Dimension is influenced according to region. As drawn from the literature, societies with strong levels of uncertainty avoidance basically imply that members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations and try to avoid such situations. This feeling is, among other things, expressed through a need for written and unwritten rules, and issues must be clearly spelt out and understood before the people support a particular proposal. Rules are crucial in these societies.

Table 4: Overall facets of Uncertainty Avoidance (UA)

| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|------|------|
| Between Groups | .439 | 4 | .110 | .388 | .023 |
| Within Groups | 29.740 | 105 | .283 | | |
| Total | 30.180 | 109 | | | |

Source: Own survey, 2016

The results show that the above ANOVA test is significant $F(1, 105) = .388; p < 0.05$. This indicates

that Uncertainty Avoidance is significant among the regions. According to Wursten (2005), this means a preference for deductive way of thinking and a need for understanding of philosophies behind an initiative before it is accepted. Written rules are highly regarded and must be established in order to reduce uncertainty and ambiguity (Pheng & Yuquan, 2002 and Wu, 2006). In a nutshell, this is an indication that employees prefer well-defined work procedures and well spelt out job descriptions. In terms of change management, unfreezing is very essential in order to win the support of employees on any proposed change initiative. Cultures that rank high in Uncertainty Avoidance also tend to be extremely prone to resistance to change (Savolainen, 2013).

Attitudes towards SAP Implementation

This serves as the final reflection of the analysis and discussion of results regarding the change process and environment in the AUC in the context of SAP. It summarizes the views of respondents on the implementation of SAP and its perceived benefits to them and the organization at large.

Table 5: Respondents' views and attitudes towards SAP implementation and their involvement in the change process at the AUC

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Chi Square | Sig. |
|---|-----|------|----------------|------------|------|
| The introduction of SAP has been of significant benefits to the Commission. | 110 | 4.45 | .568 | 24.00 | .991 |
| I am satisfied with the degree of communication and information sharing on the concept of SAP as a whole (<i>The reasons for /purpose of its introduction and its benefits</i>) by AUC Leadership and Project Management Team prior to and during implementation? | 110 | 2.94 | 1.265 | 18.80 | .776 |
| Staff members were receptive to the introduction of SAP. | 110 | 3.80 | .886 | 10.32 | .658 |

As depicted in Table 5 above, a mean score of 4.45 (SD = 0.568), which is indicative of the fact that the introduction of SAP has been of significant benefit to the Commission.

Reacting to the degree of communication and information sharing during the implementation of SAP, a below average mean score of 2.94 (SD = 1.265) is reported. On staff receptiveness to the introduction of SAP, a mean score of 3.80 (SD = 0.886) is reflected.

As shown in the above Table 5, there is strong statistical evidence with chi square test $P = 24$, $df = 8$ and significance level of 99.1% that shows the introduction of SAP has been of significant benefits to the Commission. Similarly with a chi square of 10.32 ($df = 12$) and significance level of 66% the findings further implied that staff was receptive to the introduction of SAP. Nonetheless, as to the level of satisfaction with the degree of communication and information sharing on the concept of SAP as a whole a chi square of 18.8 ($df = 12$) and significance level of 77.6% is indicative of low level satisfaction on the degree of communication and information sharing.

Conclusions

The following conclusions can be drawn from this study:

- i. This study has clearly highlighted the existence of underlying cultural factors in line with the dimensions in Hofstede's Theory (1993) that the organization must be cognizant of them during change implementation. The general observation is that PD is low across all cultures which calls for Management to encourage a more participative and consultative approach during change management. Uncertainty Avoidance is high which calls for Management to clearly explain the change processes prior to implementation because the high UA connotes a high preference for structured situations. The results have also shown that the various societies in the AUC are highly individualistic which implies that they are potentially highly resistant to change. This also calls for better communication, and the adaptation of a more participative and consultative approach during change management;
- ii. The study has generally not shown significant differences among the various regions of the African Union so on the basis of this study, national cultural differences might not pose a great challenge;
- iii. The above cultural factors can be used as indicators to work out strategies for instance, to smoothly implement change by overcoming potential resistance from within or out of the organization;
- iv. The study has confirmed that the political, social and economic characteristics of the organization define the context within which change takes place and issues such as leadership, power influences, financial well-being and communication, among many others, have a direct impact on change management;
- v. The factors that trigger change in the AUC are not unique to the AUC. The study has confirmed that both internal and external factors trigger change and it is essential for the organization to constantly examine its environment in order to keep abreast of the various challenges.

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