

THE IMPACT OF SERVICE ORIENTED ARCHITECTURE ADOPTION ON
ORGANIZATIONS

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This dissertation is dedicated to my dear parents and my siblings for their endless support and encouragement.

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ABSTRACT

Service-Oriented Architecture (SOA) is one of the technologies in the area of information systems' design and architecture in the recent technology world. SOA adoption is known as an evolutionary process, instead of revolutionary one. In this process an application is developed in a long period of time which will be improved gradually. Since there is a limited number of researches that focus on the effects of SOA adoption in an organization, this study investigated the significant factors which affected SOA and have been more discussible in the last five years based on previous studies such as governance, strategy, complexity, Return on Investment (ROI), business and IT alignment, culture and communication, costs, and security. Since most of the researches focus on qualitative analysis for SOA adoption, a need for empirical research was felt. So, this study conducted a quantitative analysis to investigate the influential factors for adopting SOA. In addition, an SOA adoption framework was proposed to measure the effect of factors on SOA adoption and the performance of organizations. Based on the proposed framework, an online questionnaire was created and distributed among SOA experts through LinkedIn (the largest social networking website for people in professional occupations) to collect data about the influence of SOA adoption on organizations. Subsequently, this study has made recommendations for improving the organizations planning to adopt SOA or in the way of adopting SOA to promote the performance of their organizations. On the other hand, the outcomes of this study may pave the way to form the basic knowledge in the domain of organizational and technological SOA adoption and trigger further research in the field

ABSTRAK

Rekacipta berteraskan perkhidmatan (SOA) adalah salah satu teknologi dalam bidang reka bentuk sistem maklumat dan seni bina yang terkini dalam dunia teknologi . Perlaksanaan SOA merupakan satu proses evolusi dan bukan satu proses revolusi . Dalam proses ini, aplikasi dibangunkan dalam tempoh masa yang panjang dan akan diperbaiki dari masa ke semasa . Oleh kerana terdapat bilangan yang terhad terhadap penyelidikan yang tertumpu kepada kesan-kesan penggunaan SOA dalam sesebuah organisasi, kajian ini adalah penting kerana faktor-faktor penting yang memberi kesan SOA dalam tempoh lima tahun lepas akan dikaji. Ini adalah berdasarkan kajian terdahulu seperti tadbir urus, strategi , tahap kerumitan , pulangan ke atas pelaburan (ROI) , perniagaan dan penjajaran IT , budaya dan komunikasi , kos dan keselamatan. Oleh kerana kebanyakan kajian memberi tumpuan kepada analisis kualitatif untuk diterima pakai SOA, keperluan untuk penyelidikan empirikal adalah penting. Jadi, kajian ini menggunakan analisis kuantitatif untuk menyiasat faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi pelaksanaan SOA. Di samping itu, rangka kerja pakai SOA telah dicadangkan untuk mengukur kesan faktor-faktor pelaksanaan SOA terhadap prestasi organisasi. Berdasarkan rangka kerja yang dicadangkan itu, soal selidik dalam talian telah dirangka dan diedarkan di kalangan pakar-pakar SOA melalui LinkedIn (laman web rangkaian sosial terbesar untuk pekerjaan profesional) bagi proses pengumpulan data mengenai pengaruh penggunaan SOA pada organisasi. Selepas itu, kajian ini telah membuat cadangan-cadangan untuk penambahbaikan dan perancangan untuk penerimaan SOA atau penambahbaikan SOA bagi menggalakkan peningkatan prestasi organisasi. Selain itu , hasil kajian ini boleh menjadi pembentukan pengetahuan asas dalam domain organisasi dan teknologi SOA bagi menjalankan penyelidikan lanjut dalam bidang ini.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AVE	Average Variance Extracted
CIO	Chief Information Officer
CTO	Chief Technology Officer
CISO	Chief Information Security Officer
IS	Information System
IT	Information Technology
ROI	Return on Investment
SMARTPLS	Smart Partial Least Squares
SOA	Service Oriented Architecture
TOE	Technology-Organization-Environment
UTM	University Technology Malaysia
VP	Vice President

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

SOA adoption is known as an evolutionary, instead of revolutionary, process. In other words, adopting SOA is similar to a trip for an organization in a long period of time. It is not developing an application in a short period of time. (Erl 2005) Specialists in many fields are concerned with organizational performance including strategic planners, operations, finance, legal, and organizational development (Marisoosay 2009).

SOA seems different for different users. In other words, it is different from various perspectives. For example according to IBM (2009), SOA has an architectural form and needs criteria, patterns, architectural principles, service description, requestor and a service provider that shows attributes like encapsulation, modularity, segregation of concerns, loose coupling, reuse and so forth. SOA is a model of programming that is completed with standards, technologies like Web services and a solution for middleware which optimize for monitoring, orchestration, service assembly and a management.

While more firms around the world have started to search about SOA, some implementation topics are represented that some aspects of implementation are undervalued like complexity, cost, and the attempt necessary for even a little

enhancing to implement SOA. (Lewis, Morris et al. 2007). A report expressed SOA impact organizations positively and negatively at the same time. When SOA positively influences on modifiability, extensibility and interoperability, on the other side it affects performance, auditability, testability, and security negatively. (O'Brien, Merson et al. 2007). So, the main aim of this study is to evaluate the impact of SOA adoption on organizations.

1.2 Background of Study

Growing competitiveness, globalization and ever faster creativity are the specification of modern economies. It is highly worth mentioning that a developing move toward new markets, a responsive change toward business strategies, or providing effective feedback to competitive pressures pave the way for the organizations to focus on a high level of flexibility (Barry 2003).

Currently, the preferred architectural design to supply organizational agility, to promote application adaptability and system interoperability, and to provide the reuse of legacy possessions referred to Service Oriented Architecture, henceforth SOA (Lewis, Morris et al. 2007). Consecutive innovation, competitive emprise and agility are changing into an important component of strategic thinking in a large number of current organizations. As a result, the growing of information systems has given birth to many organizations to re-evaluate their techniques as well as re-examine information technology function in forming their business strategies (Sambamurthy, Bharadwaj et al. 2003).

It is astonishing that although Service-oriented architecture has been used for a decade, only several research studies have been performed on critical aspects that must be concentrated on during such implementations. Results show that there are a number of resemblances to success factors found in attaining strategic alignment,

such as top management support and communication between collaborating parties (Emadi and Hanza 2013).

SOA is formed on the base that systems are divided into sub-systems –each managing individual tasks- based on group responsibility in the business course of a company and then eventually all the responsibilities are seen as an interoperable service (Erl). So, considering new information system, SOA is a complex solution of analysis, design, conserving, and combination of enterprise application dependent on services. Services are considered as unconnected program-autonomous existence which supplies one or more operational capabilities through their interface (Weiss 2010).

The fleeting environment of business organization challenges the flexibility and adaptability capabilities of organizations. It can be claimed that every IT manager is looking into SOA (Papazoglou and Van Den Heuvel 2006). SOA adoption is different from developing an application which is done in a short period of time. Therefore in applying SOA in organizations many problems appear, e.g. immature standards and inadequate knowledge (Tilley, Gerdes et al. 2004).

Naturally, as other different kinds of technologies, some groups of people accept SOA as a perfect and precise technology and this is when other groups of people reject it for being imperfect. But, it is crystal clear that no one tends to ignore the achievements which SOA has brought about in the cases of efficiency, reusability, agility and productivity of an enterprise (Erl 2008).

As identified in various sources, SOA is a developed method in the direction of IT and information system architecture based on a cluster of services which are in relation with each other. A highly business-special definition introduces service-oriented architecture as a design that applies roles via reusable business services (Galiniun and Shahbaz 2009).

Regarding not only IT but also business perspectives pave the way for the most thorough definition of SOA, an architectural model that tends to promote the efficiency, practicality, agility, and productivity of an enterprise which this new description is revealed by locating services as the fundamental channels through which solution rationale is demonstrated in support of the achievement of the strategic aims related to service-oriented computing (Erl 2008). In order to make a great progress, organizations are supposed to modify their approaches, types of communication, channels of collaborating, and techniques of publishing relationships, so these are the most challenging difficulties of organization and governance (Varadan, Channabasavaiah et al. 2008).

A famous technology and market research company, Forrester Research, executed a study claiming that the uses of SOA have been developed from 44% in North-American, European and Asian-Pacific companies to 63% (Heffner, 2008). On the other hand, different conferences on the pattern of SOA were held since 2002 such as, International Conference on Web Services (ICSOC), the IEEE International Conference on Web Services (ICWS), the International Conference on Services Computing (SCC) and the European Conference on Web Services (ECOWS). Consequently, a substantial SOA awareness exists in the domain of educational studies and industry practitioners and it is assumed that many companies performing something connected to SOA (Luthria and Rabhi 2009).

Providing the chance of fee-based services is an outstanding value that SOA serves to various companies of different sizes from small to medium-sized ones and it is not just in the possession of big organizations (Barry 2003). In spite of that, the 2009 Forrester SOA research demonstrated that in smaller organizations SOA adoption is much inferior, namely the companies with less than 1,000 staffs (McKendrick 2009). The desire of SOA adaption is not satisfactory as it supposed to be (Haines 2007, Kontogiannis, Lewis et al. 2007). Claims on the part of some industries proposed that SOA faced a failure at presenting its suggested and guaranteed benefits and it turns to be of a high expense (Meehan 2008).

1.3 Problem Statement

In spite of a large number of educational cases connected to SOA, it is being discussed that academic background and related literature is to some extent disintegrated and untimely considering why and to what extent companies accept SOA. Furthermore, there is a limited number of researches that focus on the effects of SOA adoption in an organization (Joachim, Beimborn et al. 2009).

The principal question of how SOA can promote organization agility and nurture closer alignment between IT and business has not been appropriately focused on. The vigorous communication among external business environmental factors, organizational agility, and IS architecture lead to a high complexity of the process of keeping IT and business in alignment (Choi, Nazareth et al. 2013).

One frequent problem in SOA adoption is that many associations initiate the project of adopting SOA with regard to an IT prospect rather than a business one. Regarding the technical perspectives of the project, implementations might emerge successful, but the effect of the adoption of the new architecture on the business cannot be recognized without having been counted right from scratch. Difficulties like these are mainly noticed in large associations with well-founded IT departments which try to obey every new fashion of technology. Not amazingly, the lack of business alignment with the SOA movement project is a definite result of such as infirm project planning. The most feasible rejecting consequence of such usual mistakes is the increasing expense of IT without any return on investment (ROI) for the corporation (Cherbakov, Ibrahim et al. 2005).

As far as the researcher knows, there has been little research done to examine the effect of the adoption of Service Oriented Architecture on the performance of organizations.

1.4 Research Questions

Based on the above mentioned problem, the present research attempts to answer the following questions:

1. Q1: What are the factors which influence SOA adoption in organization?
2. Q2: What are the relationships among significant factors, SOA adoption and the performance of organizations?
3. Q3: What are the recommendations for organizations towards success of SOA adoption?

1.5 Objectives of Study

In the light of the problem statement, the present study aims to determine the following objectives through which organizations can make progress:

1. To identify the factors influenced by adoption of SOA in organizations.
2. To understand the relationship among significant factors, SOA adoption and the performance of organizations.
3. To develop recommendation towards success of SOA adoption.

1.6 Scopes of Study

As it was mentioned before, the purpose of this study is to discover the factors that affect SOA adoption in an organization and estimating the impact of SOA adoption on the performance of enterprises. In order to narrow the scope of this

study down and based on the objectives of this research, the researcher focuses on organizations which have already adopted SOA. Data will be collected from skilled experts in SOA all over the world using online questionnaire. Some technical and organizational concepts will be presented in this study, but its purpose is to present a general horizon of SOA adoption and its performance.

1.7 Significance of Study

A number of limited researches exist studying the function of SOA adoption in organizations. This study tends to show how SOA adoption may pave the way for the organizations to make progress, by giving them the opportunity of being in an active access to the SOA. The results of this study might help organizations which not adopt SOA to promote their chance of development.

1.7.1 Theoretical Implication

Help organization to find out the key factors which influence SOA adoption to improve organizational performance.

Add performance of organization to the TOE framework would give this idea to organization to improve their performance by adopting SOA.

1.7.2 Practical Implication

Help organization to focus on significant factors to accelerate the process of SOA adoption.

Improve performance of organizations by successful adoption of SOA.

Develop recommendations based on SOA experts' perspectives for being successful in SOA adoption.

This study tends to show how SOA adoption may pave the way for the organizations to make progress, by giving them the opportunity of being in an active access to the SOA.

The results of this study might help organizations which adopt SOA to promote their chance of development.

The findings of this study will encourage those companies that have not been using SOA to improve their strategies by adopting SOA.

1.7.3 Methodological Implication

Use self-selected sampling and distribute online questionnaire among SOA professionals through LinkedIn.

1.8 Structure of Study

This study is consisting of 6 chapters as shown in following figure:

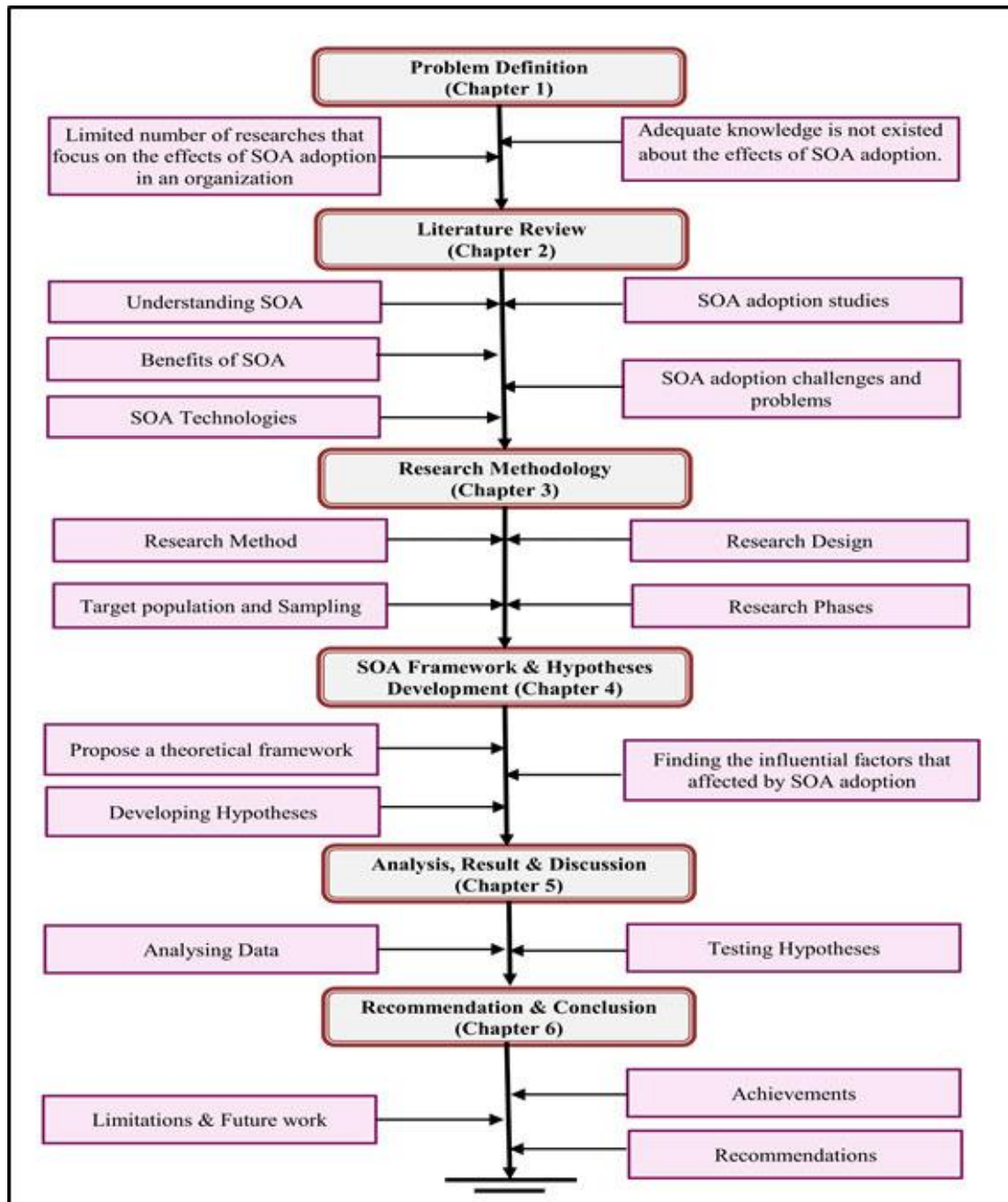


Figure 1.1 Structure of the study

1.9 Thesis Outline

In chapter one the researcher focuses on introduction and background of the study about the key points of the study and problem background in terms of the clear

background study of project. Moreover, research questions and research objectives have been discussed. Final steps consist of significant of the study, scope, structure and outline of the project.

In chapter two based on the problem of the study the academic literature will be studied. In this chapter author focuses more on the SOA adoption in an organization and extract significant factors influence by SOA adoption based on previous studies. Then TOE framework for adoption will be described.

In chapter three the research methodology of the study will be involved in the methods which are used in this research. The questionnaire will be distributed among the SOA experts and the results will be explained at the end of this chapter. The questionnaire will be distributed among the SOA experts.

In chapter four influential factors that concluded from papers reviewed in chapter two will be investigated as the initial findings of this study. Then the theoretical framework and hypotheses will be proposed in continue. Afterwards, pilot study will be performed. Final step includes the explanation of validity and reliability of the questionnaire.

In chapter five the researcher will be discussed the data collection and the data analyses. Data will be analyzed with SmartPLS. In continues, the hypotheses of this study will be examined. The relationship among the significant factors, SOA adoption and the performance of organizations will be evaluated at the end of this chapter.

In chapter six the achievements and the contribution of this study will be explained shortly. Then few recommendations will be discussed based on SOA experts' experiences. Moreover, some limitations and direction for future work will be described at the end of this study.

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