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Effective Strategies to Improve Project Planning in the Banking Industry

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This is to certify that the doctoral study by

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Abstract

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Abstract

Poor project planning can negatively affect the profitability of information technology (IT) projects. IT project managers in the banking industry who fail to improve project planning can observe a decrease in profitability. Grounded in the structuration theory, the purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore effective strategies IT project managers use to improve project planning in the banking industry. Participants were four IT project managers in Abidjan-Ivory Coast who successfully used strategies to improve project planning in the banking industry. Data were collected from semistructured interviews and company documents relevant to IT project planning and analyzed using Yin's five-step process. Five themes emerged: effective communication, effective risk management plan, scope management plan, schedule management plan, and cost management plan. A key recommendation for IT project managers is to use project management information systems and project reporting to share information with the project stakeholders. The implications for positive social change include the potential to sustain financial and economic development in the community through the successful implementation of IT projects.

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Dedication

I dedicate this doctoral study to Almighty God for granting me strength and inspiration through the challenging journey of completing my DBA program. To my father, Nagnounon Tuo, my mother, Tioguignon Silue, and my stepmother, Fatouma Coulibaly thank you for your prayers and blessing that support me for any challenge I face in life. I also dedicate this study to my lovely wife Aramatou Kone, my lovely daughter Aicha-Malika Tuo, my siblings, and friends for their incredible support. Thank you all for your love, support, and prayers.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Background of the Problem

Despite the globalization of banking, West African banking systems report significant harms in project planning execution. Most of the West African developing nations do not have suitable institutional capacity accompanied by a lack of proficient employees to design and apply projects (Cull et al., 2018). Thus, information technology (IT) project planning in West African banks is affected not by financial resources; but the bank administrations' ability to plan and execute projects appropriately (Bertone et al., 2018). Further, leaders of West African banks are reluctant to accept open banking project planning strategies to respond to competition from IT (Hilson et al., 2018). But the lack of using IT project planning for innovation and a competitive advantage in a fast-growing banking sector has stripped Ivorian banks of practical solutions to face competition (Breckenridge, 2019). Since project planning is significant to project success (Kerzner & Kerzner, 2017; Project Management Institute, 2017), the banking industry in Ivory Coast needs effective project planning strategies to improve projects' success rates.

Problem Statement

Poor project planning is one of the most critical failure factors in IT projects (Aranyossy et al., 2018). Over 50% of IT projects do not meet their budget and schedule plans (Shokouhyar et al., 2019). The general business problem is that poor planning negatively affects the profitability of IT projects in financial organizations. The specific business problem is that some IT project managers lack effective strategies to improve project planning in the banking industry.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore strategies IT project managers use to improve project planning in the banking industry. The targeted population were four IT project managers from one major bank in the metropolitan city of Abidjan-Ivory Coast with more than 5 years of successful experience in using IT strategies to improve project planning in the banking system. The implications for positive social change include the potential to create more jobs and increase customer satisfaction in the banking industry in Abidjan through the successful implementation of IT projects in the banking system.

Nature of the Study

The researcher has a choice between quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods when conducting a research study (Brannen, 2017). Using the qualitative method, the researcher can describe the feelings, opinions, and experiences of the research participants (Rahman, 2016; Yin, 2017). Researchers use the quantitative method when they investigate the relationship between a dependent and independent variable (Elfenbein & Schwarze, 2020; Patton, 2015; Yin , 2017). The researcher uses the mixed-methods approach to combine elements of qualitative and quantitative approaches (O'Cathain, 2020; Vangrieken & Kyndt, 2020). I chose a qualitative method for the proposed research study because I wanted to gain a clearer understanding of strategies IT project managers use to improve project planning in the banking industry. Researchers can use the qualitative method to gain a clearer understanding of the investigated problem (Kaae & Traulsen, 2020).

Three main qualitative research designs include phenomenology, ethnography, and case study (Glasofer & Townsend, 2020; Mays & Pope, 2020). The researcher can use the phenomenological design to explore how an individual perceives the meaning of an event (Vagle, 2016; Yin, 2017). But the purpose of this study was not to understand what a group of people feel during a phenomenon, so I did not use the phenomenological approach. The ethnographic research design focuses on the study of people and cultures (Kassan et al., 2020; Yin, 2017). Ethnographic research was not appropriate for this study because I did not intend to perform a long-term study of organizational culture. Using the case study design, the researcher can perform an in-depth investigation of a business problem within a real-world situation (Blume, 2020; Yin, 2017). I used a single case study design to develop a more in-depth understanding of the strategies IT project managers use to improve project planning in the banking industry. By using a single case study design, I collected richer and substantial data for this research study.

Research Question

What strategies do IT project managers use to improve project planning in the banking industry?

Interview Questions

1. What strategies do you use for successful planning of your IT projects?
2. What strategies do you apply during your IT project planning to involve the key stakeholders?
3. What were your success criteria for an effective planning strategy?

4. What strategies do you use to communicate with stakeholders during your project planning?
5. What were the main barriers or challenges to applying your strategies for IT project planning?
6. How did you overcome these barriers?
7. What else do you wish to add about strategies you use to improve project planning?

Conceptual Framework

The structuration theory served as the conceptual framework for the current study. Anthony Giddens laid the foundations of the structuration theory in 1976 (Giddens, 1993) and significantly added to the theory in 1984. IT project managers can use the structuration theory to understand how project stakeholders interact during project planning (Muhammad & Wickramasinghe, 2018). IT managers and researchers in business use the structuration theory to decipher the relationship between IT practice and organizational' functioning (Stones, 2018). The structuration theory provides an understanding of the relationship between individuals and the social forces that influence peoples' actions (Bettig , 2018). Based on the theory, individuals who desire to take actions without proper knowledge can recreate a social structure for a social change (Bettig, 2018). IT project managers can contribute to social change by managing the interrelation of the different steps in project planning in an organized whole through the lens of the structuration theory.

Additionally, the theory of structuration includes two main philosophical components: epistemology and ontology (Stones, 2018). Practitioners of the epistemology component grasp the significance of knowledge, namely exploring a phenomenon and acknowledging its foundations and limits (Bettig, 2018). The ontology component indicates the subsistence of some phenomenon (Bettig, 2018). Giddens' theory ties the epistemology and ontology in a duality relationship to justify human structure conception using conceived tenets and patterns. IT project managers can use Giddens' structuration theory to explore strategies to improve project planning in the banking industry.

Operational Definitions

Process in project management: A process is a set of tools and techniques used together to produce one or more specific outputs for the project (Project Management Institute, 2017). There are 49 processes in project management. Each process is organized so that it belongs to one knowledge area and one process group (Project Management Institute, 2017).

Project management: Project management is a practice that requires the application of skills, tools, and techniques to project activities for meeting the project requirements (Project Management Institute, 2017). Project management constitutes a group of many phases, including: (a) initiation, (b) planning, (c) executing, (d) monitoring and controlling, and (e) closing (Project Management Institute, 2017).

Project management tools and techniques: Project management tools and techniques (PMTT) are systematic procedures or practices that project managers and their

teams use to produce specific project management deliverables (Milosevic & Martinelli, 2016; Project Management Institute, 2017). Appropriate use of PMTT can lead to project success; therefore, PMTT are projects' success factors (Project Management Institute, 2017).

Project planning activities: Project planning activities involve all activities that guide the project managers and their teams for the execution, the monitoring and controlling, and the closure phases of the project (Harris et al., 2018). Through project planning activities, project managers can manage time, cost, quality, change, risks, and issues related to the project (Harris et al., 2018; Project Management Institute, 2017).

Project planning input factor: Project planning input factors are: (a) human, (b) management, (c) technical, and (d) organizational (Project Management Institute, 2017; Williams, 2016). Project planning input factors have a significant influence on the effectiveness of project plans.

Project planning objectives: In project planning, project managers translate project requirements into work breakdown structure (WBS), tasks list, Gantt charts, resource assignment, and risk register (Project Management Institute, 2017).

Project scope: The project scope is the work performed to deliver a product, service, or result with the specified features and functions (Project Management Institute, 2017).

Project success: The project success represents the delivery of the product and the project within the set boundaries of scope, cost, schedule, quality, and customer satisfaction (Project Management Institute, 2017).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Scholars are responsible for setting the boundaries and the purpose of their research to validate the limitations of the study. Researchers use their extensive knowledge about the research boundaries to establish the limitations and delimitations of their research (Bernard, 2017). In the current section, I discussed the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations of this research.

Assumptions

Assumptions are beliefs that the researcher did not examine and consider to be probable and authentic (Eisenhardt, 2020; Pyrczak, 2016). Thoughts come with assumptions that anticipate how the researcher frames the research problem and formulate solutions (Wolgemuth et al., 2017). Interviews are subject to the common problem of bias, poor recall, and poor or inaccurate articulation (Yin, 2016). As the primary researcher, I assumed that during the interview, the participants demonstrated honesty about their project management experience and mainly their knowledge of project planning. I assumed that the participants provided me accurate and updated information regarding strategies they use for project planning. The fact that participants were aware of their participation in a research study could influence their responses during the interview (Yin, 2016). I also assumed that the participants had a sincere interest in participating in this research.

Limitations

Limitations are potential facts that restrict the research area under consideration; they represent prospective weaknesses for the research (Pyrczak, 2016; Taylor et al.,

2015). The current study may have the following components as limitations: (a) limiting the targeted population to four IT project managers from one major bank could weaken the results of the research, (b) conducting research into one organization in the metropolitan area of Abidjan does not ensure the transferability of the research findings, and (c) IT project managers may not recall past experiences and information might not be accurate. Qualitative case studies may raise ethical issues of confidentiality while interacting with participants in research (Queirós et al., 2017). Probable ethical problems of confidentiality during this study could be a limitation.

Delimitations

Delimitations represent the characteristics that limit the scope and boundaries of the research study (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2019). The scope and geographic location included four IT project managers from one major bank in Abidjan-Ivory Coast with more than 5 years of successful experience in using IT strategies to improve project planning. My choice for a small sample size represented a delimitation to this proposed research. The study was delimited to the city of Abidjan as opposed to more comprehensive geographic locations. The study was also delimited to the banking industry.

Significance of the Study

Effective project planning and best practices lead to successful projects and increase organizations' effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability (Allen et al., 2015). Effective planning contributes to IT project success (Allen et al., 2015; Naor et al., 2013). Using the findings from the current study, IT project managers may understand the

strategies to use for improving IT project planning in the banking industry. The planning process consists of the processes that establish the total scope of the effort, define and refine the objectives, and develop the course of actions required to attain those objectives (Allen et al., 2015; Project Management Institute, 2017). By developing effective project planning, the IT project manager can mitigate risks inherent to the projects (Allen et al., 2015). However, some IT project managers in the banking industry in Abidjan (Ivory Coast) still lack effective planning strategies to deliver IT projects within scope, budget, and time. The findings of the current qualitative research study can provide to these IT project practitioners strategies for effective project planning and therefore create more jobs and increase customer satisfaction in the banking industry in Abidjan through the successful implementation of IT projects in the banking system.

Contribution to Business Practice

Through successful projects that lead to innovation, companies gain and sustain competitive advantage (Levin & Wyzalek, 2015). However, poor project planning is one of the significant reasons for IT project failure (Sligo et al., 2017). The lack of top management support and effective planning practices constitute the most critical factors of failure in IT projects (Aranyossy et al., 2018). Ensuring IT project success through a productive planning phase could increase the success rate among projects. Achievable and effective project plans are capital for keeping projects under control therefore ensuring projects' success (Hughes et al., 2016). An effective planning strategy involving best practices, various processes, and techniques could lead to successful IT projects. Through effective planning strategies, organizational leaders may reduce overall project

costs, project risks, and project delivery dates. The business value of the current qualitative research study resides in the exploration of project planning strategies IT project managers within the banking industry can use for ensuring project success.

Implications for Social Change

The implications for positive social change of the current study include the potential to create more jobs and increase customer satisfaction in the banking industry in the metropolitan city of Abidjan through the successful implementation of IT projects in the banking system. The banking sector in Abidjan currently provides opportunities for economic sustainability after nearly a decade of a political crisis in the country. The present research provided insight into the potential IT market by helping banks to create jobs and sustain a living through successful IT projects for communities in the metropolitan city of Abidjan.

Another implication for social change involves vulnerable people or low-income individuals from the community providing them financial solutions like e-banking and easy access to various types of loans through successful IT projects. Successful strategies of project planning in the banking sector contributed to create opportunities and sustain financial and economic development in the communities (Winkler & Duminy, 2016). The findings of the present research may encourage leaders of financial institutions to boost technology innovation through effective project planning strategies.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

Researchers should use the literature review to describe and analyze what other researchers developed (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The purpose of this qualitative

single case study was to explore strategies IT project managers use to improve project planning in the banking industry. The current literature review refers to findings from previous studies related to this study. The literature review is the heart of the business research study (Lepenioti et al., 2020). In the current literature review, I included the structuration theory as discussed by diverse authors, explained why the actor-network theory (ANT), the resource-based theory (RBT), and the theory of constraints (TOC) did not fit for the current study, and then suggested a solution to the problem of ineffective planning in IT projects.

The researcher can use a variety of academic resources to conduct the literature review (Snyder, 2019; Xiao & Watson, 2019). I conducted the current literature review by exploring scholarly peer-reviewed journals, books, and dissertations. Through Walden University Library and Google Scholar, I explored Academic Search Complete, ABI/INFORM, Business Source Complete, Emerald, and Thoreau Multiple Databases to access peer-reviewed journals, Walden University dissertations, and books related to the qualitative research methodology and case study examination strategy. I reviewed each article through the UlrichWeb to categorize and use proper academic orientations applicable to the current study and ensure that the information I considered for the review was updated and aligned to the evolution of the project planning practice in the field of project management. My search strategy included the following keywords: *IT projects, project planning, banking industry, project planning strategies, IT project failure,* and *IT project success*. I used Boolean operators such as “and,” “or,” and “not” to combine keywords in my search and provided more accurate and effective results. The literature

review comprised 265 peer-reviewed articles. The study contains 614 references with 92.45% peer-reviewed articles, of which 90% were published from 2017 to 2021. Additionally, researchers can use literature mapping for organizing the literature review into themes (Ferreira et al., 2019). I used the literature mapping technique for organizing the literature review into the following themes: (a) the structuration theory, (b) the ANT, (c) the RBT, (d) the TOC, (e) IT project success, (f) IT project failure, (g) IT project planning strategies, and (h) the evolution of the banking industry.

The Structuration Theory

Anthony Giddens's structuration theory constitutes a framework for describing social systems such as teams and understanding the structure of group decision-making and IT used in organizations (McPhee & Canary, 2016). The complex socio-cultural environment is a justification for human agents to incorporate technology in their social practices (Geels, 2020; Hansen et al., 2019). Social structures and human agency are iteratively related and co-develop (Falkheimer, 2018). The planning phase of most projects evolves in a social environment based on three components, including human beings, technological resources, and the organizational domain (Taufen Wessells, 2017). Using the structuration theory, researchers can understand the relationship between the IT project manager and the social forces that influence the project team's actions for an effective project planning.

The theory of structuration involves two constructs: the structure and the agents (Giddens, 1991). The agency construct is central to the structuration theory (McPhee & Canary, 2016). The agency construct involves the ability of human actors or stakeholders

to engage throughout the project life cycle (McPhee & Canary, 2016; Nyandiere et al., 2015). Thus, IT project managers can use the structuration theory to assess the project team's capacity to deal with project planning by fostering information-sharing and project team members' participation, recognizing that information is necessary to maintain an organization (Mezzanotte, 2016). During social interactions, IT project managers reproduce structural properties with project team members (Puron-Cid, 2013). The interaction between IT project managers and project teams produces results that end up changing the existing properties of the social structure in three dimensions including: (a) communication, (b) power, and (c) sanction (Nyandiere et al., 2015; Puron-Cid, 2013). Considering the agency construct, IT project managers can develop effective cost, schedule, resources, and communication management plans.

Structure is the second important construct of Giddens's structuration theory (McPhee & Canary, 2016; Nyandiere et al., 2015). Giddens (1991) defined structure as rules and resources, organized as properties of social systems that exist only as structural properties. According to Giddens's notion of structural duality, structural properties including rules and resources are integrated into the action and involved in the production and reproduction of social systems (Nyandiere et al., 2015; Puron-Cid, 2013). The structure construct influences the social roles of project stakeholders (Jones & Karsten, 2008). Structure focuses on two main components including planning and approach (Nyandiere et al., 2015; Omar et al., 2020). Through the lens of the structure construct, IT project managers can improve project planning. Due to its dual aspect composed of the agent (human) and the structure (the technology in the current case), the structuration

theory establishes a framework of a continuous process of technology that affects technology use (Vyas et al., 2017).

The dual aspect of the structuration theory represented by the human factor and the complex network of technology-based relations could be capital for IT project managers to organize and control communication during the project planning phase (McPhee & Canary, 2016). Communication is essential in project planning process, and IT project managers can use the structuration theory to improve communication with project stakeholders (Ahmed et al., 2019). If IT project managers apply the structuration theory to communications during project planning, project team members can interact and make sense of their own and other stakeholders' actions. Technical and nontechnical risks resulting from communication and the relationship between agents involved in the structuration framework in IT projects could have negative impacts on the performing organizations; however, applying the structuration theory to IT project management could significantly improve the success rate of IT projects (Iyamu, 2017).

From an achievement point of view of the structuration theory, a typical format of technology use rules what that technology affords. For instance, the primary purpose of cell phones at first was to provide communication in real-time—to receive and make phone calls. Over time, users' understanding of mobile phones through innovative technologies evolved as they learned to use it for many other purposes, including cameras, scanners, and file handlers. That is why many contemporary analyses of technology related to the theory of structuration tend to emphasize how members of organizations respond to technologies or how technology is gradually functioning as a

mediating resource for members (Canary & Tarin, 2017). For instance, technology-in-practice is the use of the artifacts (human and nonhuman) and tools that make it easier to improve peoples' knowledge and practices in a community (Kerschner & Ehlers, 2016). By providing a framework that facilitates the creation of a technology and its improvement over time, the structuration theory was the best fit for analyzing effective strategies for IT project managers.

Relevant Theories

Actor-Network Theory

The ANT from French scholars Latour (1996) and Callon (1984) focuses on the understanding of processes of technological innovation and scientific knowledge-creation (Rydin & Tate, 2016). Latour and Callon developed the actor-network in the early 1980s (Callon, 1984; Latour, 1996). The main principle of actor-network theory is the idea of the heterogenous network (Allen, 2011; Murdoch, 1998; Mwenya & Brown, 2017). Using the ANT, IT project managers can understand the planning processes by emphasizing and considering all surrounding factors (Rydin & Tate, 2016). According to Callon and Latour, the process of actor-network formation involves four constructs: problematization, interessement, enrollment, and mobilization.

Problematization is the first stage of the actor-network process (Callon, 1984; Latour, 1996; Rivera & Cox, 2016). At the problematization stage, actors define the problem they intend to solve (Callon, 1984; Mwenya & Brown, 2017). The role of IT project managers during the problematization stage should consist in identifying all active stakeholders (Gunawong & Gao, 2017; Rivera & Cox, 2016). Then the

interessement stage involves several actions the IT project manager should take to create an alignment with all the active actors (Burga & Rezania, 2017; Iyamu & Mgudlwa, 2018). Once the interessement is successful, the project manager's challenge is to achieve enrollment (Callon, 1984; Latour, 1996; Rivera & Cox, 2016).

At the enrollment stage, the IT project manager engages with all active actors (Burga & Rezania, 2017). Upon successful negotiations, the IT project manager defines the role of each active actor within the process (Callon, 1984; Rivera & Cox, 2016). Mobilization is the final stage of the actor-network process, and it involves the support of internal and external actors to the network (Burga & Rezania, 2017; Iyamu & Mgudlwa, 2018; London & Pablo, 2017). IT project managers can use the ANT framework to ensure the inclusion of heterogenous actors during the planning process (Brandão & Joia, 2018; Rydin & Tate, 2016).

When using the actor-network theory, IT project managers should understand that the success or failure of an innovative project does not depend on the intrinsic characteristics of innovation, but on a network capable of linking heterogeneous actors (Aka, 2019; González et al., 2020; Viberg et al., 2019). However, the ANT is limited because of the vague boundaries of the theory (Silvis & Alexander, 2014). Additionally, since the ANT conceptual framework aims at undermining the divide between human and nonhuman and suggests that all should be treated symmetrically (Buijtendijk et al., 2018; Felski, 2016; Kinder et al., 2019), it is not appropriate to the current study. The ANT framework rejects the objective reality by providing the basis on which a symmetrical social theory can lead to productive interaction with human and nonhuman factors

(Felski, 2016; Murdoch, 1997). From this perspective, the ANT framework was not appropriate for this research study.

Resource-Based Theory

In 1991, Jay Barney formalized the theory of resources (Barney, 1991, 2017; Conner & Prahalad, 1996). Resource-based theory is a management framework used to determine the strategic resources that can provide a comparative advantage to a company (Adnan et al., 2018; Davis & Simpson, 2017; Zhao et al., 2017). Project managers can use the RBT to explain the differences in performance (creation and maintenance of competitive advantage) between firms by the characteristics of resources (Campbell & Park, 2017; Kamasak, 2017; Singh et al., 2019; Vidal & Mitchell, 2018). The RBT suggests that if every firm does the same analysis, it will end up with the same conclusions (Nason & Wiklund, 2018; Shan et al., 2019). Sustainable competitive advantage has to lie within the firm's resources and the way they employ them; leaders may cultivate a sustainable performance and maintain a competitive advantage through building an ethical and moral organizational culture that aligns with the organization goals (Barney, 2017; Chen, 2019; Jin et al., 2019; Shaari, 2019).

Barney (1991) noted if firms want to achieve sustainable competitive advantage and consequently above-normal profits, the resources they employ should be valuable, rare, inimitable, and nonsubstitutable. The inputs of the production system are not the resources themselves, but the services they provide, and the nature of these services depends on the knowledge that the individuals in the company possessed (Chuang & Lin, 2017; Kianto et al., 2017; Pérez-Luño et al., 2019). Because the search for opportunities

for the use of resources drives growth, the interaction between the two types of resources, namely material and human, creates productive opportunities that are unique, subjective, and specific to each firm (Nagano, 2020; Nwankpa & Datta, 2017; Saranga et al., 2018).

Resource theory was developed in reaction to developments in business strategy proposed by proponents of a traditional economic approach, the work of Michael Porter (Chereau & Meschi, 2018; Parnell, 2018; Stonehouse & Snowdon, 2007). In the 1980s, Michael Porter highlighted the importance of the structure of a sector and the positioning of companies in this sector (their market power) in explaining performance differentials (Du, 2018; Fahy, 2000; Isabelle et al., 2020). RBT rather emphasizes the company to understand how to create a difference over time in an organization (Barnabè et al., 2019; Lahti et al., 2018; Mishra et al., 2019). The RBT does not deny the interest of a detailed analysis of a company's sector environment but is more interested in the internal springs of the processes of creation and appropriation of value (Cappa et al., 2019; Kathuria et al., 2018; Zakrzewska-Bielawska, 2019). Through the RBT, managers can reintroduce certain strategic creativity into the process of creation and appropriation of value in their organizations.

Though many researchers used the RBT in various fields such as IT, few studies observed project management from this theoretical perspective (Almarri & Gardiner, 2014; Newbert, 2007; Perkins et al., 2018). Project management is an evolving and increasingly developed discipline and accepted both as a field of professional expertise and as academic research (Abbasi & Jaafari, 2018; Hassan & Mathiassen, 2018; White & Fortune, 2002). However, it is difficult to identify and measure the value resulting from

investments in project management (Mullaly & Thomas, 2008; Zwikael et al., 2018). Determining the value of project management requires a deep understanding of what the value is as well as the consideration of several factors that may influence the perception of this value, like the external environment, the stakeholders involved, the nature of projects, or organizational context (Anantatmula & Rad, 2018; Derakhshan et al., 2019; Gemünden et al., 2018; Willumsen et al., 2019). For example, a consulting company whose main products are projects does not perceive the value of project management in the same way as a functional organization leading ad hoc projects such as continuous improvement projects or computer systems implementation projects. The differentiation about a project value is fundamental to determining the value of project management for an organization (Armenia et al., 2019; Dao et al., 2017; Kerzner, 2019).

The definition of key concepts is one of the main challenges of the RBT, and the definitions most often used by most works present the notion of resource as a stock of available factors owned or controlled by a firm (Amit & Schoemaker, 1993; Braganza et al., 2017; Pereira et al., 2017). However, RBT has an internal limitation that resides in the weakness in respective resources and an external limitation, which includes the threat of law, economy, policy, and culture (Hernández-Carrión et al., 2017; Polyviou et al., 2019). From this perspective, the project manager faces the challenge for a deep understanding of the resources and the forces influencing the environment where he or she operates. RBT is a conceptual framework that organizational leaders can use to analyze how the organization’s resources can increase competitive advantage (Derakhshan et al., 2019; Rockwell, 2019). However, using RBT, project managers cannot understand the different

processes for effective project planning strategy (Dao et al., 2017; Mac Donald et al., 2020). From this perspective, the use of RBT was not appropriate to the current study.

Theory of Constraints

Eliyahu Goldratt developed and discussed TOC in 1984 in his book *The Goal* (Castaño et al., 2013; Goldratt & Cox, 1984). TOC has three constructs which are: convergence, consistency, and respect (Goldratt, 2017; Goldratt & Cox, 1984). The convergence construct suggests that a complex system is easier to manage because an adjustment or correction to one aspect of the system will impact the system (Cox & Boyd, 2020; Modi et al., 2019). The consistency construct infers that any internal conflict must be the outcome of at least one flawed assumption (Bauer et al., 2019; Taylor & Asthana, 2018). The respect construct advert that humans are inherently good and deserving of respect even when they make mistakes (Galli, 2019a; Nagarkatte & Oley, 2017). According to Goldratt and Cox (1984), any flow that an organization generates is limited by a process and increasing the production capacity to the level of constraints will increase the production of value. TOC thinking process evolves around six steps, including identifying the system's constraints, deciding how to exploit the system's constraints, subordinating operations to the constraints, increasing constraints' capacity, and repeating anterior steps with a new constraint (Ikeziri et al., 2019; Johnson et al., 2016).

TOC represents a methodology that focuses on detecting the most crucial constraint preventing the achievement of a goal and improving the system to eliminate that constraint (Goldratt, 2017; Mabin et al., 2018). The TOC is process-oriented;

practitioners of TOC can use TOC to analyze a business process and identify possible weaknesses. Though IT project managers could use TOC to optimize the processes during project planning, weak integration of the human component could mislead the project team by focusing on irrelevant constraints (Georgiadis & Tang, 2017). Applying TOC to the project team will not be effective due to its weakness in considering the dual aspect of the IT project team (human factor and IT network). Though TOC could lead to the optimization of various processes, human productivity depends significantly on the style of management within an organization (Peltokorpi et al., 2016). Using TOC, practitioners cannot emphasize the contribution of each project team member for reaching a successful outcome for the project planning phase. The complexity of the IT project environment and the lack of capturing the motivation level of the project's team members could influence their implication in the continuous improvement of the organizational processes (Joseph, 2017); therefore, TOC did not contribute enough for planning IT projects.

In project management, TOC dwells in the idea that every system has a constraint or bottleneck that hurts the system's performance. So, the goal behind TOC in this context is to identify and manage the defined constraint and evaluate the system's performance with improvement in place (Johnson et al., 2016). TOC transitioned from its original factory floor to influence the field of project management by focusing on project control and resource allocation, project cost management, project risk management, and single project scheduling to reduce project duration (Johnson et al., 2016). Applying TOC could contribute to achieving projects in a timely manner. However, the framework of

TOC for IT project managers could be challenging due to the introduction of buffers that requires executive support based on the understanding of basic principles in the practice of project management (Dmitrievich et al., 2016). From this perspective and because not all project managers use buffering in their planning, I chose the structuration theory as the conceptual framework for this study.

IT Project Success

Project practitioners and stakeholders had different interpretations of IT projects success (Aranyossy et al., 2018). The information technology governance (ITG) became gradually crucial for organizational success and strategic value sourcing with the fast evolution in the IT field (Alreemy et al., 2016; Hardin-Ramanan et al., 2018). Unterhitzenberger and Bryde (2019) and Alreemy et al. (2016) noted the critical success factors (CSFs) are key components in the implementation of a successful ITG. The 10 main categories represented the CSFs to implement ITG successfully are the following: the stakeholders' involvement, the management support, the financial support, the organizational effects (internal), the strategic alignment between IT and business, the IT staffing management, the IT structure, the environment effect (external), managing the implementation, and the preparation (Alreemy et al., 2016; Francisco de Oliveira & Rabechini Jr., 2019; Tyagi et al., 2019).

Derakhshan et al. (2019), Sirisomboonsuk et al. (2018), and Young et al. (2019) analyzed the success factors of IT projects by exploring the relationships between IT governance, project governance, and project performance. IT governance and project governance have a positive impact on project performance and ensure project success

(Haq et al., 2019; Li et al., 2019; Sirisomboonsuk et al., 2018). AlBar and Hoque (2019) and Laird (2016) analyzed IT project success factors from a different perspective by trying to understand the factors that contribute to the success of small IT projects. The use of scope documents and a quality management plan had a positive correlation with project success and provided more value to small IT project success than perceived by project practitioners (Jitpaiboon et al., 2019; Laird, 2016; Zaman et al., 2019). IT governance, project governance, effective scope, and quality management constitute IT projects success factors (Alreemy et al., 2016; Laird, 2016; Sirisomboonsuk et al., 2018).

Project managers can reach the main objective of any project through its successful implementation. Project management maturity is significantly related to all vertices of the iron triangle (time, cost, and technical performance) dimensions of success (Berssaneti & Carvalho, 2015; Iriarte & Bayona, 2020; Zwikael & Smyrk, 2019). Two moderate variables, which are top management and dedicated project manager, have a significant impact on the time success dimension but not on customer satisfaction, which means a putting focus on efficiency aspect rather than effectiveness aspects (Abdulla & Al-Hashimi, 2019; Berssaneti & Carvalho, 2015; Pacagnella Jr. et al., 2019). Team building partially mediates the effect of transformational leadership, which has direct and indirect impacts on project success (Aga et al., 2016; Imran et al., 2019; Rehman, 2020). Team building is an important project success factor that plays a mediating role between transformational leadership and project success.

Several researchers discussed the CSFs of many types of IT projects (Chiyangwa & Mnkandla, 2017; Fayaz et al., 2017;). Management support, the leadership, the budget

support, the right team, the teamwork, the effective communication, the effective monitoring and controlling, the requirement specification, the project duration, a clear goal, the project progress schedule, the team capability, and the risk management influence the success of IT projects (Fayaz et al., 2017; Guo, 2019; Oh et al., 2019; Ozorhon & Karahan, 2017). Even though effective leadership plays a crucial role in successful IT projects, top management support did not often play a capital role in IT project success (Fayaz et al., 2017; Nuscheler et al., 2019). Haq et al. (2019), and Javani and Rwelamila (2016) shared that risk is a capital construct that influences IT project success. Though they shared different approaches in the management of IT projects. Chapman (2019), Javani and Rwelamila (2016), and Willumsen et al. (2019) suggested effective risk management strategies contribute to improving project performance and quality. However, the evaluation approach is not an effective strategy for IT project risks management and knowledge of project risks alone is not adequate to ensure project success (Al-Abrrow et al., 2019; Javani & Rwelamila, 2016; Tavares et al., 2019; Urbański et al., 2019).

Using IT effectively and efficiently will ensure IT project success and increase organizational productivity and performance (Chege et al., 2020; Hamdan et al., 2016; Unterhitzenberger & Bryde, 2019). Several components, including management style, project team, IT planning, financial aspect, consultants, vendors, organizational culture, relationship management and change, and perception as CSFs in implementing IT projects (Hamdan et al., 2016; Hughes et al., 2020; Kisielnicki & Misiak, 2020; Tam et al., 2020). Factors associated with reducing administrative cost, lowering operating costs,

and reducing the information cost represented the main reasons for using IT in organizations (Cepeda & Arias-Pérez, 2019; Hamdan et al., 2016; Lecerf & Omrani, 2020).

Influencing IT projects' CSFs could lead to support business routine and ensure competitive advantage (Hamdan et al., 2016; Haseeb et al., 2019; Severo et al., 2019). Several CSFs including a committed and motivated team, internal communication, goals and objectives, the use of tools and infrastructures, risk analysis, good estimation, skilled teams, and project monitoring can ensure IT project success (Ayat et al., 2020; Gheni et al., 2017; Trigo & Varajão, 2020). However, the highest CFSs of IT projects are the levels of commitment and motivation (Gheni et al., 2017; Mughal et al., 2019; Odabashian et al., 2019). Besides the traditional iron triangle (scope, time, and cost constraints), IT projects' success factors evolved to consider more factors like the perception of organizational project success and the characteristics of the IT project manager (PM, Alvarenga et al., 2019; Aranyossy et al., 2018). Aranyossy et al. (2018) and Marchewka (2016) posited that the most important characteristics for an IT PM that influence project success includes: (a) the PM ability to communicate at multiple levels, (b) the PM ability to deal with ambiguity and change, (c) the PM leadership style and attitude, (d) the PM experience, and (e) the ability of the PM to escalate. While planning and managing stakeholders are the priority CSFs of IT projects, the PM knowledge and expertise could be necessary but not enough factors when it comes to IT project success (Aranyossy et al., 2018; Chegu Badrinath & Hsieh, 2019; Marchewka, 2016).

IT Project Failure

Few researchers attempted an in-depth investigation of failed projects to identify the specific factors behind the failure (Alami, 2016). IT projects failed due to several factors, including: (a) volatility, (b) uncertainty, and (c) unknowns are at the origin of IT projects' failure (Alami, 2016; Mohanta et al., 2020). Ineffective risk management and poor execution are some of the major causes of IT projects' failure (Alami, 2016; Bouvard & Lee, 2020; Hillson & Simon, 2020; Willumsen et al., 2019). The lack of stakeholder management and top management support and effective planning constitute the most critical factors of failure in IT projects (Aranyossy et al., 2018; Einhorn et al., 2019; García-Sánchez et al., 2019). According to Shehzad et al. (2017), poor software development planning and associated skills lead to many project risk factors. Significant causes of failure in inhouse IT projects reside in organizational and technical dimensions, whereas risks in outsourced IT projects dwell in social and corporate aspects (Gupta et al., 2019b; Iriarte & Bayona, 2020; Lee et al., 2019; Shehzad et al., 2017). However, efficient principles and practices of IT projects and risk management contribute to solving software projects' risks (Hillson & Simon, 2020; Shehzad et al., 2017; Wu et al., 2019).

The most critical IT failure factors include: (a) the lack of top management support, (b) the poor project management, (c) the poor management of requirements, and (d) the lack of user training and support (AlBar & Hoque, 2019; Marchewka, 2016; Mphale & Okike, 2018). According to Mphale and Okike, the following factors related to the socio-cultural, political, governmental, technical, and operational environments of IT

projects influence IT project success or failure. In the same perspective, no IT project fails for a single reason; therefore, poor project planning, inappropriate estimations, unclear project objectives and goals, the lack of senior management involvement, support and commitment, the lack of risk management, unrealistic project schedules and deadlines, scope creep, the project management methodology, the ineffective communication, and the vague requirements and scope lead to IT project failure (Deshmukh et al., 2020; Khan et al., 2019; Marchewka, 2016; PMI, 2017; Shah, 2019; Sudhakar, 2016). A bad political environment, some ecological reasons, cultural factors, a poor project design, poor project conceptualization and design, and the economic problems are failure factors for IT projects and derive maximum value from a project (Baghizadeh et al., 2020; Gupta et al., 2019b).

Many IT projects in the government sector in developing countries fail due to the lack of internal political desire, the overall vision, the dominance of politics, poor management, the lack of competencies, and the inadequate technological infrastructure (Abbas et al., 2017; Baghizadeh et al., 2020; Stover, 2019). In other words, the factors influencing IT projects failure evolve around technology, management politics, and finance. Asgarkhani et al. (2017) and Marchewka (2016) echoed the failure of IT projects in a regulatory environment by mentioning that gaining value from technology deployment via IT governance remains a significant concern. Asgarkhani et al. (2017) and Hamid et al. (2019) shared that the main factors for IT project failure are inadequate information technology governance (ITG) practices in organizations.

Nikabadi and Sepehrnia (2019) and Foote (2016) explored the gap between the uses of project management and knowledge management (KM) tools and techniques in IT projects. The integration of the traditional project management and KM tools to combine the knowledge of the team members with project development helped to access the knowledge for project development (Foote, 2016; Khalil & Khalil, 2019; Marion & Fixson, 2019). Foote remarked that the integration of the tools did not eliminate issues like the lack of use but helped to access the knowledge during the project development. Rodríguez et al. (2016) proposed a new risk assessment method based on a combination of the fuzzy analytic hierarchy process (FAHP) and fuzzy inference system (FIS). Rodríguez et al. (2017) developed a method for the selection of the most suitable option for the management of risk in information IT projects by considering the needs of organizations. Rodríguez et al. found that the use of the FAHP for the weights' calculation facilitates problem analysis by the implementation of a hierarchy and application of pairwise comparisons among IT projects risks evaluation criteria.

IT Project Planning Strategies

Among the 49 processes that form the framework of project management, the project planning phase is the largest group with 24 processes (Dobie, 2020; PMI, 2017; Tereso et al., 2019). The project planning phase is important and capital to ensure project success (Pellerin & Perrier, 2019; PMI, 2017; Tesfaye et al., 2017). Effective project planning strategies contribute to ensure IT project success (Marchewka, 2016; Schwalbe, 2015; Tesfaye et al., 2017). Project management practitioners and researchers noted project planning strategies involve nine processes including: (a) plan scope management,

(b) plan schedule management, (c) plan cost management, (d) plan quality management, (e) plan resource management, (f) plan communication management, (g) plan risk management, (h) plan procurement management, and (i) plan stakeholder management (Dobie, 2020; PMI, 2017). IT project managers can apply the nine project planning processes to develop an effective strategy to improve IT project planning (Kidd, 2020; Marchewka, 2016; Schwalbe, 2015). Project planning involves project activities definition, resource and duration identification, scheduling activities and resources, and, if needed, recursive decomposition at the lower level of some activities (Allahar, 2019; Vareilles et al., 2015).

Plan Scope Management

The scope management plan describes how the project manager, and the project team will prepare project's documents and carry out the other planning processes including: (a) collect requirements, (b) define scope, and (c) create the work breakdown structure (Dobie, 2020; PMI, 2017). According to the PMI (2017), the scope management plan includes procedures to define, validate, and control the projects' scope on one hand, and provides guidance and direction on how the project managers and their team will manage the project's scope throughout the project on the other hand. The process of plan scope management has a very significant impact on the success of the project since the requirements are the main means of understanding and managing stakeholders' expectations (Antony & Gupta, 2019; Francisco de Oliveira & Rabechini Jr., 2019; PMI, 2017). IT project's schedule, budget, quality specifications, risk factors, and resources planning influence the effectiveness of a scope management plan (Marchewka, 2016;

Schwalbe, 2015; Tesfaye et al., 2017). To minimize the likelihood of misunderstandings during the lifecycle of an IT project, the IT project manager should communicate to all the project's stakeholders the scope management plan which includes all the processes to define and manage the project's scope (Fashina et al., 2020; Marchewka, 2016). Building a comprehensive scope management plan will prevent the IT project manager to lose control of the project and avoid experiencing scope creep and over-runs in project's schedule and budget (Kidd, 2020; Schwalbe, 2015). Aligning the project scope management plan to the project's performance goals and considering strategic planning characteristics can lead to a successful implementation of an IT project (Marchewka, 2016; Papke-Shields & Boyer-Wright, 2017).

Researchers noticed project scope management training activities for project team, project manager leadership, and IT project complexity affect project scope (Abdilahi et al., 2020; Pheng, 2018). Valdés-Souto (2019) and Schwalbe (2015) notified the lack of formal techniques to manage scope though scope management is a critical success factor in software projects. By dividing the project into two groups namely the project planning process group and the project execution phase, project managers and practitioners set during scope management planning effective techniques and approaches to minimize and mitigate scope creep (Fashina et al., 2020; Sharma et al., 2017). Through an effective scope management plan, project managers clarified project expectations including the selection of project team members and the skillsets that matched the project scope (Dobie, 2020; Wulf, 2020). IT project managers can improve project planning

strategies by ensuring an alignment between the project scope management plan and the project's performance goals.

Plan Schedule Management

The project schedule management plan is critical to develop a successful project management plan (Dobie, 2020; PMI, 2017). Project managers can use the schedule management plan to defines how to manage the project schedule throughout the project life cycle (Kidd, 2020; Rowe, 2020). Project management processes involves six steps including: (a) plan schedule management, (b) define activities, (c) sequence activities, (d) estimate activities durations, (e) develop schedule, and (f) control schedule (PMI, 2017; Schwalbe, 2015).

In the plan schedule management process, project managers should establish strategic orientation for an effective planning, development, management, implementation, and control of the project schedule (Kerzner, 2019; PMI, 2017; Schwalbe, 2015; Tesfaye et al., 2017). After the plan schedule management process, project managers define activities through the identification and documentation of the specific actions to take for producing the expected project deliverables (Cicala, 2020; PMI, 2017). In the sequence activities, the project manager works with the project team to identify and document correlations between project activities (Dobie, 2020; PMI, 2017). For estimating project activity durations, project managers can use methods including, expert judgment, analogous estimating, parametric estimating, or three-point estimating (Marchewka, 2016; PMI, 2017; Tesfaye et al., 2017). After estimating activity durations, project managers should develop the project schedule. Project managers used a

variety of tools including, schedule network analysis, critical path methods or resource optimization to analyze activity sequences, durations, resource requirement, and schedule constraints, and to control schedule (Kerzner, 2019; Marchewka, 2016; Schwalbe, 2015). IT project managers can apply the 6 processes of project schedule management to improve project planning strategies.

The existence of the trade-offs between planning performance and delivery performance might lead to a more extended planning period, which is counter-balanced by a higher probability of delivering the project on time during the execution phase (Brookes & Locatelli, 2015; Sohi et al., 2019). The ability to invest enough 'front end" time to ensure that all planning tasks and responsibilities of the individual are understood, the support from top management of the planning efforts, and clear information system strategy to guide the planning effort represent success factors for the strategic information system planning (Alamri et al., 2016; ul Musawir et al., 2020). The implications of human resource planning are essential for the project planning process and that many companies need planning guidelines to understand where to develop flexibility during project scheduling (Brčić et al., 2019; Vaagen et al., 2017). An analysis of the optimal weighted number of alternative execution modes in project schedules shows that a small increase in the weighted number of included alternative methods results in a high degree of flexibility and all model performances deteriorate rapidly if the project stakeholders increase the deadline factor (Burgelman & Vanhoucke, 2018; Servranckx & Vanhoucke, 2019). A valuable lesson for renewable energy project policy and planning guidelines is that well-defined requirements for project approval documents can contribute to shorter

assessment timeframes (Martin & Rice, 2015; Rowe, 2020). Effective project schedule management plan and proactive scheduling method improved the robustness of the project schedule and prevented the project execution from the duration uncertainty (Detti et al., 2019; Zhang et al., 2020). Project managers and practitioners used the Monte Carlo simulation method to improve the reliability of project schedule prediction, to control project duration, and ensure a better implementation of the project plan (Avlijaš, 2019; Zhang & Jin, 2020).

Plan Cost Management

The project cost management plan is an important component of the project management plan (Kerzner, 2019; Tereso et al., 2019). The project cost management plan involves the approach that the project team should use to estimate, budget, manage, and monitor and control the project costs (Kwon & Kang, 2019; PMI, 2017). Estimating project costs refers to the process of developing an approximation of the monetary resources the project team needs to implement the project (Efe & Demirors, 2019; Sanghera, 2019a). Project managers can use tools and techniques including expert judgment, analogous estimating, parametric estimating, bottom-up estimating, three-point estimating, and data analysis to ensure an effective estimation of projects costs (Patrón et al., 2019; PMI, 2017; Sanghera, 2019a). Project managers can use tools including, expert judgement, cost aggregation, data analysis, funding limit reconciliation, and financing to determine budget and create an authorized cost baseline through the process of aggregating the estimated costs of individual activities or work packages (Dobie, 2020; Kwon & Kang, 2019; Sanghera, 2019a). Project managers can apply variance analysis,

earned value analysis, forecasting and financial analysis to control project's costs and manage changes to the cost baseline (Khesal et al., 2019; Widiningrum et al., 2020; Zohoori et al., 2019).

Project managers can use techniques and metrics including, planning poker (an agile estimating and planning technique), value points estimation, return on investment (ROI) calculation, and agile earned value management (EVM) to estimate, manage IT projects, and improve project performance (Pellerin & Perrier, 2019; Torrecilla-Salinas et al., 2015). Čeke and Milašinović (2015) defined the measurement procedure IT project managers can use in the early stage of the web application development process to estimate the time, cost and other resources needed for the development of software projects. Project managers should consider project cost budgeting as the allocation of project cost estimate to various project activities over time (Schwalbe, 2015; Tesfaye et al., 2017). From this perspective, IT project managers can use cost budgeting for producing a cost baseline to measure and monitor project cost performance (Marchewka, 2016; PMI, 2017; Schwalbe, 2015).

Plan Quality Management

Plan quality management is the process of identifying the project's quality specifications and the approach to meet those requirements during the life cycle of the project (Honarpour et al., 2018; Hussain et al., 2018; PMI, 2017). Project managers can use the quality management plan to describe the standards, guidelines, responsibilities, tools, and activities that project teams need to achieve project's quality objectives (Mizuno, 2020; PMI, 2017). Most project managers and teams use various tools and

techniques including expert judgment, data gathering, data analysis, decision making, data representation, and test and inspection planning to build a reliable project's quality management plan (Choudhury, 2019; Dobie, 2020; PMI, 2017). Through the quality management plan, project managers set clear guidance and direction on how to define and measure quality during the project management life cycle (Carrozza et al., 2018; Sanghera, 2019b). IT project managers should create an effective quality management plan to enhance their overall project planning strategy.

Quality management practices with a focus on human resources contribute to create a learning-oriented company, integrate knowledge, and support successful new product development (Dahlgaard et al., 2019; Gutierrez-Gutierrez et al., 2018). Project managers and practitioners can address and control better quality defects through planning, monitoring, and evaluation (Agrawal & Chari, 2020; Hussain et al., 2018). Continuous client feedback throughout the lifecycle of IT projects can contribute to improving IT project performance and quality management (Brown & Johnson, 2020; Lu et al., 2019). IT project success criteria involves the projects' system quality, user satisfaction, and economic value (Iriarte & Bayona, 2020; Taniguchi & Onosato, 2018). Marchewka (2016) and Pargar et al. (2019) shared an effective quality management approach can contribute to decreasing IT projects' cost and risks. Without an effective quality management planning, project managers can not improve project success rates (Orta & Ruiz, 2019; PMI, 2017; Sligo et al., 2017).

Plan Resource Management

Plan resource management is the project management process that leads to the project resource management plan (Dobie, 2020; Kerzner, 2019; PMI, 2017). Project managers should indicate the approach for estimating, acquiring, managing, and utilizing physical and team resources in the resource management plan (PMI, 2017; Rowe, 2020). Akpan (2019) and Madsen (2019) noted project managers use the resource management plan to describe how to staff, manage, team-build, asses, and improve the project team performance. The PMI (2017) and Tesfaye et al. (2017) suggested project managers should consider using tools and techniques including, expert judgment, hierarchical charts, responsibility assignment matrix (RAM), test-oriented formats, organizational theories, and meetings to establish an effective resource management plan. Kerzner (2019) and Marchewka (2016) shared project managers can use a resource management plan for maximizing project resources' efficiency. Planning resource management is important because it allows project managers to make the planning and management process more transparent (Fonseca et al., 2017; Kasemsap, 2018; Marnewick & Langerman, 2018).

Project managers can use tools and techniques to improve IT project planning (Hasan et al., 2019; Marchewka, 2016; Schwalbe, 2015; Umulisa et al., 2015). Afzalan and Evans-Cowley (2015) shared project managers should facilitate interactions between project stakeholders to ensure inclusive and expected planning outcomes. Thaddee et al. (2020) and Umulisa et al. (2015) noted human resource planning practices such as teambuilding and workshops can contribute to improving project performance. Iegorchenkov and Yehorchenkova (2016) noted that with the use of the product-resource

planning (PRP), costs reduction can reflect the rational allocation of resources and accurate planning. Project managers can use the PRP system to increase the quality and reduce the number of errors in resource management (Iegorchenkov & Yehorchenkova, 2016; Kerzner, 2019; Pearlson et al., 2019). In the process of resource management planning, project managers should use adequate tools and techniques to deliver project successfully (Freudendal-Pedersen et al., 2017; Shurrab et al., 2020). Durrani and Durrani (2020) and the PMI (2017) noted an effective resource management planning contributes to effective project planning.

Plan Communications Management

Project managers create the communication management plan through the process of plan communication management (Beiler et al., 2019; PMI, 2017; Rowe, 2020). Kwofie et al. (2020), PMI (2017), and Sanghera (2019b) noted project managers can use the communication management plan to identify how to communicate the information to project team members, stakeholders, sponsors, customers and any other stakeholders impacted by the project. Project managers can develop a successful communication plan by first developing a strategy to ensure communication is effective for project stakeholders, and then defining the activities necessary to execute the communication strategy (Beiler et al., 2019; Kerzner, 2019; PMI, 2017). Project managers should invest time in defining the project's line of communication up front to ensure less conflicts in the project life cycle (Dobie, 2020; Englund & Graham, 2019; PMI, 2017).

Project managers should ensure that the project communication plan is detailed, clear, and implemented as stated (Muszyńska, 2018; PMI, 2017; Wada et al., 2020).

Kerzner (2019) and the PMI (2017) noted project managers can use tools including, expert judgment, communication requirements analysis, communication technology, data representation, and meetings to plan project communications. Project managers should ensure an effective management of communication by identifying all aspects of communication, including methods and techniques (Marchewka, 2016; PMI, 2017). Muszyńska (2018) and Rowe (2020) noted project managers can use tools, including project management information system and project reporting to share information with project team members and stakeholders. Project managers should also monitor communications to ensure the effectiveness of the communication plan (PMI, 2017; Wada et al., 2020). Dobie (2020) and Englund and Graham (2019) suggested the use of tools, including data representation, and interpersonal and team skills for monitoring project communication. Without an appropriate communication management plan, project managers cannot develop and implement an effective project planning strategy to improve project success rates (Kerzner, 2019; Rowe, 2020; Schwalbe, 2015).

Plan Risk Management

Planning risk management is the process of deciding how to approach risk management activities and plan for them in a project (PMI, 2017; Tavares et al., 2019). In the plan risk management, project managers build the risk management plan which outlines the approach for the remaining six risk management processes including identifying risks, performing qualitative risk analysis, performing quantitative risk analysis, planning risk responses, implementing risk responses, and monitoring risks (PMI, 2017; Rowe, 2020). Project managers used the risk management plan as a roadmap

to be deliberate and proactive with project's risks (Hillson & Simon, 2020; PMI, 2017). IT projects involved several risks, including lack of users' involvement, lack of top management support, unclear requirements, and poor planning (Schwalbe, 2015; Tesfaye et al., 2017). From this perspective, many IT project managers focused on preparation and commitment during risk planning and ensured that resources, processes, and tools needed to plan for project risk management were available (Marchewka, 2016; Schwalbe, 2015; Tesfaye et al., 2017). Systematic preparation and planning helped minimize adverse effects on IT projects' while taking advantage of opportunities as they occurred (Marchewka, 2016; Schwalbe, 2015). By creating an effective risk management plan, IT project managers can control and reduce IT projects' risks to an acceptable level.

Some project managers implemented a modified project risk management framework that integrates the PMI's framework with Monte Carlo simulation to improve the effectiveness of high-tech new product development (NPD) projects (Ayala-Cruz, 2016; Klastorin & Mitchell, 2020). PMI's framework and Monte Carlo simulation enhanced risk responses due to task durations and coats' uncertainties from IT projects by providing insight into the issues of early project risk assessment (Ayala-Cruz, 2016; Wali & Othman, 2019). Some traditional project management methodologies such as the system development life cycle focused on the operational level since they may be ineffective in mitigating inadequate planning risks (Chang, 2018; Emmons et al., 2018). Kopf et al. (2016) found that the planning approach needs to adapt installation planning based on the evaluation of technology maturity to the challenges and production risks of immature production processes. While not all the controls are necessary during risk

planning in software development projects, all risks planning in software projects were significant, essential in the software project manager's perspective, and did not all controls most of the time (Alahyari et al., 2019; Elzamly & Hussin, 2015; Menezes et al., 2019).

Using effective risk management strategies, IT project managers can identify project's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (PMI, 2017; Schwalbe, 2015). Marchewka (2016) and Tesfaye et al. (2017) noted planning for unforeseen events can prepare IT project managers to response productively when those events occur. Effective risk management planning activities can contribute to achieve IT project's goals.

Plan Procurement Management

Planning procurement management involves determining what to procure, when, and how to do it (PMI, 2017; Rowe, 2020; Yaghin & Darvishi, 2020). Project managers decided what to outsource, determined the type of contract, and described the work for potential sellers who could be providers, contractors, or suppliers providing goods and services to the project team (Marchewka, 2016; PMI, 2017). Plan procurement management is the process that leads to the procurement management plan (Kakwezi & Nyeko, 2019; PMI, 2017). Using the procurement management plan, project managers defined project components or services made internally or procured from an external source (PMI, 2017; Sanghera, 2019c). Most project managers used various tools and techniques including expert judgement, data gathering, and meetings to build an effective project procurement management plan (PMI, 2017; Rane et al., 2019). Many IT project managers consulted with internal and external expert for assistance with procurement

planning because many legal, organizational, and financial issues are often involved (Marchewka, 2016; Schwalbe, 2015). IT project managers can use a make-or-buy analysis, expert judgement, and market research IT project procurement management planning.

Plan Stakeholder Engagement

Through the process of plan stakeholder engagement, the project team creates the stakeholder management plan (Pedrini & Ferri, 2019; PMI, 2017; Sperry & Jetter, 2019). Project managers used the stakeholder engagement plan as a guidance to involve project based on their, expectations, interests, and potential impact on the project (Bahadorestani et al., 2020; PMI, 2017). The stakeholder engagement plan is important because it represents an actionable plan the project managers used to interact effectively with stakeholders (PMI, 2017; Silvius & Schipper, 2019).

Heravi et al. (2015) and Lehtinen et al. (2019) discussed the engagement level of stakeholders involved in the project planning process and established a basis for further stakeholders' involvement improvement. Project managers used workshops with key stakeholders that served to elicit the necessary information for better project planning and to engage the stakeholders in the project, highlight the key risks and motivate stakeholders to work together to ensure project success (Balfe et al., 2017; Ngetich & Gakuu, 2019). Several project managers noticed the advantage to engage contractors directly in the whole planning procedure because the use of workshops with project stakeholders can facilitate the retrieval of hidden information, thus improving the planning process (Balfe et al., 2017; Pirozzi, 2019).

Researchers discussed some key concepts about the project planning process. Caron (2015) found that improving the planning or forecasting process requires the usage of all the data available to the project team especially while facing a high level of uncertainty and complexity. Project planning and monitoring represent a participatory process resulting from the interaction of the project team with all the stakeholders involved in the project (Caron, 2015; De Camargo et al., 2019). Through public value planning and analysis, managers systematically bring the conceptual strategies for linking the interests of multiple stakeholders to activities related to IT investments to bear in the planning and decision-making process (Caron, 2015; Chapman, 2019; Elsawah et al., 2019). Legacy found that the political formation of involvement is the product of the dialectical and constitutive relationship that exists between participatory planning and the subjectivity of stakeholders' participation. The lack of time for project planning and not getting the stakeholders to involve at the early stages of projects are significant barriers that produced the highest effect on projects' implementation (Abbas et al., 2016; Francisco de Oliveira & Rabechini Jr., 2019). According to Martin and Rice (2015), improved engagement and information-sharing would help to satisfy the objections of stakeholders who hold preferences for more rigid planning and permitting processes. Information technology project managers can set clear actions that contribute to increasing support, minimizing stakeholders' negative impacts, and defining stakeholders' level of power during project life cycle by using an effective stakeholder management plan (Akhwaba, 2020; PMI, 2017).

The Evolution of the Ivorian Banking Industry

The Banking Industry Structure

The low level of economic development, the high poverty of the population, the weak motivation for saving, and the low entrepreneurial activity constitute major reasons for the underdevelopment of the Ivorian banking sector (Kassi et al., 2017). The Ivorian government needed the support of its financial sector to implement significant projects to sustain economic growth (Acquah & Ibrahim, 2020; Kassi et al., 2017). Interest in the markets of developing countries, which, in turn, intensified the activity of local companies contributed to the fast development of the Ivorian banking sector (Ouedraogo & Drabo, 2019; Slesman et al., 2019). The banking sector of the Ivory Coast experienced a significant rate of development and new regulations that lead to mobilized social capital and demonstrate altruistic and insurance behaviors beyond the limits of kinship (Konan, 2017; Luna, 2019). This new mindset in the Ivorian global economy landscape permitted many foreign banks in the past ten years to join the Ivorian banking sector and boost regional cooperation. Managers in the private sector including small and medium businesses benefited from the easy access to affordable credit to innovate and expand their organizations' capacity, sustain the economic growth, and increase household incomes (Sanogo & Moussa, 2017; Sombolayuk & Yusuf, 2019). Bandura (2020), and Sanogo and Moussa (2017) noted the deposit ratio of liabilities reflects the appropriate representation for the financial development in the Ivory Coast. The banking system of the Ivory Coast is a collection of banks and other credit institutions operating under a single financial credit mechanism. The modern banking system of the country is two-

level. It includes the Central Bank of West African States (CBWAS), an extensive network of commercial banks, and two financial institutions. At the same time, several commercial banks acted as branches and representative offices of foreign banks (Simplice, 2019). The CBWAS, which represents the conductor of the official monetary policy, is a critical element of the financial and credit system of the countries of the WAEMU (Anarfo et al., 2019; Kufuor, 2017). A combination of national banks, large Western banks, and national financial institutions represented the second level of the Ivorian banking system (CBWAS annual report, 2019; Ivory Coast Ministry of Economy and Finance, 2017). National banks controlled 20% of bank assets. In contrast, foreign financial institutions manage 80% of bank capital, and five national banks, including one commercial bank and 20 banks representing branches of foreign banks and banks of African regional groups characterized the Ivory Coast banking system (Ivory Coast Ministry of Economy and Finance, 2017).

Along with large Western banks, the largest African banks are also present in the country's economy (Jones, 2020; Pelletier, 2018). The attractiveness of the Ivorian market led to an inflow of capital of foreign banks due primarily to the takeover of financial institutions and the opening of branches of foreign banks (Essingone & Diallo, 2018; Oshikoya, & Durosinmi-Etti, 2019). Despite a long period of political instability, the Ivory Coast attracted investors because it maintains the base of its economy (Felix et al., 2018; Yusuf et al., 2020). Since 2012, the government has initiated several investment projects of interest not only for national but also for foreign capital. The government initiative regarding investment projects is the modernization of socio-

economic infrastructures, road construction, construction of bridges, universities, and hydroelectric power plants. The intensive phase of globalization of business activity helped to increase the presence of African banking groups in the Ivorian market (Ivory Coast Ministry of Economy and Finance, 2017). For example, Moroccan and Nigerian banks became active in the banking industry of the Ivory Coast (Ivory Coast Ministry of Economy and Finance, 2017). Beyond the fast-growing network of banks and their branches in the Ivory Coast, the number of banks not only remains small compared to the demand for financial services but unevenly distributed throughout the country.

Ivory Coast leadership formulated the objective to reduce the number of state-owned banks in favor of the private sector and reduce the state's share in the remaining banks with state participation by pursuing a policy of attracting foreign banks to the country and improving the investment climate (Dwumfour, 2017; Kvon et al., 2017). The inflow of foreign capital to the financial market of the Ivory Coast will ensure the sustainable development of banking; increase the competitiveness of Ivorian banks; provide new banking services; introduce modern technologies and new banking tools; finance the national economy, in particular, investment projects; support private entrepreneurship; and facilitate access to credit improving credit conditions (Anthony-Orji et al., 2018; Owusu-Agyei et al., 2020). Yao and Eugène (2018) noticed decision-makers need to expand the network of bank branches throughout the country to develop the banking sector of Ivory Coast, and to improve lending conditions for small and medium-sized businesses and beyond to reshape the business environment in the country. This expansion could be capital to establish effective banking management, reform, and

modernize national banks to ensure the availability of all types of banking services to the public.

The Impact of Financial Technology

Technological innovations in financial services, namely fintech, have aroused growing interest, and the term fintech describes a wide range of changes concerning established banks and new entrants, whether start-ups or large IT companies (Koffi, 2016; Krasonikolakis et al., 2020). Financial innovation in the technology field, which could lead to the creation of new strategic models, applications, processes, or products, had a significant impact on financial markets, institutions, and the provision of financial services (Koffi, 2016; Tidd & Bessant, 2018). The assessment of the recent impact of new technologies on the banking sector must consider two essential factors, namely the rate of adoption of the underlying technology in the society, and the degree of the general population competence in technology (Choudrie et al., 2018; Hamidi & Jahanshaheefard, 2019). The pace of innovation in financial technology is faster compared to the previous decade, and some signs attested a rapid pace of adoption (Amankwah-Amoah et al., 2018; Uddin et al., 2020). Technology played a vital role in the history of the banking industry at the origin of ever-increasing investments (Aydalot & Keeble, 2018; Kingshott et al., 2018; Wewege & Thomsett, 2019). IT transformed the banking sector that was among the first to computerize because it represents the center of major strategic issues (Amankwah-Amoah et al., 2018; Hendrikse et al., 2019).

Financial innovations can lead to updated technologies and appropriate risk management approaches, which can contribute to effective project planning in the banking sector.

Many banks make significant investments in various IT projects to meet strategic objectives and gain a competitive advantage (Gabor & Brooks, 2017; Haseeb et al., 2019). In the era of big data and data security issues, IT has become the figurehead of the bank of tomorrow (Gabor & Brooks, 2017; Iacona et al., 2019). IT projects in banks were for facilitating the management of accounting and service operations as opposed to the current situation where IT projects influenced the development of IT systems by considering technological advances and the strategic objectives of financial companies (Gabor & Brooks, 2017; Hoffmann et al., 2020; Schilling & Shankar, 2019). The increasing demand for IT innovation in the banking sector has pushed organizational leaders to recruit more IT profiles who are responsible for improving internal procedures, facilitating the transmission of information, and ensuring the performance and availability of IT tools (Gabor & Brooks, 2017; Ogbeibu et al., 2020; Paré et al., 2020). Jakšič and Marinč (2019) and Kerényi and Müller (2019) stated that banks need to adopt IT to adjust to changing customers' needs and respond to regulatory demands. Decision-makers in the banking sector should use IT to build upon relationship banking to embrace change and gain competitive advantage (Jakšič & Marinč, 2019; Tallon et al., 2019). Researchers compared fintech to previous waves of innovations like the ones that gave birth to vending machines, videotext, electronic payments, and online banking to picture the current development of technology in the banking sector (Chen et al., 2019; Palmié et al., 2020; Saksonova & Kuzmina-Merlino, 2017). Though all innovations were not successful, they have together changed the landscape of banking (Saksonova & Kuzmina-Merlino, 2017; Still et al., 2019). Banks’ IT budgets increased, working hours extended,

and transaction times shortened compared to the late 1960s where they had fewer employees (Saksonova & Kuzmina-Merlino, 2017; Stulz, 2019). Technological innovations tended to follow the hype cycle, which represents the life cycle stages of technology from conception to maturity and widespread adoption (Markard, 2020; Ukwuani & Bashir, 2017). Project managers can ensure a successful implementation of technological innovation projects through effective project planning.

The continuous increase in human needs created a dependency on technology, which transformed the way humans communicate, learn, and interact with the environment (Fosch-Villaronga & Özcan, 2020; Lind et al., 2019; Ukwuani & Bashir, 2017). Hussien et al. (2019) and Moehrle and Caferoglu (2019) noted programmers can use emerging technologies to develop original applications in specific domain areas. The internet became an essential platform for business, and vast swathes of the world's population could not contemplate living without it (Glavas et al., 2019; Zu et al., 2019). Fruin (2019) and Zu et al. (2019) mentioned the possibility that the financial technology, in general, aroused excessive enthusiasm and that some innovations entered already in the pit of disillusionment. The disillusion regarding some innovative financial technologies does not necessarily mean a lack of a lasting effect on the banking sector (Bouman, 2019; Byrd, 2019). The adoption of various banking innovations, that of automated teller machines, happened in the twenties of the 20th Century. In contrast, adoption times for online banking and mobile banking were each time a little faster (Abayomi et al., 2019; Changchit et al., 2020). The generations born with digital technology are growing with technological skills at the heart of fintech innovations

(Gupta et al., 2019a; Omarini, 2020). According to Chanias et al. (2019) and Rana et al. (2019), changing customer behavior and demand for digital financial services constitute the critical driver of change. Since the effects of innovation and disruption can be more sensitive than before, historic actors in the financial industry may have to adapt faster to the impact of new technologies.

New banks that relied on advanced technologies to provide innovative and more cost-effective banking services obtained banking approvals under existing regulatory regimes, and controlled customer relations, or operated in partnership with traditional banks (Anand & Mantrala, 2019; Chipeta & Muthinja, 2018; Mohan, 2020). According to Garg et al. (2020) and Rajola (2019), new banks consolidated their presence in the banking sector by implementing a modern customer relationship model based on digital technology, departing from the hospitality-based model clients in agencies. New banks are not constrained by existing infrastructure and might be able to exploit new technologies at a lower cost, faster, and in a more modern format (Bagby & Reitter, 2019; Martino, 2019). Leaders of banks relied more on technologies to provide retail banking services through mobile applications, and online platforms at lower costs compared to the old establishment of banks (Giovanis et al., 2019; Gozman et al., 2018). Lerner and Nanda (2020), and Schilling and Shankar (2019) noted banks that were reluctant to technological innovation and change became relatively less profitable over time. IT projects and internet banking have a positive and significant influence on the operational performance of commercial banks (Abdullai & Micheni, 2018; Ahmed & Wamugo, 2019; Kamau et al., 2019). Leaders of commercial banks should invest more in internet

banking to increase the positive impact on operational performances (Abdullai & Micheni, 2018; Jepchumba & Simiyu, 2019; Nduta, & Wanjira, 2019).

The Adoption of Information Communication Technology

Bank managers use many IT process tools and instruments that have various effects. Asongu et al. (2019) found that positive effects exist with edges from ICT-driven information sharing on financial depth (money supply and liquid liabilities) and financial activity (at banking and financial system levels). Positive effects of information sharing through mobile devices occurred at certain levels of financial capability for financial intermediation efficiency (Ahamed & Mallick, 2019; Alhassan et al., 2019). Mocetti et al. (2017) and Thakor (2020) shared that banks holding more ICT capital had more delegation of power for small business lending. According to Mocetti et al. (2017) Thaker et al. (2019) the positive effect of ICT on delegation is stronger for banks resorting more to soft information (i.e., those specialized in small business lending and with a longer permanence of local branch managers' in the same branch). Complementarity between ICT and delegation in an information-intensive industry such as banking is a competitive advantage (Hu et al., 2019; Jakšič & Marinč, 2019). Researchers shared that by holding larger ICT endowments, a bank improves the internal monitoring of LBM actions through timely information on lending practices and continuous updates about LBMs' decisions and branches, performances. Technology has a significant relationship with bank performance, and the introduction of new products may lead to new market segments for banks and increase the revenue and enhance banks' performance (Campanella et al., 2020; Lebdaoui & Chetioui, 2020). Chai et al. (2016)

and Zhao et al. (2019) noticed increasing technology levels in banks, creative innovation in products, and services that banks offered could improve bank performance. Researchers noticed a positive relationship exists between ICT and banks' performance and shared that a marginal change in the level of the investment and adoption of ICT like ATMs, Web-based transactions, and mobile payments in the banking industry resulted in a proportionate increase in the profit level (Bolaji et al., 2019; Dabwor et al., 2017).

Transition

Section 1 included background information for the current single qualitative case study. The goal of this qualitative single case study is to explore strategies IT project managers use to improve project planning in the banking industry, and the underlying research question focuses on strategies IT project managers use to improve project planning in the banking industry. Section 1 of the current study also included the literature review with an introductory paragraph that provides a brief discussion on the need for effective IT project planning and the related relevant theories. In the literature review, I discussed the following points: the structuration theory, the ANT, the RBT, the TOC, IT project success and failure, IT project planning strategies, and the evolution of the banking industry. I restated the purpose statement to begin Section 2 of the current study, and discuss the role of the researcher, the research method and design, the research ethics, and the procedures for data collection and analysis by providing peer-reviewed literature to support details on each component. In section 3, I presented the findings of this study. I also discussed in section 3 the applications of this research to professional

practice and the implications for social change, the recommendations for action and further research, and the reflections.

Section 2: The Project

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study is to explore strategies IT project managers use to improve project planning in the banking industry. The targeted population will be four IT project managers from one major bank in the metropolitan city of Abidjan-Ivory Coast, with more than 5 years of successful experience in using IT strategies to improve project planning in the banking system. The implications for positive social change include the potential to create more jobs and increase customer satisfaction in the banking industry in Abidjan through the successful implementation of IT projects in the banking system.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher represents the research instrument during qualitative research (Hennink et al., 2020; Mohajan, 2018; Yin, 2017). Researchers collect, organize, and analyze data while conducting qualitative research (Basias & Pollalis, 2018; Smith & McGannon, 2018; Yin, 2017). Dadzie et al. (2018) used semistructured interviews to conduct a study on the barriers to the adoption and application of sustainable technologies. Nieuwenhuis et al. (2018) used semistructured interviews to investigate the value network of company software solutions changes regarding cloud-based technology. Yin (2017) shared qualitative researchers are primary research instruments because they can collect qualitative data through observation, note taking, and interviews. From this perspective, I was the primary research instrument for the current qualitative research. I chose the best methodology, selected the appropriate participants, and conducted

semistructured interviews to explore the experiences of the participants, collect data, and conduct an analysis.

I worked in a small business consulting firm located in New York, New York for the last 5 years. As financial director and project manager, my experience dealing with various project teams and clients in the financial industry triggered my interest in the current research topic. I witnessed IT project managers who failed to implement effective project planning strategies in their organizations. From this perspective, I better understood the experience of the participants in this research. Hancock and Algozzine (2017) and Yin (2017) noted researchers can use techniques, including interview protocols, reflective journals, and bracketing for addressing bias. Qualitative researchers can use bracketing and reflective journaling to mitigate their own biases by avoiding viewing data from a personal perspective (Alase, 2017; Janak, 2018). McNarry et al. (2019) challenged preconceptions and sharpened their observational and analytical focus by practicing bracketing and intensifying reflexivity during their research. Dörfler and Stierand (2018) implemented bracketing by raising the awareness of presumptions, previous knowledge, and beliefs that the interviewer does not perceive. Oswald (2019), Patton (2015), and Yoshihara et al. (2020) noted researchers should maintain and use reflective journals to make their research visible for the readers. I used reflective journaling and practice bracketing during my research by keeping a record of my thoughts and spot potential areas of bias. Based on my knowledge of the IT project process in the financial environment, I did not share my beliefs and thoughts to avoid influencing the participants in this study.

An ethical approach is crucial for any research (L. Farrugia, 2019; Welland & Pugsley, 2018). Reid et al. (2018) shared that qualitative researchers should adhere to ethical principles throughout their research to illustrate the complexities and nuances regarding the study. The United States Department of Health and Human Services (USHHS) established the Belmont Report, which is a national guideline for the ethical treatment of humans participating in research (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects and Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979). Researchers must fulfill ethical requirements that the USHHS suggested in the Belmont Report (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects and Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979). According to the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects and Biomedical and Behavioral Research (1979), the Belmont Report established research principles including respect for humans, the obtention of participants' consent, and fairness while distributing any research benefits by minimizing harm. I followed the requirements and respected the rules of the Belmont Report during this qualitative research. I shared the Belmont Report guidelines with the participants in this study and developed strategies to mitigate biases like avoiding influencing participants during this research.

In qualitative research, the data quality depends on the researcher's capability to reduce bias and validate the right interpretation of the phenomenon (Fusch et al., 2018). The risk of biases is possible at any level of qualitative research, and the sources of these biases could be the interview questions, the respondents, or the researcher who conducts the interviews. To provide a quality research outcome, qualitative researchers must

reduce bias (Fusch et al., 2018). I wrote the accounts of my assumptions, expectations, and worldviews during the process of collecting data to avoid any personal biases that could impact my interpretations of the interviews' outcome.

Researchers should reduce bias during the research process to ensure credibility and reliability for a study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2018), qualitative researchers need to describe the relevant aspects of self, including any biases and assumptions and any expectations and experiences to qualify their ability to conduct the research. Progressive implementation of a purposeful methodology by using accurate data can improve rigor and transparency and minimize potential bias in qualitative research (Mackieson et al., 2019). To reduce bias and get rid of any influences, Stewart et al. (2017) used crystallization with a focus on the incarnation of the qualitative researcher as the primary tool in addition to the development of rigor through credibility and trustworthiness. Schaefer and Alvesson (2020) suggested that tactics of an internal and external source that consider interactional dynamics behind and quality of interview seeking to confirm interview material with observations and multiple sources through cross-checking could minimize potential bias in qualitative research. Many researchers used semistructured interviews, which represent an effective way to collect open-ended data in qualitative research (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019; Tamblyn et al., 2018). Therefore, I used semistructured interviews to collect and analyze data like project planning strategies from IT project managers in the banking sector for this qualitative research.

Researchers observed that interview protocols in qualitative research established consistency and reliability while conducting semistructured interviews (Basias & Pollalis, 2018; Majid et al., 2017). The interview protocol is a procedural guide that directs the qualitative researcher through the interview process while ensuring the originality and the standardization of the study by creating meaningful data (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017; Yin, 2017). For this qualitative research, I followed the processes included in the interview protocol (see Appendix A) and asked specific open-ended interview questions.

Participants

Participants in qualitative research are essential to demonstrate the value and validity of the study (Yardley, 2017). The selection criteria differ from the qualitative research to the quantitative research (Aspers & Corte, 2019). Qualitative researchers should select participants that can appropriately inform the research question and improve understanding of the problem (Cypress, 2017; Phillippi & Lauderdale, 2018). Patton (2015) and Yin (2017) noted qualitative researchers should align the selection of participants with the research question. To understand effective strategies to improve IT project planning in the banking industry, I selected project managers from one major bank in the metropolitan City of Abidjan-Ivory Coast, with more than 5 years of successful experience in using IT strategies to improve project planning in the banking system. The participants were fluent in English and located in the metropolitan city of Abidjan.

Conducting successful research could be challenging because of the difficulty to gain access to the right and reliable participants in the location of the study (Baig et al.,

2019; Light et al., 2019). Hoskins and White (2013) and Kircher et al. (2017), noted access to participants in the research field depends on the subject matter under investigation in the research. I identified the target company's human resources manager contacts, including email and phone number via the website of the Ivorian professional association of banking and financial institutions. After the institutional review board (IRB) approval, I sent a recruitment letter to the human resources manager to request a list of IT project managers with more than 5 years of successful experience in using IT strategies to improve project planning in the banking system. After receiving contact information of potential participants, I sent to each of them an invitation letter (see Appendix B) and participants' consent form to participate to the study. The email sent to each participant involved information, including the purpose of this research study, a statement related to the confidentiality of data participants provided, a statement about the voluntary nature of the study, the type of access I required, and my contact information. Effective collaboration with interview participants can create the right working relationship for qualitative research and ensure its success (Cardwell et al., 2017; Ross, 2017). Qualitative researchers should choose the appropriate communication style to interact with participants and maintain the responsibility to the participants (Cypress, 2017; Phillippi & Lauderdale, 2018). I asked participants to feel free to reach out to me at any time via email or phone if they had any question or needed further information about this study. After volunteer participants notified interest in participating in the current research by responding with the word "I consent", I interacted with them via phone call to build trust. While having the first conversation with the potential participants, I shared

again the purpose and the overarching research question of the study, gave them the opportunity to ask questions, and reassured them regarding confidentiality.

Research Method and Design

Research Method

Researchers can conduct research using various methodologies that include qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods (Schoonenboom, 2019; Yin, 2017). Leatherdale (2019) noted researcher can use a research methodology to collect, analyze, and interpret data. Researchers should select a research method that addresses the research problem (Yin, 2017). The qualitative research method is appropriate when the researcher aims at collecting data through participants' observations and interviews (Monroe et al., 2019; Patel & Patel, 2019). The qualitative method is appropriate to understand human behavior from the respondent's view (Berner-Rodoreda et al., 2020). The researcher can use the qualitative method to explore and seek an answer to a phenomenon (Glegg, 2019; Yin, 2017). I chose to use the qualitative method because the purpose of the current study and the overarching research question. Using the qualitative method, I appropriately explored the phenomenon of effective strategies to improve IT project planning.

The qualitative method is advantageous since while implementing it, the researcher can use open-ended questions and probing questions to collect rich data from the participants (Sutton & Austin, 2015). Yin (2017) indicated that the qualitative method facilitates the understanding of the subject matter of the study. Jimenez et al. (2019) noted that the qualitative researcher could use semistructured methods, including in-depth

interviews, focus groups, and observation, to collect data from the participants. DeJonckheere and Vaughn (2019) and Yin suggested the use of the qualitative method to describe participants' experiences. Using the qualitative method, the researcher can have a deep understanding of the research problem (Aspers & Corte, 2019; Dodgson, 2019). McGrath et al. (2019), Patton (2015), and Yin noted qualitative research is appropriate when researchers expect participants to provide an in-depth understanding of the research problem. Using the qualitative method, I had a thorough understanding of strategies to improve IT project planning.

Researchers can use the quantitative method to examine the problem by generating numeric data and converting the data into usable statistics (Goldkuhl, 2019; Leatherdale, 2019; Patton, 2015). Bowers (2017) and Dźwigoł, (2019) noted researchers can confirm the hypothesis about a problem by using the quantitative method. Quantitative researchers can use instruments such as questionnaires and surveys for analyzing relationships among dependent and independent variables (Ghauri et al., 2020; Lancaster & Lundberg, 2019). According to Galli (2019b), researchers can use the quantitative method for examining the relationship between variables. I chose not to use the quantitative research method because the purpose of the research study was to explore effective strategies for improving IT project planning and not to confirm hypotheses on effective strategies.

Researchers can use the mixed methods approach for collecting and analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data within the same study (Clark, 2019; Shorten & Smith, 2017). Researchers can use the mixed methods to explore a phenomenon and

uncover the relationships among variables (Galli, 2019b; Shorten & Smith, 2017). Researchers can use combination of qualitative and quantitative instruments for collecting data from participants in studies while using mix-method research (Kaur et al., 2019; Shorten & Smith, 2017). Researchers should use the mixed methods approach to examine and explore a problem through the combination of qualitative and quantitative data (McChesney & Aldridge, 2019; Shorten & Smith, 2017). I chose not to use the mixed methods approach because the purpose of the study did not require combining both quantitative and qualitative data as the quantitative component was not suitable to collect appropriate data to address the research question.

Research Design

The qualitative researcher can use various designs, including narrative research, phenomenology, ethnography, and case studies (Maxwell, 2019). Qualitative researchers could use narrative research to explore and conceptualize participants' experience as it pertains to its textual form (Bearman et al., 2019; Lewis, 2015). The qualitative researcher could use the narrative research design to describe the participants' stories and personal experiences, their culture, as well as their historical contexts (Sen, 2020). Haydon et al. (2018) and James (2018) shared that the narrative research design is appropriate when the researcher aims to capture the relationship between the participants' experience and cultural context. I chose not to select the narrative design for the study because the nature of the study did not require describing the participants' life experience.

Researchers use the phenomenology research design to have a thorough understanding of the problem that research participants experienced (Neubauer et al., 2019; Zahavi, 2019). Phenomenology design is appropriate when the researcher aims at describing what all the participants share when experiencing a phenomenon (Smith, 2019). I rejected the phenomenology research design because the purpose and the nature of the study did not focus on describing the meaning for several participants of their lived experiences of a phenomenon.

The ethnographic research design is appropriate when the researcher aims at examining shared patterns of behavior, beliefs, and language (Mills et al., 2021; Potter & Richardson, 2019). Researchers apply ethnographic research design to focus on a whole cultural group (Dahlbäck et al., 2019; Hammersley, 2016). Researchers could analyze and understand the values and culture of the participants' organization by using ethnography (Vig-Arrazola & Beach, 2020; Yin, 2017). Because the purpose of the current study did not aim at describing shared patterns of the participants' behavior, belief, and language, I chose not to use the ethnographic research design.

The researcher can use a case study design for developing an in-depth description and analysis of a new phenomenon (Goffin et al., 2019). Since the nature of the current study aims at exploring the strategies IT project managers use to improve project planning in the banking industry, I chose a single case study. A single case study design was the most appropriate for researchers who intended to create a high-quality theory (Wall et al., 2017; Welch et al., 2020). The researcher could have a deeper understanding of the phenomenon studied while using a single case study design (Yin, 2017). When

researchers do not aim at analyzing the data within each situation, and across different situations, the use of the single case study is the most appropriate design (Smith, 2018; Welch et al., 2020; Yin, 2017). Researchers could collect rich data from the participants using a single case study (Aguinis & Solarino, 2019; Yin, 2017). I chose to use a single case study to explore strategies' IT project managers at a major bank use to improve project planning.

The research should ensure research quality by achieving data saturation (Saunders et al., 2018). Constantinou et al. (2017) and Hennink et al. (2019) shared that data saturation happens when the researcher identifies no new information in data analysis. Fusch et al. (2018) suggested the use of methods, including interviews to reach data saturation. I used semistructured interview**s** to collect data from the participants, and I ensured that I reached data saturation when there was no possibility to obtain additional information from the participants I interviewed.

Population and Sampling

A research population is a complete set of people with similar characteristics (O'Cathain et al., 2020; Tymejczyk et al., 2020). Qualitative researchers should target participants that can provide a thorough understanding of the research problem (Patton, 2015; Yin, 2017). Weis and Willems (2017) shared that population sampling is a process of considering a subset of a whole population of interest. Researchers can use purposeful sampling for identifying, selecting participants, and collecting rich data (O'Cathain et al., 2020). I used purposeful sampling for identifying and selecting participants. I selected four project managers or more from one major bank in the metropolitan city of Abidjan-

Ivory Coast, with more than 5 years of successful experience in using IT strategies to improve project planning in the banking system and review company's archival documents pertaining to the planning of previous IT projects.

Sample sizes could vary depending on the characteristics of the study because the goal of the qualitative researcher is to select a sample that will yield rich data to understanding the overarching research question (Ames et al., 2019; Hennink et al., 2019). Qualitative researchers could use purposeful sampling to engage with few individuals within a population group to collect rich and thick data (Cooksey & McDonald, 2019; Tourangeau et al., 2020). B. Farrugia (2019) and Weis and Willems (2017) noted purposeful sampling is a selection process that considers the variables or qualities of potential participants that could impact the contribution they could provide to the study rather than focusing on a large sample of participants. Baltes and Ralph (2020) and Yin (2017) suggested qualitative researchers should consider selecting a sample size ranging from 2 to 25 participants. I selected four project managers from one major bank in the metropolitan City of Abidjan-Ivory Coast, with more than 5 years of successful experience in using IT strategies to improve project planning in the banking system.

Ghafoori et al. (2020) noted qualitative researchers could use purposeful sampling method to recruit participants and conduct in-depth semistructured interviews to reach data saturation. Qualitative researchers can use purposeful sampling method to answer the overarching research question (Mushy et al., 2020). Researchers could use semistructured interviews to collect data until they could not extract any new data and reach data saturation (Rashidi-Fakari et al., 2020). To achieve data saturation, I continued

sampling the participants that I considered for the current study until no new information emerged.

Qualitative researchers can use semistructured interviews for understanding participants' perceptions, descriptions of knowledge, and professional practices (Brown & Danaher, 2019; Yin, 2017). Krouwel et al. (2019) and Patton (2015) shared conducting semistructured interviews that provide unique insights and increase the opportunity for the researcher to interact with participants is appropriate to qualitative research for reasons such as cost-saving, shorter time to collect data, and privacy enforcement. I expected the target participants to share their experience in project management, and mainly on effective strategies to improve IT project planning. Researchers should ensure conducting interviews in a quiet and comfortable setting (Brown & Danaher, 2019; Yin, 2017). Krouwel et al. (2019) and Patton (2015) noted the setting of the interview can influence the accuracy of data collected from participants. Since I conducted the interview remotely, I asked participants to confirm they had access to videoconferencing technology, including Skype, Zoom, GoToMeeting, WhatsApp, or WebEx. To record accurate data from the participants and improve data validity, I asked them to confirm they could participate remotely in this interview from a quiet, secure, private, and comfortable location.

Ethical Research

Potential power between researchers and research participants could influence ethics in research (Mietola et al., 2017). A primary ethical requirement towards the participants in research is to fulfill all promises and avoid harming them (National

Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects and Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979; Navab et al., 2016). Mietola et al. (2017) and Moss et al. (2019) noted qualitative researchers face ethical challenges during the research process. According to Bracken-Roche et al. (2017) qualitative researchers encounter ethical issues when interacting with participants. Avoid harming participants refers to avert any behavior to exploit them (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects and Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979; Williams, 2020). For protecting participants' confidentiality, I sent an invitation letter and informed consent form to the target participants to request their participation in this research (see Appendix A). After participants respond with the word " I consent", I scheduled a remote interview with each of the participants. Qualitative researchers must ensure participants understand and agree that their contribution to the research is without any payment and at their will (Gelinas et al., 2018; Surmiak, 2018). I informed target participants that their participation in the current study was voluntary, and that I would not provide any monetary payment or gifts to participants. The researcher must give the opportunity and the right to all participants to withdraw from the study for any or no reason, and at any time, the participants change their mind (Heale & Shorten, 2017; Qamar, 2018). I mentioned in the informed consent form that participants may send me a statement via e-mail message any time they decided to withdraw from the research.

Qualitative researchers should guarantee the ethical protection of participants (Gelinas et al., 2018; Millum & Garnett, 2019). Head (2020) suggested researchers should comply with the university's code of ethics. Researchers should protect

participants confidentiality by conducting research in accordance with the IRB and Belmont Report protocols (Friesen et al., 2017; Lantos, 2020; Miracle, 2016). Hadden et al. (2017), Kane and Gallo (2017), and Perrault and Keating (2018) noted researchers should only start collecting data after receiving IRB approval. I first sought permission from Walden University's IRB before collecting data from participants. Upon the approval and the obtention of Walden University's IRB number, I added the approval number and expiration date on the consent form. To provide ethical protection to the participants, I did not disclose participants names and target company name in the study. For example, I used the codes ITPM1, ITPM2, ITPM3, and ITPM4 to name the four participants in the study.

Qualitative researchers must ensure participants' confidentiality during the entire research process (Gelinas et al., 2018; Millum & Garnett, 2019). Surmiak (2018) discussed the approach researchers take on confidentiality and the protection of information, which are two essential components to establish confidentiality in research. I complied with Walden University's IRB rules by keeping data for 5 years in an encrypted external hard drive and maintaining the encrypted external hard drive in my home safe-deposit vault. When requested from the Walden University IRB, I will share the data about this research study. I will delete the data after 5 years by reformatting the external hard drive to ensure that the saved information is unrecoverable.

Data Collection Instruments

The researcher represents the primary data collection instrument in qualitative case study research (Hollin et al., 2020; Yin, 2017). Researchers can use many methods,

including interviews, focus group discussions, observational methods, and document analysis in qualitative research to collect data (Kaae & Traulsen, 2020; Mikkonen & Kyngäs, 2020; Pope & Allen, 2020). Mohajan (2017), Rose and Johnson (2020), and Yin (2017) stated qualitative researchers should use semistructured interviews for ensuring the reliability and validity of the research. As the primary research instrument, I used semistructured interviews to collect data from participants and review company's archival documents pertaining to the planning of previous IT projects.

To prepare for interview research, qualitative researchers should use the interview protocol (Abdel Latif, 2019; Amabile, 2019). Castillo-Montoya (2016) and Patton (2015) noted researchers can use the interview protocol to ensure an alignment between the research question and the interview questions. Using the interview protocol, qualitative researchers can construct an inquiry-based conversation to understand participants' experience about the research topic (Castillo-Montoya, 2016; Yin, 2017). I used an interview protocol as a guide to the interview process, and to improve the quality of the data collected from participants (see Appendix A). Qualitative researchers can use a variety of data collection techniques, including structured, semistructured, and unstructured interviews (Patton, 2015; Yin, 2017). Castillo-Montoya and Hollin et al. (2020) noted researchers should use semistructured interviews to collect data from participants. I used semistructured interviews to explore participants' thoughts by asking seven open-ended questions aligned to the overarching research question and relevant to the current study (see Appendix A).

Qualitative researchers can use member checking, and triangulation to improve the quality of data (Patton, 2015; Yin, 2017). Castillo-Montoya (2016) and Patton (2015) noted member checking is an effective tool that researchers can use to increase data trustworthiness. According to Candela (2019) and Zamani-Alavijeh et al. (2019), qualitative researchers can use member checking to improve the accuracy of data collected from participants. I used member-checking so that participants make comments or corrections on the transcribed interviews before validation.

Data Collection Technique

The qualitative researcher should select the appropriate data collection technique for answering the research question (Hamilton & Finley, 2020; Kaae & Traulsen, 2020). Before collecting data, I sent via email the informed consent form to each research participant. Semistructured interviews encourage two-way communication and participants have enough time to discuss sensitive issues (Apaydin, 2020; Roni et al., 2020). A semistructured interview is one of the most common techniques researchers use to collect data in a qualitative study (Hawkins, 2018). I used a semistructured interview to collect data for this study. After receiving the acceptance of participants to participate in this research, I set up a remote interview date and time according to the availability of each participant. While using semistructured interviews, researchers can include planned questions in the interview protocol (McGrath et al., 2019). Semistructured interviews can be more flexible, and the researcher can better understand the perspective of the interviewees (Fontana et al., 2020; Walker et al., 2020). I used an interview protocol and seven open-ended interview questions to conduct a semistructured interview with each

participant. I used social platforms like Zoom, Skype, or GoToMeeting to conduct a 30 to 45 minutes interview with each participant. Researchers can use semistructured interviews to uncover deep insight by performing in-depth analysis on respondents' answers (Eisele et al., 2020; Yin, 2017). I used semistructured interviews to recenter the interview questions and consider additional information if compelling ideas emerge.

Data collection through semistructured interviews presents some disadvantages. Semistructured interviews could be time-consuming due to the possibility of generating a significant amount of data that is hard to organize and to analyze (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Semistructured interviews could be intimidating in a way to alter the trusting relationship between the researcher and the interviewees and increase the risk of bias in interview questions' responses (Biggs et al., 2019). The bias in semistructured interview can come from poorly articulated interview questions and the reflexivity and the difficulty for the interviewee to analyze open-ended question (Xu et al., 2019). One disadvantage in semistructured interviews is that the researcher is responsible for distinguishing the frequency of essential themes in interview responses (Yin, 2017). The flexibility of the semistructured interview may affect the quality of data collected and lessen the study's reliability.

Qualitative secondary sources and analysis have essential implications for qualitative researchers in generating new knowledge via unobtrusive, reliable, valid, and time and cost-effective research through the broader use of existing qualitative data (Sherif, 2018). Ruggiano and Perry (2019) shared that secondary data analysis is one way to promote and advance the goal of generating new knowledge that benefits society while

minimizing the burden of research participants. Using multiple sources of data represents an approach to promote social change, mitigate bias, and enhance reaching data saturation through triangulation (Fusch et al., 2018). As a secondary source of data for this research, I requested company's archival documents including project plan sheets and reports on project planning strategies of previous successful IT projects. I conducted an in-depth analysis of documents with the data I collected from the interviews to ensure consistency. I used the organization website and database to extract relevant information and verify the accuracy of the information that I collected. Document reviews could present some disadvantages, including the inapplicability, the disorganization, the out of date of the available information (Alberti-Alhtaybat et al., 2019; Windle & Silke, 2019). Data emerging from document reviews regarding the research topic may be inaccurate, incomplete, subject to bias due to the selective choice of the researcher, and time-consuming for the process of collecting, reviewing, and analyzing the data (Fowler et al., 2019).

Researchers who use a field journal alongside recordings can enact some potential validity criteria and prompt reflectively the process of learning, interpretation, and bracketing to ensure transparency in a research study (Vicary et al., 2017). The quality of reflective practice using reflective journals could help researchers evaluate the impact of participants on a study (Bruno & Dell'Aversana, 2017). The reflective entries provide an opportunity for researchers to explore the complexity of teamwork, identify the stages of its development, and analyze its significance (Bashan & Holsblat, 2017). I respected the processes included in the interview protocol (see Appendix A). I recorded interview

questions and participants' comments to focus all data analysis capacity on the data that each study participant provided. Qualitative researchers can use member checking as a technique to improve the validity of data collected and minimize bias (Birt et al., 2016; Varpio et al., 2017). Candela (2019) and McGrath et al. (2019) suggested researchers should use member checking to create trustworthiness in qualitative research. Birt et al. (2016) noted the steps to conduct for member checking cover activities, including returning the interview transcript to participants, a member check interview using the interview transcript data, and returning analyzed synthesized data to participants (Birt et al., 2016). I performed member checking by reviewing and interpreting the interview transcript, writing each question followed by a succinct synthesis, emailing a copy of the synthesis to each of the participants, asking participants if the synthesis represents their answer or if they have additional information to provide, and continuing member checking process until there is no new data to collect. Data security and access to raw data are critical concerns in qualitative research (Corti et al., 2019). I stored and secured all data and interview related documents of the study on my password-protected computer and backed up on a password-protected hard drive.

Data Organization Technique

Researchers can use various techniques or tools for organizing data collected from target participants (Fusch et al., 2018; Glegg, 2019). Patton (2015) and Yin (2017) suggested researchers should use techniques, including written notes, audio recording, and coding for organizing data. Williams and Moser (2019) shared that coding is essential for data analysis and successive steps to serve the purpose of the study in

qualitative research. Scharp and Sanders (2019) proposed six steps: gaining familiarity with data, creating coding categories or subcategories, generating themes, reviewing themes, labeling themes, and identifying exemplars to understand how researchers could conduct thematic analysis. Researchers should use written notes to keep data collected from participants (McGrath et al., 2019; Waite & Denier, 2019). Researchers can use audio recording for maintaining a record of interviews (Fusch et al., 2018; Williams & Moser, 2019). I used coding, audio-recording, and written notes to organize the data I collected from target participants. I will securely keep collected data for 5 years in an encrypted external hard drive and keep the encrypted external hard drive in my home safe-deposit vault.

Researchers can a variety of software for storing, organizing, and analyzing data (Dickinson et al., 2019). According to Lienhard and Kettiger (2017), well-structured and organized data represents an attendant for an effective data analysis that leads to a quality outcome of the research. Qualitative researchers can use NVivo software as a tool for various purposes, including data storage, coding participants' interview responses, finding out themes for analyzing organized data to improve the quality of research (Lee et al., 2020; Lei et al., 2020). Williams and Moser (2019) and Yin (2017) suggested researchers should use coding to effectively organize and analyze data. After collecting data from the target participants, I saved the transcribed interview data into NVivo for analysis. I analyzed the data and determined the themes that emerge. I created a coding table and make classification of the data into themes and use NVivo for coding data.

Data Analysis

Researchers can use various data analysis techniques, including modified van kaam analysis and triangulation (Natow, 2019; Patton, 2015). Patton (2015) and Yin (2017) suggested the use of triangulation for case study. Triangulation refers to the use of multiple methods or data sources in qualitative research to develop a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon by testing the validity of a research through the convergence of information from different sources (Campbell et al., 2020). Through methodological triangulation, researchers can make analytic choices and yield different forms of knowledge to explore multiple perspectives of the same phenomenon (Vogl et al., 2019). Fusch et al. (2018) shared that through methodological triangulation, researchers conduct an in-depth analysis of research data. Methodological triangulation is an attempt to improve the validity and increase the trustworthiness of research by combining various techniques in one study (Drnevich et al., 2020; McDonald & Needham, 2020). I applied methodological triangulation between the two key data sources in the research process by collecting data from semistructured interviews and document reviews to increase the validation of data. I confirmed data consistency through cross-verification from two data sources including semistructured interviews and document reviews.

Qualitative researchers can perform data analysis using five steps, including data compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding (Patton, 2015; Yin, 2017). Yin (2017) noted data transcription is essential for qualitative research because it makes it easier to analyze and share data collected from participants. Using data

transcription, researchers can improve data accuracy (Mozahem et al., 2019; Patton, 2015). Researchers can use NVivo software during the data analysis process to classify and fragment data into nodes, and develop emergent themes (Akinyode & Khan, 2018). Gan et al. (2019) and Jackson and Bazeley (2019) noted researchers can use NVivo to import several different types of data, including word documents, videos, and spreadsheets. I used Microsoft Excel to categorize in a tabular format (a) participants' answers to the interviews, (b) results obtained from member checking, and (c) the data from document review. I imported the data from the database I created using Microsoft Word into NVivo software for analysis.

Researchers can use various techniques for organizing data (Patton, 2015; Yin, 2017). Herzog et al. (2019) shared that thematic analysis is a cost-effective tool which researchers can use to identify and analyze patterns of meaning within data. Researchers can use thematic analysis for organizing data into database and categorize them into different themes (Fusch et al., 2018; Ravindran, 2019). Researchers can use thematic analysis to identify, analyze, organize, describe, and report themes found in a data set (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). I used thematic analysis to determine, interpret, and explain the emergent themes from the transcribed data. Coding the data is an essential step in qualitative data analysis (Lawless & Chen, 2019; Yin, 2017). Cypress (2019) and Mortelmans (2019) noted qualitative researchers can use software like NVivo to manage, code, and analyze data by querying coded material or developing conceptual models. Codes mainly originate from a variety of sources, including the research question, interview questions, theories, and data collected (Vila-Henninger, 2019; Wong, 2008). I

used NVivo to code, map, and determine key themes in the data. To ensure alignment, I reviewed the research question, interview questions, the structuration theory associated with this study, and themes that will emerge from the study findings. I compared the frequency of themes in the current study to previous ones and link the emergent themes with both literature reviews on strategies to improve project planning in the banking industry and the structuration theory, which represent the conceptual framework of this study.

Reliability and Validity

Establishing the quality of the research, which is the process of ensuring reliability and validity, is essential in formulating a research design (Buus & Perron, 2020). The concepts of reliability and validity are central to judgments regarding the quality of qualitative research (Majumdar & Ganesh, 2020). Lemon and Hayes (2020) considered reliability as the dependability, consistency, and repeatability of a project's data collection, interpretation, and analysis.

Researchers apply validity to show consistency and trustworthiness of the research findings according to activities in the research process (Jacobs, 2020; Kyngäs et al., 2020). Validity refers to the accuracy, credibility, or believability of the research (Pietilä et al., 2020). By implementing reliability and validity, the qualitative researcher should ensure credibility, applicability, consistency, and neutrality of research findings.

Reliability

In qualitative research, reliability refers to how researchers will address the dependability of their research and ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of the

research findings (Ormin, 2020). Kassan et al. (2020) noticed qualitative researchers should consider the dependability of their study to ensure its rigor and the validity of the results of the study. Triangulation is one method that helps increase the reliability, which encompasses the credibility and dependability of research findings (Moon, 2019; Natow, 2019; Rose & Johnson, 2020).

Dependability

Dependability in qualitative research involves the rigor to ensure trustworthiness and consistency of research findings through the evaluation of the research findings, the interpretation, and recommendations of the study according to data received from the study's participants (Haven & Van Grootel, 2019; Sezer et al., 2020). Dependability is about whether collecting the qualitative data was accurate by providing details of the study's description to examine the integrity of the research results (Nestel & Calhoun, 2019). Dependability in qualitative research is essential to ensure that researchers did not omit anything in their research study, or that they were not sloppy or misguided in their final report (Haenssgen, 2019; Johnson et al., 2020). Patton (2015) and Yin (2017) noted researchers can use member checking to improve the reliability of the research study. To ensure the dependability of the current study, I applied member checking by sharing my interpretations of participants' responses to the interview questions with participants and asking them to confirm or correct what I wrote.

Triangulation is a useful practice for qualitative researchers to enhance the dependability of data by combining an interview with a document review (Natow, 2019). Fusch et al. (2018) noted one approach to promote social change, mitigate bias, and

enhance reaching data saturation is through triangulation (multiple sources of data), which adds depth to the collected data**.** Jentoft and Olsen (2019) suggested data triangulation can reveal a social phenomenon's complexity by providing a fuller picture through establishing trust when meeting the informant to ensure rich data. For the current study, I stuck to the case study protocol, and I used the qualitative software NVivo to build and maintain a case study database. I enhanced dependability by ensuring that I would not misinterpret the participants' experience.

Validity

Validity depends on the purpose and context of the research and refers to conclusions based on specific methods used to address validity threats pertinent to the research (Fitz-Patrick, 2019; Project, 2020). Hayashi Jr. et al. (2019) mentioned qualitative research should adopt a processual view approach of validity since it should not be the product of a single test or just one step in the research. Validity applies to the design and the method of research by genuinely representing the phenomenon the researcher is claiming to measure to indicate how sound is the research (Garcia-Perez et al., 2019). I established the credibility of the current study through triangulation by using a single case study method to collect and analyze many data sources with available and supporting documentation to increase the soundness of the findings**.** I applied critical analysis by weighting the pros and cons from a diverse perspective to establish validity.

Qualitative researchers can ensure validity by enhancing credibility through member checking of the data interpretation, participant transcript review, triangulation, interview protocol, focus group protocol, direct or participant observation protocol

(Elarousy et al., 2019; Rummell et al., 2019). Member checking is an integral part of ensuring validity by creating trustworthiness in qualitative research and considering participants' experiences to justify how researchers could use member checking as a reflective experience (Candela, 2019). Birt et al. (2016) shared that member checking is a technique that qualitative researchers use to help improve the accuracy, credibility, validity, and transferability of a study. Qualitative researchers can make different claims to the validity of the interpretation of their results due to the variety of member checking across studies; therefore, they should report the consistency of the member checking procedure with the study's epistemological stance (Birt et al., 2016). I applied member checking by sharing my interpretations of participants' responses to the interview questions with participants and asking them to confirm or correct what I wrote.

Transferability

Transferability in qualitative research evolves by providing readers with evidence that the research study's findings could apply to other contexts, situations, times, and populations synonymous with generalizability (Forrest et al., 2020; Johnson et al., 2020). Transferability refers to the degree to which researchers could generalize or transfer the results of qualitative research to other contexts or settings (Thompson et al., 2020). IT project managers in the banking industry as well as other sectors could use the findings from the current research study to improve planning strategies and IT project success rates. Beyond IT project planning, practitioners in project management can use the findings from this study as a benchmark for improving project success rates.

Confirmability

Confirmability is the last criterion of trustworthiness a qualitative researcher must establish because it represents the degree of confidence at which the study's findings reflect the participants' narratives and words rather than potential researchers' biases (Luciani et al., 2020; Reay et al., 2019). Confirmability in qualitative research establishes a unique perspective to a study and implies that other researchers could confirm or corroborate a qualitative research study (Haenssgen, 2019; Larki, 2020). Barrett et al. (2020) shared that confirmability in qualitative research enhances the trustworthiness of the study. I set strategies to guarantee consistency in the processes of the current research and emphasize confirmability to secure the rigor of this research. As components of the strategies in the confirmability process, I created an audit process and use the data analysis software NVivo to examine and analyze this research data. Rose and Johnson (2020) noticed qualitative researchers could increase reliability through a variety of consistencies that demonstrate the study's rigorous and systematized nature. Member checking should be more than a procedure to maintain validity, and researchers should consider participants' experiences, including how researchers could use the member checking as a reflective experience (Candela, 2019). On top of corroborating consistency and credibility by asking the same questions to participants in this research, I warranted that participants confirm and prove the accuracy of the data I collected.

Data saturation

Nascimento et al. (2018) shared that data saturation in qualitative research occurs when researchers find no new elements and new information ceases to be necessary because it does not alter the comprehension of the researched phenomenon. The

researcher could reach data saturation when he or she identifies the types of responses and records repetitions by applying semistructured interviews sequentially with an open-ended question (Nascimento et al., 2018; Sechelski & Onwuegbuzie, 2019). Data saturation, which happens when new elements cease to emerge from collected data, represents a criterion for rigor in determining an adequate sample size in qualitative research (Cho et al., 2020; Hennink et al., 2019). The saturation criterion is a process for the objective validation of research that adopts methods, addresses themes, and collects information in sectors and areas where it is unfeasible or unnecessary to probabilistically treat samples (Hennink et al., 2019; Nascimento et al., 2018). The richness of data collected is more important than the sample size because data saturation does not confirm whether the sample is large or small (Fusch et al., 2018). I interviewed four or more participants to reach data saturation for the current research. I used the purposeful sampling approach to select project managers with more than 5 years of experience in successful IT project planning implementation in the banking industry.

Transition and Summary

The purpose of this qualitative single case study is to explore strategies IT project managers use to improve project planning in the banking industry. The focus of the current research is to contribute to improving project planning in the banking industry. In section two, I discussed the subsections of the role of the researcher, the participants, the method and design, the population and sampling, the ethical research, the data collection instruments, the data collection technique, the data organization technique, the data analysis, and the reliability and validity.

In section 3, I will present the findings of this study. I will also discuss in section 3 the applications of the research to professional practice and the implications for social change. Additionally, I will provide some recommendations for IT project managers to improve practices in the field of IT project planning and suggest some recommendations for further research in the field of project management. Finally, I will share my experience with the doctoral study journey and conclude the study.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore strategies IT project managers from one major bank in the metropolitan city of Abidjan used to improve project planning in the banking industry. Aranyossy et al. (2018) noted ineffective project planning is one of the significant reasons why IT projects fail. I identified five emerged themes that represented strategies IT project managers used to improve project planning in the banking industry: effective communication, effective risk management planning, scope management plan, schedule management plan, and cost management plan.

Presentation of the Findings

The overarching research question was: What strategies do IT project managers use to improve project planning in the banking industry? After analyzing the data, I identified five major themes, including effective communication, effective risk management planning, scope management plan, schedule management plan, and cost management plan. The five themes that emerged from the data analysis aligned with most of the project planning strategies discussed in the literature review.

Theme 1: Effective Communication

Effective communication was the first theme that emerged after using NVivo 12 to analyze data collected from participants. Effective communication is essential for developing successful project planning. Ikudayisi and Oviasogie (2020) stated project planning fails because of ineffective communication strategy. Beiler et al. (2019) and

Kerzner (2019), and the PMI (2017) noted successful project planning runs on effective communication. Dobie (2020) and Englund and Graham (2019) shared that IT project managers can only be successful during project planning by communicating effectively with clients, the project team, and other project stakeholders.

In this study, I used codes, including ITPM1, ITPM2, ITPM3, and ITPM4, to name the participants and their organization. All four participants mentioned the essential role of effective communication in successful IT project planning. For example, ITPM1 shared: “Communication is the foundation of project planning. Most of the project planning strategies were successful because we developed a communication plan to communicate on project cost, scope and schedule, and quality effectively.” Project managers should involve and engage with project stakeholders during the project life cycle (Dobie, 2020; Englund & Graham, 2019; PMI, 2017). Kerzner (2019) noted all project stakeholders have information and communication needs during the project planning phase. Therefore, project managers should identify the needs of project stakeholders and find out how to develop an effective communication strategy to respond to those needs. All four participants noted effective communication with the project team, clients, and project stakeholders results in successful project planning. For example, ITPM4 shared communication is the key to successful project planning. ITPM4 added: “The project team developed a communication plan to establish communication with all the project stakeholders, involve them in all the stages of the project planning, and create alignment with them.”

Project managers can implement communication effectively by understanding the

functions of communication and its processes (Kerzner, 2019; PMI, 2017). Zulch (2014) noted communication involves the process of collecting, analyzing, and effectively distributing information to project stakeholders. All four participants reported the essential role of communication processes and communication functions for developing and implementing an effective communication plan. Table 1 depicts the subthemes of effective communication and their frequency.

Table 1

Subthemes Representing Effective Communication

Subtheme	Frequency	Percentage of occurrence
Communication processes	70	67%
Functions of communication	39	33%

Participants discussed communication processes 70 times. All four participants shared communication is essential for all actors involved or influenced by the project. Ali et al. (2021), Kerzner (2019), and the PMI (2017) noted the communication processes consists of three components, including: the (a) sender, the (b) medium, and the (c) receiver. For instance, ITPM2 and ITPM4 noted ensuring a flow of the message they transmitted to the project stakeholders. ITPM1 mentioned working with project team members to identify the communication need of the project. ITPM3 shared after listing the project communication needs; they define the purpose before choosing a communication medium. All four participants also noted establishing a regular frequency for sharing information about the project cost, schedule, scope, and quality to project

stakeholders. ITPM1 reported working with the project team to list all the project communication needs. ITPM1 indicated project team members use communication supports, including scheduled meetings, lunch meetings, and project planning reports to engage stakeholders with high power and high interest. The participants' practices to implement effective communication align with the literature review. Participant ITPM1 shared some pertinent remarks regarding the implementation of effective communication during project planning as follow: “I worked with my project team to develop a communication plan through which we identified internal and external project stakeholder and enhanced communication among all parties involved during project planning.”

Project managers are the starting point of the communication processes and they should determine a goal to communicate to the project team and stakeholders (Ali et al., 2021; Kerzner, 2019; PMI, 2017). ITPM2 and ITPM3 noted frequently communicating with project investors, consulting, and involving them to increase their interest over the project life cycle. While ITPM2 noted “ Using communication supports, including kick-off meetings, dashboard, scheduled meetings, and newsletters”, ITPM3 noted “Using project planning reports and scheduled meetings.” ITPM4 noted using communication supports, including emailing, kick-off meetings, and project team meetings, to share information with the project team and get feedback. Additionally, ITPM4 mentioned using project status meeting to update project sponsors about project status and give opportunity for feedback.

Participants discussed functions of communication 39 times. All four participants shared the essential role of functions of communication for developing an effective communication strategy. Project managers should ensure an effective management of communication by identifying all aspects of project communications, including methods and techniques (Marchewka, 2016; PMI, 2017). The participants used the agency construct of the structuration theory to engage with stakeholders throughout the project life cycle. For example, ITPM4 stated "To succeed in the project planning phase, we focused on strong collaboration, sharing of information, and knowledge with all the other project stakeholders." ITPM1 added "To ensure successful project planning, we involved stakeholders in all the project planning stages and create alignment with them."

Kerzner (2019) and the PMI (2017) noted projects generally fail because of factors, including low quality of communication in the project. Project managers can use effective communication to motivate the project team, engage with stakeholders, and foster useful exchange (Ali et al., 2021). TTPM1 noted using communication as a function for creating vital communication within the project team members and thereby encouraging effective collaboration with all project stakeholders. ITPM2 mentioned using communication as a function to influence decisions related to project cost, schedule, scope, and quality. Additionally, ITPM2 noted using communication as a function to organize engaging teambuilding sessions among project team members. ITPM3 and ITPM4 shared using communication as a function to effectively manage change, conflict, team diversity and to enforce transparency in the project planning.

All four participants shared internal documents that showed effective communication strategies as essential for improving project planning. ITPM1, ITPM2, ITPM3, and ITPM4 provided documents from previous projects that included the description, frequency, method, audience, and the owner related to all project communication. For instance, ITPM2 shared a project communication plan document that included information such as the purpose, medium, frequency, and audience. The document emphasized the use of regular kickoff meeting once at start of the project, project team meeting scheduled every Monday morning, and project status meetings scheduled every month.

Effective communication was one of the strategies IT project managers in the banking industry used to improve IT project planning. Kerzner (2019) and Rowe (2020) noted without an effective communication plan, project managers cannot develop and implement project planning strategies successfully. Effective communication was an important theme in discussing effective strategies to improve project planning in the banking industry. Nyandiere et al. (2015) and Puron-Cid (2013) noted one fundamental construct of the structuration theory resides in the interaction between the IT project manager, the project team, and project stakeholders. Effective communication aligns with the agency construct of the structuration theory as it involves the ability of human actors or stakeholders to engage throughout the project life cycle. IT project managers can use the structuration theory to effectively communicate with stakeholders during project planning. IT project managers should consider developing effective communication planning for the success of the project planning.

Theme 2: Effective Risk Management Planning

Effective risk management planning was the second theme that emerged from the data analysis. All four participants shared the importance of developing a risk management plan for improving project planning. The PMI (2017) and Tavares et al. (2019) noted risk management planning is the process of deciding how to approach risk management activities and plan for them in a project. Risk management planning involves six processes, including: (a) risks identification, (b) qualitative risk analysis, (c) quantitative risk analysis, (d) risk responses planning, (e) risk responses implementation, and (f) risk monitoring (PMI, 2017; Rowe, 2020).

All four participants shared using a risk management framework that includes risk identification, risk analysis, risk response strategy and implementation, and risk monitoring. ITPM1 noted using project team tools, including meetings, prompt lists, Delphi technique, data analysis, and expert judgment for identifying project risks. ITPM2, ITPM3, and ITPM4 noted the importance of identifying risks and documenting their characteristics. ITPM2 and ITPM4 shared several tools for risk identification, including data gathering, expert judgment, meetings, and interpersonal and team skills. The strategies participants used for managing risks during project planning align with the approaches discussed in the literature review. For instance, ITPM3 emphasized some tools and techniques to manage project risks during project planning effectively in the following statement: ”We used several different techniques, including Delphi techniques, interviewing, benchmarking of previous similar projects for the identification of project risks and root cause analysis.”

Project managers should proceed to risk analysis after the risk identification process. The risk analysis involves two stages, including qualitative and quantitative risk analysis (Kerzner, 2019; PMI, 2017). All participants shared the importance of analyzing project risks after their identification. Additionally, the participants mentioned using both qualitative and quantitative risk analysis. For instance, while ITPM3 shared using risk categorization, data representation, and Monte Carlo simulation, ITPM2 noted using decision tree analysis, probability and impact analysis, and expert judgment. ITPM1 shared using techniques, including the project assumption testing and representations of uncertainty. In a like manner, ITPM4 mentioned using the representations of uncertainty with the project team for reflecting individual project risks and other sources of uncertainty.

All four participants shared the importance of risk response strategy and implementation in the risk management processes. Risk responses strategy is the process of developing options and selecting strategies to deal with risks, while risk implementation is about executing the risk responses plans (PMI, 2017; Rowe, 2020). The participants shared developing a risk response strategy based on the type of risk identified. For instance, ITPM1 shared conducting reviews with management, project team, and project stakeholders before adopting an appropriate risk response. All the participants shared appointing a risk owner who frequently reports on the status of the risk to the risk champion. For instance, ITPM1 and ITPM3 noted using a risk register dashboard to communicate in real-time with project stakeholders on the status of risk during risk implementation. Moreover, all four participants shared using tools, including

audits, meetings, and data analysis for monitoring risks. The participants' risk monitoring strategies during project planning aligns with the literature review. Additionally, ITPM3 shared the following practices, which align with the agency construct of the structuration theory: “To monitor project risk effectively during the project planning process, we discussed the use of variance and trend analysis to evaluate variances between the project schedule and cost baselines and the actual results.”

Project managers can develop and implement an effective risk management plan by understanding the risk management process (Kerzner, 2019; PMI, 2017; Rowe, 2020). Tavares et al. (2019) noted that project managers could effectively manage project risk through a clear understanding of risk objectives to determine the threats to those objectives. All participants reported maintaining their risk register up to date so they can follow an ongoing risk management process for identifying, analyzing, responding, and controlling project risks. For instance, ITPM2 noted “After clearly identifying the steps, we implement the risk management process, which should be an ongoing effort.” ITPM3 and ITPM4 suggested being proactive and not reactive for effective management of the risk management processes. Participants discussed the risk management process 50 times and the risk lessons learned 17 times. Table 2 depicts the subthemes of effective risk management.

Table 2

Subthemes Representing Effective Risk Management Planning

Subtheme	Frequency	Percentage of occurrence
Risk management processes	50	75%
Risk lessons learned	17	25%

Risk lessons learned shows how project managers addressed risk events during the project life cycle and what actions they should take to improve future risk management plan (Hillson & Simon, 2020; PMI, 2017). All four participants stated using risk lessons learned from previous projects to improve the current risk management plan. ITPM1 and ITPM2 noted using risk lessons learned from previous projects to avoid committing similar mistakes. ITPM3 and ITPM4 shared using documented risk lessons learned throughout the risk management process. ITPM1 highlighted the importance of risk lessons learned in the following terms: “Using risk lessons learned from previous projects was a powerful method of risk management planning.”

All four participants shared internal documents that corroborated the theme of effective risk management planning. Participants ITPM1. ITPM2, ITPM3, and ITPM4 provided the organization’s risk management plan, describing the strategy for handling project risks. Each participant also shared a risk lesson learned report, which explained what went right and what went wrong during the risk management process of previous projects. Risk lesson learned reports revealed effective risk management planning strategies during the previous projects. For example, ITPM1 shared a risk lesson report

that described keeping the risk register up to date and appointing a risk owner as successful strategies to plan and manage major project risks including project schedule delays, project quality issues, and project budget overruns.

Effective risk management planning is a critical component of the strategies to improve IT project planning in the banking industry. McPhee and Canary (2016) and Nyandiere et al. (2015) noted the agency construct of the structuration theory involves the ability of human actors or stakeholders to engage throughout the project life cycle. During all the processes of risk management planning, the IT project manager uses different risk management techniques. Effective risk management planning aligns with the agency construct of the structuration theory. During the risk management processes, IT project managers use techniques, including meetings, data analysis, and data gathering, to engage with the project team and project stakeholders.

Theme 3: Scope Management Plan

Scope management plan was the third theme that emerged from the data analysis. Kerzner (2019) and the PMI (2017) define the project scope as a vital component of the project planning that comprises finding out and documenting a list of specific project goals, deliverables, features, functions, activities, schedule, and costs. All four participants noted using a scope management plan for describing how they worked with the project team to prepare project documents and manage other processes, including the collection of requirements, defining scope, and developing the WBS.

Effective scope management improves project planning (Antony & Gupta, 2019; Francisco de Oliveira & Rabechini Jr., 2019; PMI, 2017). ITPM1 and ITPM4 noted

following a number of processes for effective management of the project scope. For instance, both ITPM1 and ITPM4 shared working with the project team during the project planning phase for collecting input from project stakeholders. ITPM1 indicated techniques used to succeed in scope management planning as follow: “In my previous projects, we used brainstorming and questionnaires for collecting requirements.” ITPM4 mentioned using benchmarking and interviews. ITPM2 and ITPM3 reported using data-gathering techniques, including context diagram, data representation, and data analysis for collecting requirements. All four participants shared the importance of defining scope. The participants shared using data analysis and product analysis for developing a detailed description of the project and product. The scope management plan discussed in the literature review aligns with the strategies participants used to plan project scope during project planning. Additionally, the participants applied the agency construct of the structuration theory during project scope management planning. ITPM4 shared some relevant remarks also discussed in the literature review by mentioning: “During project scope management planning, I involved the project team and project stakeholders in defining the project scope. I organized meetings with all parties to discuss how to integrate the expectations of project stakeholders fully.”

Project managers should create a work breakdown structure during the scope management process to decompose project deliverables and project work into smaller, more manageable components (Kerzner, 2019; PMI, 2017). ITPM1 and ITPM3 shared using Easy Projects for creating Gantt charts and task management, while ITPM2 and ITPM4 noted using GoodDay which is a project, product, and work management

platform as a tool to create a WBS. All four participants insisted on the importance of effective team management for the successful creation of the WBS. For instance, ITPM3 shared using teambuilding activities, including milestone parties before the creation of the WBS.

Validate scope and control scope are two essential processes of scope management. Rowe (2020) and the PMI (2017) defined validate scope as the process of formalizing acceptance of the completed project deliverables. All four participants noted using some tools and techniques for validating and controlling project scope. All four shared using inspection as a tool for validating project scope. For instance, ITPM3 noted: "We used inspection to review the project deliverables for ensuring they meet stakeholders' needs and expectations." To monitor the status of the project scope and manage changes to the scope baseline, ITPM1 and ITPM3 shared using trend analysis, while ITPM2 and ITPM4 shared using variance analysis.

Project managers can develop and implement an effective scope management plan by understanding the project scope management process (Kidd, 2020; PMI, 2017; Schwalbe, 2015). Fashina et al. (2020) and Sharma et al. (2017) noted project managers could effectively manage project scope by clarifying project expectations at each step of the scope management process. All participants reported documenting everything required at each step of the scope management process to achieve the project goal. For instance, ITPM3 noted a clear understanding of the project scope management process helped address issues such as scope creep. ITPM1 and ITPM4 shared documenting the list of all the project goals, activities, deadlines, and budgets. ITPM2 shared a relevant

remark on the scope management in the following terms: ”An understanding of the scope management process helped the project team manage scope and deal with the change request.” Participants discussed the scope management process 31 times and the project scope statement 30 times. Table 3 depicts the subthemes of the scope management plan.

Table 3

Subthemes Representing Scope Management Plan

Subtheme	Frequency	Percentage of occurrence
Scope management process	31	51%
Scope statement	30	49%

Project managers can develop a scope statement to identify the expected outcomes, assumptions, constraints, and other significant factors under which they will deliver the project (Antony & Gupta, 2019; Francisco de Oliveira & Rabechini Jr., 2019; PMI, 2017). All four participants stated using a scope management document for establishing work responsibilities of project team members and procedures to follow during the project lifecycle. ITPM4 mentioned: “In previous projects, the team and I used project charters that projects sponsors provided to develop project scope statement documents.” ITPM1 and ITPM3 noted using the scope statement as a document to outline project results and determine the constraints, assumptions, and critical factors for success. ITPM2 indicated the project scope statement is a document that helped the project team create an alignment with project stakeholders because it ensures a common understanding of the project goals.

All four participants shared internal documents that supported the theme of a scope management plan. Each participant also shared a scope management plan for previous projects that outlined the process to define and document project work to show how strategies for managing scope planning implemented in previous projects were effective. Participants ITPM1, ITPM2, ITPM3, and ITPM4 shared scope statements of previous projects that included the project scope description, project deliverables acceptance criteria, project deliverables, project exclusions, project constraints, and project assumptions based on the project sponsor's needs and expectations. For example, ITPM3 provided a scope statement indicating interviews, meetings, or brainstorming sessions with project stakeholders as a practical approach to define the project scope.

Effective scope management planning is a vital component of the strategies to improve IT project planning in the banking industry. Valdés-Souto (2019) and Schwalbe (2015) notified the lack of formal techniques to manage scope through scope management is a critical success factor in software projects. The structure is the second important construct of Giddens's structuration theory (McPhee & Canary, 2016; Nyandiere et al., 2015). Giddens (1991) defined structure as rules and resources, organized as properties of social systems that exist only as structural properties. Structure focuses on two main components, including planning and approach (Nyandiere et al., 2015; Omar et al., 2020). The PMI (2017) defined the project scope as a detailed outline of all aspects of a project, including all related activities needed to deliver a product, service, or result with the specified features and functions. Giddens (1991) suggested domination as a structural element to control resources. Through the lens of the structure

construct, IT project managers can use power and collaboration with project team members to effectively manage project scope planning.

Theme 4: Schedule Management Plan

Schedule management plan was the fourth theme that emerged from the data analysis. Dobie (2020) and the PMI (2017) shared project schedule management plan is critical to developing a successful project planning strategy. All four participants noted using a project schedule management plan to define how to manage the project schedule throughout the project life cycle. Kidd (2020) and Rowe (2020) shared that project managers can use project schedule management plans to deliver the project scope over time. ITPM2 and ITPM4 used project schedules for monitoring and controlling project activities. ITPM1 and ITPM3 noted following six processes, including planning schedule management, defining activities, sequencing activities, estimating activities, developing schedule, and controlling schedule.

Project managers can use various tools and techniques for creating a schedule management plan (PMI, 2017; Rowe, 2020; Schwalbe, 2015). All four participants shared using various tools and techniques to develop a schedule management plan for monitoring and controlling project activities. For instance, ITPM1 mentioned using the parametric technique for estimating time and resources. ITPM2 remarked: “We used the parametric technique in three situations, including historical information from similar projects, scalable models, and quantifiable tasks or activities.” ITPM3 and ITPM4 noted the importance of using the critical path method and program evaluation and review techniques (PERT) to ensure effective management of project schedules. For instance,

ITPM3 shared using the PERT to calculate the project time span through the project scope. Schedule baseline represents a copy of the project schedule project managers can use to compare the planned and actual schedule of the project (Kerzner, 2019; PMI, 2017; Rowe, 2020). All four participants shared using project schedule baseline as references to evaluate the schedule performance of the project. The practices described by the participants for measuring project schedule performance during project planning align with the literature review. For instance, ITPM1 highlighted: ”We discussed indicators we could use for measuring the project schedule performance. We mostly used metrics, including schedule performance index, to determine if the project was behind or ahead of schedule.”

The purpose for project managers to develop a schedule management plan is to provide clear guidance and set expectations for procedures for planning, developing, managing, implementing, and controlling the project schedule (Kerzner, 2019; Marchewka, 2016; PMI, 2017; Schwalbe, 2015). The PMI (2017) and Tesfaye et al. (2017) noted IT project managers can use tools, including the schedule baseline, and establish checkpoints and performance measurement metrics to measure progress in completing the project. Participants discussed the schedule baseline 17 times and controlling and performance measurements 14 times. Table 4 depicts the subthemes of the schedule management plan.

Table 4

Subthemes Representing Schedule Management Plan

Subtheme	Frequency	Percentage of occurrence
Schedule baseline	17	55%
Schedule performance	14	45%

All the participants noted using the schedule baseline for measuring performance by reporting on schedule variance. For instance, ITPM1 stated: “We used the schedule baseline as an agreed-upon project schedule and as a basis for work authorization, budgeting, and control.”

ITPM2 noted using the schedule baseline to control changes to the baseline and ascertain that the actual completion date for tasks and actual resource expenditures do not change the baseline data. ITPM3 and ITPM4 shared using the schedule baseline for capturing changes in the project schedule that happened because of risk occurrence. All participants also noted using controlling and performance measurement metrics for controlling the project schedule. For instance, ITPM1 and ITPM3 reported using the schedule performance index to measure how close the project is being completed compared to the schedule. ITPM2 and ITPM4 shared using earned value management to conduct a continuous measure of the schedule performance. ITPM1 added “We used the variance analysis to help us compare the schedule baseline to the current schedule to determine what variances occurred.”

All four participants shared internal documents that aligned with the theme of a schedule management plan. The participants shared schedule management plans used to track and monitor schedules in previous projects. Participants ITPM1, ITPM2, ITPM3, and ITPM4 shared project schedule documents, including a predecessor diagramming method network diagram document, standard milestones, rolling wave schedule document, Gantt chart schedule, and a network calculation schedule. The documents shared revealed how strategies for schedule management planning in previous projects were effective. For example, ITPM4 provided documents that first identified project activities, expected durations, and sequences leading to a practical project schedule plan.

Project managers can use an effective project schedule management plan and baseline schedule to improve the robustness of the project schedule and ensure the success of project planning (Detti et al., 2019; Zhang et al., 2020). Project schedule management and schedule baseline align with the two constructs of the structuration theory, which is the conceptual framework for this study. The agency construct of the structuration theory is about the ability of human actors or stakeholders to engage throughout the project life cycle (McPhee & Canary, 2016; Nyandiere et al., 2015). During the process of project schedule management plan, IT project managers and project team interact to manage activities, including planning schedule management, defining activities, sequencing activities, estimating activities, developing schedule, and controlling schedule. As the second construct of the structuration theory, structure focuses on rules and resources organized as properties of social systems that exist only as structural properties. The project schedule is a structure of activities, time, effort, and

resources the project team can use as a reporting and implementation tool to deliver the project on time (PMI, 2017; Zhang et al., 2020). Through the lens of structure, IT project managers can develop an effective schedule management plan and schedule baseline.

Theme 5: Cost Management Plan

Cost management plan was the fifth theme that emerged from the data analysis. The project cost management plan and cost baseline are important components of the project management plan (Kerzner, 2019; Tereso et al., 2019). All four participants shared the essential role of the cost management plan and cost baseline to improve project planning. Kwon and Kang (2019) and the PMI (2017) noted project cost management plan involves the approach the project team uses to estimate, budget, manage, and monitor and control the project costs. All four participants noted using various tools and techniques for estimating, managing, monitoring, and controlling project costs. For instance, ITPM3 and ITPM4 shared using techniques, including bottom-up estimating and three-points estimating techniques for estimating costs. ITPM1 and ITPM2 noted using techniques, including data analysis, analogous, and parametric estimating techniques. ITPM1 stated: “We used the analogous estimating technique to calculate the expected costs of a project based on the costs associated with similar projects completed in the past.”

Project managers can use techniques and metrics including, planning poker value points estimation, ROI calculation, and EVM to estimate, manage IT projects, and improve project performance (Pellerin & Perrier, 2019; Torrecilla-Salinas et al., 2015). All four participants shared using quantitative tools, including EVM measure project

performance. For instance, ITPM1 and ITPM3 noted using the cost performance index (CPI) to measure the project performance from a cost perspective. Additionally, ITPM2 and ITPM4 shared using the CPI to calculate the cost efficiency and financial effectiveness of the project. Pellerin and Perrier (2019) and the PMI (2017) suggested project managers use the cost baseline as a benchmark to measure cost performance. All four participants shared using the cost baseline as a time-phased budget for measuring and monitoring project cost performance. For instance, ITPM1 and ITPM3 mentioned using software, including Project Insight, to track budget changes over time. Additionally, ITPM2 and ITPM4 shared using the cost baseline to evaluate how project changes influence project costs. The practices shared by the participants for managing project cost during project planning align with the cost management planning discussed in the literature review. ITPM3 shared: "In my previous projects, we applied variance analysis, earned value analysis, forecasting and financial analysis to control project costs and manage changes to the cost baseline."

Project managers can use several tools, including cost baseline and project cost measurement metrics, to determine where the project stands concerning the budget (Kwon & Kang, 2019; PMI, 2017). Efe and Demirors (2019) and Sanghera (2019a) noted that project managers could use the cost baseline to manage the amount of money planned for the project and the time the funds will be spent on each project phase. Participants discussed the cost baseline 27 times and controlling and performance measurements 20 times. Table 5 depicts the subthemes of the cost management plan.

Table 5

Subthemes Representing Cost Management

Subtheme	Frequency	Percentage of occurrence
Cost baseline	27	57%
Cost performance	20	43%

All the participants noted using the cost baseline for measuring performance by reporting on cost variance. For instance, ITPM1 and ITPM3 noted using the cost baseline for monitoring where the project is, where it should be, and where it is going in terms of expenses. ITPM2 mentioned establishing the cost baseline by plotting the estimated total cost per time on a graph to show how project costs are expected to be incurred over the project life cycle. ITPM4 indicated "We set the cost baseline in the project planning phase after spending significant efforts and time developing accurate cost estimates." All participants also noted using controlling and performance measurement metrics for controlling project costs. For instance, ITPM3 shared using earned value analysis to identify areas where the project is performing differently than the plan. ITPM1 also noted using earned value analysis to identify variance such as cost variance as well as trends, including cost performance index that directly influences the controlling cost process. ITPM2 and ITPM4 shared using trend analysis to anticipate the project total cost at several different points of time during the project. For instance, ITPM2 shared: "During project planning, I met the project team and discussed project cost performance metrics,

including cost variance and cost performance index for effective cost management and control."

All four participants shared internal documents that justified the theme of cost management plan. Participants ITPM1. ITPM2, ITPM3, and ITPM4 shared cost management plans of previous projects, including strategies used to manage project costs. Each participant also shared cost documents, project budget plans, project cost tracker, and cost estimator for previous projects to show how strategies for managing cost planning implemented in previous projects were effective. For example, ITPM1 shared a resource planning sheet identifying the type of resources, meaning people, technology, facilities, and the number of resources needed to carry out the project activities.

Project managers can use an effective cost management plan and cost baseline to improve the robustness of the project cost and ensure the success of project planning (Kerzner, 2019; PMI, 2017). Project cost management and cost baseline align with the structuration theory, which is the conceptual framework for this study. The agency construct of the structuration theory emphasizes the ability of human actors or stakeholders to engage throughout the project life cycle (McPhee & Canary, 2016; Nyandiere et al., 2015). During the process of project cost management plan, IT project managers and the project team interact to manage activities, including planning cost management, estimating cost, determining budget, and controlling costs. Through the lens of the agency construct, IT project managers can develop an effective cost management plan and cost baseline to improve IT project planning strategies.

Applications to Professional Practice

The findings and recommendations from this study may significantly contribute to business practices and help IT project managers improve project planning. Aranyossy et al. (2018) noted ineffective project planning is one of the significant reasons why IT projects fail. Shokouhyar et al. (2019) shared more than 50% of IT projects are not delivered within budget and schedule. IT project managers could use the findings from this research to improve project planning. The five themes that emerged from this research are essential to professional practices in many ways.

The first theme showed that IT project managers cannot develop and implement project planning strategies successfully without an effective communication plan. Dinis et al. (2020) and Zulch (2014) noted project managers could use effective communication plans to acquire all relevant information, interpret this information and effectively share the information to project stakeholders who might need it. Therefore, project managers should consider developing an effective communication plan to communicate the areas of cost, scope and schedule, and quality.

The second theme, effective risk management planning, emphasized the importance of using tools and techniques to identify, analyze, control, and respond to project risks for improving project planning. Kerzner (2019) and the PMI (2017) shared effective project risk management plan contributes to improving project success rate by identifying a list of internal and external risks to the project. Without effective risk management planning, project managers may not deliver projects within schedule and budget.

The third theme, scope management plan, addressed all the processes IT project managers should use to determine and document project goals, activities, deliverables, deadlines, and budgets to improve project planning. Project managers need to develop a scope management plan to ensure the project scope is well defined for allocating the proper resources to complete the project (Dobie, 2020; PMI, 2017). Project managers should consider developing a project scope management plan to stay on track and ensure meeting deadlines throughout the project life cycle.

The fourth theme, schedule management plan, highlighted the tools and techniques IT project managers should use to plan schedule effectively, define activities, sequence activities, estimate activities, develop the schedule, and control schedule. Kerzner (2019), the PMI (2017), and Suresh and Sivakumar (2019) shared project managers can use an effective project schedule management plan to keep projects on track, allocate resources appropriately, and identify project tasks relationships. Project managers should consider implementing schedule management planning to minimize overhead and ensure the project is not overstaffed. Moreover, project managers should consider using effective schedule management planning to deliver projects on time while reducing project costs.

The fifth and last theme, cost management plan, addressed how IT project managers can improve project planning by using tools and techniques to estimate project costs, allocate resources effectively, and control overall spending. IT project managers should consider using the findings from this research to develop effective strategies for improving project planning to increase IT project success rates. The PMI (2017) shared

project managers need to develop a cost management plan to set the baseline for project costs. Therefore, project managers should consider using a cost management plan to ensure the project budget is on track and is delivered according to its planned scope.

Implications for Social Change

The implications for positive social change of the current study may include the potential to create more jobs and improve the quality of life of communities through investments and social actions in the sectors of education, agriculture, and healthcare. Successful strategies of project planning in the banking sector contributed to creating opportunities and sustaining financial and economic development in the communities (Winkler & Duminy, 2016). Another implication for social change involves vulnerable or low-income individuals from the community, providing them financial solutions like e-banking and easy access to various types of loans through successful IT projects.

Managers enhance the quality of life for the most vulnerable community members through IT projects (Au-Yong-Oliveira, et al., 2018). The findings from this research could improve project planning and success, which could play an essential role in the development of society by creating innovative jobs for millennials. Moreover, effective strategies to improve IT project planning in the banking industry could improve IT project success rates, enhancing job flexibility opportunities for employees, creating meaningful interactions during times of isolation, such as the Covid19, and more interactive and collaborative work environment.

Effective strategies for project planning in the banking industry may improve IT project success rates and access to information. Additionally, effective strategies for

project planning in the banking industry could allow community members to perform financial transactions such as bill payments or money transfers electronically. IT project managers in the banking industry should consider using the findings from this study to develop effective strategies to improve project planning, which could contribute to economic growth, reduce the unemployment rate within the community, and create more tax revenue for the government.

Recommendations for Action

The findings from this research include effective strategies to improve IT project planning in the banking industry. Five themes emerged from the data analysis, including effective communication, effective risk management planning, scope management plan, schedule management plan, and cost management plan. Sligo et al. (2017) and Aranyossy et al. (2018) noted poor planning is one of the significant reasons for IT project failure. Shokouhyar et al. (2019) also shared more than 50% of IT projects are not delivered within budget and schedule. IT project managers could use the findings from this research to ensure IT project success through a productive planning phase.

The first recommendation I formulate is for IT project managers to develop and implement an effective communication plan during the project planning phase. Project managers may create a successful communication plan by developing a strategy to ensure communication is effective for project stakeholders and then defining the activities necessary to execute the communication strategy (Beiler et al., 2019; Kerzner, 2019; PMI, 2017). Therefore, I recommend IT project managers use tools and techniques, including project management information systems and project reporting to share

information with the project stakeholders. Additionally, IT project managers should consider monitoring communication to ensure the effectiveness of the communication plan. I formulate the second recommendation for IT project managers to create an effective risk management plan to control and reduce IT project risks to an acceptable level. I recommend IT project managers use tools and techniques to identify, analyze, control, and respond to control project risks.

The third recommendation I formulate is for the IT project manager to develop a scope management plan that includes procedures for defining, validating, and controlling project scope and providing guidance and direction on how project managers and the project team will manage the project scope throughout the project. Antony and Gupta (2019) and Francisco de Oliveira and Rabechini Jr. (2019) noted that the process of scope management planning has a very significant impact on the project's success since the requirements are the main means of understanding and managing stakeholders expectations. Therefore, I recommend that IT project managers use tools and techniques to prepare project documents and manage other processes, including collecting requirements, defining scope, and developing the WBS.

A fourth recommendation is for IT project managers to develop and use a schedule management plan to define how to manage the project schedule throughout the project life cycle. Kerzner (2019) and Tesfaye et al. (2017) noted IT project managers should establish strategic orientation for effective planning, development, management, implementation, and control of the project schedule during the schedule management process. I recommend IT project managers use tools and techniques to determine the

timeline, resources needed, and reality of the delivery of the project. The last recommendation is for IT project managers to develop a cost management plan for estimating, budgeting, managing, monitoring, and controlling the project costs. Kerzner (2019) and Tereso et al. (2019) shared cost management is an essential component of the project management plan. Therefore, I recommend IT project managers use practical tools and techniques to estimate project costs, allocate resources effectively, and control overall spending. I intend to share a summary of the findings of this research with the participants and their organization. Additionally, I will publish my research study in ProQuest, allowing researchers and practitioners to use my findings as a benchmark to enhance best practices.

Reflections

My doctoral program was a challenging and exciting journey with many lessons learned to share. This doctoral journey enabled me to understand that I had to play a crucial role in adding value to the business practice and not finding gaps in the literature as a DBA researcher. I learned much from faculty members and peers during exchanges in the discussion thread. My chair's feedback was very constructive and helpful in completing the doctoral stages, including the prospectus, proposal, and final study. Dr. Hammoud has been a chair who positively influenced me during this program. His support, guidance, and mentorship motivated me to deliver this doctoral milestone.

The IRB process is an ethical rigor I had never experienced before this doctoral program. I discovered how essential the IRB guidelines and requirements were capital within the research process. For instance, the IRB process enabled me to understand to

which extent it is critical to protect the rights and welfare of human subjects involved in research activities. Additionally, this step helped me communicate the importance of my doctoral topic to the research participants and their organization.

Pursuing a doctoral study at Walden University was a good and rich experience. It enabled me to develop new skills, including academic and business research, and leverage various technologies to complete assignments and interact with peers and faculty. Additionally, I acquired new knowledge in the fields of project, program, and portfolio management as I conducted extensive research on these areas. I have been applying the knowledge and competencies developed during this journey in my professional career, thus adding value. The approval process of the doctoral dissertation was another new experience since the scholar's submissions must go through the review of faculty, including independent committee members and URR.

Conclusion

This qualitative single case study aimed to explore strategies IT project managers use to improve project planning in the banking industry. Semistructured interviews were the method used to collect data from four participants. All participants in the study were in the metropolitan city of Abidjan, Ivory-Coast, and had more than 5 years of successful experience in using effective strategies to improve IT project planning in the banking industry.

Qualitative researchers can use techniques, including member-checking, to improve the quality of data collected from research participants (Elarousy et al., 2019; Rummell et al., 2019). I used member-checking to improve the accuracy, credibility,

validity, and transferability of this research study. The five themes that emerged from the data analysis aligned with the effective strategies for IT project planning in the literature. The structuration theory, the conceptual framework I used for this study, aligned with the research question and the emerging themes.

Effective strategies IT project managers used to improve project planning in the banking industry included effective communication, effective risk management planning, scope management plan, schedule management plan, and cost management plan. To develop a successful communication plan, IT project managers should first consider developing a strategy to ensure communication is effective for project stakeholders and then define the activities essential to implement the communication strategy. Additionally, IT project managers should consider creating an effective risk management plan using tools and techniques to identify, analyze, control, and respond to project risks.

IT project managers should consider using tools and techniques to prepare project documents and manage processes, including collecting project requirements, defining project scope, and developing the project WBS. IT project managers should develop and use a schedule management plan to describe how to manage the project schedule throughout the project life cycle. Additionally, IT project managers should consider using tools and techniques to determine the timeline, resources needed, and reality of the delivery of the project. In a like manner, IT project managers should consider using appropriate tools and techniques to estimate project costs, allocate resources effectively, and control overall project spending.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Effective Strategies to Improve Project Planning in the Banking Industry

Interviewee number:

Introduction

Hi, my name is Pegabela Tuo. I want to thank you for accepting to participate in the current interview.

Purpose

I would like to ask you a few questions regarding the strategies you have used as an information technology project manager (ITPM) in a bank to implement successful planning for IT projects in your organization.

Description of Reason to Participate in the Interview

Participating in the current study may contribute to generating practical knowledge that ITPMs in the financial industry and precisely in the banking system can use as a guide.

Description of Benefit of Participating

Participation in the current interview could generate new ideas and increase the understanding of IT project planning strategies that leaders need to grow and sustain banking organizations.

Ethics Discussion

To protect your privacy and comply with ethical practices, I am seeking your permission to keep notes of the current session (opening discussion and interview) and to know that I will audio-record the session.

Confidentiality Discussion

Reports coming out of this study will not share the identities of individual participants. Details that might identify participants, such as the location of the study, also will not be shared. I will not use your personal information for any purpose outside of this research project. Data will be kept secure on the researcher's password-protected computer and backed up on a password-protected hard drive. To ensure confidentiality, I will use the code ITPM for each selected participant and rank them by ascending order (ITPM1, ITPM2, ITPM3, and ITPM4). After conducting interviews, I will keep recording material and transcripts in a secured private locker. Data will be kept for a period of a minimum of 5 years, as required by the university, and immediately destroyed after.

Asking Participants for Eventual Question

Do you have any questions or concerns regarding the process I just shared?

Transition to the Interview Questions

I will conduct a semistructured interview.

Conduct the Interview

1. What strategies do you use for the successful planning of your IT projects?
2. What strategies do you apply during your IT project planning to involve the key stakeholders?
3. What were your success criteria for an effective planning strategy?
4. What strategies do you use to communicate with stakeholders during your project planning?

5. What were the main barriers or challenges to applying your strategies for IT project planning?
6. How did you overcome these barriers?
7. What else do you wish to add about strategies you use to improve project planning?

Interview Wrap up

Thank you for your participation. Based on your availability, I would like to schedule a day and time in the next few days to review my interpretation of the responses you provided during the current interview for approximately 30 minutes. The reason for following up on the interview is to confirm that I did not misinterpret your answers to the interview questions. Thank you again for your time and participation.

Appendix B: Recruitment Letter

Dear Sir/Madam:

My name is Pegabela Tuo. I am currently a Doctoral student at Walden University, pursuing a Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) program with a concentration in Project Management. I am researching Project Planning Strategies, and the title of my research is the following: "Effective Strategies to Improve Project Planning in the Banking Industry." I am seeking your authorization to recruit study participants from the employees of the organization you are managing. I want to recruit and interview at least 4 participants who meet the following criteria:

1. Project managers with more than 5 years of experience in implementing successful IT projects in the banking system.
2. Potential participants must be fluent in English.

Selection criteria are to ensure that participants are likely to provide knowledge and information relevant to the study's purpose. Employees who meet the selection criteria and voluntarily choose to participate in the study will participate in an interview via Skype, Zoom, or GoToMeeting to provide their unique perspectives**.** I will share a summary of the results and findings with participants and other scholars. I will not attach any name in any form to the results. I will guaranty confidentiality through protocols established by the Walden University Internal Review Board (IRB). I seek your authorization to recruit participants for individuals who meet the above criteria and are interested in participating in the study. I can be contacted on telephone number (1) 347-720-3596 or via email at Pegabela.tuo@Waldenu.edu. Participation in this study is

voluntary after responding “I consent” to the email, including a consent form. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Pegabela Tuo

Pegabela.Tuo@Waldenu.edu

347-720-3596