

UNDERSTANDING ERP ADOPTION AND FAMILY INVOLVEMENT IN UK'S RETAIL SMALL FAMILY BUSINESSES

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Declaration

I declare that the research contained in this thesis, unless otherwise formally indicated within the text, is the original work of the author. The thesis has not been previously submitted to this or any other university for a degree, and does not incorporate any material already submitted for a degree.

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Mukhtar Lasisi

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ABSTRACT

Despite the theoretical suggestion that adopting an ERP system could bring about competitive advantage to Family Businesses within a highly competitive market such as the retail industry, a high level of family involvement appears to be a hindrance to the successful adoption. This study focused on understanding how family involvement might influence ERP adoption within UK's retail Small Family Businesses (SFBs). The study is important because some studies posit that family involvement in business could be leveraged for a successful adoption of technology, but others suggest that family involvement could as well be a hindrance to adopting an ERP system.

This is a qualitative study done in two stages; Firstly, through the exploration of the experience of ERP experts (consultants) for retail SMEs to understand ERP adoption and its possible contributions to UK's retail SFBs. Secondly, the findings the characteristics and processes within UK's retail SFBs were investigated through observations and family manager interviews.

Although, some of the cases studied were yet to adopt an ERP system, findings from comparing SFB cases with and without an ERP system shows that the business characteristics and processes might benefit from a successful adoption of the technology in a range of ways such as Managerial, Operational, Strategic and Organisational benefits. Despite the heterogeneity of the families and their businesses, the family managers appear to be the key decision makers and for ERP to be adopted the technology may need to be positively perceived in terms of its contribution to business and family interests. It was also found that due to family cohesion and trust, the business stakeholders irrespective of family affiliation tend to commit to the adoption of an ERP system if the family manager decides the business needs to adopt the technology.

While this study is based on evidences from few ERP consultants and cases of UK retail SFBs, the study has extended existing ERP knowledge in Family Businesses by showing that family involvement can be leveraged in some UK's retail SFBs to successfully adopt the ERP system. The study shows that the technology is capable of effectively benefitting both the business and family interests. A framework was also developed to show how family involvement might bring about ERP adoption in UK's retail SFBs. The study also shows that methodically using expert interviews and case studies is an efficient way to explore family involvement in ERP adoption within SFBs.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

BIS – Business, Innovation and Skills

ERP- Enterprise Resource Planning

FB – Family Business

FSME – Family Small and Medium Enterprise

IFB - Institute for Family Business

LE – Large Enterprise

MRP – Material Resource Planning

MRP II- Manufacturing Resource Planning

ONS – Office for National Statistics

PRP- Process-Resource Planning

PWC – Price-Water Cooper

SBS – Small Business Survey

SFB – Small Family Business

SME – Small and Medium Enterprise

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

1.0. INTRODUCTION

Studies have identified that the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system could contribute operational, managerial, IT infrastructural, strategic and organisational categories of benefits to business (Dimitros *et al.*, 2012; Teittennen *et al.*, 2013; Huang and Handfield, 2015; Kramer, 2016; Ertuk and Arura, 2017). The studies also suggested and attested to the evolution of ERP over the years to further benefit businesses irrespective of size, ownership type or business needs. An ERP system is a technology in the form of software that integrates all business data and processes into a comprehensive platform with the aim of bringing about business solutions (Klaus, 2000; Davenport, 2000).

Despite ERP being originally developed for large enterprises (Sweat, 1998; Davenport, 1998; Wah, 2000), studies of its adoption in small and medium enterprises (SMEs) have identified that SMEs could benefit as much as large companies if ERP is successfully deployed (Haddara, 2013; Griffith *et al.*, 2013; Olsen and Staley, 2011; Al-Molaiffi and Al-Mashari, 2014). SMEs, for the purpose of this study, businesses size ranges with between 1 to 250 employees have been selected (ONS, 2016). Could adopting an ERP system be beneficial to SFBs as a part of SMEs despite its uniqueness due to family involvement? While studies such as (PWC, 2014; Lasisi *et al.*, 2017) found ERP adoption to be potentially beneficial to the characteristics of a SFB, there is little empirical evidence to support such proposition and this study further investigates into the proposition within the UK's retail industry.

However, despite some studies suggesting that ERP adoption might benefit SFBs, a high level of family involvement may result in these businesses having a poor rate of successful adoption the technology (Smith, 2016; Decker and Gunther, 2017). Smith (2016) posit that the higher level family involvement found in small family businesses could serve as a disadvantage with ERP adoption. Other studies (Carasco-Hernandez and Jimenez Jimenez, 2012; De Massis, 2018) suggest that the characteristics brought about through family involvement or familiness can be leveraged by SFBs to successfully adopt a potentially beneficial technology. ERP being suggested as a potentially beneficial technology to SFBs then raises the question, how might familiness influence ERP adoption in SFBs within a

competitive market such as the UK's retail industry? This study explores the adoption of ERP in SFBs to understand how family characteristics can affect ERP adoption within such businesses. SFBs are family businesses (FBs) with fewer than 50 employees, and they are known to have the most family involvement of any size of family business (BIS, 2014; De Massis *et al.*, 2016). The unique characteristics of a family business due to family ownership and involvement such as management style, strategic decision-making, financial and other resources, operational structure and the business goals can also be referred to as 'familiness' (Kellerman, 2010; Chrisman *et al.*, 2015; Konig *et al.*, 2013). However, for the purposes of this study, familiness refers to the family's consideration in making ERP adoption decisions (Spencer *et al.*, 2012; Carrasco-Hernandez and Jimenez-Jimenez, 2013).

1.1. WHAT IS AN ERP SYSTEM?

An ERP system is software technology that integrates business data and processes into a comprehensive platform with the aim of promoting business solutions (Klaus, 2000; Davenport, 2000). While ERP is of immense benefit to SMEs (Teittinen *et al.*, 2013; Marsh *et al.*, 2014), SFBs may not succeed in adopting the technology due to familiness (Smith, 2016).

1.2. THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this research is to contribute to the limited research in ERP in SMEs and specifically in small family retail businesses. The research investigates the adoption of ERP in retail SFBs through the unique characteristics of SFBs ; the work is important as research and archival evidence suggest that unlike in other businesses, the adoption of the ERP system by SFBs might be dependent on the business characteristics due to family involvement or familiness and such influences could be the difference between the success and failure of such adoption (Kellermans *et al.*, 2012; Classen *et al.*, 2014 De Massis *et al.*, 2015; Smith, 2016).

The focus on the UK's retail industry is due to its significance to the economy and its competitive nature (Rhodes, 2013; ONS, 2016). Also, as the adoption of technology within retail SMEs is dependent on the type of ownership (Marcati *et al.*, 2008; Romero and Martinez-Roman, 2015), it becomes crucial to explore how family ownership might affect ERP adoption in SFBs within the industry.

Businesses in the retail industry, such as supermarkets, corner shops, local post offices, restaurants, cafes and launderettes provide goods and services (CG, 2009; Rhodes, 2015a).

However, for the purposes of this research, transportation services, car sales and showrooms, and garden centres will be excluded from the analysis (CG, 2009; Rhodes, 2015a).

1.2.1. AIM, RESEARCH QUESTION AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this research is to **investigate ERP adoption in the UK's retail small family businesses in relation to familiness**. This aim gives rise to the research question:

How might familiness influence ERP adoption in the UK's retail SFBs?

The aim and research question give rise to the following objectives:

- To explore the process of ERP adoption in the UK's retail SFBs
- To understand the involvement of the family on ERP adoption in UK's retail SFBs
- To investigate the benefits of the adoption of ERP to the UK's retail SFBs business characteristics

1.3. THE RESEARCH MOTIVATION

Being from a Small Family Business background and worked as a Systems Analyst for the adoption of an ERP system, I have a first-hand experience of how a small business can be fully transformed through the use of such integrated system even in a country like Nigeria. However, I have come to realise that not a lot of SFBs in the UK's retail industry have been able to take advantage of such beneficial technology despite the high level of technologically motivated competition within the industry.

This experiences made me wonder why such businesses in a technologically advanced country like the UK struggle with the adoption of a strategically beneficial technology. Theoretical findings suggesting that although ERP adoption can bring about competitive advantage to Family Businesses but a high level of family involvement in the business could imply a lower chance of success with adoption motivated me to want to understand how a strategically important characteristic of a business be the factor that could hinder the adoption of a technology perceived to be strategically important to business. Hence, the motivation for this research.

1.4. THEORETICAL REASONING FOR STUDY

Even though the adoption of ERP may be deemed beneficial to businesses, evidence from theory suggests that the adoption of such technology within SFBs may be dependent on the commitment of the family to its adoption through their perception and decision-making (De Massis *et al.*, 2018; Carrasco-Hernandez and Jimenez Jimenez, 2013; Smith, 2016). Also, family business and retail studies suggest that attributes such as family ownership are business characteristics that often have a significant impact on the adoption of technology such as an ERP system (De Massis *et al.*, 2015; Lipi *et al.*, 2015; Smith, 2016; Ganesh and Mehta, 2016). It could then be misleading to treat SFBs like other SMEs without putting their uniqueness in terms of ownership and management into perspective while studying the ERP system as such uniqueness affects the adoption of technology (De Massis *et al.*, 2012, 2016). Despite the uniqueness and enormous significance of SFBs (EC, 2009; Coutts, 2010; IFB, 2011), there has been little research on ERP in this sector even though ERP is viewed as being a technology for all businesses and one that could help family businesses survive competition (Dimitros *et al.*, 2012; PWC, 2014; Smith, 2016).

Although recent studies on family businesses (Cassia and De Massis, 2012; Classen *et al.*, 2014; De Massis *et al.*, 2015; De Massis *et al.*, 2016) have focused on the innovative attributes and benefits of strategic innovation to FBs, little effort has been directed towards specific technology such as the ERP system within such businesses (Smith, 2016), even though studies suggest that SFBs would adopt a technology depending on the family perception of such technology (Carrasco-Hernandez and Jimenez-Jimenez, 2013; Spencer *et al.*, 2012; De Massis *et al.*, 2016). It thus suggests the need for more of such research into FBs particularly to understand how family characteristics (familiness) affect its successful adoption. This study focuses on the impact of familiness on the adoption of ERP in the UK's retail SFBs. The retail industry being a high economic contributor, competition increasingly being dictated by technology in the sector and technology adoption in retail SMEs reportedly dependent on the ownership type such as family ownership (Pantano, 2014; BPE, 2015; ONS, 2016).

Also, as ERP systems are seen as social-technical systems, participant involvement in the study of ERP within the SFB context would produce a deeper insight into the interaction between the technical (ERP systems) and the social system (the family) within UK's retail SFBs (Emery and Trist, 1965; Grabot *et al.*, 2008; Liere-Netheler *et al.*, 2017). Such approach

can extend existing ERP knowledge as an Information Systems field using the Lockean inquiry approach (Gabrot *et al.*, 2008; Linden *et al.*, 2007; Hirschheim and Klein, 2012).

1.5. THE EMPIRICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The UK's retail SMEs are of significant importance to the economy, but surviving in a competitive market remains a challenge (BPE, 2015; Rhodes, 2015; Jimisiah *et al.*, 2016). The literature suggests that retail businesses could benefit from adopting ERP but business characteristics such as family ownership could influence such adoption (Romero and Martinez-Roman, 2012, 2015). With little theoretical evidence of ERP adoption in the UK's retail SFBs, a pilot study of the archives of ERP vendors was conducted to investigate documented evidence of the adoption of ERP by retail SMEs.

Even though little empirical evidence of the adoption of ERP was found, family involvement was identified as having had a significant impact on the delayed and eventual adoption of ERP within the SFB investigated. It was also found that on successful adoption, the business benefitted immensely from the ERP system. Although the evidence points to the significance of familiness in the SFB example case, the case did not clearly show why or how such influence affected the adoption of ERP. Also, while a single example of ERP adoption from ERP vendor archives may be adequate for preliminary findings, it is not adequate to draw conclusions (Leonhardt and Niculescu, 2016). It, in fact, points to the need to explore the adoption of ERP in the UK's retail SFBs further as such knowledge could be immensely beneficial to improving existing ERP studies and improving the potential for successful adoption of ERP within SFBs.

1.6. THE NOVELTY

- This study contributes to existing knowledge on the influence of familiness on ERP success in family businesses by proposing an ERP adoption framework for SFBs based on the research findings. The framework shows the family business manager's/decision-maker's perception as a power filter in decisions concerning the adoption of ERP, irrespective of other factors.
- This study also proposes a range of ERP benefits specifically for retail SFBs in the UK based on available evidence. It was found that the perceived benefits of ERP by owner/managers of family businesses tend to improve the chances of successful adoption. Identifying these specific benefits of ERP doption serves to contribute

towards aiding possibilities for the adoption of ERP in the UK's retail SFBs as it could be highly beneficial.

1.7. INITIAL LIMITATIONS

- As the aim of this study is to understand considerations concerning the adoption of ERP by the UK's retail SFBs, it is not intended that the study will investigate the implementation process. Although ERP implementation is discussed in the literature, it was mainly for the purposes of emphasising the complexity of ERP deployment.
- As the submissions from this study are based on evidence from only a small sample of SFBs as well as ERP experts, such findings require further investigation for them to be generalizable.

1.8. THESIS OUTLINE

Chapter two reviews the literature on the ERP system, small family businesses and the UK's retail industry. The chapter reviews the literature on the evolution of ERP, the life cycle, the benefits to SMEs and the archival evidence of ERP adoption in family-run SMEs. Literature on family businesses is also reviewed in this chapter in terms of its definition, significance, the term 'familiness' and the adoption of technology in SFBs. Lastly, the UK's retail SMEs are discussed to establish how the adoption of ERP works within the industry.

Chapter three introduces the theoretical framework. The framework considers the literature findings and existing theories to arrive at an ERP adoption framework for SFBs.

Chapter four discusses the methodological considerations for the research. This chapter reviews the literature on the philosophical underpinnings of social research. Based on the research aim and the kind of knowledge the study seeks, a decision is made on the methodical approach employed in this research. Options regarding the data collection available using this method are discussed as are the methodical choices deployed in answering the research question.

Chapter five discusses the expert investigation including the sampling, data collection and analysis of findings. Further discussion of the findings in comparison to existing knowledge from the literature was also undertaken.

Chapter six discusses the retail SFB case study. The sampling is discussed as well as how data was collected from the different cases that were investigated in order to understand their

businesses. The findings are analysed and discussed to understand ERP adoption and its possible contribution to each case studied.

Chapter seven discusses in detail the results of the fieldwork in comparison to existing theories and how this has worked towards answering the research questions. The ERP frameworks for retail SFBs are developed in this chapter.

Chapter eight is the concluding chapter of the research; it summarises the research work as a whole, pointing out what has been done and how the research aim has been achieved. It points out the novelty and research contributions and recommends avenues for future research.

1.9. CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this introductory chapter the need to conduct this research was established, the motivation was explained and the theoretical and empirical evidence for the research was provided. The research aim, question and objectives were also formed. The main terms of the aim of the research, i.e. ERP adoption, familiness, SFBs and the retail industry were defined to avoid ambiguity in interpretation.

It was found that there is a need to study the adoption of ERP in SFBs as the technology is deemed beneficial in helping businesses to survive, but there is a limited amount of evidence suggesting a high or an increasing amount of ERP adoption in SFBs.

Both the theoretical and practical implications of this study are also summarised in this chapter. As the novelty of this study was established, so were limitations of the research highlighted.

CHAPTER TWO: THE LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0. INTRODUCTION

As the previous chapter discussed the relevance of this study, the aim, research question and objectives, this chapter reviews the literature on the Enterprise Resource Planning system as one form of technology that has evolved over the years to benefit businesses, including SMEs. The definition, history, life cycle and the benefits of ERP are discussed and results of the pilot study, which shows the empirical evidence of the adoption of ERP in SFBs, are provided.

The existing literature on family businesses is also reviewed in this chapter, a definition of a family business is provided, and the different sizes of family business and characteristics of SFBs are also discussed. The familiness and adoption of technology in SFBs, and the implications of characteristics of SFBs on the possible adoption of ERP are discussed.

Lastly, the retail industry literature is reviewed to establish why the industry is important to this study. Below is a structure of this chapter.

THE ERP SYSTEM	HOW IS ERP DEFINED?	THE HISTORY AND EVOLUTION OF ERP	ERP IN SMES	ERP LIFE-CYCLE	THE BENEFIT OF ERP TO BUSINESS	
				ADOPTION STAGE IMPLEMENTATION STAGE POSTIMPLEMENTATION STAGE	ERP BENEFITS TO SMES *	
FAMILY BUSINESS	THE SIGNIFICANCE OF FAMILY BUSINESSES	SMALL FAMILY BUSINESS (SFB)	FAMILINESS	FAMILINESS AND TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION	THE CHARACTERISTICS OF SFBS *	THE IMPLICATIONS OF ERP ADOPTION TO SFB CHARACTERISTICS **
					FAMILY-STYLED MANAGEMENT FAMILY INFLUENCED STRATEGIC DECISION-MAKING UNSTRUCTURED OPERATIONAL SYSTEM COMPLEX RESOURCE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIC INTEREST IN BUSINESS SUSTENANCE ORGANISATIONAL SUCCESSION GOAL	CENTRALISED BUSINESS PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IMPROVED STRATEGIC DECISION-MAKING PROFESSIONAL OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE BETTER MANAGED RESOURCES SUPPORTS SFB STRATEGY SUPPORTS LEADERSHIP SUCCESSION
THE UK'S RETAIL INDUSTRY	SIGINIFICANCE OF THE INDUSTRY	COMPETITION IN THE INDUSTRY	CHALLENGES FOR RETAIL SMES	TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION IN RETAIL SMES	ERP ADOPTION IN UK'S RETAIL FAMILY SMES: ARCHIVAL EVIDENCE	SUMMARY OF ARCHIVAL FINDINGS
				CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP FINANCIAL TECHNOLOGY		ERP ADOPTION STYLE IN FAMILY SMES THE BENEFITS OF ERP TO FAMILY SMES

SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER : THE IMPLICATION OF EXTANT LITERATURE OF THE RESEARCH

Table 1: The structure of the literature review

To explain table 1 above, this chapter was structured based on trying to establish existing ERP studies on SFBs but having found through reviewing ERP studies in SMEs that there exists a negligible amount of ERP studies into FBs or SFBs, further literature review was done of FB, its significance, the implication of family involvement on technology adoption. Having found that SFBs may possess more of the FB characteristics due to a high level of family involvement, the review of the literature then focused on SFBs and its characteristics. As it was found that the adoption of a technology may be dependent on the perceived benefits of the technology to SFB characteristics, the literature then compared SFB characteristics to the benefits of ERP identified in theory.

Further part of the literature then focused on the retail industry as it was found that the competition within the sector is increasingly technology driven but the adoption of a technology like the ERP system in small businesses may be determined by the ownership type and the characteristics such ownership brings to business. With there being little evidence of ERP adoption in UK's retail SFBs, an archival exploration of UK's ERP provider's success stories was conducted to understand ERP adoption in Family-owned SMEs. The ERP adoption pattern was established and the benefits derived were also established in comparison to ERP benefits to SMEs generally.

2.1. THE ERP SYSTEM

Enterprise Resource Planning is a software package that comes with many potential benefits, such as improved customer service, marketing, operations, management and much more (Shang and Seddon, 2002; Teittinen, 2013; Kramer, 2016). Its complexity and time-consuming nature give SMEs sufficient reasons to believe it is an investment for LEs (Papagianidis, 2012; Dey *et al.*, 2013). However, the ERP system is a software package designed to manage organisational resources in such a way that it creates an improved, real-time and efficient mode of operation (Davenport, 1998; Maguire *et al.*, 2010). The importance of the ERP system cannot be overemphasised as it is a business-centric package that serves different purposes depending on the organisational need for which it is deployed (Madininos, 2012). The benefits that organisations intend to derive from the ERP system range from gaining competitive advantage, improved internal management and maintaining a centralised information system to improve all round internal operations (Davenport, 2002; Shang and Sedon, 2002; Koh and Simpson, 2005; Maditinos *et al.*, 2012). However, over the years researchers (Barker and Frolic, 2003; Dawson and Owens, 2008; Frederic and

Sammon, 2008; Olson and Staley, 2012) have reported mixed fortunes with regard to organisations' experiences with regard to the adoption and implementation of the ERP system. While researchers such as Sammon *et al.* (2004) have reported management support, project management and employee cooperation, among other factors, as being responsible for the mixed fortunes experienced by organisations in the adoption and implementation of ERP, failure can also occur after the implementation of the ERP system and failure at this stage is often attributed to the users rather than the top management or other factors such as the ERP vendors (Madinios, 2012). Laukanen *et al.*'s (2007) research also suggests that enterprise size is also an essential factor affecting the adoption of an ERP system because LEs are more outward-oriented in adopting an ERP system than SMEs. There may also be other factors responsible for the difference in behaviour towards the adoption of ERP other than size, such as organisational structure, perceived benefits and more.

As research has shown that size could be one of the factors responsible for mixed organisational fortunes with the adoption and implementation of ERP, some researchers have also investigated the significance of the sectorial differences in determining the adoption of ERP. Ramdani and Kawalek's (2007a) research showed that although the service sector requires much information to render their services, SMEs in the manufacturing industry are more proactive in adopting enterprise systems than other sectors. However, according to the World Bank (2014), the service sector contributes about 78% of the UK's GDP, followed by the retail industry and manufacturing is far behind (Jankai, 2014a). The retail industry is a highly competitive industry especially for small businesses, and studies have suggested that a technology like the ERP system could benefit them in terms of gaining competitive advantage (Pantanon, 2014; Romero and Matinez-Roman, 2015; Kramer *et al.*, 2016).

To better understand the ERP system, why it is important and how different factors affect it, it is important to understand its definition, evolution, life cycle and the role different factors play in the ERP system.

2.2. HOW ERP IS DEFINED

There has hardly been any consensus on the definition of the ERP system over the years. While some studies, such as Davenport (2000) and Laudon and Laudon (2000) argued that the term ERP did not say everything about the technology and advised against its use. Pawlowski *et al.* (1999) argued for the suitability of the term ERP as it does not refer to a distinct name, but rather it relates to a whole package which encompasses many offerings of

the technology. Holsapple and Senna (1999) also argued that a user defines ERP based on the provider's offerings, i.e. ERP is to a user what the user makes of it. Davenport (2000) and Laudon and Laudon (2000) argued that the ERP system does not only manage resources but every aspect of the business. They, however, agreed on the term Business Systems (BS) or Enterprise Systems (ES). However, the ERP system has over the years been widely used both by authors and professionals in the IT field, and this study will use the term ERP.

While Koch (2003) describes ERP simply as a technology that integrates all activities across organisational departments, Kale *et al.* (2010) described ERP as software which integrates all organisational functions to create a link across all the supply chains to provide the right product, in the right place and at a lower cost. Klaus (2000) for his part carried out extensive research on authors' arguments on ERP. While he agreed with Davenport's argument, he continued with use of the term ERP but described it based on its three key features. The research agreed based on the three features of ERP that it is a product in the form of software that integrates all business data and processes into a comprehensive platform with the aim of bringing about business solutions.

This research will adopt Klaus's (2000) definition as it best describes what the ERP system is about in unambiguous terms and despite its evolution over time, the definition still holds water. The next section looks at the history of ERP and how it has evolved over the years to still remain relevant in business.

2.3. THE HISTORY AND EVOLUTION OF ERP

Few studies have specifically studied the evolution of ERP, but there seems to be some consensus on how it has evolved to the present day. Despite a few discrepancies on its definition and the first use of ERP, there is general agreement on the fact that ERP evolved from the original Material Requirement Planning (MRP) to the later Manufacturing Resource Planning (MRP II) and then to the present day ERP and its continuous evolution. This section studies ERP evolution from inception to establish the enduring nature of the technology. It further buttresses why ERP is the technology for the future and SMEs should adopt it to remain relevant in a competitive market.

2.3.1. THE 1960s-1970s

The 1960s saw the use of the centralised Inventory Control (IC) system which used the COBOL and FORTRAN programming languages, but the 1970s brought the birth of

Materials Requirement Planning (MRP) (Miller and Sprague, 1975). The MRP system was concerned with production material planning through the production schedule. This at the time was used for faster production in large manufacturing businesses (Miller and Sprague, 1975; Orlicky, 1975). The success and desire for further improvement to manufacturing processes brought about advancement in the 1980s.

2.3.2. THE 1980s

The 1980s brought the advent of Manufacturing Resource Planning (MRP II). The improved system did more than plan production materials but synchronised manufacturing processes such as engineering, distribution, finances, etc. (Landvater and Gray, 1989). Although the system served well to improve the manufacturing industry at the time, there was still the insatiable need for further improvement (Wylie, 1990).

2.3.3. THE 1990s

The 1990s brought about the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system; the new system at the time was seen as the best system yet (Wylie, 1990). It was involved with enterprise-wide management (Armstrong and Hagel, 1996). The system synchronised every aspect of business such as manufacturing, supply chain management (SCM), human resource management (HRM) and much more. The ERP system was still at that time mainly made for and used by large manufacturing businesses (Wylie, 1990). Some of the key ERP vendors at the time were SAP, ORACLE and Peoplesoft. Some, in fact, argue that SAP is the originator of the ERP system (Bhattacharjee, 1999). The system managed enterprise processes almost in real time, but the implementation was expensive, time-consuming and not always successful (Bingi *et al.*, 1999). In fact, due to the cost of implementation at the time, a failed implementation could lead to bankruptcy (Tadjer, 1998). Considering the advantages of the ERP system as shown in Figure 1 below, it became clear that businesses could not do without this system and there came the need for further improvement. At this time there were few studies (Davenport, 1998; Tadjer, 1998; Seethamraju, 1999) looking at the definition of ERP and the concept of the ERP system; studies were new and not well explored (Stewart and Gable, 1999).

What benefit	How
Reliable information access	Common DBMS, consistent and accurate data, improved reports.
Avoid data and operations redundancy	Modules access same data from the central database, avoids multiple data input and update operations.
Delivery and cycle time reduction	Minimizes retrieving and reporting delays.
Cost reduction	Time savings, improved control by enterprise-wide analysis of organizational decisions.
Easy adaptability	Changes in business processes easy to adapt and restructure.
Improved scalability	Structured and modular design with “add-ons.”
Improved maintenance	Vendor-supported long-term contract as part of the system procurement.
Global outreach	Extended modules such as CRM and SCM.
E-Commerce, e-business	Internet commerce, collaborative culture.

Table 2: Advantages of earlier ERP

Source: Rashid *et al.* (2002).

2.3.4. THE 2000s

The quest for an improved ERP system brought about different ERP extensions which resulted in the continuous evolution of the ERP system till the present day (Li, 1999). This period represents a time of boom for the ERP system in many ways. Different modules of ERP such as CRM, SCM, etc. were added (Rashid *et al.*, 2002). ERP became well known to academics and its study became key in business management (Laudon and Laudon, 2000; Shang and Seddon, 2000, 2002). Also, the need for ERP usage in SMEs came to bear (Koh and Simpson, 2005). While vendors were making efforts towards opening ERP up to this new market, academics kept researching the market (Koh and Simpson, 2005; Haddara and Zach, 2011; Johanson, 2015; Teittinen *et al.*, 2013; Kramer, 2016). Efforts were made to make ERP usable for SMEs through attempting to reduce the implementation cost, time and to make ERP available in modules so only the required module would be deployed (Haddara and Zach, 2011; Johanson *et al.*, 2015).

Also, more recently, ERP vendors have taken advantage of the new Cloud system to develop ERP in the Cloud. According to studies by, for example, Al-Ghoulaiifi and Al-Mashari (2014), Schafer *et al.* (2013) and Johanson *et al.* (2015), ERP in the Cloud reduces the cost of ERP, making it available to more businesses, especially SMEs. Cloud ERP in the last few years also brought about mobile-ERP and Social-ERP (Johnson, 2014). Mobile-ERP allows business information to be readily available in real-time and from anywhere while Social-

ERP connects the business to the world through social media (Gelogo and Kim, 2014). The findings above show that the ERP system is an enduring system which has evolved with technological advancement over the last three decades to continually benefit businesses.

Considering that an ERP system is a technology originally developed for large enterprises, SMEs have also taken advantage, and the next section discusses the ERP system in SMEs as the research is focused on a type of SME.

2.4. ENTERPRISE RESOURCE PLANNING IN SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (SMEs)

The ERP system was originally designed to suit LEs but in recent years vendors realised the importance of SMEs to the economy and the potential market it represents for the ERP system, so they then introduced the ERP system to SMEs (Koh and Simpson, 2005; Tulivaye *et al.*, 2014). SMEs, according to the Office for National Statistics, are businesses with between 0 and 249 employees (Statista, 2016). Understandably, LEs have recorded a high rate of adoption of the ERP system and it has reached a perceived market saturation (Hasheela and Smolander, 2014). The perceived market saturation prompted the introduction of the ERP system to SMEs (Hasheela and Smolander, 2014). While LEs have experienced mixed fortunes with adopting the ERP system, a lot of research is ongoing with the aim of aiding a successful adoption (Holland and Light, 1999; Hong and Kim, 2002; Katerattanakul *et al.*, 2014; Ahmad and Cuenca, 2013).

The figure below shows the proportion of ERP adoption in UK businesses to explain the difference in ERP adoption by size further and emphasise the need to be size specific when studying the ERP system, especially in the UK.

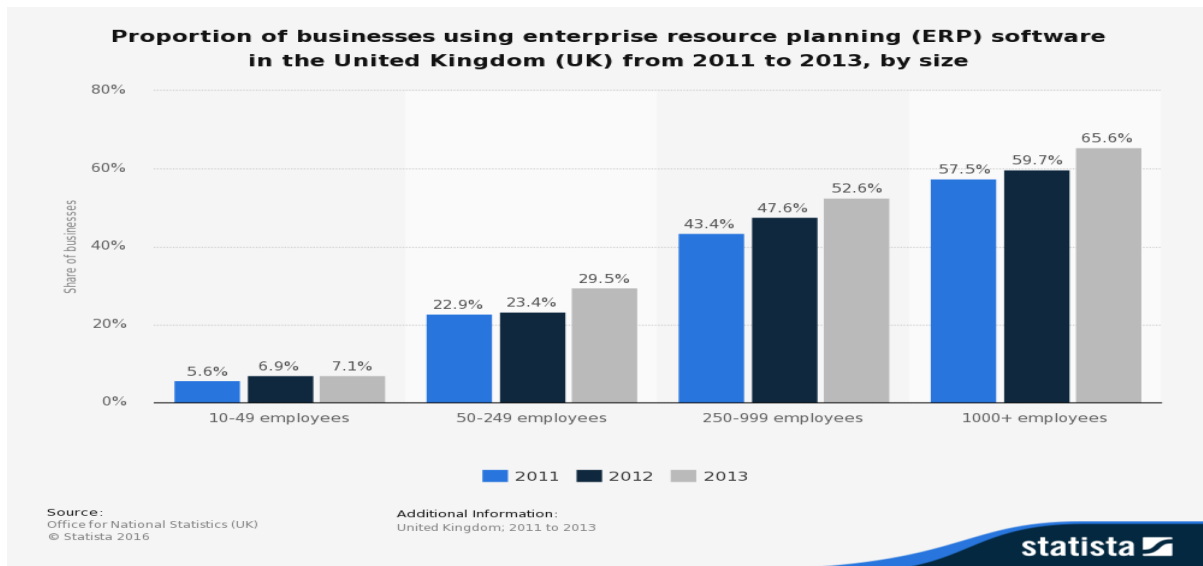


Figure 1: ERP usage for UK businesses by size between 2011 and 2014. Source: Statista (2016).

The figure above shows the rate of ERP adoption in UK businesses. It further buttresses the argument of studies by Laukanen *et al.* (2007) and Buonanno *et al.* (2005) about the significance of size as a factor to consider in ERP adoption studies even in SMEs. It, in fact, shows the vast difference between adoption in medium enterprises (50-249 employees) and small businesses (10-49). It should be noted that an update on the figures above from the Office for National Statistics (ONS, 2016) which covers 2014 shows that about 2.7% of businesses with numbers of employees between 0-9 now use the ERP system.

Despite the recent rise in the adoption of ERP in UK SMEs, as shown in the table below, and the increasing amount of literature on SMEs (Gable and Stewart, 1999; Snider *et al.*, 2009; Ahmad and Cuenca, 2013), there remain some research areas that require deeper understanding. Also, little research has been carried out on why the characteristics of businesses such as ownership type matter in the adoption of the ERP system (Laukanan *et al.*, 2007; Cartman and Salazar, 2011).

Some of the research work that has investigated the adoption of ERP has identified organisational size as an important factor influencing adoption and, hence, this subject should be given more attention (Laukanen *et al.*, 2007; Buonanno *et al.*, 2005; Cartman and Salazar, 2011). There also exists an argument that differences exist between small and medium enterprises and that medium enterprises should be treated in a similar way to large enterprises when considering the adoption and usage of enterprise systems (Laukanen *et al.*, 2007).

Ramdani *et al.* (2009) noted in their research that the factors influencing Enterprise Systems (CRM, SCM and ERP) are quite different from the factors that affect the adoption of other IT in SMEs. This could imply that previous research on technology adoption in SMEs may not be sufficient when referring to the ERP system in SMEs. Also, Haddara and Paivarinta (2011) argued that SMEs see ERP as a relevant but challenging technology to adopt such that the realisation of formal benefits and investment evaluation may not apply to ERP. They further recommended the need for more work on the ERP system in SMEs and especially on how to achieve all its benefits.

Hallikainen *et al.*'s (2002) research on ERP in Finnish SMEs shows that they implement ERP to improve day-to-day operations of the organisation and not specifically to gain a competitive advantage as some previous research (Tadger, 1998; Stewart and Gable, 1999) has intimated. Teittinen *et al.* (2013) also investigated SMEs whose top management aim was to use the adoption of ERP to kick start a new managerial control system. Although the company could not achieve full managerial control due to many challenges the implementation faced, it ended up without the full control craved before ERP deployment. Federici (2009) also supported the earlier claim that SMEs mainly adopt ERP to improve internal operations, management and production, and enhance information retrieval. These facts suggest that SMEs are quite different from LEs regarding the intent to adopt ERP, which could suggest that the benefits derived from ERP by SMEs may be significantly different too.

David (2013) also noted that there are lots of ERP modules available to businesses. However, the manufacturing sector has benefited more from modules such as Material Resource Planning (MRP) and Product Resource Planning (PRP) due to readily available support from vendors globally. It could therefore be suggested that ERP usage across sectors may differ in SMEs and so this may be one of the benefits of ERP.

Although it is agreed that the ERP system is beneficial to businesses, it is however argued that an unsuccessful adoption could be detrimental to business (Pender, 2001; Raymond and Uwizeyemungu, 2007; Bharathi *et al.*, 2014). Hence, the need to understand the complexities of ERP through its life cycle and how studies suggest it is best deployed successfully throughout the different stages of the life cycle.

2.5. THE ERP LIFE CYCLE

The ERP life cycle identified from the literature is categorised into three stages for this study: adoption/pre-implementation stage, implementation stage and post-implementation stage. Although this research is primarily focused on the adoption stage, it is important to study the life cycle to understand and appreciate the complexities involved in how a successful ERP adoption can be achieved.

At these different stages, some factors affect the success and failure of ERP, and none should be taken for granted as a failure in one stage could result in a total system failure.

2.5.1. ADOPTION/PRE-IMPLEMENTATION STAGE

While some studies (Bharathi *et al.*, 2012) described adoption as the whole ERP deployment life cycle, others (Lewandowski *et al.*, 2013; Alshamaila and Papagiannidis, 2012) suggest the adoption stage of the ERP life cycle as the stage where acquisition decisions and planning are undertaken. Bharathi *et al.* (2012) however identified planning and acquisition as two different stages in the bigger adoption picture. Although ERP adoption in this study refers to the decisions within SFBs relating to the adoption of ERP, the literature review covers the whole deployment life cycle. Such decisions in SFBs lead to the commitment of the family to the whole adoption process (Weismeier-Sammer and Von Schlippe, 2013). The decision relating to adopting an Enterprise Resource Planning system is affected by many factors which are identified in the literature. These factors include organisational size, system complexity and industry type among other factors as discussed in the section below (Haddara and Zach, 2011; Alshamaila and Papagiannidis, 2012). Buonanno *et al.* (2005) described the issues relating to the adoption of ERP as both exogenous and endogenous. Studies such as by Shahawai and Idrus (2011) also used the TOE (Technology-Environment and Organisation) framework to describe the adoption issues of ERP in Malaysian SMEs. Although other researchers (Iskanius, 2009; Winkelman and Klose, 2008) did not follow the TOE framework, they still arrived at similar findings to those obtained using the TOE framework regarding the adoption of the ERP system. Ramdani and Kawalek (2007) also researched the adoption of Enterprise Systems in SMEs in the North West of England and reached a similar conclusion as that reached by Shahawai and Idrus (2011). However, Alshamaila and Papagiannidis (2012), while acknowledging the factors identified earlier, also suggested that competitive pressure plays a major role in SMEs making Cloud ERP adoption decisions. The

cost of ERP is a major factor in making ERP adoption decisions especially in SMEs where resources are limited (Haddara and Elragal, 2013). A further discussion of the factors such as company size, industry type, system complexity, system compatibility, ERP perception, and cost and competitive pressure as identified above and discussed below could help towards better understanding the factors responsible for ERP adoption decisions in SMEs and how such knowledge could apply to SFBs.

2.5.2. FACTORS AFFECTING THE ADOPTION OF ERP

2.5.2.1. SIZE OF THE COMPANY

Previous researchers (Davenport, 2000; Shang and Seddon, 2000) did not consider company size in their studies of the ERP system. Later studies (Jeremy, 2006; Koh and Simpson, 2005; Mabert *et al.*, 2003), however, argue that it is, in fact, crucial to consider the size of a company when discussing the adoption of ERP by a company; the importance of company size is highlighted by Jeremy (2006) who suggested that only 35% of SMEs in the UK were, at the time, aware of the ERP system. Considering that studies by, for example, Koh and Simpson (2005) have indicated a market saturation for ERP in large enterprises, the awareness level in SMEs points to the significance of size in ERP adoption. Jeremy's (2006) study suggests a low percentage of awareness by SMEs compared to that for large enterprises, which was reported to be about 80%, especially considering the number of SMEs and their enormous contribution to the national economy. SMEs now represent a promising market for the ERP system if the right package can be introduced (Shahawai and Idrus, 2009), especially in the UK where SMEs now constitute arguably over 90% of businesses (BIS, 2012). Also, SMEs lead the way in the country's recovery from the economic meltdown (Mathew and Rhodes, 2014). Sanna *et al.* (2007) also argued that SMEs are quite different from LEs in their adoption behaviour as there are lots of differences between them, especially regarding resource availability. Small and medium enterprises might be different in their approach to IT adoption as there are differences in their characteristics, especially regarding resources (Sanna *et al.*, 2007). Studies by Kostopoulos (2004) and Teittinen (2013) further buttressed the need to consider company size as they noted the lack of financial resources, skilled human resources and an uncentralized business structure as affecting ERP adoption in SMEs, whereas these factors are not important in large enterprises as they have an abundance of resources (Teittinen, 2013). Recent studies (Johanson *et al.*, 2014; Alajbegovic *et al.*, 2013) on Cloud ERP also identified difference between companies based on their size as SMEs are expected to adopt more Cloud ERP while large enterprises

have genuine security fears and tend towards an on-site type of ERP system. These findings, as well as those by Bharati and Chaudhury (2015), indicate that the size of a company is an important determinant when it comes to the decision to adopt a technology like the ERP system. It is then worthy of consideration when discussing ERP adoption. Bharati and Chaudhury (2015) recommended a pro-active approach to designing SME-specific solutions to ERP adoption. This study recognises the significance of size as a determinant of ERP adoption and focuses on small family businesses. SFBs are essential to national economic growth, represent a potential market for ERP, but as the evidence from previous research shows, the rate of ERP adoption is low.

2.5.2.2. INDUSTRY/SECTOR TYPE

Although few studies connect industry type to the adoption of ERP, there are a few which connect industry type to the adoption of innovation in companies. It is well known that ERP is a form of technology for enterprises/businesses. Appuswamy (2004) suggests that the factors determining the success, failure or benefits from the ERP system depend on the type of industry. Some studies point to the fact that the adoption of innovation by firms is influenced by external factors such as the competitive environment, policies and socio-cultural beliefs (Frank, 1995; Park *et al.*, 2005; Banerjee *et al.*, 2003; Aubert *et al.*, 2012). These factors, however, point to why a firm's industry sector is important in determining its ERP adoption behaviour as these factors often relate to businesses within the same sector. The presence of very few research papers addressing industry type and its influence on ERP adoption could imply that it is not very important in influencing adoption behaviour. However, factors identified above which are related to the sector in which a firm operates would suggest how industry type may influence the adoption of any innovation. Yvonne's (2006) research further confirmed this argument by explaining how policies and industrial culture could determine the adoption of innovation in different industries. The study suggests that policies may favour innovation in some industries more than others, so it is normal to see some industries adopt a particular technology more than others. Chimanda (2011) also suggested that industry-specific research would help firms to understand better the factors that are particular to their industry and know how best to adopt the ERP system. Also, according to Johanson *et al.* (2014), the industry a business operates in could determine the potential adoption of Cloud ERP. The study of ERP in SMEs in North West England by Ramdani and Kawalek (2007) also pointed to the significance of industry sector in the adoption of ERP by suggesting that the service sector requires a lot of information flow to

deliver their services and should be more proactive in adopting IT, but the rate of adoption of Enterprise Systems in the manufacturing industry is significantly higher than in another industry sectors. Skok and Leggy (2001) also recommended further research into ERP in organisations emanating from the same business sector. They emphasised that it could be crucial to ensuring successful adoption of ERP within such sectors, a sentiment shared by more recent ERP studies (Maglyas and Smolader, 2011; Lee, 2014).

It is important to consider industry type in ERP adoption as its applicability to industries may differ, and also policies and culture within different sectors vary, as echoed in studies by Maguire *et al.* (2010), Maglyas and Smolader (2011) and Lee (2014). Although studies identifying industry type as important to ERP adoption are limited, the recurrence of this subject over a period of time has ensured that this study will consider industry type and, in particular, this study will focus on the UK's retail industry.

2.5.2.3. SYSTEM COMPLEXITY

Owens and Dawson (2008) suggested that technological uncertainties are a major factor behind delays in new product development since the sixties till the present day. It was found that the uncertainty often occurs either as a result of technological complexity or lack of adequate knowledge of such technology.

Selecting a type of ERP, process re-engineering, integration of ERP into the existing system, training of employees, etc. are considered to be complex and uncertain (Bingi *et al.*, 1999; Ghosh *et al.*, 2010, Dey *et al.*, 2013). The fact that these processes only increase the possibility of ERP success rather than give an assurance of success makes ERP less attractive to SMEs, especially considering the implications of failure (Ghosh *et al.*, 2010, Dey *et al.*, 2013). If the perceived complexities in the implementation of ERP are addressed by reducing the risk and thereby raising the potential for success, more SMEs will adopt ERP (Dey *et al.*, 2013). These findings imply that considering system complexity in decisions relating to ERP adoption in SMEs is a vital determinant of possible adoption. For these reasons, some studies (Appandairaja *et al.*, 2012; Elragal and El Komos, 2012; Johanson *et al.*, 2014) have recommended Cloud ERP as being the best solution for more SMEs when adopting the ERP system as it gives a cheaper, less complex and more readily available ERP option. If ERP were able to be adopted in modules, this would not only further reduce the cost of adoption but also reduce complexities such as licensing, configuration and maintenance associated with the ERP system (Alshamaila and Papagiannidis, 2012; Lewandowski *et al.*, 2013).

However, studies by, for example, Johanson *et al.* (2015) and Chang *et al.* (2014) suggest that if large enterprises can handle the risks of Cloud ERP, they can take full advantage of the technology. Even though Cloud ERP is deemed an easier way to adopt the ERP system in SMEs, this study focuses on the ERP system as a whole and not specifically on Cloud ERP.

2.5.2.4. SYSTEM COMPATIBILITY

Ramdani (2009) suggested that firms with the ability to experiment with Enterprise Systems (ES) are more likely to adopt the ES packages. It implies that companies that are capable of determining the compatibility of any technology with the organisational system tend to adopt such technology more successfully than others. With the resources available to SMEs trialability of any ES including ERP may be difficult. Hence, the need for an ERP package that requires less customisation.

The study of ERP in Portuguese SMEs by Ruivo (2012) also concluded that compatibility and efficiency are important factors in the adoption of ERP systems. According to the study, a compatible ERP system means there would be less need for customisation and adaptability would be seamless for firms. Julie and Owen (2008) also identified that implementing an incompatible ERP system was one of the leading causes of failure to successfully integrate an ERP system in SMEs in the furniture making industry. One of the main causes of this problem was attributed to the vendor's inexperience in the industry. Stefanou (2014) identified that the compatibility of open source ERP is usually a challenge for SMEs in the adoption of this technology. The fact that selecting an appropriate ERP is complex and could be challenging for SMEs could militate against ERP adoption (Ruivo *et al.*, 2014). A further corroboration of the importance of system compatibility came from a recent study by Bhati and Trivedi (2016). The study argues that even though a successfully adopted ERP brings about undoubted benefits, the mismatch of ERP and business needs, also known as misalignment, remains a major problem.

Going by the findings above, it is important to adopt an ERP system that is compatible or in-line with business needs as an incompatible system is generally argued to be responsible for the non-adoption of ERP in small businesses. For these reasons, this study focuses on investigating individual retail SFBs to understand if ERP is compatible with such businesses.

2.5.2.5. PERCEPTION OF ERP BY SMEs

SMEs widely perceive the ERP system as a costly, time-consuming and difficult system to implement and that the implications of failed implementation are severe (Lee, 2008; Lenart, 2011; Marsh *et al.*, 2014). For this reason, SMEs usually stay clear of advanced technologies like ERP. Shahawai (2009) stated that a true awareness/knowledge of the ERP system is essential if a better record of adoption is to be seen from SMEs. The knowledge of ERP in this case refers to the business' awareness of the implications of having an ERP system to bring about an informed decision on its adoption (Almahamid and Awsi, 2015). The erroneous belief that ERP is expensive and complicated to implement for SMEs has clouded the views of SMEs to the extent that not many of them are aware of the cheaper and less complicated systems that can be implemented (Lenart, 2011).

The perceived benefits of the ERP system to business needs are also important to its adoption, and SMEs require such knowledge if the rate of adoption is to improve (Almahamid and Awsi, 2015; Teittinen *et al.*, 2013). Also, the amount of support available to SMEs is positively correlated to SMEs' perceived benefits from ERP (Almahamid and Awsi, 2015). Teittinen *et al.*'s (2013) study suggests that even though the perceived benefits of ERP are important to its adoption, achieving those benefits could be challenging if SMEs are not supported during ERP deployment, and if adoption of ERP is not well managed throughout its life cycle. Marsh *et al.* (2014) studied ERP in Welsh manufacturing SMEs and found that hindrances such as the limited knowledge of ERP at the managerial level could militate against ERP usage in SMEs.

It becomes obvious, based on the findings above, that a better awareness of ERP and its benefits to business, through vendors and researchers, is essential to ensuring an improved perception of ERP to allow greater adoption by SMEs, a suggestion also supported by an earlier study by Raymond *et al.* (2004). While researchers are supposed to raise the level of awareness of ERP in SMEs through research work that opens SMEs to the R&D that is naturally beyond their reach (Bharathi and Parikh, 2012; Lewandowski *et al.*, 2013), ERP vendors are expected to make SMEs aware of the options available to them through aggressive marketing (ALshamaila and Pappagianidis, 2012; Lewandowski *et al.*, 2013). This study, besides investigating the effect of familiness on ERP adoption in UK retail SFBs, investigates businesses to compare the existing perceptions surrounding such technology with the investigated reality. This study contributes to ERP knowledge within retail SFBs and, hence, influences how ERP is perceived within these businesses.

2.5.2.6. THE COST OF ADOPTION

With the ERP system traditionally known to be an expensive investment and SMEs not known for having an abundance of resources, the cost of ERP is worthy of consideration in discussions regarding the adoption of ERP by SMEs (Klaus *et al.*, 2000; Kale *et al.*, 2010; Haddara and Elragal, 2013). However, the advent of the Cloud ERP and/or the Open Source ERP is suggested to have made the total cost of ERP adoption cheaper and more affordable for SMEs (Elragal and Elkomos, 2012; Lewandowski *et al.*, 2013; Johanson *et al.*, 2015; Johnson *et al.*, 2015; Scholtz and Atukwase, 2016). However, Supramaniam *et al.* (2014) argued that although competitive pressure is driving Malaysian SMEs towards adopting ERP, the cost associated not necessarily with the ERP software but with people, e.g. consultants, the training of employees, etc. contributes majorly to the high cost of ERP and hence influences the propensity to adopt. The study concludes that considering the potential contributions of ERP or the Return on Investment (ROI) is important for SMEs when planning to adopt ERP and studies should focus on this aspect of ERP.

Haddara and Elragal’s (2013) study, which was aimed at developing a cost model for ERP adoption in Egyptian SMEs found that fuzzy cost factors of ERP adoption represent a major problem that often hinders the adoption process. The fuzzy cost factors as identified in the study are shown below.

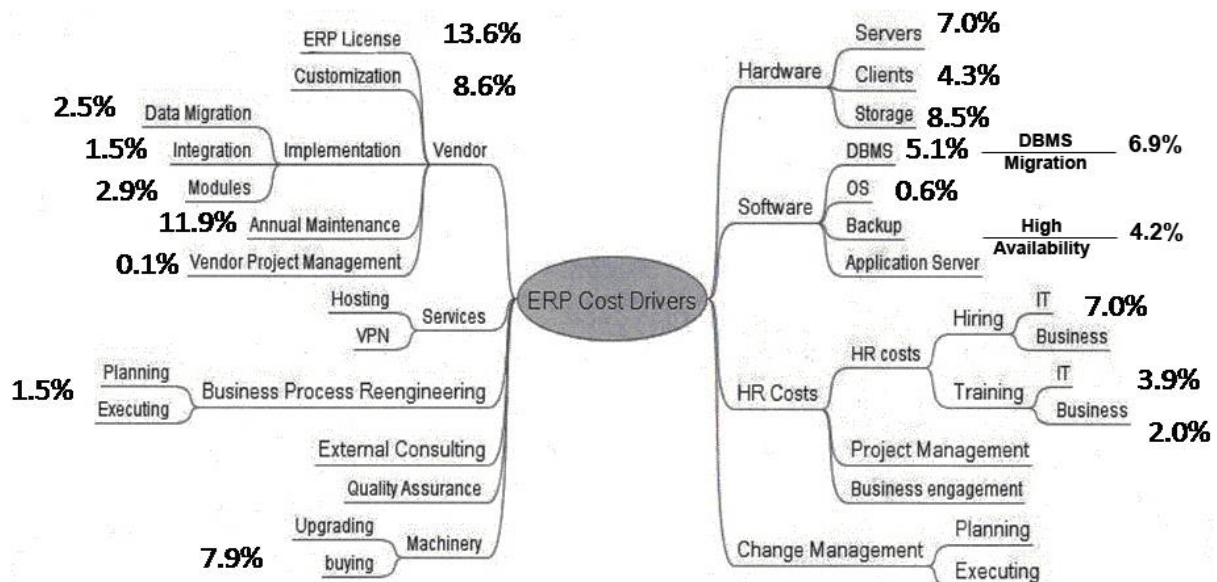


Figure 2: The ERP fuzzy cost factors. Source: Haddara and Elragal (2013).

It should be noted that although some Egyptian family-owned SMEs were investigated in the study, the conclusions did not refer to family ownership as having any impact on ERP adoption or the cost factors influencing such adoption.

Although, this research is focused on investigating the effect of familiness on ERP adoption in retail SFBs, the discussion of cost cannot be ignored in small family businesses especially as the findings above show that it could be more complicated than the cost of obtaining the software and the business money may be linked to family prosperity (Kellerman *et al.*, 2014). However, as there is evidence, though limited, of ERP adoption even in retail SFBs, other factors than cost may need to be considered. The investigation in this study establishes if cost, which is an internal capability, has any effect on decisions to adopt ERP.

2.5.2.7. COMPETITIVE PRESSURE

Competitive pressure is a major factor influencing the usage of Cloud ERP in SMEs (Alshamaila and Papagiannidis, 2012; Chan *et al.*, 2012). Ruivo *et al.* (2014) also corroborated this suggestion by investigating ERP adoption across European SMEs. The study suggested that while other factors such as system complexity, compatibility, etc. vary significantly across European SMEs, competitive pressure remains a constant influencing factor across regions.

Palicious-Marques *et al.* (2015) also suggest that high competitive pressure tends to increase the organisational demand for new technology such as the ERP system that could give European SMEs the competitive advantage. However, competitive pressure could also negatively influence technological adoption as it does not give the business a chance to integrate such technology before moving onto the next technological innovation (Zhu *et al.*, 2006; Chan *et al.*, 2012). Such disadvantages may not apply to the ERP system as it is believed to be an enduring technology that brings long-term competitive benefits to business (Shang and Seddon, 2000; Bhati and Trivedi, 2016). The assertion is especially buttressed by Supramaniam *et al.* (2014) who suggested that increased competition has served as an important catalyst moving Malaysian SMEs towards the integration of business processes through ERP.

The fact that the UK's retail SFBs are a part of European SMEs indicates that competitive pressure could move them towards adopting ERP, especially as there is a high level of competition within the industry. It then becomes important to understand ERP adoption within such businesses and establish whether or not competitive pressure plays a part in ERP

adoption. It is especially important as ERP, in fact, provides a competitive business advantage (Bhati and Trivedi, 2016).

Having identified from the literature some of the factors that influence the adoption of an ERP system in SMEs, this study intends to establish if or how they influence ERP adoption in UK's retail SFBs. The next section discusses the implementation stage of ERP, which is another stage of its life cycle.

2.5.3. THE IMPLEMENTATION STAGE

This stage is another crucial stage in the life cycle of an ERP system which involves the long and tricky process of launching the ERP software itself (Ram *et al.*, 2014). Although this research is not focused on implementation, this section discusses the complexity involved in achieving successful adoption of ERP software.

Most organisations and researchers see this stage as the most important because a failure to implement ERP effectively could destroy an organisation (Davenport, 1998; Davenport, 2000; Ahmad and Cuenca, 2013; Marsh *et al.*, 2014). However, as shown in the earlier section, a milestone check would be necessary at every stage of the ERP life cycle because failure at any stage of the ERP life cycle could mean total failure and such a failure may not be visible until after the project is finally launched.

The implementation stage could involve software configuration, system integration, testing, data conversion, training and rollout (Nah and Lau, 2001; Ahmad and Cuenca, 2013; Zach *et al.*, 2014). As previously stated, this is a critical stage of the project and it requires total commitment from everyone involved. Nah and Lau (2001) noted that everyone involved at this juncture must have a sound knowledge of the ERP system and all teams involved must work hand in hand to achieve the set goal (cooperation). If this stage is not well managed, the whole project is destined to fail (Marsh *et al.*, 2014). However, if this stage proves successful then the last stage of the ERP system implementation process becomes ever necessary before the project can be considered a success. This is due to studies (such as Teittinnen *et al.*, 2013) which investigated a case of partial success and concluded that post-implementation problems resulted in the full benefits of the system not being achieved. Also, Smith's (2016) conclusion that family characteristics affect the chances of successful implementation of ERP in family firms points to the need for a full ERP life cycle study.

Having identified the significance of this stage to the success of ERP implementation and a business being able to achieve any potential benefits, several studies have over the years investigated factors or actions that must be undertaken to increase the possibilities of successful implementation of an ERP system. These are known as the Critical Success Factors (CSFs).

2.5.4. CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS (CSFs)

Critical Success Factors refer to those factors that are deemed as important to the probability of successful ERP implementation (Sherer and Alter, 2004; Bharathi and Parikh, 2012; Zach *et al.*, 2014). Al-Hinai *et al.* (2013) explained that recent ERP CSF studies have mostly focused on the implementation phase (Christofi *et al.*, 2013; Dezdar, 2012), while few others have focused on both the adoption and post-implementation phases (Shahawai and Idrus, 2011; Haddara and Zach, 2011). However, as stated earlier in this work, there is little research on ERP in SFBs, and a recent study of ERP in family firms suggests a low tendency for successful implementation in SFBs with strong family influences (Smith, 2016). Hence the need to study the CSFs for ERP implementation. Reviewing literature on the influence of the CSFs on ERP implementation in SMEs, of which SFBs are an integral part, would benefit this work by identifying some CSFs that could be pertinent to successful ERP implementation in retail SFBs. Research suggests, however, that further studies in these particular contexts should be carried out as conceptual perceptions are often different from the actual contextual findings (Bharathi and Parikh, 2012), and conceptual knowledge informs expectations from the context.

Bharathi and Parikh (2012) studied the difference between the conceptual and contextual perceptions of ERP Critical Success Factors in SMEs across the ERP life cycle. It was suggested on concluding the research that there are significant differences between the conceptual perceptions and contextual findings of ERP CSFs across its life cycle and especially during the latter stages of the life cycle. For the purposes of this section, the focus will be on CSFs in the implementation phase of the ERP life cycle. The CSFs identified for this phase are: goal and scope of ERP, owner's commitment (leadership), SME change culture, SME vision and growth, and project planning and scheduling. It was found, however, that the CSF rankings from the literature are in agreement with the contextual perceptions in this phase. As the study was carried out in the context of Indian SMEs, the findings cannot be erroneously accepted to be applicable to all SMEs as 'one size does not fit all' (Stackpole,

2007). Rather, it suggests the need to carry out further studies within other contexts before any assertions can be made.

Al-Ghofailli and Al-Mashari's (2014) study of the difference between implementing the traditional ERP and Cloud ERP recognised the following factors from literature: top management support, change management plan, training and education, project management, vendor selection, dedicated resources, organisational culture, technological readiness, and system design and configuration. The research further introduced three adoption approaches (the traditional ERP system, ERP as IaaS and ERP as SaaS) based on the security rating, investment amount and organisational size. The traditional ERP system is where the whole system, including the hardware and software, would be on the premises and as such would be suitable for large enterprises or organisations with sensitive or confidential data. The ERP as IaaS (Infrastructure as a Service) is where the infrastructure is available in the Cloud, but the business would be responsible for buying the ERP package, license and implementing the system (Li, 2011). This ERP system is most suitable for mid-sized businesses with fewer investment resources but some security risks. If, however, the ERP system is provided as Software as a Service (SaaS), the whole ERP package is available in the Cloud, hence the need for little investment and this makes it suitable for small businesses (Chen *et al.*, 2011). But making business data available to the service provider online brings about very high-security risks. Although Cloud ERP is another area being currently researched, this research is focused on ERP for SMEs which includes Cloud ERP or any other form of ERP.

Kramer *et al.* (2016) put existing knowledge on ERP adoption in SMEs to test by exploring it within a single case. It was found that some factors, such as having a project champion, proper project management, change management and strong partnership are key success factors while inadequate training, instruction and low key-user involvement are high-risk factors for ERP in the SME. The study also suggested a new CSF that has not been previously explored, which is the flexibility provided by open-source software. However, this could be categorised under software selection as previous research by, for example, Bajju *et al.* (2012) and Bansal (2013) has highlighted software selection as a key CSF to ERP implementation. As much as the study introduces new knowledge on the ERP in SMEs, it is based on a single case and suggests further studies in this field to establish a more credible and reliable knowledge base.

Griffith *et al.* (2013) also investigated SAP Business One, a specific ERP software, when implemented in a single SME. The study submitted that value and belief, leadership, structure

and process, and roles within the business are key factors determining ERP implementation in the SME. Although vendor selection was not particularly highlighted, the significance of choosing the right vendor was discussed throughout the research work. The importance of the SAP partner (IT supplier), as well as the technological fit of SAP Business One, was also briefly mentioned. The CSFs identified from discussions above are highlighted and further discussed below.

The table below shows the list of the ERP Critical Success Factors in SMEs obtained from the review of the literature.

CSF/Authors	Muscalleto & Chen (2010)	Ahmad, Haleem & Syed (2012)	Dezdar (2012)	Koh et al. (2011)	Tarhini <i>et al.</i> , (2015)	Dawson & Owens (2008)	Saade & Nijher (2016)
Strategic initiatives	X	X		X		X	X
Top management Support	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Human Resources	X	X		X			X
Project Management	X		X	X		X	X
Information Technology	X	X		X			
Business process	X	X	X		X	X	X
Training	X	X	X	X			X
Change management		X		X	X	X	X
Project support and communications	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Software selection and support	X	X	X				X

Table 3: Critical Success Factors of the ERP system

2.5.4.1. STRATEGIC PLANNING

It is important for businesses to have a clear strategy before ERP implementation. This involves setting clear objectives based on the business needs and pathways to achieving implementation (Dixit and Pratash, 2011). Due to the complexity of ERP implementation and implications of its failure, Ghangi and Chugh (2012) suggest that SMEs must have a clear strategy as to what is expected of ERP and how to achieve this; Laughlin (1999) termed this an ERP game plan. He stated that this is crucial due to the complexity of the technology and the varying needs of the businesses implementing it. It was also suggested that a clear strategy reduces the rate of customisation, cost and time spent on implementation. Upadhyay and Dan (1999) suggest that strategic planning should not be autonomous, rather it should involve a team of managers, consultants and vendors, and should be communicated to the users. The study further reported that an autonomous strategy may not be well informed or accepted by users and would ultimately lead to a failed implementation. Bansal (2013) described a case of a small enterprise whose implementation strategy was vendor/consultant based. This was reported as a reason for failure because even though the vendor and consultant had expert knowledge, they did not have adequate knowledge of the business processes in the company. This led to misalignment of the software, which then required a great deal of customisation of the ERP software in order to suit the business and this ultimately led to implementation failure. It was reported that although there were other issues during the implementation, how the implementation strategy was formed played an important role in the failure.

2.5.4.2. TOP MANAGEMENT SUPPORT (TMS)

Parr and Sharks (2000) described TMS as top management's commitment to the project as well as the provision of both financial and human resources towards the success of the project. TMS for ERP is the total commitment, interest, involvement and continuous sponsoring of the ERP project by the top managers (Dawson and Owens, 2008; Ahmad, 2012). Going by these descriptions, it can be said that authors describe TMS according to the actions expected of the members of the top management. Top managers are not just expected to initiate, sponsor and communicate strategies, they are also expected to be fully involved especially in SMEs where top managers may also function as staff members/users (Aarabi *et al.*, 2013). They are also expected to manage any resistance to the new technology through change management activities (Laughlin, 1999; Dixit and Pratash, 2011).

The figure below shows a table of expectations from top managers towards a successful ERP implementation.

TMS/Authors	Griffiths <u>etal</u> (2013)	William and Andy (2010)	Dawson and Owens (2008)	Ahmad et al (2012)	Young and Poon (2013)	<u>Boonstra</u> (2013)	Young and Jordan (2008)		
I. Involvement	X	X	X	X	X		X		
II. Commitment	X	X	X	X	X		X		
III. Sponsorship		X	X	X	X	X	X		
IV. Foresight					X				
V. Interest	X	X	X	X			X		
VI. Communication				X	X	X			
VII. Power				X		X			
VIII. Knowledge of project		X	X		X	X			

Table 4: TMS actions by authors.

Figure 5 above suggests that TMS actions or behaviour have been divided into six categories: involvement, commitment, sponsorship, interest, communication, power and knowledge of the project.

Young and Jordan's (2008) survey of four cases of ERP implementation shows that companies with full TMS considered ERP implementation as being successful while companies with partial or no TMS, even with other factors present, did not successfully implement ERP. A standard way to measure TMS actions or behaviour has not been well studied except by Boonstra (2013) who attempted to build a TMS behaviour framework and explain why top managers often withdraw their support for information technology projects. The research, however, identified that TMS behaviour varies based on the type of business and the technology being implemented. Smith's (2016) study of ERP in family firms supports Boonstra's (2013) assertion by suggesting that the greater the family influence in business management, the lower the tendency for a successful implementation.

Although this research has identified six categories of TMS actions or behaviours and does not intend to study them further, no prior research has been found to have studied all six categories.

2.5.4.3. HUMAN RESOURCES

Human resources refers to the manpower required for the implementation of ERP (Bansal, 2013). People with the right expertise to implement an ERP system are required for successful implementation, but with small businesses, there is not likely to be an abundance of such knowledge (Dixit and Pratash, 2011; Bansal, 2013). It was suggested that it is important that the vendor's team has adequate knowledge of the technology so as to be able to train the internal users (Upadhyay and Dan, 2009; Dixit and Pratash, 2011; Bansal, 2013). It was also suggested that not only should users/employees be trained, they must also remain committed to the course and retained after implementation (Dixit and Pratash, 2011). Al-Shamlan and Al-Mudimigh (2011) reported that ERP often faces resistance from users/employees which may lead to its failure if it is not well managed by the top managers. This resistance may be due to a lack of adequate knowledge of the ERP system or reluctance to accept changes brought by the technology (Dixit and Pratash, 2011; Al-Shamlan and Al-Mudimigh, 2011). Top managers are expected to allocate the right employees/users to committees that would see to the implementation of ERP. They are to be trained and remain committed all through the implementation (Dawson and Owens, 2008; Dixit and Pratash, 2011; Bansal, 2013). Also, as identified with the TMS, they are expected to help with the change management to reduce the possibility of technology resistance. Teittinen *et al.* (2013) identified employee resistance to change as a reason for the SME studied not achieving the full benefits of the ERP system.

2.5.4.4. TRAINING

The implementation team selected by top managers is to be trained by the consultant/vendor team, and they are expected to train other users of ERP within the organisation (Dixit and Pratash, 2011). This training is crucial for small businesses due to the low level of IT expertise that is usually prevalent within small businesses (Bansal, 2013). It may be suggested that without adequate training of users, it will be difficult to achieve implementation or post-implementation success. The failure of the case reported by Bansal (2013) was also attributed to the lack of adequate knowledge of ERP by the consultant team which led to the inadequate training of users. Dixit and Pratash (2011), on the other hand, reported that the implementation failure reported in the case studied was mainly due to the

fact that the internal implementation team failed to train other users within the organisation after being trained themselves. This was largely due to resistance to change from these users as also seen in Teittinen *et al.* (2013). It may be suggested that for businesses to ensure a successful implementation, it is not enough to have the implementation team adequately trained; it is also important that all users are properly trained. However, Koh *et al.* (2009) suggested that as crucial as training is for ERP implementation, SMEs can implement ERP successfully with limited training investment if there is enough knowledge of ERP or IT by the users in the company. This, thus, implies that SMEs with adequate IT knowledge would invest less in training than SMEs with little or no prior knowledge of IT. However, Lewandowski's (2013) study of Cloud ERP in SMEs suggests that as much as the cost of ERP has reduced as a result of the introduction of Cloud ERP, there is no significant reduction in terms of the cost of training.

An obvious suggestion from the findings on employee training detailed above suggests the need to ensure users have adequate knowledge of the ERP system whether it is through training or previously gained skills. This knowledge will not only reduce the possibility of reluctance to embrace the software but also aid the chances of benefitting from the ERP system (Teittinen *et al.*, 2013).

2.5.4.5. BUSINESS PROCESS REENGINEERING

Christofi *et al.*'s (2013) study of ERP implementation in SMEs shows that some attempts at implementation fail even before the actual implementation starts due to lack of proper preparation. ERP often changes business processes (Su and Yang, 2010; Chimanda, 2011) and an employee's job description, so it is crucial to adjust some of these processes to accommodate the changes ERP would bring after implementation - this is known as Business Process Reengineering (BPR) (Christofi *et al.*, 2013). While some researchers, for example, Yu and Wright (1997) and Doomun and Jungum (2008) suggest, BPR should be part of the implementation process, later studies (Christofi *et al.*, 2013; Roskill, 2014) suggest it should be done before the actual implementation. Roskill (2014) suggests that BPR is especially important for SMEs prior to ERP implementation because processes and boundaries are often not clearly defined in small businesses prior to ERP implementation. Failure to do the BPR may lead to data overlap or transfer of deficient processes into the ERP system and may ultimately lead to failure (Xiang *et al.*, 2014).

2.5.4.6. SOFTWARE SELECTION AND SUPPORT

There are several vendors of ERP today, but companies need to identify which ERP software is the best fit for their business (Winkelman and Klose, 2008). BPR is important for SMEs as it allows them to identify the business processes that need to be integrated into the ERP system in order to identify which ERP software would be fit for their business (Chen, 2001). This would help reduce the level of customization required to make the ERP fit (Iskanus, 2009; Upadhyay and Dan, 2009; Bajju *et al.*, 2012). Medium enterprises prefer to select the software that is the best fit, is cost effective and requires less time to implement as this increases the possibility of a cheap and successful implementation (Bhati and Trivedi, 2016). Even though some SMEs such as the cases reported by Zach and Munkvold (2012) may feel the need to customize as they believe in the need to retain most of their business processes, an ERP software that is closest to business needs should be selected in order to keep customization to the barest minimum so as to increase success and the associated benefits (Dawson and Owens, 2008; Bansal, 2013).

2.5.4.7. CHANGE MANAGEMENT

The resistance to ERP reported by Bansal (2013) and other studies (Al-Shamlan and Al-Mudimigh, 2011; Teittinen *et al.*, 2013) is expected to be managed by top managers so as to ensure a successful implementation. Change management is crucial to ERP implementation as ERP brings about change and companies must be ready to manage all the changes and the resistance in order to be successful (Aladwani, 2001; Surkov, 2015). It was suggested that top managers should identify user needs, potential causes of resistance and deal with ERP changes strategically (Aladwani, 2001; Al-Shamlan and Al-Mudimigh, 2011; Surkov, 2015).

2.5.4.8. PROJECT MANAGEMENT

A constant check on project progress against the target, schedule and budget is crucial to ERP implementation (Bansal, 2013). Not keeping a proper check on this may lead to the project slipping out of control as seen with the RetailS case reported by Bansal (2013). In this case, coupled with other problems experienced during implementation, the internal team and vendor could not control the project due to their lack of adequate knowledge. The project eventually slipped out of control and eventually failed. Ara *et al.* (2011) suggest that most attempts to implement IT that fail are attributed to a failure in project management. It was further stated that project management is important at every stage of the ERP life cycle as it involves having a good project team, decision-making at the different stages and top

managers should be fully involved (Aarabi *et al.*, 2011; Upadhyay and Dan, 2011; Ara *et al.*, 2011; Bansal, 2013).

2.5.4.9. COMMUNICATION

Clear, and effective communication is crucial at every stage of ERP implementation (Dason and Owens, 2008; Basu *et al.*, 2012; Aarabi *et al.*, 2011). Communicating project plans and benefits to users would go a long way in managing resistance at the early stage of implementation and would help identify milestones when achieved in the course of implementation (Al-Shamlan and Al-Mudimigh, 2011). Communication is crucial for everybody participating in ERP implementation especially in SMEs where although decision-making may be hierarchical, job functions are tightly connected and they do overlap (Doom, 2009; Dixit and Pratash, 2011; Aarabi, 2011).

The review of literature on ERP implementation in SMEs shows that TMS is required for virtually everything needed for successful implementation, e.g. strategic planning, allocation of resources, setting up committees, change management, etc. (Upadhyay and Dan, 2009; Dixit and Pratash, 2011; Young and Jordan, 2008; Young and Poon, 2013).

The importance of TMS to ERP implementation was also identified by Riaz *et al.* (2014) as their study shows TMS as the most cited CSF by ERP implementation researchers. The diagram is as shown below.

Although it is beyond the scope of this study to investigate the implementation of ERP, it has been identified from the review of the literature on ERP CSFs in SMEs and generally that top management and understanding how ERP would benefit the business is crucial to its implementation and that there is a relationship between TMS and other ERP CSFs. Understanding how family ownership and characteristics influence the adoption stage of the ERP system is the focus of this study. Smith (2016) suggests that family characteristics influence the possibility of successful ERP implementation, and further studies of family businesses can be found in part II of this chapter. The next section studies the post-implementation stage of the ERP life cycle as it is at this stage that success and benefits are actually achieved and assessed (Teittinen *et al.*, 2013).

2.5.5. POST-IMPLEMENTATION STAGE

The post-implementation stage can also be referred to as the post-launch stage. At this stage, the ERP system can be fully assessed to determine if it is a success or not (Hsu *et al.*, 2015).

It will also reveal any lapses through the life cycle. The post-implementation stage involves success assessment, maintenance and upgrade (Ram *et al.*, 2013; Ruivo *et al.*, 2014). It is important to assess the success of ERP at this stage against the initial goal set (Hsu *et al.*, 2015; Ram *et al.*, 2013; Ruivo *et al.*, 2014). Some researchers often generalise success, and this has led to a number of models over the years that help to determine success (Moalagh and Ravasan, 2013). However, the success or benefits of ERP may not be assessed as a one-off but continuously until the ERP system is retired or upgraded (Davenport, 2000; Esteves, 2009). The fact that ERP disuse or user resistance may lead to ERP failure even after its successful implementation further corroborates the argument that success assessment is not a one-off (Granlund, 2011; Teittinen *et al.*, 2013).

Moalagh and Ravasan (2013) developed a success measurement model as shown below. In the model, the success factors were divided into managerial, organisational and individual success as shown in the table below.

Factors	Sub-factors	Linguistic evaluations	Scale value	Managerial success	Organisational success	Individual success
SQ	Data accuracy	VH	1	0.024	0.012	0.017
	Easy to learn	H	0.75	0.005	0.002	0.003
	Good features	H	0.75	0.015	0.007	0.010
	Data integration	VH	1	0.104	0.052	0.075
	Efficiency	H	0.75	0.049	0.024	0.035
IQ	Timely information	H	0.75	0.041	0.036	0.032
	Important information	H	0.75	0.033	0.029	0.025
	Relevant information	H	0.75	0.054	0.048	0.042
	Usable information	H	0.75	0.004	0.004	0.003
	Available information	H	0.75	0.004	0.004	0.003
VQ	Adequate technical support	M	0.50	0.011	0.007	0.019
	Credibility and trustworthiness	H	0.75	0.018	0.011	0.029
	Good relationships	VH	1	0.011	0.007	0.019
	Experience	VH	1	0.032	0.019	0.053
	Good communication	VH	1	0.013	0.008	0.022
II	Organisational learning	H	0.75	0.017	0.021	0.019
	Improving individual productivity	H	0.75	0.037	0.047	0.042
	Benefits for individual's tasks	M	0.50	0.019	0.024	0.021
	Higher-quality decision making	M	0.50	0.016	0.020	0.018
	Saving time	M	0.50	0.014	0.017	0.016
WI	Improved workers' participation	H	0.75	0.033	0.042	0.037
	Improved organisational-wide communication	H	0.75	0.033	0.042	0.037
	Creating a sense of responsibility	M	0.50	0.015	0.019	0.017
	Improved efficiency of sub-units	M	0.50	0.008	0.010	0.008
	Solution effectiveness	M	0.50	0.009	0.012	0.010
OI	Competitive advantage	L	0.25	0.003	0.005	0.003
	Customer service/satisfaction	L	0.25	0.003	0.005	0.003
	Facilitating business process change	H	0.75	0.036	0.054	0.036
	Supporting decision making	M	0.50	0.016	0.023	0.015
	Better use of organisational data resources	H	0.75	0.051	0.075	0.050
Success score				0.729	0.682	0.720

Table 5: ERP performance measurement model. Source: Moalagh and Ravasan (2013).

All the stages of performance measurement are important to the ERP system, and none of the issues and challenges can be left unaddressed if success is to be ensured. Although post-implementation issues and challenges have been researched and addressed individually by

various researchers (Oseni *et al.*, 2014; Tsai *et al.*, 2015; Shen *et al.*, 2016) at different levels, identifying the ones that are crucial to organisations is very important especially in SMEs where addressing every ERP contextual issue may prove to be a herculean task.

It could be argued from the above that the complexities of the ERP system are enough to put off SMEs and especially SFBs (Ghosh *et al.*, 2010; Dey *et al.*, 2013). However, the benefits of ERP to SMEs may suggest otherwise (Teittinen *et al.*, 2013; Almahamid and Awsi, 2015). The next section reviews the literature on the benefits of ERP to business and especially SMEs.

2.6. THE BENEFITS OF ENTERPRISE RESOURCE PLANNING TO BUSINESS

The literature reveals that the ERP system has over the years been used across different sectors to serve different purposes. Although ERP can serve very large businesses, the benefits of ERP vary and should be assessed contextually (Davenport, 1998; Markus and Tanis, 2000; Chimanda, 2011). While studies followed this lead and investigated ERP in different contexts considering organisational size, type of company and geographical location (Mabert *et al.*, 2000; Olhager and Seldin, 2003; Maguire *et al.*, 2010; Maglyas and Smolader, 2011), Esteves (2007) conducted a conceptual study of the benefits of ERP using existing contextual studies. The study suggested that the benefits of ERP are not just one-offs but continue over time. This suggestion is in agreement with an earlier study by Davenport (2000). Esteves (2007) also concluded that organisational size and company type is important to the kind of benefit derived from ERP. This further suggests the significance of research into the contextual benefits of ERP.

Shang and Seddon's (2000) ERP benefit framework suggests that no matter how or where ERP benefits are considered, they would all fall under five categories; operational, organisational, strategic, IT infrastructure and managerial. However, Olhager and Seldin's (2003) study of ERP in Swedish manufacturing firms suggests that although the ERP benefits framework is applicable to the Swedish context, not all Shang and Seddon's (2000) subdivisions apply within the context. Although the companies experienced improved communication with customers and suppliers, business operations and data were well integrated and there was improved quality of information, the cost of IT did not reduce and cash management, inventory costs and order delivery times were little affected. Also, Esteves (2009) and Staehr *et al.* (2012), for example, conducted an ERP benefits realisation

study in SMEs using Shang and Seddon's (2000) framework, and they concluded that the different categories of ERP benefit were achieved at different stages of usage, following earlier suggestions that ERP benefits are realised by companies over time and are not one-offs. The need for future research to focus on organisational size, type of company, ERP type and model of ERP implemented was suggested. The continuous evolution of ERP gave rise to Cloud ERP, and it comes with unique contributions to business which studies suggest are more relevant to SMEs than large enterprises (Duan *et al.*, 2012; Al-Gholaiffi and Al-Mashari, 2014).

2.6.1. CLOUD ERP AND ITS BENEFITS

Cloud ERP takes advantage of the cloud computing technology to offer a cheap and readily available ERP (Venkatachalam *et al.*, 2012). Cloud ERP, especially Software as a Service (SaaS), is believed to be the best ERP solution available to SMEs today (Mashari, 2014; Bharathi and Mandal, 2015; Johanson *et al.*, 2015). It could, however, be beneficial to large enterprises if they are able to keep high-risk data on site (Al-Ghofaili and Al-Mashari, 2014; Johanson *et al.*, 2015). Studies into Cloud ERP (Duan *et al.*, 2012; Al-Gholaiffi and Al-

Mashari, 2014; Bharathi and Mandal, 2015) suggest that benefits such as lower upfront costs, lower operating costs, scalability, easier access to advanced technology, and improved disaster recovery are ERP contributions that are more pertinent to SMEs than large enterprises. The advent of big data analytics is found to be synonymous with the continued growth of Cloud technologies (Kshetri *et al.*, 2017). Cloud ERP then becomes more important for both large enterprises and SMEs due to the increasing reliance on big data analytics through social media for business decisions (Elragal, 2014). This may suggest that SMEs are quite different from large enterprises in terms of their needs and the contributions of ERP to them. However, this cannot be assumed without adequate evidence. There is, then, the need for a review of the literature on the contribution of the ERP system to SMEs. This knowledge could take this study closer to what exists within retail SFBs as they are an integral part of SMEs but are unique in

terms of ownership and management (IFB, 2010; BIS, 2013, 2014; De Massis *et al.*, 2012, 2016).

The ERP contributions to business as identified by different studies on large enterprises and SMEs are shown below using Shang and Seddon's (2000) categorisation in order to have a clearer picture of ERP benefits in the literature.

Divisions	Sub-divisions	Large Enterprise Authors	SME Authors
Operational	Cost reduction, Cycle time reduction, Quality improvement, Customer services improvement	Shang and Seddon (2000), Davenport (2000), Olhager and Seldin (2003) Murthy (2008), Zamiri <i>et al</i> (2010), Badewi <i>et al</i> (2017)	Ruivo <i>et al</i> (2012), Chabouni and Yahia (2014), Chaouni <i>et al</i> (2013), Scholtz and Atukwase (2016) , Almahamid and Awsi (2015), Johanson (2015), Airola (2016), Kosalge and Ritz (2015), Lasisi <i>et al.</i> (2017), Gouma <i>et al</i> (2018), Meganathan and Singh (2017)
Managerial	Better resource management, Improved decision making, Performance improvement	Shang and Seddon (2000), Davenport (2000), Olhager and Seldin (2003), Murthy (2008), Zamiri <i>et al</i> (2010), Badewi <i>et al</i> (2017)	Teittennen <i>et al</i> (2013), Ruivo <i>et al</i> (2012), Almahamid and Awsi (2015), Chabouni and yahia (2014) , Koslage and Ritz (2015), Lasisi <i>et al.</i> (2017), Gouma <i>et al</i> (2018), Meganathan and Singh (2017)
Strategic	Support business growth, Support business alliance, Build business innovations, Build cost leadership, Generate product differentiation, Build external linkages	Davenport (2000), Shang and Seddon (2000) , Olhager and Seldin (2003), Murthy (2008), Zamiri <i>et al</i> (2010), Badewi <i>et al</i> (2018)	Teittennen <i>et al</i> (2013), Ruivo <i>et al</i> (2012), Almahamid and Awsi (2015), Johanson (2015), Kosalge and Ritz (2015), Lasisi <i>et al</i> (2017), Gouma <i>et al</i> (2018)
IT Infrastructure	Build business flexibility for current and future changes, IT cost reduction, Increased IT infrastructure capability	Shang and Seddon (2000), Davenport (2000), Olhager and Seldin (2003), Murthy (2008), Zamiri <i>et al</i> (2010), Badewi <i>et al</i> (2017)	Scholtz and Atukwase (2016), Dezdar and Ainin (2011), Almahamid and Awsi (2015), Chen Y. (2011), Bharathi and Mandal (2015), Johanson (2015), Gouma <i>et al</i> (2018), Meganathan and Singh (2017)
Organisational	Support organisational changes, Facilitate Business learning, Built common visions	Shang and Seddon (2000), Davenport (2000), Olhager and Seldin (2003), Murthy (2008), Zamiri <i>et al</i> (2010), Badewi <i>et al</i> (2017)	Teittennen <i>et al</i> (2013), Ruivo <i>et al</i> (2012), Almahamid and Awsi (2015), Johanson (2015), Airola (2016), Lasisi <i>et al</i> (2017),

Table 6: ERP benefits by different authors on ERP.

This table suggests that researchers who have studied ERP expect large enterprises to get the maximum possible benefit from ERP while SMEs tend to look at key business needs to determine what ERP can contribute. This is evident as researchers in ERP who have studied large enterprises tend to investigate all categories of ERP benefit while researchers who have studied SMEs have focused mainly on those categories that would contribute to their business needs. This observation was supported by studies that suggest that the limited resources in SMEs would not allow them to take full advantage of enterprise systems while large enterprises are expected to take full advantage due to their access to an abundance of resources (Arend and Wisner, 2005; Schafer *et al.*, 2013).

It was further observed that researchers on the subject of SMEs studied the operational contributions of ERP more than other aspects. Although other contributions such as managerial, IT infrastructural, organisational and strategic benefits were also studied, no ERP benefit was studied independently. For example, Teittinen *et al.* (2013) studied the managerial contribution of ERP to SMEs but studied it in relation to organisational changes. Mehan and Munir (2008) also concluded that SMEs in Merseyside, UK focus on operational and strategic contributions from enterprise systems. This suggests that depending on SME business needs, some contributions may not be independent of others.

This research intends to investigate ERP contribution to retail small family businesses in the UK. This is because studies of SFBs, despite them being part of SMEs, indicate that their ownership and management characteristics affect the business and how they benefit from technological innovations (PWC, 2012, 2014; De Massis *et al.*, 2015).

The next section reviews the literature on how each of the ERP benefit categories from Shang and Seddon's (2000) framework applies to SMEs.

2.7. ERP BENEFITS TO SMEs

Several studies on ERP in SMEs (Pender, 2001; Raymond and Uwizeyemungu, 2007; Bharathi *et al.*, 2014) researched potential benefits of ERP but argued that they may not be realised until the successful deployment of ERP. The suggestion supports why the study herein reviewed the literature on the ERP life cycle to better understand how ERP could be successfully adopted. Almahamid and Awsi (2015), however, argued that knowing what to expect from ERP would help towards better planning and decision-making. ERP studies on SMEs (Teittinen *et al.*, 2013; Ruivo *et al.*, 2012; Chabouni and Yahia, 2014; Chabouni *et al.*, 2013; Scholtz and Atukwase, 2016) identified several contributions of ERP to SMEs.

Some of these benefits are generally accepted (improved accountability; faster order processing times; improved data management, data quality, resource planning, transparency, and business processes, and cheap access to IT), while others are not (enhanced collaboration, decision-making, flexibility and strategic control). On this evidence and Teittinen *et al.*'s (2013) research, among other studies, it can be suggested that SMEs only invest in ERP based on the perceived contribution to their main business needs. However, Kosalge and Ritz (2015) suggest that SFBs are motivated by the possibility of gaining more hierarchical control, operational efficiency and more systems integration. These benefits could be categorised as managerial, operational, and IT infrastructural benefits using Shang and Seddon's (2000) ERP benefits framework as modified by Staehr (2012) categorisation. Kosalge and Ritz's (2015) study was based on a single case, and further studies were suggested to ascertain the benefits of ERP to SMEs.

The next section discusses how each category of ERP benefit identified in Table 6 above applies to SMEs and contributes towards understanding how ERP benefits may apply to retail SFBs. It should be noted that the level of importance of ERP benefits depends on the needs of the business (Teittinen *et al.*, 2013) and so the order of discussing the benefits below are unrelated to evaluating their level of importance. The discussion below offers further clarity on how ERP systems have contributed to the categorization of benefits received by SMEs.

2.7.1. OPERATIONAL BENEFITS

The ERP system could help businesses reduce production costs, improve order fulfilment/cycle time and customer relations and importantly also improve the quality of the product (Shang and Seddon, 2000; Zamiri *et al.*, 2010; Kanellou and Spathis, 2013). However, SMEs may not look to benefit from all that ERP can offer but may look just to the benefits that address their main business needs (Marsh *et al.*, 2013; Ruivo *et al.*, 2014). Ruivo's (2012) study of ERP in Portuguese and Spanish SMEs shows that they look towards different operational benefits and the perceived inhibitors are different. While it was argued that Portuguese firms look to improve production efficiency and system compatibility, Spanish firms look towards strategic collaboration, as will be further discussed in the next section.

Kanellou and Spathis (2013) suggest that there is a positive relationship between accounting operational performance of a business and ERP, and this often leads to user satisfaction as a result of time and energy savings (Kanellou and Spathis, 2013). However, according to Shang

and Seddon's (2000) framework, accounting benefits of ERP are categorised within operational benefits. Kanellou and Spathis (2013) and Spathis (2006), however, argued that the accounting benefits cut across the different categories. It was found in Marsh *et al.* (2013) that just as Esteves (2009) suggested, it is expected that the ERP system would deliver some operational benefits, such as better purchasing and production systems and improved customer service. Based on evidence in this section, the ERP system would contribute a range of operational benefits to SMEs depending on their business needs. If retail SFBs adopt ERP, they could benefit from such a contribution of technology to business.

2.7.2. STRATEGIC BENEFITS

Shang and Seddon (2000) supported by studies by Davenport (2000) and Benfell *et al.* (2013) described the strategic benefits organisations could derive from ERP, which range from supporting business growth and business alliance/collaboration, building business innovations and cost leadership, generating product differentiation and building external links to business. Ruivo (2012), as previously discussed, suggested that Spanish SMEs look towards ERP to gain a strategic advantage through collaboration. Yang and Su (2009) argued that Taiwanese SMEs look towards more strategic benefits of ERP and operational benefits are less significant. Contrary to the studies above, and also a study by Armenakis *et al.* (1993), the operational benefits of MRP/ERP are expected to bring about strategic benefits such as further growth. The Welsh manufacturing SMEs as investigated by Marsh *et al.* (2014) do not expect the ERP system to bring about future growth. It can be said that based on the findings above, the ERP system contributes a range of strategic benefits to SMEs depending on their business needs or requirements.

2.7.3. MANAGERIAL BENEFITS

According to Shang and Seddon (2000), the managerial benefits of ERP could include better resource management, faster decision-making and better performance management (Shang and Seddon, 2000, 2002; Davenport, 2000). Kolsage and Ritz (2015) suggest that SMEs tend to adopt ERP when the business becomes more complex and the motivation for SMEs is usually the integration of these complex processes to make management control easier and to improve hierarchical or centralised control. Ruivo *et al.*'s (2014) study of Portuguese SMEs using Resource-Based View (RBV) suggests that these SMEs recognise improved performance management and collaboration as benefits of ERP usage. Evidence from the study also shows that managerial control is the most important benefit of ERP to Portuguese SMEs. However, Teittinenn *et al.* (2013) studied an SME which planned to take full

advantage of the managerial benefits of ERP by taking control of the whole business. However, in this case, unforeseen challenges such as resistance to its use (discussed previously in the chapter) made it difficult to achieve the primary aim. Only financial management was achieved in this case. Teittinen *et al.*'s (2013) study, on the one hand, shows how difficult it is to achieve full success in SMEs and there is a need for further studies on successful implementation of ERP. On the other hand, it may serve as an affirmation of the argument that SMEs only take advantage of ERP based on their key needs but achieving such benefits could be difficult. Agreeing to the fact that SMEs may not be able to take full advantage of the ERP system, Chabouni and Yahia (2014) studied the contribution of ERP to decision-making through knowledge management in two SMEs using the same module of ERP. It was argued that one SME had some good practices which ensured success with ERP while the other SME did not have this and hence failed. A guide or framework was suggested to enable SMEs to improve decision-making using ERP.

Chabouni and Yahia's (2014) study suggests that further research should focus on seeking to understand how ERP could contribute to managerial decision-making in SMEs. Marsh *et al.*'s (2014) study of ERP usage in Welsh manufacturing SMEs also suggests that the SMEs expect to manage resources and control inventory. Although this is a managerial benefit of the ERP system, it is expected to bring about operational benefits such as the integration of purchasing, production and customer services. This again is in agreement with suggestions that the benefits of ERP to SMEs are sometimes interdependent.

The findings above suggest that SMEs could gain a range of managerial benefits from ERP but achieving those benefits may not come easy and depends on other factors.

2.7.4. IT INFRASTRUCTURAL BENEFITS

IT infrastructural benefits of ERP to business, according to Shang and Seddon (2000), could include IT cost reduction, improved business flexibility and improved IT capabilities. Scholtz and Atukwase (2016) suggest that the use of ERP, especially Cloud ERP, could bring about reduced IT costs due to the reduced cost of implementation and training, and it could also bring about business flexibility. The study, however, suggested that even though there are security and strategic risks, South African SMEs focus on business flexibility through ERP to ensure easier collaboration. This also supports the argument that ERP benefits are interdependent. Other studies suggest that with the Cloud ERP, SMEs have a chance to deploy IT that could give them a competitive advantage and sustained growth at a reduced

cost (Johanson *et al.*, 2015; Bharathi and Mandal, 2015). The suggestions above that SMEs could gain IT infrastructural benefits leading to strategic benefits through ERP further buttresses Teittinen *et al.*'s (2013) argument that SMEs may not have the resources to take full advantage of ERP, but the benefits are sometimes interconnected.

Zhu *et al.* (2010) among other studies (Dezdar and Ainin, 2011; Almahamid and Awsi, 2015) identified an IT infrastructural benefit as a possible contribution of ERP to businesses including SMEs. They, however, argued that achieving this benefit or any other benefit would depend on the successful deployment of ERP, and factors such as top management support, company support, organisational culture, sectorial differences and other CSFs, as mentioned earlier in this chapter.

2.7.5. ORGANISATIONAL BENEFITS

The ERP benefit framework by Shang and Seddon (2000) suggests that the organisational contribution of ERP ranges from support for change and support for organisational learning to building a common vision. Uwizeyemungu and Raymond (2012) studied the organisational contributions of ERP using the Resource Based View (RBV). Through study of the cases of manufacturing SMEs, it was found that ERP does contribute to a firm's operational and managerial processes. The contribution ensured improved organisational performance and enabled strategic improvement. Staehr *et al.* (2012) suggest that the ERP system can contribute organisational benefits to businesses, but this could be influenced by different factors.

The literature review suggests that SMEs could benefit from the ERP system in the varying ways discussed above depending on their business needs. It was, however, suggested that achieving those benefits depends on the successful adoption of the ERP system. However, studies identified family influence as an important determinant of success with ERP in SFBs (Smith, 2016). The next sections discuss family businesses and specifically small family businesses to understand how a family's influence could affect ERP adoption.

2.8. FAMILY BUSINESS (FB)

As much as FBs share some similarities with other forms of business, there remain clear distinctions between them and others in terms of ownership and management style (Chua *et al.*, 2003; Sharma, 2004). Although there is no generally accepted definition of FBs, they are distinguished from other businesses by their ownership, management and common goals

(Ibrahim *et al.*, 2001), which is why Chua *et al.* (2003) described family business as a “*business governed and/or managed on a sustainable, potentially cross-generational basis to shape and perhaps pursue the formal or implicit vision of the business held by members of the same family or a small number of families.*” However, several studies adopted the PWC’s definition, which is mainly based on ownership, management and decision-making, and ignores the goals of FBs. PWC (2012, 2014) described FBs as “1. *Whose owner or family (wife, parent, child or child’s direct heir) holds the majority of the vote; 2. At least a member of the family is in the management of the business; and 3. The owner or family possesses at least 25% of voting right through their share capital, and at least one family member is involved in management.*” Chua *et al.*’s (2003) definition besides showing ownership and management composition, also shows the main attributes of FBs, while the PWC’s definition shows the different conditions that make a business, a family business. The two descriptions will be adopted for this research. The implication is that any business that meets any of the conditions stated by both Chua *et al.* (2003) and PWC would be considered as a family business by this study.

2.9. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF FAMILY BUSINESSES

The Institute for Family Business (IFB) (2011) reported that there were over three million family businesses in the UK in 2010, which constitutes about 66% of private sector businesses and creates about 41% (9.2 million) of the UK’s employment. This figure is likely to be higher than this today considering the fact that FBs have continued to flourish since the recession (PWC, 2014). This indicates the immense contribution of FBs to the UK’s economic development and how crucial sustaining the trend of family businesses is to the country. BIS (2013) however reported that FBs are an integral part of SMEs as they constitute about 60%, 56% and 46% of micro (1-9), small (10-49) and medium (50-249) businesses, respectively (IFB, 2010; PWC, 2012; BIS 2014). It is also argued that most businesses started up as FBs as families represent a financial resource for business start-ups (Campopiano *et al.*, 2014). This may suggest that the sustenance and growth of FBs is immensely beneficial to economic development (IFB, 2008). However, SBS (2012) reports that most small family businesses (SFBs) are less willing to grow and are relatively older than their non-FB counterparts due to their focus on survival/sustenance and succession. Studies suggest that as much as small family businesses may not be willing to grow, their sustenance is crucial not just to the family owners but also the UK economy (Westhead, 2002; BIS, 2013, 2014). According to Price-Water Cooper’s 2012 and 2014 studies and

Laforet (2013), FBs are more likely to achieve the objective of growth in today's competitive market through technological innovation. PWC (2014), in fact, suggested the ERP system as one technology that could help FBs gain competitive advantage.

It should, however, be noted that most studies on FBs are focused on SMEs. This could be due to the suggestion that large enterprises constitute only about 2% of FBs, while family SMEs constitute about 98% (SBS, 2012; BIS, 2014; De Massis *et al.*, 2013, De Massis, 2016). Although most studies on FBs are generalised to SMEs, it is found that small family businesses exhibit more of the family characteristics of a family business than other sizes of family business (Dessi *et al.*, 2014; De Massis *et al.*, 2016). Further discussions will centre on SFBs as the interest of this study is to understand if and how family characteristics affect ERP adoption.

2.10. SMALL FAMILY BUSINESSES (SFBs)

Based on extant literature, it would be misleading to treat all sizes of family business as the same. The difference between SMEs and large enterprises has long been identified as significant and cannot be neglected in family businesses (Dietrich, 2012; Kumar *et al.*, 2012; Bauman-Pauly *et al.*, 2013). Also, some studies argued that medium enterprises are closer to large enterprises than they are to small businesses in terms of structure, management and financial capability, so small businesses should be distinguished from medium enterprises (Pett *et al.*, 2012; Flynn *et al.*, 2013). BIS (2012) among other studies (Bauchet and Morduch, 2013; Flynn *et al.*, 2013) even noted the differences between micro and small businesses, based mainly on the number of employees. But other studies argued that even though there may be differences between micro and small businesses in terms of number of employees and resource capability, they are similar in terms of structure, management and financing, and they are largely classified as the same (Turner *et al.*, 2012; Daskalakis *et al.*, 2013), which is based on studies suggesting that small and medium businesses represent about 98% of family businesses (SBS, 2012; BIS, 2013) and that small family businesses hold more family values than others (De Massis *et al.*, 2016). This research intends to investigate the family business which exhibits the most attributes of FBs to understand how familiness affects ERP adoption and the benefits to the retail business. Small family businesses are the focus of this research as studies have suggested that they exhibit the most family values and characteristics, but considering that in micro businesses activities are less complex and relatively easy to manage (Daskalakis *et al.*, 2013), they are less likely to consider the adoption of the ERP system.

Also, the ERP usage graph shown in Figure 7 suggests that ERP usage in micro businesses is almost non-existent.

For the purposes of this research, small family businesses have between 10 and 49 employees and are owned and managed by a family or group of families (BIS, 2014). Studies suggest that most SFBs are not interested in growth but long-term sustenance and succession to the next generation due to the fear of losing control and family values (PWC 2012, 2014; BIS 2013, 2014). BIS (2013) also suggests that even the few SFBs interested in growth may have adequate knowledge on how to implement growth. Other studies suggest that other SFBs may just not be willing to grow due to the fear of losing control, resistance to change and to prioritising long-term sustenance over short-term growth in profit (Sirmon and Hitt, 2003; BIS, 2014).

However, for all the interest in business sustainability/survival and succession, Laforet (2013) found that only one-tenth of SFBs survive till the second generation and even fewer survive beyond that. This could be for various reasons including policies, not enough financial support and not adopting enough technology (Laforet, 2013; De Massis *et al.*, 2012). However, considering that studies suggest that technology such as the ERP system is crucial for the survival of family businesses (PWC 2012; 2014; Laforet, 2013, De Massis *et al.*, 2012a, 2015), investment in such technology in SFBs could be vital to their sustenance, especially in a highly competitive environment like the UK's retail industry (Farkas, 2016). Although recent studies on family businesses have focused on technology, innovation and new product development (Cassia and De Massis *et al.*, 2012a; De Massis *et al.*, 2012b, 2016; Laforet, 2013), there remains little evidence of how much FSMEs, and especially small family businesses, benefit from specific technology like the ERP system (Laforet, 2013, Smith, 2016). Despite identifying the ERP system as potentially beneficial to SFBs (PWC, 2014; Lasisi *et al.*, 2017), little has so far been done to improve SFBs' knowledge of such technology that may be beneficial to their sustenance (Lui and Chen, 2014). The need for such a study becomes more important as previous work has identified that the family's perception of technology is crucial to the decision to adopting such technology (Kellerman *et al.*, 2012). In fact, Smith (2016) studied ERP in family firms and found that family involvement in a business reduces the chances of successful implementation of an ERP system.

With the ERP system identified as potentially beneficial to FBs but the involvement of the family being a factor militating against its success, the next section of this study discusses family involvement in business, which is also known as familiness (Chrisman *et al.*, 2015; Konig *et al.*, 2013).

2.11. FAMILINESS

Familiness is that characteristic that distinguishes a FB from a non-FB, i.e. the unique characteristics of a business that are the result of family involvement (Kellerman, 2010; Chrisman *et al.*, 2015; Konig *et al.*, 2013). Familiness has, over the years, been studied through theories, such as the systems theory, Resource Based View (RBV), and the agency theory (Weismeier-Sammer and Von Schlippe, 2013). However, due to the heterogeneous nature of FBs, it is argued that definitions may limit the scope of familiness and do not capture the heterogeneous and unique nature of individual FBs (Norqvist, 2015; Kellerman *et al.*, 2014; Chrisman *et al.*, 2015). This heterogeneity according to Leaptrott (2005) could be as a result of individual family member differences, or the industry among other factors. Weismeier-Sammer and Von Schlippe (2013) after a review of familiness through the theories conclude that the relationship between the family and the business should be looked at from the decision premise viewpoint in which the family is responsible for the decisions.

Considering that this study is aimed at investigating the effect of familiness on ERP adoption, the proposed view of familiness above is an appropriate theory as it looks at familiness as the effect of family involvement on strategic business decisions (ERP adoption). The family's decisions affect business performance and technology adoption (Spencer *et al.*, 2012; Smith, 2016).

2.12. FAMILINESS AND TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION

Studies suggest that familiness influences the adoption of technology in FBs and especially in SFBs where the family's influence is most noticeable (Kellerman *et al.*, 2014; Chrisman *et al.*, 2015; Konig *et al.*, 2013). Konig *et al.* (2013) suggest that familiness is continuous and the 4Cs (command, continuity, community and connection) are useful measures to use in its assessment. It is, however, argued that the heterogeneous nature of FBs makes familiness more difficult to measure than Konig *et al.* (2013) suggest (Kellerman *et al.*, 2014; Chrisman *et al.*, 2015). Smith (2016) further buttresses Chrisman *et al.*'s (2015) argument by recognising that the quantitative nature of his study made it difficult to adequately research the effects of familiness on ERP success.

The family ownership within SFBs affects technology adoption as the decisions are down to the owner-manager 's (family) perception of such technology (Spencer *et al.*, 2012). With FBs being an open system, factors such as business performance or succession could change the goal of the business and influence how familiness affects technology adoption (Kotlar and De Massis, 2013; Patel and Chrisman, 2014). However, Decker and Gunther (2017) found that the chance of successfully adopting a technological innovation reduce with succession, especially after the second generation due to dependence on the family's legacy system.

Carrasco-Hernandez and Jimenez-Jimenez (2013) suggest that SFBs would innovate if such innovation was deemed as crucial to their goals and not just for short-term profit or growth. It is suggested that the main driving goals of SFBs are family control, survival and continuity. Considering that the decision for SFBs to successfully adopt a new technology or innovate strategically may depend on the perceived benefits of such technology (Casia and De Massis, 2012; De Massis *et al.*, 2016), the next sections focus on establishing, through the literature, the implications of ERP adoption for the characteristics of SFBs (i.e. their internal capabilities and strategic goals). However, research has found that the conceptual knowledge of ERP benefits may not be as important as the perception of the family manager in SFBs (Ibrahim *et al.*, 2001; Spencer *et al.*, 2012; Smith, 2016). The focus of this research is to empirically establish ERP adoption knowledge in SFBs through familiness.

2.13. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF SFBs

Due to the family's involvement in business, the extant literature has identified some characteristics that are typical of FBs but are more noted in SFBs. Despite the arguments on how family influence affects SFBs, the literature agrees on some characteristics that are typical of SFBs due to family involvement. These characteristics include family-styled management; family-influenced decision-making, unstructured operational processes, complex resource management, strategic interest in the sustenance of business and succession of ownership (Basu, 2014; Songini and Gnan, 2015; Acquah, 2016). Discussing these characteristics, on the one hand, creates a clearer understanding of the effect of familiness on SFBs and, on the other hand, helps identify if the ERP system is able to contribute to the characteristics of the SFB. These characteristics are discussed below.

2.13.1. FAMILY-STYLED MANAGEMENT

Family businesses are distinctively different from their non-FB counterparts as family involvement in ownership and management dictates business goals, behaviour and

performance (Chrisman *et al.*, 2005, 2012, 2015; Dyer, 2006;). It is suggested that management in SFBs involves personalising authority amongst family members in such a way that it is centralised and resembles family authority settings (Carney, 2005; Gedajlovic *et al.*, 2004; Stewart & Hitt, 2012). Family-styled leadership is such that the eldest member of the family leads the business (Carney, 2005). BIS (2013; 2014) suggests that family businesses, and especially SFBs, strive to maintain this family control and do not often seek any external aid.

However, while some studies suggest that family management helps remove agency issues (Zellweger *et al.*, 2013; Miller *et al.*, 2013), other studies suggest that it could, in fact, promote more agency problems depending on the level of family involvement and structure of the business (Carney, 2005; Chrisman *et al.*, 2012; Songini and Gnan, 2015). For example, the pursuit of non-economic goals such as firm philanthropy by family managers either benefits the business or causes harm (Carney, 2005; Chrisman *et al.*, 2005, 2012). Studies show that there is heterogeneity as to the influence of family involvement in family firms for various reasons ranging from management structure to the level of family commitment (Chrisman *et al.*, 2012; Zellweger *et al.*, 2012; Kim and Gao, 2013). Dessi *et al.* (2014) suggest that the management of market knowledge by retail SFBs in advanced European countries helps them compete with superstores. Hence, while family management may be positive for business (Zellweger *et al.*, 2013; Miller *et al.*, 2013; Dessi *et al.*, 2014), the pursuit of non-economic goals by family managers sometimes leads to conflicts which may be dire for business (Songini and Gnan, 2015; Nose, 2015; Alderson, 2015, Ibrahim *et al.*, 2015). It was, however, found that an adaptive structure supports effective management as a solution to potential conflicts that may arise from family involvement in management (Nose *et al.*, 2015; Alderson, 2015; KPMG, 2011).

2.13.2. FAMILY-INFLUENCED STRATEGIC DECISION-MAKING

Making decisions in a SFB may not be as it is in non-family businesses. Several studies indicate that the altruist nature of the family means that both family goals and business goals are considered before decisions are made in a family business, and especially in a SFBs (Habbershon and Williams, 1999; Sirmon and Hitt, 2003; Miller and Le Breton-Miller, 2006; Farkas, 2016). Miller and Le Breton-Miller (2006) argued that unless the family and business goals align, the SFB may not gain a competitive advantage as there is likely to be a conflict of interest when decisions are made. Business-owning families tend to feel a sense of

responsibility for the community, which then brings about firm philanthropy (Stanley, 2015). Firm philanthropy, according to the discussion in 2.13.1, is a non-economic goal of FBs with mixed consequences for the business (Stanley, 2015). This tendency also calls for extra effort from the family to decide on how resources are managed (Campopiano *et al.*, 2014; Stanley, 2015). Stanley (2015) also suggests that some family businesses often allow the more experienced and committed family members to make important decisions, while other studies argue that the older members of the family are usually responsible for such strategic decision-making in SFBs (Carney, 2005; Stewart & Hitt, 2012). Factors such as family norms, attitude or perceived control of the business affect financial decisions in SFBs (Kellerman *et al.*, 2014). It, thus, means that SFBs support using internal funding rather than external financial assistance for fear of losing control, except if such aid is from another FB with common interests (Kellerman *et al.*, 2014). As external funds often support firm development and openness to further investment, such reluctance may limit the chances of the survival of a SFB due to the limited resources in a small business (Sirmon and Hitt, 2003; Poutziouris, 2001). Ibrahim *et al.*, (2001) also argued that strategic decisions in SFBs are determined by family considerations and this viewpoint buttresses Kellerman *et al.*'s (2014) findings. However, decisions by SFBs to adopt technology are determined by the benefits the family perceives it may achieve from the technology (Casia and De Massis, 2012; Carrasco-Hernandez and Jimenez-Jimenez, 2013). Carrasco-Hernandez and Jimenez-Jimenez (2013) in fact suggest that SFBs tend to fully commit to the adoption of any technology that is perceived as beneficial to their goals.

In terms of finances, research by Bagnoli *et al.* (2011), Croci *et al.* (2011) and Koropp *et al.* (2013) show the different financing styles of family businesses, such as mixed internal and external funding, collaboration, etc. These studies point to the heterogeneous nature of family businesses despite the common patterns.

2.13.3. UNSTRUCTURED OPERATIONAL SYSTEM

Studies suggest that SFBs have a less professional structure than non-family businesses due to the involvement of the family (Westhead *et al.*, 2002; BIS, 2014). SFBs, due to family trust, tend to favour an unstructured organisational setup, especially when other family members work within the business (Chrisman *et al.*, 2014). In fact, some studies indicate that SFBs require the experience of non-family members to turn towards a more professional structure (Gedajlovic *et al.*, 2004; Pazzaglia *et al.*, 2013). However, it has been argued that an

unstructured organisational setup makes accountability difficult and may hinder business performance (Schulze *et al.*, 2001; Gedajlovic *et al.*, 2004; Pazzaglia *et al.*, 2013). Another attribute identified is that top managers in SFBs are often not highly educated or often do not have any managerial expertise outside the family firm (Westhead *et al.*, 2002; BIS, 2014). Due to their level of knowledge and experience, it is usually difficult for them to outperform the competition.

2.13.4. COMPLEX RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The resources available to a family business, also known as their socio-economic wealth, are financial, human and non-financial resources (Sirmon and Hitt, 2003; Habbershon and Williams, 1999; Songini and Gnan, 2015). The limited availability of these resources especially in SFBs implies the need for effective management if competitive advantage is to be gained or maintained (Sirmon and Hitt, 2003).

However, the non-financial goals of SFBs affect how its resources are managed, and hence, strategic planning is also affected (Songini and Gnan, 2015; Nose, 2015; Alderson, 2015). For example, SFBs may require an alliance or collaboration with other companies to be able to gain enough competitive advantage to survive due to their limited resources (Sirmon and Hitt, 2003). However, most SFBs are not willing to do this because they want to maintain business at a level where resources can be easily managed (BIS, 2013; BIS, 2015). Also, the need to be responsible for a SFB's host community and family reputation means that there is a need to commit resources to non-economic activities like firm philanthropy (Campopiano *et al.*, 2014; Zellweger *et al.*, 2013). Zellweger *et al.* (2013) defined firm philanthropy as the selfless financial commitment to serve other social or humanitarian purposes. It is the SFB belief that even though firm philanthropy may not directly affect the business, it helps the family's reputation and hence, the company's reputation in the community (Campopiano *et al.*, 2014). On the other hand, the commitment of resources to such non-financial goals could result in detrimental consequences, such as family disputes or inadequate resource commitment to the financial goals of the business (Sirmon and Hitt, 2003; Fletcher, 2002; Acquah, 2016).

Managing human resources in all businesses may be tricky but it becomes more so when the management and employees are members of the same family (Sirmon and Hitt, 2003; Acquah, 2016). According to Sirmon and Hitt (2003), having family members as employees and managers could either mean better business performance, as they have the tacit

knowledge of the business after a long time (human capital), or it could result in keeping unskilled and ineffectual employees and managers in the business while preventing the skilled and determined non-family members from coming to the fore due to altruism (Kellerman, 2005). Studies, such as those by Lenzner and Peddleton (2007) and Kidwell *et al.* (2012), suggest that checking employee activities irrespective of family affiliation would be beneficial to the improvement of SFBs. However, holding family employees responsible for their actions could result in a conflict which may affect the business (Kidwell *et al.*, 2012). There is then the need for a structure that ensures accountability irrespective of family affiliation (Kidwell *et al.*, 2012; Stewart and Hitt, 2012).

2.13.5. STRATEGIC INTEREST IN BUSINESS SUSTENANCE

Management of a SFB is mainly concerned with family welfare and SFBs often strive to maintain business survival at a level sufficient to provide for the family (Ibrahim *et al.*, 2001; BIS, 2014). However, prioritising family values in FBs make them more risk averse and unwilling to grow, thereby limiting their economic value (Bhaumik, Driffield and Pal, 2010; Sciascia *et al.*, 2012). Although Calabrò & Mussolino (2011) and Chen (2011) argued that SFBs tend to take more risks and are more interested in extending their market reach through internationalisation, it is generally agreed that SFBs prioritise sustaining the business over short-term gains or growth (BIS, 2012; Laforet, 2013).

In a bid for continuous business sustenance, leadership succession becomes an important goal of SFBs (Gilding *et al.*, 2015; Collins *et al.*, 2016; Chen, 2016). The primary aim of the older generation is to ensure continuity of the business and promote family wellbeing after retirement by passing managerial control to the next generation (Collins *et al.*, 2016; Chen, 2016). However, it is argued that family businesses require innovation to survive or grow in today's increasingly competitive market (Liu and Chen, 2014; Bresciani, 2013; PWC, 2014). Kraus *et al.* (2012) also found that family businesses tend to adopt a technology that benefits the business while also maintaining family control. PWC (2014) identifies the ERP system as one technology that is able to help FBs survive in a competitive market. The next section of this chapter discusses, based on the literature, how the ERP system contributes to the characteristics of a SFB identified above.

2.14. THE IMPLICATIONS OF ERP ADOPTION TO SFB CHARACTERISTICS

As established above, family involvement in business means that SFBs have business characteristics that differ from other businesses. With the suggestion that the ERP system is needed for SFB survival (PWC, 2014), this section discusses the implications of ERP adoption to the SFB characteristics identified above.

2.14.1. CENTRALISED MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The ERP system is a technology that integrates business information and processes, and its adoption could help SFBs easily achieve the much-desired centralised management of the business (Teittinen *et al.*, 2013; Kramer, 2016). The ERP system, if successfully adopted, can integrate all business processes and make information available on a central database, making it accessible to the family management team as and when needed (Teittinen *et al.*, 2013). With centralised business processes and information, the SFB manager can easily manage the business even when not physically present (Johanson *et al.*, 2015; Mashari, 2014; Bharathi and Mandal, 2015).

2.14.2. IMPROVED DECISION-MAKING

As discussed above, decision-making in SFBs involves both family and business considerations. Adopting the ERP system for any business means faster decision-making due to more readily available business information (Chabouni and Yahia, 2014; Marsh *et al.*, 2014). However, in SFBs, family knowledge or considerations are usually tacit (Dessi and Floris; 2010; Dessi *et al.*, 2014). As the ERP system cannot manage knowledge not made available to it, it may not have the capacity to contribute to family considerations in decision-making. However, the ERP system has the capability to obtain both internal and market information and make it readily available for fast decisions (Garverick, 2014). Even though the ERP system may not be able to help with family considerations, it still has the capacity to make the required business information readily available to the right member of the family in order to allow them to make decisions.

2.14.3. PROFESSIONAL OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE

A successfully adopted ERP system means that business processes will need to be re-engineered to ensure that the right information is fed into the system (Christofi *et al.*, 2013; Roskill, 2014). Although unstructured business processes are typical of small businesses (Roskill, 2014), they are more prevalent in SFBs due to family trust (Chrisman *et al.*, 2014).

However, as an unstructured business implies non-accountability and underperformance, the ERP system helps structure the business (Christofi *et al.*, 2013).

With such a structured system, SFBs will have a more professional outlook in that they will be accountable without necessarily causing family conflict (Gedajlovic *et al.*, 2004; Pazzaglia *et al.*, 2013). A structured business also improves business performance and accountability as it is easy to identify where the business is lacking (Pazzaglia *et al.*, 2013).

2.14.4. BETTER MANAGED RESOURCES

Although adopting the ERP system may not contribute to non-financial goals of SFBs such as firm philanthropy, it will help the business better manage business resources, such as financial, human and other non-financial resources (Sirmon and Hitt, 2003; Habbershon and Williams, 1999; Songini and Gnan, 2015).

With the ERP system, financial information is automated and available in real time; product and service information is also readily available. Such easy visibility makes the management of resources easier than with the legacy system that SFBs are known for (Dechow and Mouritsen, 2005; Teittennen, 2013).

2.14.5. SUPPORTS SFB STRATEGY

ERP adoption could bring about seamless collaboration with other businesses especially larger competitors, which could help small businesses grow (Castellina, 2013; Koslage and Ritz, 2015). It could mean that it is easier to collaborate rather than compete with large enterprises while still maintaining control of business through ERP. This would represent a strategic means of improving the business' access to resources and still retain control of the business (Dyer, 2006; Granlund, 2011; Teittennen *et al.*, 2013). This would imply improving the business' market reach, sustain the business and help the business grow while still maintaining control.

As it is known that SFB's fear of growth emanates from the fear of losing control, ERP adoption could help SFBs grow and still maintain family control. Also, as the ERP system is an enduring technology as evidenced from its evolution in the last two decades, it is a technology for the long term (Koh and Simpson, 2005; Haddara and Zach, 2011; Johanson, 2015; Teittennen *et al.*, 2013; Kramer, 2016). The ERP system then represents a technology that could sustain SFBs over the long term. As SFBs crave sustenance over short-term growth (Sciascia *et al.*, 2012), the ERP system could help them achieve this.

2.14.6. SUPPORTS SFB LEADERSHIP SUCCESSION

As information and resources are centrally managed with the ERP system (Chabouni and Yahia, 2014; Marsh *et al.*, 2014), the technology could support a SFB's succession plans. The succession process involves the transfer of facts and files which could be difficult (Gilding *et al.*, 2015; Collins *et al.*, 2016). Adopting such a technology could make the succession process seamless as the required information can be centrally managed by the ERP system (Laforet 2013). It is worthy of note, however, that the tacit business knowledge of SFBs cannot be managed by technology as this knowledge is undocumented.

With the discussions above justifying studies (PWC, 2014; Lasisi *et al.*, 2017) suggesting that the ERP system is beneficial to family businesses, it should be noted that those benefits are not achievable without successfully adopting the technology (Raymond and Uwizeyemungu, 2007; Bharathi *et al.*, 2014). Internal rifts due to non-commitment of stakeholders may also lead to businesses not benefitting from the ERP system (Teittinen *et al.*, 2013). This means that for SFBs to enjoy the benefits of ERP, like other technology, the full commitment of the business and family is required (Carrasco-Hernandez and Jimenez-Jimenez, 2013). SFBs are likely to commit to the adoption of a technology perceived beneficial to the business and literature findings suggest ERP can be beneficial to SFBs. It could, therefore, be assumed that the chances of successful implementation of an ERP system in SFBs is high, however, Smith (2016) suggests that the chances of success are low.

It is important now to focus this study on a specific industry as the industry determines ERP adoption and there is theoretical evidence of ERP in retail SMEs (Lipi *et al.*, 2015; Ganesh and Mehta, 2016; Kramer *et al.*, 2016). This research focuses on the UK's retail industry as discussed next in this chapter. The focus on the retail industry is due to the level of competition within the industry and the significance of small retail businesses to the economy (Rhodes, 2013; ONS, 2016).

2.15. THE UK'S RETAIL INDUSTRY

The retail industry is classified by The Valuation Office Agency (VOA) as well as the Office for National Statistics (ONS) as companies, such as supermarkets, corner shops, local post offices, restaurants, cafes and launderettes that provide goods and services. (CG, 2009). The classification of the retail industry, however, excludes transportation services, car sales and showrooms, and garden centres. The retail industry involves spending by consumers in shops and online while wholesalers are the shops' suppliers (Rhodes, 2015a). The industry is

divided into specialised (pharmacy, camera stores, bookstores, etc.) and non-specialised stores (supermarkets, convenience stores and departmental stores).

2.16. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE UK'S RETAIL INDUSTRY

While the non-specialised stores, i.e. supermarkets, convenience stores and departmental stores constituted 20% of retail businesses, they provided 51% of turnover and 47% of employment as of 2013 (Rhodes, 2013; ONS, 2016).

The House of Commons report on Businesses in the UK suggests that the retail industry is an important sector of the UK economy, contributing about 10% of total businesses (Rhodes, 2015B). The sector, however, accounts for 19% of total employment and 37% of turnover, and is the second biggest sector behind the service sector (Rhodes, 2015A, 2015B). Business Population Estimates (BPE, 2015) also shows that the sector accounts for the highest SME employment and turnover in the UK's private sector, accounting for 15% employment and one-third of turnover as shown below.

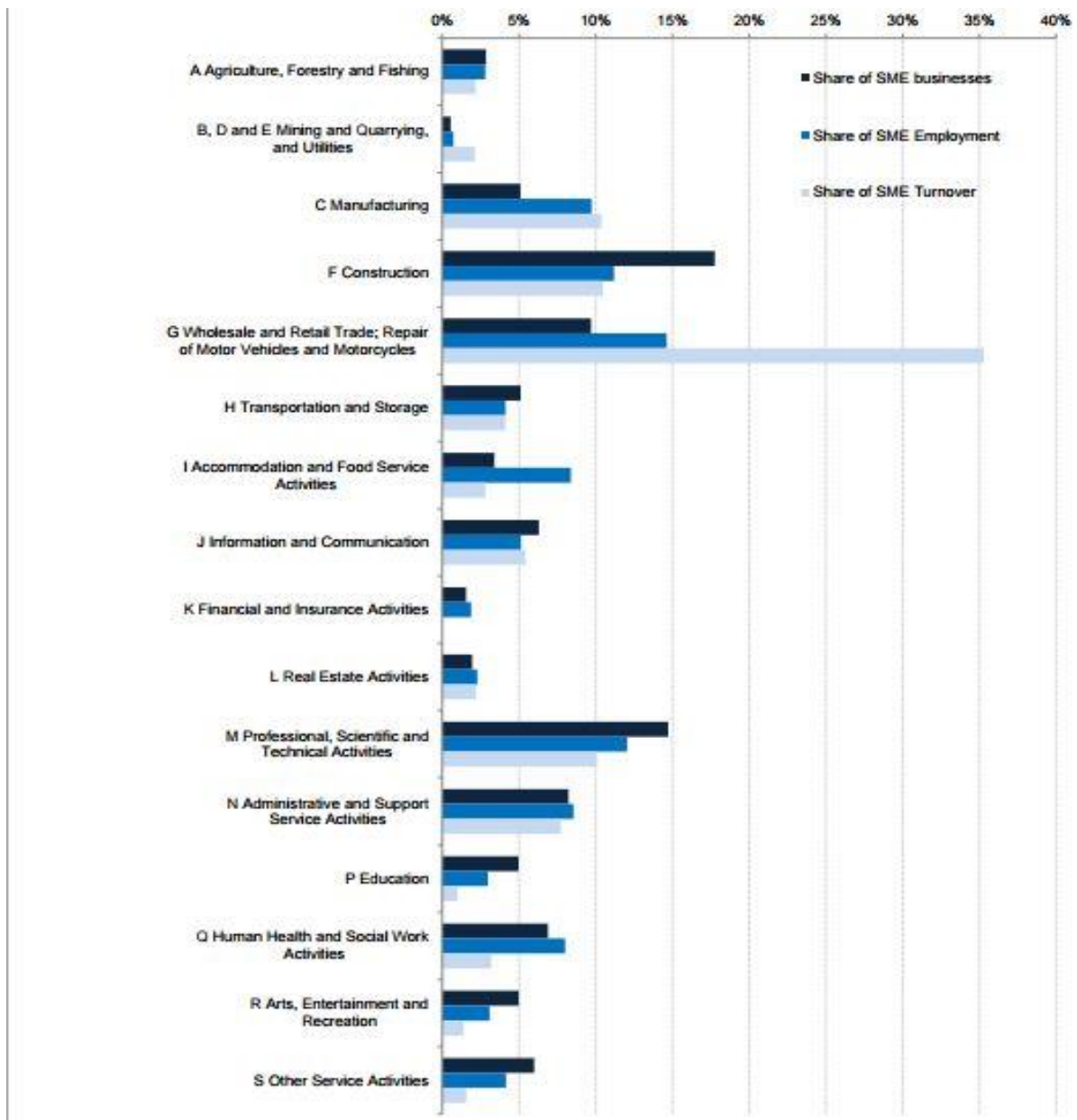


Figure 3: Share of SME number, SME employment and SME turnover by industrial sector at the start of 2015. Source: BPE (2015).

It has also been found that since 2007 the retail industry has often out-performed the UK economy as a whole. However, the downturn in the economy between late-2007 and 2009 showed that the industry performed worse than the whole UK economy with negative growth of 9.3% compared to 5.8% for the whole economy (Rhodes, 2015A). The sector picked up after 2009 and considerable growth has been recorded as the industry has grown by 5% since the first quarter of 2013 as compared to 2.5% for the whole economy. Also, retail sales for June 2016 showed continued growth as sales increased by 4.3% in comparison to the same period in 2015 (ONS, 2016). It should be noted that the ONS (2016) figure above represents

the 38th consecutive month-by-month growth recorded by the industry. This indicates that the UK's retail industry is crucial to the UK economy and the growth rate of the industry suggests an increase in the level of competition within the sector.

2.17. COMPETITION IN THE UK'S RETAIL SMES

The ease of entrance into the retail industry has made it straightforward for small businesses to enter the market and this has increased the level of competition amongst SMEs like never before (Jimisiah *et al.*, 2016). For this reason, there is always a continuous struggle for market share in the retail industry, which includes, for example, the battle for customers, the battle to beat the increasing competition and the struggle to adapt to the changing market (Hutchinson *et al.*, 2013; Zakariah *et al.*, 2013; Elkady *et al.*, 2014; Jimisiah *et al.*, 2016). Also, the advent of information and communication technology, and e-commerce has increased competition within the industry, especially for SMEs (Rhodes, 2015; Jimisiah *et al.*, 2016). It is projected that by the year 2020 online retail will influence total sales by about 75% and store sales will diminish to 66% from the present day level of 86% (Javelin, n.d.). The challenges facing retail SMEs include customer loyalty retention, finances and more importantly technological innovation. These challenges are discussed below (Hutchinson *et al.*, 2013; Ahmed *et al.*, 2015; ONS, 2016).

2.18. CHALLENGES FOR RETAIL SMES

A number of challenges facing the retail industry, especially retail SMEs, have been identified and studied over the years. Some of the challenges, which studies suggest are important, such as the relationship with the customer, finance and technology, are discussed below (Zakaria *et al.*, 2013; Dessi *et al.*, 2014; Ahmed *et al.*, 2015).

2.18.1. CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP

The retail industry is known as a customer driven sector as growth and competition are related to customer spending (Hutchinson *et al.*, 2013; Elkady *et al.*, 2014; Rhodes, 2015A; Jimisiah *et al.*, 2016). The level of competition in the retail industry suggests the need for businesses to keep customers satisfied and away from competitors (Zakaria *et al.*, 2013; Rhodes, 2015A, 2015B). Studies (by, for example, Kotler (2000) and Zakaria *et al.* (2013) suggest that customer loyalty, which is usually the result of customer satisfaction, brings about customer retention and improved profitability.

Despite the importance of the customer relationship to retail businesses, it is difficult for SMEs to maintain this relationship without innovation due to their limited resources, which makes it almost impossible for them to compete with large enterprises (Hutchinson *et al.*, 2013). Managing the customer relationship is especially important for SMEs as their limited resources often stifle their plans for market share expansion (Winer, 2001; O'Dwyer *et al.*, 2009). Zakaria *et al.* (2013) studied the relationship between retail SMEs' use of loyalty programmes, and customer satisfaction and loyalty. The findings of the study suggest that there is a significantly positive relationship between the three variables studied. Despite the suggested importance of such programs to keep customers away from the competition, Reijonen and Laukkanen (2010) and Spence and Essoussi (2010) argue that owner-managed SMEs (mostly family owned) either do not identify the importance of using such programmes or struggle to do so successfully.

Danes and Floris (2010), however, argued that the combination of the social, economic and financial wealth of small family businesses could be key to remaining competitive through customer retention. Dessi *et al.* (2014) buttressed Dessi and Floris' (2010) findings and explained how long-lived retail SFBs in advanced European countries manage to retain customers. They explained that SFBs' long-term knowledge of customer needs in their market is a competitive advantage which non-FBs may not have. Research suggests that such knowledge could help SFBs maintain good customer relationships thereby keeping existing customers and new customers happy (Biberman, 2001; Cooper *et al.*, 2005; Lamberti and Noci, 2010). Dessi *et al.* (2014) suggested that such customer knowledge gained through a close relationship with customers over a long period could become tacit and passed on to the next generations to maintain competitiveness. As much as it is agreeable that understanding customer preferences is key to customer satisfaction, loyalty and retention, it is however not clear if doing it the old way would be enough to sustain SFBs in today's technology-driven competitive market.

Evidence from Hutchinson *et al.* (2013) suggests that retail SMEs could benefit from a formal customer relationship management (CRM) system. It should be noted that even though the customer relationship is important to retail SMEs, owner-managed businesses such as SFBs struggle to use technology (CRM) to manage this relationship (Hutchinson *et al.*, 2013). CRM represents one of many offerings of the ERP system which SFBs could benefit from.

2.18.2. FINANCIAL CHALLENGES

Start-up and running costs are usually a huge challenge for small businesses irrespective of the industry (Abor and Quartey 2010; Dalberg, 2010). It is further argued that the lack of collateral or a proper financial record system make it difficult for SMEs to officially source funds (Dalberg, 2010; Ahmed *et al.*, 2015; Cant *et al.*, 2015). However, Ahmed *et al.* (2015) suggest that it is not only the factors above that contribute to the limited funding for smaller retail businesses. Factors such as weak management style, over-reliance on internal financing, among others were stated as also being responsible for SFB's limited access to finances. Looking at SFBs and the family-style of management, it could be said that such a management style is not a typical business-like style and it is what Ahmed *et al.* (2015) referred to as 'weak' management. Also, among SMEs, mid-sized businesses, i.e. those with 50+ employees have better access to funds than smaller businesses (Federal Reserve Bank, 2007; EC, 2013A; Kuntchev, 2013; Gabriel, 2015). Although the European Commission report (EC, 2013B) suggests that the lack of funding by retail SMEs has limited their access to radical innovation, Garbriel (2015) and Ahmed *et al.* (2015) suggest that keeping proper records and forming associations could help SMEs gain better access to funds. Ahmed *et al.* (2015) also suggest that technological innovation such as online lending could help bridge the financial gap for retail SMEs and SMEs in other sectors; Valenti *et al.* (2015) suggest that about 25% of small businesses surveyed in their study have at some point used online lenders. This implies that SMEs have recognised the potential benefits of technological innovation and are starting to take advantage, however, there is a need for further involvement with technology. Udel (2015) also suggests that technology is one means for retail SMEs to manage finances and access funds.

There have been studies on UK retail SMEs' access to funds by, for example, Armstrong *et al.* (2013), Macartney (2014) and Lee and Drever (2014) who suggest that access to funding could, like for other SMEs from other countries, help UK SMEs start up and especially grow. Even though some of the studies above suggest that the use of technology has helped improve SME access to funds, Armstrong *et al.* (2013) argue that the lending culture to SMEs in the UK by banks has remained poor and they suggest that it should improve if SMEs are to contribute more effectively to the economy. The British government started project Merlin to lend money to businesses, including retail SMEs, but Macartney (2014) argues that the project has not been as effective as expected for reasons ranging from lack of capacity and incentives for UK-owned banks to lend more, to lack of government intervention to compel UK banks to lend. Lee and Drever's (2014) study argues that SMEs in deprived places in the

UK are not less likely to access funding, but that factors such as managerial characteristics (perception), availability of collateral and financial records are more important factors. It can be argued that while fast-growing SMEs in the UK may or may not be granted funds, there are more unwilling borrowers than willing ones amongst SMEs (Brown and Lee, 2014). The fear of losing control of the business to banks or external lenders is the main reason for small businesses to be reluctant to seek external funds (Brown and Lee, 2014; Chachi and Hassan, 2015). This characteristic is typical of FBs. It could be suggested, based on the findings from the literature review, that the ERP system is one package that creates financial transparency for SMEs through financial management and improves the possibilities of access to loans and other financial benefits (Teittinen *et al.*, 2013).

2.18.3. TECHNOLOGICAL CHALLENGES

Technological innovation has been suggested as a possible way of helping retail SMEs with the previously mentioned challenges. However, it could be a double-edged sword for retail businesses (Pantano, 2014; Rhodes, 2015A). For example, Rhodes (2015A) and ONS (2016) suggest that online sales are growing at a rate such that it will dictate 60% of buyers' preferences by 2020. The figure below shows the rate of growth in online sales since 2007.

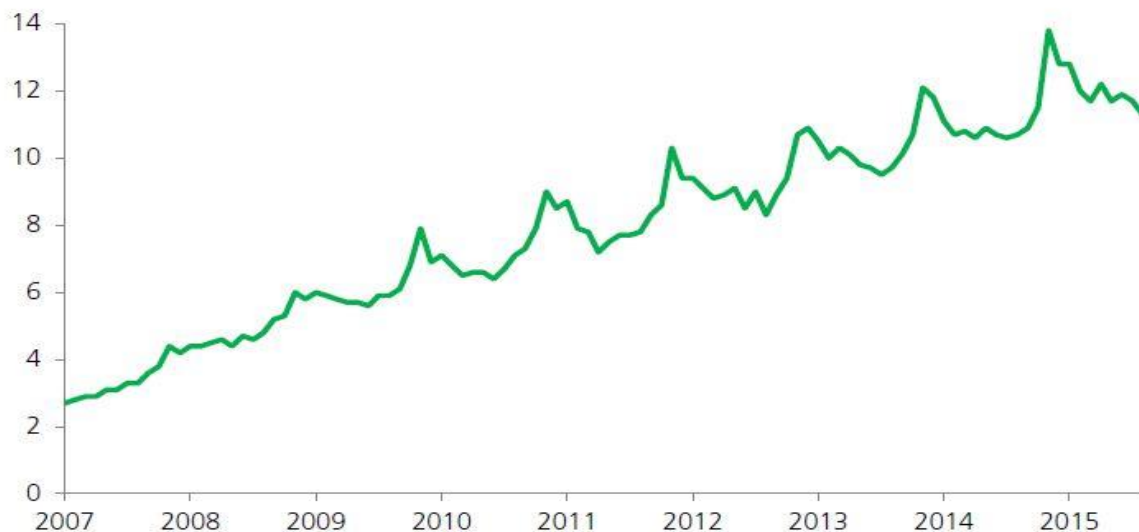


Figure 4: Online sales growth rate. Source: Rhodes (2015A)

Figure 10 shows that the highest rate of online sales was recorded in December 2014, but the rapid growth is predicted to continue into the future (Rhodes, 2015a). BIS (2011) confirms the strong online presence of high street stores, e.g. Asda, Tesco, etc. who are building their competitive advantage through their online platform.

This is just one example of a technological innovation that could represent a double-edged sword to SMEs. The advent of big data analytics represents a game changer in the retail industry as the predictive technology can affect decisions such as pricing and customer needs (Bradlow *et al.*, 2017; Lee, 2017). As large enterprises have started taking advantage of big data analytics, it becomes a challenge to the small business to keep up with such technological advancements (Lee, 2017; Cuquet *et al.*, 2017). ERP adoption could, however, be an important way for retail SMEs to cope with the challenge and take advantage of big data (Elragal, 2014). Other technologies such as customer relations management (CRM), account information systems (AIS) and point of sale (POS) systems have changed how business is done and could represent a challenge for SMEs if they remain with the legacy system (Pantano, 2014; Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson, 2014; Lipi *et al.*, 2015; Romero and Martinez-Roman, 2015).

Although technology is useful to the survival and growth of retail SMEs, including SFBs, it could also have detrimental consequences for the ones that fail to adopt or use it successfully. It is important to discuss how technology has been utilised in retail SMEs.

2.19. TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION IN RETAIL SMEs

Although Romero and Martinez-Roman (2015) suggest that the characteristics of the retail SME manager are important to their propensity to adopt technology, Pantanon (2014) suggests that there is an increasing demand for technological intervention by retail SMEs for various reasons ranging from marketing and customer retention to sales and financial records. This section will look at how technology has been used to cater for retail SMEs. Information technology (IT) or information and communication technology (ICT) has been used in some retail SMEs for different purposes including enhancing the customer relationship, and improving information and business management, and operational efficiency (Oh *et al.*, 2012; Chen and Tsou, 2012; Romero and Matinez-Roman, 2015). However, technology adoption in the UK's retail small businesses is dependent on the perception of the owner-manager (Kirby and Turner, 1993; Ghobakloo *et al.*, 2011; Romero and Martinez-Roman, 2015).

Some retail SMEs have adopted technology such as customer relationship management, customer loyalty cards and self-service technology (Nwankwo and Ajemunigbohun, 2013; Hutchinson *et al.*, 2013, 2015; Argawal *et al.*, 2014) to manage the customer relationship, satisfaction and retention. Others have used e-commerce, accounting information management (AIM), supply chain management and enterprise resource planning (Malhan,

2015; Lipi *et al.*, 2015; Kurnia *et al.*, 2015) to improve operational and managerial efficiencies.

A widely used technology by small retail businesses is the point of sale system (POS) which is a stand-alone system that records product prices and automates sales operations (Kirby and Turner, 1993; Cunningham *et al.*, 2015). Due to the wide acceptance of POS and its limitations, some POS providers (e.g. OpenBravo) now run it on an ERP platform for all-round enterprise benefits of the ERP system (Catano and Wahls, 2015).

ERP studies in the retail SME sector show that the ERP system is a technology that integrates business processes such that it delivers business-wide benefits, e.g. an improved customer relationship, resource management, operational efficiencies, etc. depending on the business' needs (Lipi *et al.*, 2015; Ganesh and Mehta, 2016; Kramer *et al.*, 2016). However, technology adoption in retail SMEs depends on ownership and business characteristics (Marcati *et al.*, 2008; Romero and Martinez-Roman, 2012, 2015).

The findings above suggest that the ERP system has the capability to solve retail SMEs' business problems but the ownership or leadership type is important to the adoption of such technology within the industry. Studying ERP adoption in retail SFBs then becomes imperative as family businesses are uniquely based on family ownership and the business characteristics associated with this type of ownership (Chua *et al.*, 2003; Sharma, 2004; De Massis *et al.*, 2012). This research, on the one hand, extends knowledge on retail studies that business ownership and characteristics are important to technology adoption. On the other hand, it contributes to ERP knowledge by establishing the significance of family involvement in ERP adoption in SFBs. The next section seeks to explore ERP adoption in the UK's retail SFBs from the archives of three UK ERP vendors. It is important to explore archival evidence of ERP adoption as studies to date indicate there is little theoretical evidence available of ERP adoption in the UK's retail SFBs.

2.20. ERP ADOPTION IN THE UK'S RETAIL FAMILY SMEs FROM ARCHIVES

As there is limited research on ERP adoption in retail SFBs in the literature, this section looks at the cases of successful ERP adoption in retail family SMEs from the archives of ERP vendors. This route was taken as it was not clear if and how such businesses adopt an ERP system, especially considering their uniqueness and how family characteristics affect technology adoption. Although the difference between family SMEs and SFBs based on size was established in the literature (BIS, 2013; De Massis *et al.*, 2016), SFBs are a part of

family SMEs and such criteria enabled a purposeful search for evidence of ERP adoption. Exploring family SMEs also allows this study to compare ERP adoption in SFBs to ERP adoption in mid-sized FBs, thereby contributing to the existing argument on the differences between FBs based on size, and considering the significance and competitive nature of the UK's retail industry.

Archival data are described as already gathered data, either raw or analysed, prior to the present study for other purposes (Fawcett *et al.*, 2008; Jones, 2010). Although such data may not be classified as part of extant literature, it is also not primary data as it was gathered for other purposes and prior to the research herein (Fawcett *et al.*, 2008; Jones, 2010). With successful ERP adoption, findings from cases of retail SMEs found in the archives of ERP vendors could give a preliminary insight into ERP within the context of the retail family SME. Archival data are suggested to be suitable when relevant or similar data that serves the purpose of the research are already available (Jones, 2010; Leonhardt and Niculescu, 2016). Such data may give access to more information in a timely manner (Fawcett *et al.*, 2008; Leonhardt and Niculescu, 2016). Besides the fact that previous studies (Shang and Seddon, 2000) have used a similar approach on a large scale to develop the ERP benefits framework, such an approach is recommended for ERP studies as it gives access to ordinarily not accessible businesses such as SFBs. The knowledge acquired at this stage gives an insight into ERP adoption and its benefits to FSMEs.

As it is understood that the business cases were gathered for marketing purposes and not for research, this study considered possible bias from individual vendors towards their products (Jones, 2010; Zaitzow and Fields, 2006). The cases were gathered from the archives of three ERP vendors in the UK and the possibility of bias was considered.

2.20.1. SUMMARY OF ARCHIVAL FINDINGS

In this section, ERP in family SMEs, as described above, is summarised in the table below for clarity.

Company name	Products	Size	Business challenges	ERP contribution
A1	Handling tools	150+	<p>Growth hampered by existing system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expensive system running costs • Manual invoicing and card payments • Disparate client information • Offline returns and faxed orders • Poor reporting and pricing capabilities 	<p>Substantial cost savings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dramatically improved efficiency • Optimised marketing strategy • Centralised customer information • Customer-specific pricing • Improved customer service • Automated card payments • Accurate customer reporting <p>Supports further growth</p>
A2	Construction supplies	100+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refocus on repair, maintenance and improvement sector • Expand diminishing local market • Improve customer service • Increase visibility of stock • Improve transparency of pricing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selling wider range of products • Improved stock management • Real-time visibility of product pricing and information for customers • Increased orders outside local area • Cost of e-commerce site less than opening new store • Increased online profile and

				credibility
A3	Grocery	230+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business expansion into ‘chill chain’ distribution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapting to government regulations • Improve web ordering facility • Integrate with 3rd-party system • Improve customer service • Provide customer reporting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continual business growth • Improved customer satisfaction • Successful expansion into chilled distribution • More responsive, user-friendly web ordering facilities • More efficient warehouse management
A4	Food	200+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding a solution to incorporate all business functions • Aligning processes across its new and existing sites • Adapting to growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased visibility of data • Traceability throughout processes • Support with growth goals
A5	Fashion	50+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New partner’s request for Business Management Technology • Business overheads reduction • Facilitation of efficient management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in administrative work • Employee efficiency improved • Faster training • Faster processing of all business transactions • Supports further growth through added functionality
A6	Food	20+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Succession into the third generation • Change in customer base • Need to keep up with competitors’ use of advanced technology • Business breaking even 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More structured system to adapt to the new customer base • Accurate stock and price information • Increased customer satisfaction • Increased turnover five

				<p>fold</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased product lines, orders and faster delivery time • Faster delivery of customer invoices via email • Business now grows profitably
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Table 7: Summary of archival cases.

2.20.2. ERP ADOPTION STYLE IN FAMILY SMEs

From the archives, it was found that there were a few family-owned retail SMEs to have adopted ERP. Of these few, only one of the businesses fitted the description of a small family business in terms of employee size, as used in this study.

In all the business cases identified to be family-owned SMEs, the adoption of the ERP system was reported to be for various business reasons, such as business expansion, external collaboration and strategic needs. However, in one case the adoption of the ERP system was family driven. It was reported that even though the need for ERP adoption became obvious years earlier, the adoption decision was not made until the third (3rd) generation manager took over the business. It is worthy of note that the only business case to fit this study’s description of a small family business was the only case reported to have had the adoption of ERP driven by the family.

However, despite the difference found in adoption behaviour between mid-sized family businesses and SFBs, no such difference was observed in the benefits of the ERP system to the businesses. Even though the businesses are unique in their characteristics as is expected of FBs (Kellerman *et al.*, 2012) and they benefitted differently from ERP, there is a pattern to these benefits based on the classification of ERP benefits (Shang and Seddon, 2000; Staehr *et al.*, 2012). These benefits are discussed below using the evidence summarised in 2.20.1.

2.20.3. THE BENEFITS OF ERP TO FAMILY SMEs

The benefits derived by FSMEs, according to the ERP benefit classification, are operational, managerial, strategic and IT infrastructural and they are discussed in this section.

2.20.3.1. OPERATIONAL BENEFITS

The ERP system contributed operational benefits to the six cases studied. The cost reduction, cycle time reduction or operational efficiency, quality improvement and customer service improvement experienced by the businesses are classified as operational benefits (Shang and Seddon, 2002; Shaehr, 2012). In Cases A1, A2, A3 and A6, ERP helped to improve customer service by improving customer-specific pricing, centralised customer information, improved customer reporting, and faster delivery of customer invoices; there was an all round improvement in customer services.

Operational efficiency or reduced cycle time was also experienced in all six cases. These benefits were experienced in different ways ranging from improved business efficiency, real-time visibility of products, improved employee efficiency, faster transaction processing, and faster order and delivery time.

While only Case A1 reported a reduction in operational costs, it can be said that all the family SMEs have experienced operational benefits from the adoption of ERP in different ways.

2.20.3.2. MANAGERIAL BENEFITS

The managerial contributions of the ERP system range from improved resource management (including human, financial, information and other resources) and decision-making to better management of performance (Teittinen *et al.*, 2013; Kolsage and Ritz, 2015). All the cases analysed show evidence that the ERP system contributed managerial benefits in at least one of the ways stated above. In Cases A1, A2, A3 and A6, the ERP system helped manage resources in different ways including centralised information, improved stock management, efficient warehouse management and more visible and accurate business data. All the businesses agreed that better information management made decision-making easier and faster. Case A5 affirmed that the ERP system helped improve administrative performance by reducing management workload.

It could be said at this point that the archival findings on ERP adoption in retail family SMEs substantiate the fact that an ERP system contributes managerial benefits to businesses.

2.20.3.3. STRATEGIC BENEFITS

The strategic benefits of ERP adoption include support for business growth, support in making business alliances (collaboration), the generation of product differentiation, and

building business innovation, cost leadership and external linkages (Davenport, 2000; Benfell *et al.*, 2013). All of the cases experienced strategic benefits in one way or another.

The successful adoption of ERP helped sustain Case A1's growth, optimised a new marketing strategy and supported further growth. In Case A2, the ERP system aided the sales of a wider range of products and helped improve business coverage. Case A3 experienced sustained growth and easy diversification of business through the use of ERP. The ERP system supported links between different business sites and helped sustain growth in Case A4. Case A5 reported sustained growth through ERP usage, while ERP helped Case A6 improve turnover and further growth of the business.

The ERP system supported growth, collaboration, diversification of business (differentiation of products) and external links in all six family SME cases.

2.20.3.4. IT INFRASTRUCTURAL BENEFITS

The IT infrastructural benefits include reduced IT costs, flexibility of business for current and future changes and increased IT capability (Johanson *et al.*, 2015; Bharathi and Mandal, 2015). Not all the cases experienced benefits categorised under IT infrastructural benefits, but three of the cases reported IT infrastructural benefits. Through the adoption of ERP, case A1 was able to use automated card payments which could be termed as an increased IT capability for the business. ERP adoption in Case A2 made the cost of having an e-commerce website cheaper. Online stores are reportedly the trending form of retail sales, and the business was able to launch an online store with ERP. Also, Case A3 was able to use a more responsive, user-friendly web ordering facility which could be classified as an improved IT capability for the business. Similar benefits as for Case A1 were also recorded for Case A3.

In all, two of the three possible IT infrastructural benefits were experienced by three family SMEs. However, one SFB case did not experience such benefits when adopting ERP.

The adoption of ERP in all the cases shows that it improved internal capabilities and the businesses were able to gain competitive advantage strategically. There is evidence that the SFB, as well as its mid-sized counterparts, gained managerial, operational and strategic benefits from the ERP system. Three family SMEs experienced IT infrastructural benefits, however, the SFB did not experience such a benefit.

2.21. SUMMARY OF CHAPTER TWO

All through this chapter, discussions have focused on the Enterprise Resource Planning system, small family business and the UK's retail industry. Of particular interest is the adoption of the ERP system in SFBs, focusing primarily on the UK's retail industry.

It was found that the ERP system is a technology that has evolved over the years to benefit both large enterprises and SMEs. However, it remains a complex technology to adopt successfully and gain from its benefits. It was also found that the technology is beneficial to small family businesses, but due to the level of family influence, the possibilities of successful adoption is low in such businesses.

It was found both from extant literature and archival studies that the adoption of the ERP system could contribute to SFBs' internal capabilities. It could also give them the competitive edge required to survive and in fact grow within a competitive market such as the UK's retail industry. The internal benefits of ERP adoption were found to be managerial and operational benefits, while the technology also benefits SFBs in terms of strategies to sustain and also grow the business.

Despite the fact that it became obvious that there was a need for SFBs to successfully adopt the ERP system, especially in the UK's retail industry, familiness was found to be an important determinant. It was further found that familiness, in terms of technology, changes, i.e. ERP adoption is based on family perception of the technology, and it has been found that family perception changes with ownership succession in the business.

It then becomes important that this thesis further explores ERP adoption decisions in the UK's retail SFBs. The significance emanates from the fact that studies indicate that a high level of familiness in SFBs implies low ERP success tendencies despite the established enormous benefits of ERP adoption to retail SFBs. With further findings showing that SFBs commit to a technology that is perceived as beneficial to the business goals, it then becomes unclear how familiness in SFBs imply low success tendencies.

The rest of this thesis is dedicated to exploring ERP adoption decisions in UK's retail SFBs to understand if and how familiness impacts ERP adoption. The next chapter focuses on the research framework.

CHAPTER THREE: THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.0. INTRODUCTION

Having reviewed the literature in chapter 2 and found that there is limited research into ERP in SFB, this chapter discusses the framework/lens through which this study is taken forward. Some of the different theories of family businesses that have been reviewed are discussed in this chapter. This is done with the intention of understanding the ERP adoption process through family involvement for this research. The theories and resulting framework are then discussed before the chapter is later summarised.

3.1. FAMILY BUSINESS THROUGH THE THEORIES

Studies over the years have, in an attempt to understand family businesses, used different theories to explore the phenomenon (Seibels and Knyphausen-Aufseß, 2012; Acquaaah, 2016). Theories such as systems theory, agency theory, stewardship theory and the resource-based view, among others, have been used to describe the uniqueness of family businesses and establish the impact of this uniqueness (Churchill and Hatten, 1987; Jensen and Meckling, 1976; Sharma, 2004; Miller and Le Breton-Miller, 2006). Although other theories have been used over the years, the focus is on the important theories that describe a FB, establish the argument on the influence of family involvement and focus on the theory that establishes the unique resources of business due to family involvement. These theories are reviewed in this section to understand how family businesses have been researched over the years and to determine the characteristics of family businesses. The strategic decision-making framework is also discussed. Other theories such as the technology adoption framework and TOE framework were considered for this study, but these theories were previously used to establish the general adoption factors for ERP without any particular reference to the uniqueness brought to a business by family ownership (Iskanius, 2009; Winkelman and Klose, 2008; Shahawai and Idrus, 2011). However, FB studies and retail SME studies suggest that the type of business ownership is an important determinant in technology adoption (Romero and Martinez-Roman; 2015; De Massis *et al.*, 2016).

3.1.1. SYSTEMS THEORY

The general systems theory views the world as one in which objects depend on and interrelate with one another (Kast and Rosenzweig, 1972; Churchill and Constantine, 2004).

This systems theory was the first used to describe the complex relationship between the family and system (Mccallum, 1987). Applying this theory to family business, studies suggest that there are interrelationships, interdependence and overlap between the family and business (Mccallum, 1987; Poza, 2007). There are two types of systems theory, closed and open, and Sharma (2004) suggests that family businesses are an open system. It is also believed that family businesses are influenced or affected by the environment. The suggestion that family businesses are an open system prompted the introduction of two factors: ownership and management as influencers of business (Pieper and Klein, 2007). It thus changed the two circled representation of family business to a three-circled interconnected representation as shown below (Nordqvist, 2007; Pieper & Klein, 2007; Tagiuri & Davis, 1996). The three-circled representation is Churchill and Hatten's (1987) original suggestion of a family business, and it has so far been widely accepted as the representation of family businesses.

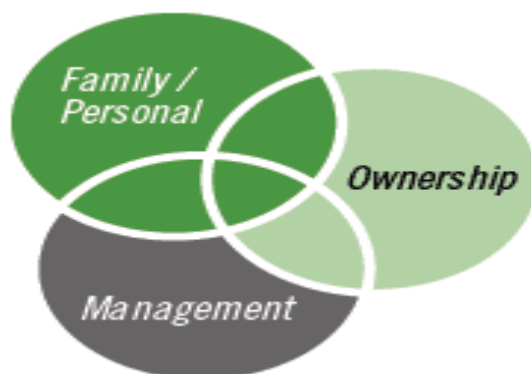


Figure 5: Systems Theory and the Family Business. Source: Churchill and Hatten (1987).

Poza (2007) suggests that the interaction between family members in different positions within a business is important to a family business as a social system. The established knowledge in family businesses has brought about studying the effect of family relationships on business through theories such as agency theory and stewardship theory, as discussed below.

3.1.1.1. SYSTEMS THINKING

It is important to mention that the systems theory brought about systems thinking which has been previously used to study Information Systems and business management (Checkland, 1999; Gharajedaghi, 2011). It is the process of thinking about the dynamic influence of an

external factor on a complex system such as ERP (Midgley, 2003). Applying systems thinking in trying to understand ERP adoption in SFBs means previous factors identified as influencers of ERP success within SMEs may need to be neglected to allow the researcher focus on the considerations leading to an ERP adoption decision when the family is involved in a UK's retail SFB (Checkland, 1999). This is due to studies such as De Massis *et al.* (2016) suggesting that such decision usually leads to the commitment of SFB stakeholders to a successful technology adoption. The form of inquiry required to create the systems knowledge for this research can be described as the Lockean Inquiry System (Linden *et al.*, 2007). The Lockean inquiry system produces systems knowledge through direct engagement with the context within which the system is studied. As the Lockean inquiry system accepts inputs and inductively validates the knowledge created, it is the approach more suitable for this research as this ERP study goes beyond existing assumptions to inductively understand how family involvement might influence the system (Linden *et al.*, 2007).

3.1.2. AGENCY THEORY

Jensen and Meckling (1976) defined agency theory as “*possible problems arising from conflicting interests and asymmetric information between two parties to a contract*” (Seibels and Knyphausen-Aufseß, 2012: 285). The theory believes that an agent-principal relationship is one in which the agent's interest does not align with that of its principal (Jensen and Meckling, 1976). Any cost incurred in detecting, mitigating, controlling or solving such an interest misalignment problem (e.g. through incentives or the business structure) is called the agency cost (Eisenhardt 1989; Jensen and Meckling, 1976). According to studies (e.g. Shukla *et al.*, 2014), the misalignment of interest is usually as a result of the separation of ownership and management.

Judging from agency theory, it could be assumed simply that the family relationship in a family business should bring about low agency costs as it is expected to promote cooperation and communication of both family and business interests (Fama and Jensen, 1983; Schulz *et al.*, 2001, 2003). However, other studies have argued that the existence of altruism within a family may bring about family conflict, which often extends to the family-run business (Levinson, 1971; Schulz *et al.* 2001, Schulz *et al.*, 2003). Other studies also argue that due to altruism within a family, a low agency cost is expected in FBs as family managers are provided with fewer incentives, but they are able to invest in long-term projects, etc. (Sharma, 2004; Carney, 2005; Shukla *et al.*, 2014).

Bergstrom (1989) describes altruism as when the “*utility function of an individual positively links one’s own welfare to the welfare of others.*” It is believed that these tendencies exist within a family and that is why a father would protect the interests of his children without expecting anything in return (Schulz *et al.*, 2001, Schulze *et al.*, 2003). Other studies argue that altruism, when family owners hold a position of power and have more information, could lead to a high agency cost especially in businesses where there are other non-family shareholders (Bertrand & Schoar, 2006; Bloom & Van Reenen, 2007; Acquaah, 2016). Due to altruism, FBs tend to employ inexperienced family members and, for this reason, studies have advocated a better structure to check such tendencies and such control could result in a high agency cost (Acquaah, 2016). Although Shuklah *et al.* (2014) argue that the benefits of family owner management outweigh the agency costs, it can be said that there is no consensus as to how family involvement in business affects the agency cost for such a business.

3.1.3. STEWARDSHIP THEORY

Stewardship theory has been used as a counter argument for the agency theory in family business. Stewardship theory posits that managers do not pursue individual goals, rather they are stewards and their interests align with those of the principal or organisation (Barney, 1991; Davis *et al.*, 1997). Acquaah (2016) suggests that stewardship theory could be best used to define a family business as the altruistic nature of the parents or business owners makes them work in the interest of the family and the organisation. However, it is argued that this altruistic nature makes family managers pursue even the non-financial goals of the family and such goals could be detrimental to business (Miller and Le Breton- Miller, 2006; Farkas, 2016). With stewardship theory reflecting typical family business characteristics, it is suggested that the steward nature of family owners brings about competitive advantage if the business goals and family goals align (Miller and Le Breton-Miller, 2006; Davis *et al.*, 2010; Farkas, 2016). Davis *et al.* (2010) concluded that “blood is thicker than water”, suggesting that family leaders tend to have more value commitment, fewer agency perceptions and more stewardship than non-family leaders. Chrisman *et al.* (2004) also suggest that the low agency cost in a family business ensures better management of scarce resources as little resource goes into agency costs. While studies agree that stewardship theory is a true reflection of a family’s influence on business (Davis *et al.*, 2010), other studies have argued that such an influence may as well be negative (Miller and Le Breton- Miller, 2006; Farkas, 2016). The RBV theory discusses the resources that family involvement brings to a business.

3.1.4. THE RESOURCE-BASED VIEW (RBV)

The resource-based view of a business posits that any business gaining a competitive advantage on a long-term basis possesses some resources and capabilities that are rare, difficult to imitate, are substitutable and organised to be exploited (Barney, 1991). The theory has been used over the years to study how family involvement brings about resources and capabilities that result in competitive advantage (Habbershon and Williams, 1999; Seibels and Knyphausen-Aufseß, 2012; Zahra, 2016; Acquaah, 2016).

Family business studies have found that family relationships in business result in unique resources known as socio-economic wealth (Habbershon and Williams, 1999; Eddleston *et al.*, 2008). However, other studies suggest that these resources may not bring about a sustainable competitive advantage if they are not well managed (Hitt *et al.* 2001; Sirmon and Hitt 2003). Campopiano *et al.* (2014) suggest that family involvement in business positively influences a firm's philanthropy - a non-financial goal of the family. The study further identifies that family involvement has a negative influence on business management.

Simon and Hitt (2003) argue that the human capital, such as the knowledge, skills and capabilities acquired from a long-term association with the business, is difficult to lose in a family business. The implications of this finding are twofold. On the one hand, such knowledge could lead to competitive advantage while, on the other hand, it could mean that unproductive family members remain within the business; legacy systems are not improved or changed and thus, this limits such a business. Kellermans (2005) refers to the reluctance of family businesses to shed resources as 'psychodynamics'.

Family businesses are more interested in sustaining the business and not the rapid growth of the business (Sirmon and Hitt, 2003; Taguiri and Davis, 1992). Sirmon and Hitt (2003) refer to the long-term goal of family businesses as the patient capital and suggest that it often leads to creativity and innovativeness. However, Carrasco-Hernandez and Jimenez-Jimenez (2013) have argued that fear of rapid growth has made family businesses innovation or technology averse.

The four theories discussed above explain family business to help understand their uniqueness, the involvement of the family in business and the special characteristics or resources of FBs. Other studies have examined the family business using theories, such as the stakeholder theory, field theory, socio-emotional and social identity theories, among others (Zellweger and Nason, 2008; Riordan and Riordan, 1993; Deephouse and Jaskiewicz, 2013).

While systems theory explains how the family is involved in their business and the RBV theory explains the resources that such involvement may bring, it remains to be seen how family involvement or the resources it brings might affect aspects of business such as decision-making or the adoption of enterprise systems. None of these theories has clearly established how family involvement affects decision-making in SFBs. Ibrahim *et al.* (2001), however, proposed a strategic decision-making framework for SFBs and as this study is focused on decision-making related to the adoption of ERP within SFBs, the framework is discussed below.

3.1.5. THE STRATEGIC DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK FOR SFBs

Ibrahim *et al.* (2001) proposed a strategic decision-making framework for small family businesses that, aside from the internal and external capabilities generally affecting decision-making, posits that family considerations have an important influence (power filter) over strategic decisions in SFBs. Using the RBV theory, the framework agrees that there are capabilities available to SFBs both internally and externally, however, family values, preferences and other considerations are more important to making strategic decisions in SFBs (Ibrahim *et al.*, 2001). Family characteristics or familiness that influence such decisions are as a result of family involvement in ownership and management as established by the systems theory. Weismeier-Sammer and Von Schlippe (2013) found that when such decisions are made, they are adhered to by the whole business including family members, although Spencer *et al.* (2012) argue that such decisions are made by the family manager.

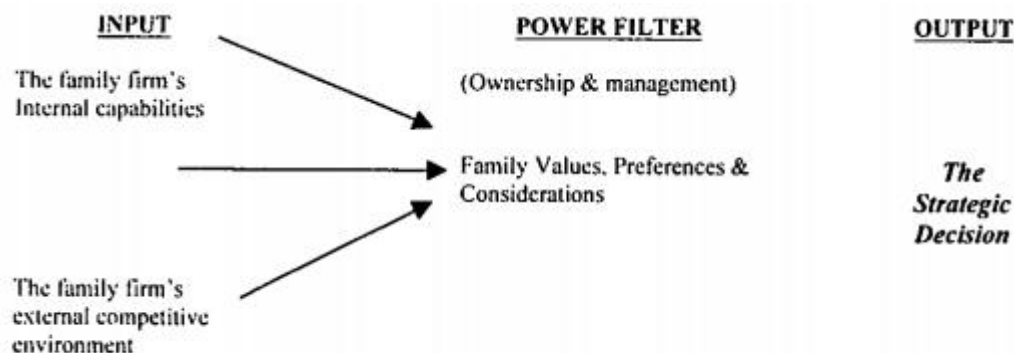


Figure 6: Strategic decision in SFBs. Source: Ibrahim *et al.* (2001).

It has been found that family considerations in terms of technology adoption are mainly based on the perceived benefits of such technology to the family's goals for the business. The

theoretical framework is formed based on Ibrahim *et al.*'s (2001) framework, which proposes an ERP adoption framework for SFBs.

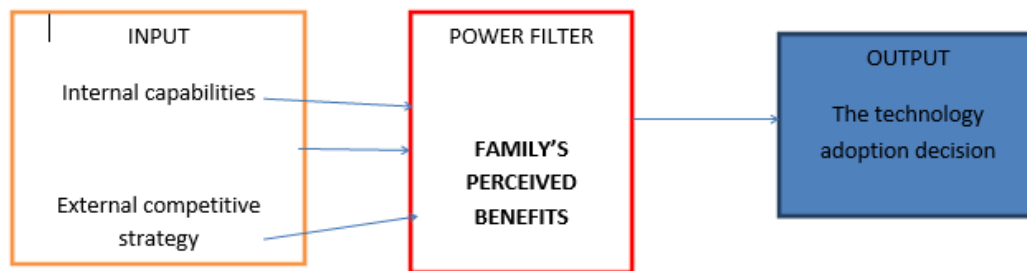


Figure 7: Technology adoption framework for SFBs.

However, as found from the review of the literature and as proposed by Lasisi *et al.* (2017), ERP adoption contributes to the goals of the SFB as discussed in the ERP adoption benefit framework below.

3.1.6. THE ERP ADOPTION BENEFIT FRAMEWORK FOR SFBs

The framework proposes that if small family businesses adopt an ERP system, it can contribute to the characteristics of typical SFBs. These benefits, using the ERP benefit classification (Shang and Seddon, 2000; Staehr *et al.*, 2012) are managerial, operational, strategic and organisational. These benefits are also found to be linked to each other to improve SFBs as shown below.



Figure 8: The ERP benefit framework for SFBs. Source: Lasisi *et al.* (2017).

The literature suggests that technology adoption in SFBs is dependent on the benefits the family perceives they will gain from the technology, so for the purposes of this study the technology adoption framework and the ERP benefit frameworks will be combined as the theoretical framework for ERP adoption.

3.2. THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Using the technology adoption framework developed from the strategic decision-making framework as discussed in 3.1.5 as well as from findings from the literature, it has been

demonstrated that there are potential needs for SFBs to adopt an ERP system in terms of the contributions an ERP system could make to a SFB (PWC, 2014). Also, there are competitive needs for ERP adoption based on the organisational goals of SFBs. SFBs strive to sustain business to enable the succession of ownership, and it has been found that an ERP system can help in this regard. Also, it was found that an ERP system can help SFBs grow and maintain the identity of their family business but due to the heterogeneous nature of individual SFBs, those benefits may vary.

However, despite the internal and competitive needs for ERP adoption in SFBs, the decision by a SFB to adopt any technology is dependent on the perceived benefits of the technology to the business (Spencer *et al.*, 2012; De Massis *et al.*, 2016). So, matching the two frameworks discussed in 3.1.5 and 3.1.6 above, the knowledge of the family on ERP benefits to business needs enlightens the business on the perception of the technology. Such perception ultimately dictates whether or not the technology is adopted. ERP adoption decision would lead to commitment since the literature (Weismeier-Sammer and Von Schlippe, 2013) posit that strategic decisions, when made by the family, are committed to by the whole business. The framework is diagrammatically represented below.

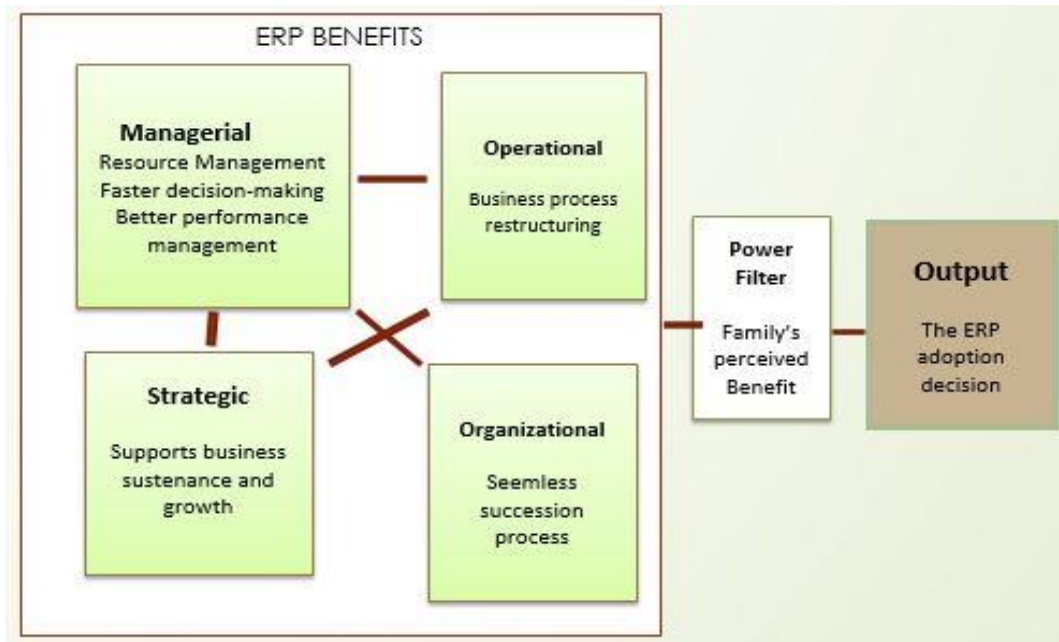


Figure 9: ERP Adoption Framework for SFBs.

To explain the framework, the ERP benefits developed in section 3.1.6 was discussed in 2.14 as “the implications of ERP adoption to SFB characteristics”. Section 3.16 was then reused in section 3.2. above as “the ERP benefits to SFBs”. It was found that the managerial

contributions of ERP to SFBs could bring about operational, strategic and organisational benefits for the business. The managerial benefits due to the centralised management of business information include better decision making and a more structured performance and resources management as discussed in 2.14.1, 2.14.2 and 2.14.4.

Reengineering SFB business processes could on the one hand give the business a more professional outlook as discussed in 2.14.3. It could on the other hand ensure that accurate information required for the management of business is inputted into the system (see 2.14.3).

The ERP system, being an enduring technology that has evolved with technological advancement and might be able to contribute to the strategic aim of business sustenance by SFB families. While the ERP system may bring competitive advantage that leads to business growth, the technology through centralised information management can support the management of such growth (see 2.14.5). Also, as succession of ownership was found to be SFBs ultimate goal, a successful ERP adoption might be able to support SFBs succession process through the transfer of business information across generations of ownership, which makes business learning easier (see 2.14.6).

While these benefits appear to be important to SFB characteristics, the literature shows that adopting the technology within SFBs may be dependent on those benefits informing the perception of the family as such perception may lead to the strategic decision that the business tends to fully commit to.

It should be noted that IT infrastructural benefits of ERP adoption were not included in the framework above. This is due to the fact that the characteristics of SFBs that ERP adoption can contribute to as identified in 2.14 do not fit any IT infrastructural benefits of ERP as identified by Shang and Seddon's (2000) benefit framework.

Recall that the aim of this research is to understand ERP adoption in UK's retail SFBs. The implication of the framework in figure 9 on the study is that it gives a lens through which the adoption of an ERP system as a technology might be influenced by family involvement in SFBs. The importance of the framework emanates from the literature which shows that SFBs tend to commit to the adoption of a technology perceived to be beneficial and the framework represents how the literature suggests such adoption might happen when the family is involved.

3.3. SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter discussed the fact that family businesses have, over the years, been studied using different theories. These theories established that there is significant family involvement in FBs, provided arguments on the impact of a family's involvement in their business and the unique characteristics present as a result of this family involvement. Only one framework has so far addressed strategic decision-making in SFBs. The framework shows that besides the internal and competitive capabilities of the business, family involvement influences decisions in terms of family values, preferences and considerations.

However, it was found that in terms of technology adoption in SFBs, it is the family's perception of such a technology's benefits to business that is the power filter or determinant of the business commitment to such technology. In terms of the ERP system, the benefit framework shows that the ERP system is able to contribute managerial, operational, strategic and organisational benefits to SFBs.

The chapter concludes by proposing the theoretical framework for this study, which is an amalgamation of the technology adoption and ERP benefit frameworks for SFBs. The framework shows that when knowledge of the benefits of ERP adoption is made available to the SFB's owning family, it directly impacts the family's perception of the technology and thus dictates the ERP adoption decision and hence, the family's commitment. This framework will be used to further explore ERP adoption in UK retail SFBs to understand exactly how it is affected by family involvement.

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

4.1. INTRODUCTION

As the previous chapter discussed and established a lens/framework for the conduct of this research, this chapter discusses the methodological choices available to test the aim of this study and the justifications behind the choices. The chapter is divided such that its significance is discussed first; this is followed by an examination of the reasoning behind the study, the philosophical world views, the methodology and the research methods. The last sections of this chapter discuss the sampling, data collection and analysis, and introduce the research framework.

4.2. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter is important as it explains in detail the different approaches available for carrying out this research and it justifies the methods used based on the research question “How might familiness influence ERP adoption in UK’s retail SFBs?” Answering this question requires deeply understanding ERP adoption within the UK’s retail SFB context and the available theoretical evidence as discussed in chapter 2 may not adequately give such answer. Linden *et al.* (2007) posits that such Information Systems study need be Inductive in nature as it requires going beyond available evidence to meaningfully interpret findings within a context. The need for such deeper interpretation of patterns means the philosophical view of the study is also interpretive (Creswell, 2009). Such viewpoint is supported by Hirschheim, and Klein (2012) with the suggestion that IS studies such as this one now tends towards interpretivism to allow the understanding of the influence of human behaviour and interactions on Information Systems such as an ERP system. Such research approach and philosophical viewpoint demands a method of data collection such as observation of cases and interviews which involves researcher interaction with the context (Hirschheim and Klein, 2012). Hence why this research have used observations and participant interviews to collect data from ERP experts as well as within UK’s retail SFBs to understand the phenomenon within the context.

The next sections in this chapter discusses the reasoning behind the study or the research approach, followed by the philosophical arguments surrounding social science research so as to show an understanding of the researcher’s point of view leading to the methodological choices, the research method, data collection and the data analysis technique.

4.3. THE REASONING BEHIND THE STUDY

The reasoning or research approach is defined as the line of action or activities in evaluating arguments and it is divided into deductive and inductive reasoning (Shye, 1988; Simon, 1996; Goel *et al.*, 1997). This is an **inductive research** as it involves going beyond available evidence on ERP in SFBs to draw reasonable, but sometimes indecisively true, conclusions (Soiferman, 2010; Lassiter and Goodman, 2014). Inductive research has been described as working bottom-up, i.e. generating theories from participants' views through formulated themes. This study goes beyond the theoretical position that irrespective of what an ERP system brings to business, SFBs may not successfully adopt the technology (Smith, 2016) to seeking an interpretive evidence of how the two systems i.e. an ERP system and family interact within the UK's retail SFB context. Using Linden *et al.* (2007)'s inquiring systems' theory for Information Systems and Knowledge Management, it may be argued that this research is Lockean in nature and hence is inductive as it involves the consensual observation of a context (UK's retail SFBs) and the discussion/interpretation of findings to understand the phenomenon (ERP adoption). Establishing this knowledge informs a new awareness of the ERP system in small family businesses rather than testing an existing positivistic assumption (Lassiter and Goodman, 2014).

It should be noted that the main difference between research reasonings are their philosophical world views which dictates how research is done (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2005; Koiferman, 2010; Yin, 2011; Lassiter and Goodman, 2014). The next section discusses the philosophical world view that guides social research to understand where this research stands, and also examines the drive towards understanding how the preferred choices were informed.

4.4. THE PHILOSOPHICAL WORLD VIEWS

This is interpretive in nature as it seeks to establish new knowledge through an in-depth exploration of ERP adoption in retail small family businesses in the UK (Creswell, 2009; Bhattacharjee, 2012). The interpretive nature of this research can be supported by the historical move of the Information Systems field, which ERP systems belong to, from the positivist position to the interpretive point of view which ensures that the system (ERP) is studied within a particular context (UK's retail SFBs) (Hirschheim, and Klein, 2012). This study moves the ERP studies in FBs from the positivist assumptions that family involvement means lower tendencies of success or that ERP adoption is beneficial to FBs, to establishing

interpretive meanings through qualitative methods such as observations and participant interviews to understand ERP adoption in the UK's retail SFB context (Linden *et al.*, 2007).

The section below offers explanation of the different philosophical world views and their appropriateness for this study.

4.4.1. INTERPRETIVISM

This research being interpretive means the researcher has had to go beyond existing ERP and SFB knowledge to interpret the dynamic patterns of ERP adoption in UK's retail SFBs when the family is involved in business (Hirschheim and Klein, 2012). Thinking of the ERP system and the family as systems that may have a relationship within SFBs support the interpretive philosophical stand of this research as **systems thinking** supports going beyond predetermined patterns to interpret the deeper meanings of the relationship between family involvement and ERP adoption in UK's retail SFBs through evidence based on human interaction (Creswell, 2009; Checkland, 1999). Also, being an Information Systems field, the interpretivist world view has been recently adopted as a good way to go about such research especially within a particular context (Linden *et al.*, 2007).

As opposed to the belief in a single truth in positivism or the Leibniz inquiry system, interpretivism believes in the complex nature of human behaviour and the fact that there can be more than one truth (Linden *et al.*, 2007; Bhattacharjee, 2012). Rather than quantifying the truth, as the name suggests, interpretivism interprets the meaning of such patterns based on the qualitative evidence gathered within the context (Bhattacharjee, 2012). This study can be said to be interpretive in nature as it seeks a deep exploration of retail small family businesses in the UK to understand ERP adoption within this context.

An interpretive researcher aims to gather a detailed knowledge of the phenomenon under review to reach meaningful conclusions towards contributing to knowledge (Crotty, 1998). It thus prioritises human/social interaction in gaining this knowledge (Cresswell, 2009). Due to the conviction that there is not one truth, interpretive research is often used in establishing new theory about a phenomenon or extending knowledge beyond what is generally known based on new evidence. (Lincoln and Guba, 2000). For example, this study, through the interpretation of evidence from the observation of retail SFBs in the UK and the interview of family managers as well as ERP experts extended the existing ERP knowledge in Family Business. However, due to its subjective nature in exploring an area of interest to seek an

exhaustive knowledge, its credibility and generalisability has often been questioned (Bhattacharjee, 2012).

Yin (2011), for example, posits that to ensure credibility in interpretive research, evidence needs to be collected from different sources to establish that the findings are not coincidental but reflect the truth at the time of data collection. To ensure the credibility of this interpretive study, different qualitative approaches, such as semi-structured interviews of ERP experts, family managers and observation of retail SFBs were used in the exploration of UK retail SFBs to understand the influence of family involvement on ERP adoption. Also, efforts such as experience check of experts, historical checks of businesses among others were made to ensure the ERP experts and SFB cases were fit for purpose.

4.4.2. POSITIVISM/POST-POSITIVISM

As this study goes beyond the quantification of truth and investigates family involvement in business, and requires a deep insight into the phenomenon being investigated, i.e. ERP adoption in the UK's retail SFBs; as a result, it may be said that the view point for this research is not positivist but interpretive. Also, considering that Smith's (2016) positivist study of ERP in FBs did not deeply explore the impact of family involvement, this study adopts the interpretive approach for a deeper insight into ERP adoption in the UK's retail SFBs (Lincoln and Guba, 2000).

Creswell (2009) suggests that positivism applies more to deductive than inductive reasoning. There is a belief that a positivist seeks to find the truth, while a post-positivist (classical positivism) aims to find what is right about reality (Philips, 2000). Also, positivism is about cause and effect, i.e. positivists are of the belief that there is always a cause, which leads to an effect (Creswell, 2009). This assumption resulted in the need for the quantification of truth. Bryman (2001) suggests that positivism studies always start with a theory that is to be further tested for affirmation or possible modification. A positivist/post-positivist believes the truth should be independent of the researcher (Creswell, 2009). This further buttresses Creswell's (2009) suggestion that positivism/post-positivism is more inclined towards deductive, rather than inductive, reasoning. Positivism has often been criticised for the need to quantify the truth about human activities as it is hard to put a value on human behaviour (Bhattacharjee, 2012).

The next section discusses pragmatism as the third philosophical world view that attempts to balance both positivism and interpretivism (Creswell, 2009).

4.4.3. PRAGMATISM

Pragmatism does not share the positivist versus interpretivist debate (Creswell, 2009). Rather, pragmatists believe that what works best to find the truth is more important than favouring one approach over another (Creswell, 2005, 2009; Bhattacharjee, 2012). Proponents of a mixed methodology approach are usually of this philosophical point of view. While this view of the world is good in its approach to research, this study is not pragmatic in nature as it seeks to establish knowledge of ERP in SFBs (interpretive) but not the generalisability of such knowledge (positivist). Exploring knowledge of ERP adoption in SFBs and seeking generalisation would have suggested a pragmatic approach to this research (Bhattacharjee, 2012). As much as it would be beneficial for further studies to seek to generalise the findings of this research, the scope of this study is limited to seeking an understanding of the adoption of ERP within the UK's retail SFBs.

Based on the discussions and considerations of the three philosophical world views for social research, the interpretive approach is appropriate for this study as it seeks to explore the ERP system through a sufficiently deep investigation of the UK's retail SFB to establish meaningful conclusions to extend existing knowledge in the field. It is important to discuss the different research methods available to social science research in the next section to understand the justification for the preferred method for this study; a detailed discussion of how the method was applied to this study can be found in Chapter 5.

4.5. THE RESEARCH TYPE

Considering the aim of this study which is to investigate familiness in relation to ERP adoption in the UK's retail SFBs, it can be said that this research is qualitative in nature. The reasons for this choice emanated from the amount and type of exploratory data gathered and analysed to achieve the research aim (Miles and Hubberman, 1994; Creswell, 2009; Myers, 2010). However, it is important to discuss the different methodological choices available to enable readers to understand the researcher's preference.

There are two main approaches to research: quantitative and qualitative. These approaches are different with regard to the type of data collected, method of data collection and analysis (Lincoln and Guba, 2000; Bryman, 1984; Bryman, 2001; Bryman, 2006; Yin, 2011).

However, despite the differences, Bryman (2006), Creswell (2005, 2009) and Bhattacharjee (2012) suggest that the two methods could complement one another. Although this study is qualitative in nature, the subsections below further discuss the two research methodologies to help towards an understanding of the reasons behind the methodological choices made in this study.

4.5.1. QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

Quantitative research evaluates or quantifies the phenomenon being studied (Bryman, 2001; 2006). In this type of investigation, the theory, idea or hypothesis are known and are tested with the data (Bryman, 2006). Quantitative researchers believe the data collected should be objective and independent of the researcher's influence or interpretation (Neill, 2006; Creswell, 2009; Bryman, 2011). According to Bryman (2001), generalisability is usually the main purpose of a quantitative study.

Quantitative data are usually collected using closed-ended questions, i.e. questions formulated using the researcher's pre-informed views without allowing for the subjective view of the respondent (Cresswell, 2009). Due to the nature of the data collected, the analysis is usually statistical, and definite answers are expected to the research questions in quantitative research (Neill, 2006; Bryman, 2011; Cresswel, 2009).

It should be noted that this method is not suitable if an in-depth knowledge of a phenomenon, such as human behaviour or organisational culture is the aim of the research as it does not allow for the respondent's expression of their subjective views (Bryman, 1987; Goel *et al.*, 1997; Creswell, 2009), rather it attempts to quantify opinions in a bid to obtain a single truth about the phenomenon irrespective of where it is studied. With the purpose of this research being to gain a deep understanding of the adoption of ERP in the UK's retail small family businesses, the quantitative research method is not suitable to obtain the type of data needed to sufficiently serve the research purpose. For example, De Massis and Kotlar (2014) suggested that family involvement cannot be quantified but can be understood when the researcher is fully engaged with the business. This suggestion was also supported by the fact Smith's (2016) study could not explore family involvement quantitatively. Hence, the need for a qualitative study to understand the impact of familiness on ERP in SFBs.

4.5.2. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Researchers have, over the years, argued that qualitative research is not a specific approach to research but is a different way of undertaking any research that is not quantitative in nature (Cresswell, 2009). It is further pointed out that any research that involves not just quantifying social behaviour but that relies on the depth or quality of the information obtained is termed qualitative research (Creswell, 2009; Bryman, 1984). This kind of investigation could involve methods such as interviews, case studies, observation/ethnography and archival research. Miles and Hubberman (1994) argued that the dichotomy between quantitative and qualitative research has been oversimplified. However, Rolfe (2006) and Creswell (2003, 2009) argued that it is challenging and could be misleading to give a specific definition to qualitative research due to the different methods it encompasses. It is therefore safer to describe the characteristics of qualitative research to help understand what it is not.

Qualitative research is aimed at an in-depth and well-detailed description of the phenomenon of interest. No pre-formed knowledge of the intended outcome is held with this form of investigation (Creswell, 2003, 2009). Also, the richness of qualitative research is related to the quality of information gathered about the phenomenon within a context (Myers, 2010). Due to the amount of information required, qualitative research is time-consuming and often not generalisable (Myers, 2010). The researcher is usually involved in a qualitative research study and directly experiences or observes the phenomenon in real-life settings (Webber, 1968).

To reiterate the aim of the research, it is aimed at exploring familiness in relation to ERP adoption in UK retail small family businesses. A qualitative approach due to the characteristics described above, is considered appropriate to gather the information that is sufficient to make meaningful conclusions towards achieving the research aim. The negligible amount of both theoretical and empirical evidence addressing ERP adoption in this type of business, despite its uniqueness, makes it difficult to have pre-informed knowledge of a potential outcome. Also, due to the unique nature of individual SFBs and the theoretical framework, a detailed understanding and description of businesses is required to have a clear understanding of the internal and competitive environment within each context. For this reason, a substantial amount of data using the different qualitative approaches was required for this study. Although the qualitative approach was adopted for this study, it is not without its disadvantages as discussed below.

4.5.3. LIMITATIONS OF A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

The fact that a lot of information is required for qualitative research means that few sources can be explored, thereby limiting its generalisability (Myers, 2000). Also, its subjective nature leads to questions regarding the credibility of qualitative findings (Yin, 2013). However, over the years, researchers have used triangulation, i.e. gathering data using different methods for comparison, to answer the credibility question (Myers, 2010).

However, the clarity and ability of another person to undertake the research and arrive at similar results based on the written report should be a priority for a researcher rather than the methodological debate (Hathaway, 1995; McLoughlin, 2007).

4.5.4. ADDITIONAL NOTES ON RESEARCH TYPES

Despite the advantages and disadvantages of quantitative and qualitative research, they are not as mutually exclusive as arguments have suggested; hence, making such an argument less productive (Miles and Hubberman, 1994). What is more important is to be able to identify which method is more appropriate to satisfy the research aim (Hathaway, 1995; Creswell, 2005; Creswell, 2009; Bhattacharjee, 2012).

While some researchers may deem it appropriate to combine the two methodologies to satisfy their research aim, some may decide to favour one of the two. The most important aspect of research is the appropriateness of an approach and the duplicability of such studies (Hathaway, 1995; McLoughlin, 2007). Based on the aim of this research, the need for a deep insight into family involvement in SFBs is the focus, and not a generalisation, so this study is a qualitative research study. (Creswell, 2009; Miles and Hubberman, 1994).

Having discussed approaches to the research methodology and having decided on a qualitative approach as being appropriate for this study, it is important for further discussions in this chapter to focus on the different methods available under the umbrella of qualitative research.

4.6. THE RESEARCH METHODS

To avoid confusion, Creswell (2009) referred to the research methods as the strategies to undertake research. Although this study sticks to the more commonly used term, it should be clarified that methods refer to the different strategies towards gathering and analysing the necessary data for achieving the research aim.

For the purposes of this research, both experiential and case study methods were used. The experiential method was used to explore the experiences of ERP experts to establish an initial knowledge of ERP adoption in the UK's retail SFBs as there is limited existing knowledge (Nicholls, 2009; Kidd and Kidd, 2012). Also, based on the result of the experiential method, and taking a cue from the theoretical framework, the case study method was used to explore individual cases of retail SFB to understand business characteristics (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2011; De Massis and Kotlar, 2014). This section discusses the qualitative research methods available to justify the preferences.

Several researchers have discussed research methods and have used different classifications. There seems to be no consensus on the terms to classify the various methods of research. Below are some of the different research methods as identified from different studies (Wolcott, 2001; Bryman, 2001; Creswell, 2003; Creswell, 2009).

4.6.1. EXPERIENTIAL RESEARCH

Every individual has a specific perspective of the world that ought to be seen as one of a kind (Nicholls, 2009; Kidd and Kidd, 2012). The experimental research method deals with the experiences of individuals on particular phenomena (Nicholls, 2009; Kidd and Kidd, 2012). The understanding of an individual's life experiences, also known as phenomenology, is seen as both a philosophy and also a research strategy (Polkinghorne, 1989). Furthermore, the system includes concentrating on a small number of subjects through broad and prolonged engagement to create important designs and connections (Polkinghorne, 1989; Moustakas, 1994). It is important that the researcher keeps any personal experience with the phenomenon out of the research to avoid any form of bias (Nieswiadomy, 1993). The interpretive, unmistakable and subjective nature of this method makes a few researchers consider it to be without a doubt the opposite of the established quantitative research technique (Denscombe, 2007).

The first stage of this investigation utilised this method to understand ERP in the UK's retail small family businesses through the experiences of ERP experts for SMEs. Grant *et al.* (2001) suggest that experiential research in SMEs involves researching the entrepreneurs/owners, academics or practitioners. As the first stage of the investigation was intended to have a prior insight into ERP in UK retail SFBs and there is little evidence to show that SFBs adopt ERP, business owners may not have the appropriate knowledge to contribute at this stage. Also, there is a negligible amount of academic

literature on ERP in SFBs in the UK and so the experiences of scholars may not be beneficial. However, the archival findings suggest that ERP experts in UK SMEs may have the appropriate experience of ERP in SFBs to benefit this research. The details of how this method was used are discussed in the next chapter.

4.6.2. CASE STUDY

Due to the heterogenous nature of FBs and the need to interact with the context, an instrumental case study method involving more five cases of UK's retail SFBs was adopted to understand the characteristics of UK's retail SFBs and how they might influence ERP adoption. It thus implies that the main investigation work of this study (see Chapter 6) adopted the instrumental case study method and the retail small family business case studies were examined not just to be able to understand them but also to be able to answer the research question "How might familiness affect ERP adoption in the UK's retail small family business?" While the inability of Smith (2016) to study the impact of familiness on ERP in FBs suggests the need for a qualitative study, De Massis and Kotlar (2014) propose that FBs are better studied through case studies to understand the family involvement in the business.

Despite the rich history of using case studies in social science research, it is hard to define it clearly because it involves the use of different data collection methods (Stake, 1995). Creswell (2003) simply describes a case study as an in-depth exploration of a programme, event, individual or group of people. Baxter and Jack (2008) also describe a case study as the method that provides the tools to explore a complex phenomenon within a particular context. Tools, such as interviews, focus groups, observation and document analysis are useful for data collection in case study research (Yin, 2003, 2011, 2013). Belbasat *et al.* (1987) explained that case study research is popular for use in information systems research but they did not state that it is the only appropriate method.

Stake (1995) classified case studies into two: intrinsic and instrumental. An **intrinsic case study** is where the interest is to further understand the qualities or uniqueness of such a case (Stake, 1995). An **instrumental case study**, on the other hand, was defined by Stake (1995) as a type of case study in which there are other research questions or problems but an insight into the case could serve as an instrument to answering such questions. For example, when a new teaching policy is to be investigated, the research could either investigate teachers as cases or schools as cases, not because of the interest in teachers or

schools but studying them would help solve the research problem (Stake, 1995). Such is the case with the second part of this research investigation. The findings from the first stage of the investigation as well as the literature findings suggest that despite the similarities shared by SFBs, the individual businesses are unique.

4.6.3. GROUNDED THEORY

Grounded theory is difficult to classify as a qualitative method because it is not an entirely subjective or qualitative technique (Stake, 1995; Cho and Lee, 2014). The point of grounded theory is to move as close as can be expected under the circumstances to a quantitative strategy, i.e. reach a common truth (Strauss and Cobin, 1990). Two essential qualities of this method are the regular examination of information to establish themes and theoretically testing these themes to increase the likelihood of its generalisability (Creswell, 2003). To accomplish this, grounded theory utilises distinctive procedures to accumulate information and diverse strategies of data analysis (Nicholls, 2009). This study is not aimed at establishing a grounded theory but to make contributions to the limited knowledge on ERP adoption in SMEs by studying it within a different and important context: the retail small family business.

4.6.4. ETHNOGRAPHY

Ethnography involves the observation of a particular culture over a period of, usually prolonged, time (Creswell, 2009). According to Denscombe (2007), ethnography simply means the description of people's culture. Well-defined cultures are involved in this type of research, e.g. people working in the same organisation or people within the same political party. Although, this method allows for an enormous amount of information to be gathered about the phenomenon of interest, it is usually only appropriate for a particularly unique case (Bryman, 2015; Bryman and Bell, 2015). As this study investigated more than one case and the time available for data collection did not permit a long term study of the phenomenon (Bryman and Bell, 2015), this method was deemed inappropriate.

As much as the research methods discussed above may not be exhaustive, they represent some of the most commonly used methods for social science research, and especially for information systems research (Das, 1983; Chrisman *et al.*, 2005; Yin, 2011).

It is hard to choose between the methods discussed above as many of them use a similar approach. The next section discusses the qualitative sampling and data collection techniques for a qualitative study.

4.7 SAMPLING, DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES

It is impossible to collect data from the whole population as doing so would either mean much of the useful information has not been explored in depth and would lead to possible bias and diminished quality of findings Krippendorff (2004). Although studies by, for example Creswell (2009) and Punch (2005) just mentioned sampling in their studies, they recognised the importance of a proper sampling technique to maintaining research quality.

4.7.1. QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

After realising the research direction, methods and sampling, the next question concerned how the data was collected. This was dictated by the research design (Yin, 2011) and as this is a qualitative research study, the focus is on qualitative data collection techniques.

Studies show that there are different ways to collect data in qualitative research, but the most common techniques are interviews, participation, documentary and observation (Bryman, 2001; Punch, 2005; Yin, 2011). It should be noted that semi-structured interviews were used for the first stage of the investigation as an obvious option to explore expert experiences (Yin, 2011). The main stage involved case studies, which used various techniques such as observations, interviews and documentary for data collection (Stake, 1995; De Marrias, 2004; Donalek, 2004; Yin, 2011).

All the data collection techniques applicable to qualitative research and the applicable sampling techniques are discussed below to understand the justification for the techniques preferred.

4.7.2.1. INTERVIEWS

Interviews can be classified as structured, semi-structured and unstructured. **Structured interviews** are often close-ended and are usually employed for quantitative purposes, while semi-structured and unstructured are mostly employed in a study for qualitative purposes (Yin, 2011), and are therefore termed ‘qualitative’ interviews (De Marrais, 2004; Britten, 1995; Yin, 2011). Qualitative interviews are defined as a method of gathering in-depth information about a phenomenon, experience or set of experiences (De Marrais, 2004).

- **Semi-structured interviews**

This type of interview was used for experts during the first stage of the investigation as well as for the owner-managers during the main investigation stage. Semi-structured interviews were preferred as they helped draw on the respondents' views without derailing from the research focus. For example, it is clear that the ERP experts (consultants) have vast experience of the ERP system especially within retail SMEs but the research focus was on retail small family business and semi-structured interviews were useful in guiding their thoughts and responses without leading the answers. Also, owner-managers have vast knowledge of their business and have a tendency of going beyond the research scope as found sometimes in cases 1 and 3's interview transcripts, so semi-structured interviews were used to keep them on track. Semi-structured interviews contain open-ended questions which are loosely planned around a topic area to allow for detailed probing (Britten, 1995). Semi-structured interviews are the medium between structured and unstructured interviews. Although there are no rigid sets of questions which are to be in a closed manner, it involves the use of prompts to keep the participant on track (Yin, 2011). Some studies suggest this type of interview does not allow for a fully detailed response as the reply is being controlled, albeit slightly. Although there are prompts in a semi-structured interview, these are not rigid and could change based on a participant's response. Also, participants are allowed to raise issues in addition to the ones in the prompt (Punch, 2005).

Purposive sampling was used at the first stage of the investigation to identify the ERP experts that were considered to have the knowledge required to answer the research questions. Literature on the family business suggests that three out of any five SMEs in the UK are family owned and about 98% of these family SMEs are small businesses. ERP experts dealing with SMEs in the UK are expected to have some experience with family SMEs and especially small family businesses. Based on these reasons, ERP experts for SMEs in the UK were targeted at the first stage. Of the 20 experts identified and contacted, three of them were deemed as both fit for purpose, willing and eventually investigated.

Also, the family members with the required knowledge and authority to respond to the interview questions were decided purposively. In all of the cases the family manager were found to be with the qualities stated above. However, in case 2 another member of the family was nominated for the interview and the member was deemed to be fit for purpose due to the wealth of business knowledge shared.

- **Unstructured interviews**, also known as in-depth interviews (Britten, 1995), often contain one or two areas in which the participant is allowed to engage fully offering great detail. The detail obtained in an unstructured interview would be greater than in a semi-structured interview as the engagement of the participant is less controlled and they are allowed to fully express their views on the phenomenon (Yin, 2011; De Marrais, 2004). Yin (2011) argued that an unstructured interview aids the detailed exploration of an important research question, and it would be detrimental for a researcher to get a one-word answer or controlled response for such a question. It could be argued that if an in-depth interpretive research study is to be conducted, an unstructured interview could serve such a purpose. However, with unstructured interviews, it is more difficult to get a participant back on track if they move away from the research focus (Bryman, 2001; Yin, 2011).

The distinction between the two types of qualitative interview does not suggest that they are mutually exclusive. Bryman (2001) indicated that the initial stage of questioning in interviews could be unstructured to give broader details of the phenomenon and then the later stages would be semi-structured to stay within the research focus.

The adaptability of qualitative interviews is a notable advantage as they are also flexible, using face-to-face, non-verbal or textual techniques depending on the accessibility of the participants (Denscombe, 2007; Yin, 2011). However, the time consuming and stressful nature of planning interviews remains the main disadvantage (Bryman, 2001). Looking at the characteristics of qualitative interviews, it suggests why this research would utilise this data collection technique for both the preliminary stage and part of the main investigation stage of this research.

Note that an open-ended questionnaire could also have been useful for this research, however, it would not have provided the chance for as much probing of the respondents as would benefit this research.

Although interviews have been mainly discussed, it is worth noting that observation and participation are an important part of interviewing in this study. Most studies suggest that researchers should fully participate in interviews through listening and encouragement but without much intervention (Bryman, 2001; Yin, 2011; Creswell, 2009). It is also suggested that everything is observed in the course of interviewing as the participant's reaction or environment may speak more than the actual words.

4.7.2.2. THE DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

This data collection technique was used in case 2 where the researcher was given a rare access to the ERP contract document solely to ascertain the nature of the system within the business. However, no permission was given to reproduce this document for research purpose. However, the researcher was able to obtain a snapshot of a similar system from the provider's website as provided in the appendix. This data collection technique is useful for case study research as a qualitative research technique. Creswell (2009) suggests that documents, such as archival records, web pages and company files, for example, are possible documents to be analysed using this type of data collection technique. This technique is suitable for a content analysis type of qualitative research. It, thus, explains why it is useful in investigating small family businesses. However, while some of the business cases investigated did not grant enough access to study documents, others did not keep the kinds of records, such as historical files or system usage documents, that could have benefitted this research. System usage documents were studied in only one retail SFB case study as explained above.

For this research, historical records of businesses would have ensured that details such as family ownership and the generation of business were confirmed from such documents as well as through interviews. While ERP experts made archival data on cases of ERP usage available, not enough evidence of ERP to benefit this research was found from the records.

4.7.2.3. OBSERVATION/PARTICIPANT-OBSERVATION

This data collection technique was used as it was found to be important for case study research as it allowed the researcher to be embedded into whole the Small Family Business system and see things happen without having much influence on events (Stake, 1995; Jerring, 2001; Baxter and Jack, 2008; De Massis and Kotlar, 2014). It is understandable, however, that participants may present an artificial environment to influence the research and threaten the reliability of findings (Foster, 1996). This study made efforts following Foster's (1996) recommendations to limit the possibility of an artificial environment during data collection. The researcher visited the businesses mostly as other customers would and the businesses were also visited at different times to study earlier observed behaviours before such observations were recorded as accurate. Questions were also asked as if the researcher was a concerned customer when need be and, at the end of the observation period, follow up interviews were conducted with the business managers to clarify and ascertain the observation findings.

With observations, the nature of the phenomenon is studied in its natural setting while the researcher observes and takes any necessary notes (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). In the case of an intrinsic case study, all details are treated as important but with instrumental cases, the details relevant to the problem are treated with more importance than others (Stake, 1995). With this study using the instrumental case study method, it focused mainly on the details that were important to answering the research questions. Details, such as family attributes, everyday operations, customer relationships, employee conduct and management, decision-making and competitive strategy were focused on based on the theoretical framework. While other aspects of the businesses were paid attention to, the focus was on the aspects of the business identified in the literature as important to ERP adoption in SFBs and retail small businesses.

This research used **theoretical sampling** during the second investigation stage to determine the businesses to be studied to holistically understand the business processes and family involvement. Coyn (1997) suggests that in theoretical sampling, a purposive sampling of the most knowledgeable people in the field is first used to lead to further sampling based on the codes and patterns discovered. The purposive sampling of ERP experts was done during the first stage as described above. The findings at that stage as well as from the literature led to the need to investigate individual small family businesses. However, as this research is in the UK, there was the need to consider and appreciate the diversity across regions (Stake, 1995). Of the 20 businesses contacted, five retail small family businesses from across different regions in the UK were studied. De Massis and Kotlar (2014) also suggest that theoretical sampling is more appropriate for family business case studies. For this research, UK retail businesses that fulfilled the ONS' definition of small businesses were identified. Of these businesses, the ones that fulfilled the definition of a family business, based on Chua *et al.* (2003) and PWC's definitions, were deemed suitable. However, only the businesses willing to be included were investigated.

4.7.2.4. FOCUS GROUPS

This method was not adopted for data collection in this research due to the understanding from the first findings in chapter 5 that only the owner-managers in UK retail small family businesses may have the authority and knowledge required to be investigated and the verbal agreement reached not to disrupt daily operations in the course of studying the cases.

Focus group simply refers to questioning or interviewing people in groups (Creswell, 2009; Henderson, 2009). There are diverse views on the appropriateness of this method for

research. Some believe that information such as organisational strategy is better discussed in person rather than in groups (Creswell, 2003; Yin, 2003). Others, for example, Henderson (2009) think people feel more comfortable discussing in groups as the attention will not be solely on them.

4.7.2. SAMPLING

Bryman (2001) suggests that having a sampling plan improves the quality and credibility of research because it is impossible to analyse all available data within a population. Without such a plan, the researcher may be overwhelmed by the materials available, become confused and unable to analyse the right materials for the research purpose. Krippendorff (2004) suggests that researchers should choose materials that are easy to analyse and fit their standpoint.

This research used purposive sampling for the first stage of the investigations to identify the ERP experts that served the research purpose. However, for the second stage of the investigation, theoretical sampling was used to identify UK retail small businesses that fit the description of a family business. For clearer justification of the sampling techniques used, the different types of sampling and their applicability are briefly discussed below.

There are two main types of sampling available for any research: probability and non-probability sampling (Robson, 2002).

4.7.1.1. PROBABILITY SAMPLING

This kind of sampling is used when the findings are expected to be generalisable. With this technique, the population size must be known, and there should be the chance of any member of the population being picked (Robson, 2002). It means the sample size should be a good representation of the population (Lunsford and Lunsford, 1995). Probability sampling includes random, systematic, stratified, cluster, quote and multi-stage sampling techniques (Lunsford and Lunsford, 1995; Robson, 2002). However, the population of ERP experts, as well as small family businesses in the UK, is not clearly known so this sampling method would not be appropriate for this research. The second type of sampling is non-probability sampling and it is discussed below.

4.7.1.2. NON-PROBABILITY SAMPLING

Non-probability sampling is used when the population size is not clear. Also, it is used when the aim of the research is not to generalise but an in-depth exploration of a phenomenon is the goal of the research (Robson, 2002). There is no chance that any member of the target

population would be selected except if they can serve the research purpose (Yin, 2011; Robson, 2002). This sampling type involves any of the following: purposive, snowballing, theoretical and convenience sampling (Lunsford and Lunsford, 1995; Coyne, 1997).

- **Convenience sampling**

This sampling method mainly focuses on the most readily available of the target population (Miles and Hubberman, 1994). It is arguably the easiest and cheapest sampling method and, in fact, some term it ‘lazy’ sampling. It is argued that there is an element of convenience in every non-probability sampling technique, although thought is still required prior to using convenience sampling. (Marshall, 1996).

- **Purposive sampling**

This sampling type was used at the first stage of the investigation to identify the ERP experts that were considered to have the knowledge required to answer the research questions. Literature on the family business suggests that three out of any five SMEs in the UK are family owned and about 98% of these family SMEs are small businesses. ERP experts dealing with SMEs in the UK are expected to have some experience with family SMEs and especially small family businesses. Based on these reasons, ERP experts for SMEs in the UK were targeted at the first stage. Also, the research preferred experts who were not affiliated to a particular ERP provider to limit bias towards such a provider’s offer in terms of determining the possible contribution of an ERP system to business. Of the 20 experts identified and contacted, three of them were deemed as both fit for purpose, willing and eventually investigated.

This is a type of convenience sampling in which the researcher chooses members of the population who are deemed beneficial to the research (Lunsford and Lunsford, 1995). It is also termed ‘judgemental’ sampling because the researcher judges which sample is beneficial to the study (Marshall, 1996; Lunsford and Lunsford, 1995). Lunsford and Lunsford (1995) questioned the quality of the studies that use this sampling method, however, Marshall (1996) argued that the researcher should have adequate knowledge of the research area to be able to decide which sample would serve the research purpose. It is worth noting that this is a widely used sampling method in qualitative research as the researcher is constantly in search of objects (members of the population) that best suit the research aim.

- **Theoretical sampling**

This research used theoretical sampling during the second investigation stage. Coyn (1997) suggests that in theoretical sampling, a purposive sampling of the most knowledgeable people in the field is first used to lead to further sampling based on the codes and patterns discovered. The purposive sampling of ERP experts was done during the first stage as described above. The findings at that stage as well as from the literature led to the need to investigate individual small family businesses. However, as this research is in the UK, there was the need to consider and appreciate the diversity across regions (Stake, 1995). Five retail small family businesses from across different regions in the UK were studied. De Massis and Kotlar (2014) also suggest that theoretical sampling is more appropriate for family business case studies. For this research, UK retail businesses that fulfilled the ONS' definition of small businesses were identified. Of these businesses, the ones that fulfilled the definition of a family business, based on Chua *et al.* (2003) and PWC's definitions, were deemed suitable. However, only the businesses willing to be included were investigated.

This type of sampling, as the name implies, is theory driven. According to Coyn (1997), this sampling is used for theory building in a similar way to grounded theory. Marshall (1996) suggests that although it is used mostly for grounded theory, it is also used at some point in any qualitative research involving the interpretation of data.

- **Snowball sampling**

Snowball sampling, or snowballing, is used when the sampling population are not readily accessible (Robson, 2002; Yin, 2011). It is used in such a way that a participant, once identified, connects the researcher to another potential participant. It is also called referral sampling as it involves a chain of referrals from participants (Lunsford and Lunsford, 1995; Robson, 2002). This type of sampling was not used for this research as there were no referrals at any point during the course of collecting the research data.

While Lunsford and Lunsford (1995) suggest that the research focus and population size must be clear before deciding on a sampling technique, Marshall (1996) and Creswell (2009) argue that the research aim or direction should determine which sampling is appropriate. The view of Lunsford and Lunsford (1995) may apply to quantitative studies due to the importance of the representativeness of the samples, however, such an argument is not applicable in this

research as the samples were based on the research aim and direction as suggested by other studies (Marshall, 1996).

4.11. THE DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUE

The varying nature of data collection techniques in qualitative research suggests that there are several ways to analyse such data (Creswell, 2009; Yin, 2011). However, qualitative data analysis is divided into five steps as shown in the diagram below.

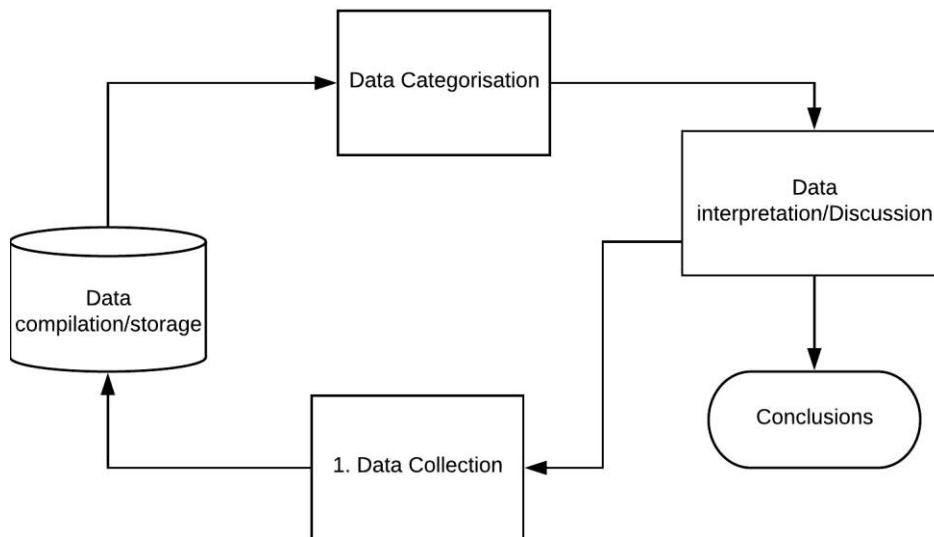


Figure 10: The five phases of analysis and their interactions

The figure above is not self-explanatory and requires some clarity; the iterative nature of data analysis in this study was evident by the two-way arrows connecting the different stages of the analysis.

The **data collection** phase is where the field data are collected and sorted. The sorted data were stored in a database for compilation. For this research data was collected at the 2 stages of investigation mainly through interviews, observations and in one case, through the analysis of the ERP contract document. The interviews were semi-structured and guided by the theoretical framework. The observations were also guided by the theoretical framework due to its instrumental nature to understanding ERP adoption within the UK retail SFB settings (Stake, 1995).

The second phase is the **data compilation** phase in which the collected and stored data are broken down into fragments and reassembled based on significance (codes). This phase is repeated as new insights are made. As shown, the codes derived were further tested in case study observations and the findings of such retesting re-informed the compiled data. The data

compiled were also stored in a database for the third phase of the analysis. The data collected through interviews were transcribed for codification purposes and daily observation reflection transcripts were also produced for transparency with reporting findings and ease of content analysis. Daily observation transcripts were compiled based on repeated actions on a daily basis. These compilations give more clarity for the particular case leading to the next observation day. Related patterns from interviews were also roughly compiled at the expert interview stage while family manager interviews were compiled along with matching observation reflections.

The third phase is the **data categorisation** phase. In this phase, the compiled and labelled data are further reassembled into themes or categories based on their commonalities. This was done through tabulations for the purpose of clarity during the interpretation phase. Categorisation of the compiled data for the expert interview transcripts were done after decontextualizing the compilations and finding common patterns across interviews. Having collected and compiled case study findings, the categorisations at this stage were done using the theoretical framework as that was the main guide leading to the data collection.

At the fourth phase, known as the **data interpretation** or **data discussion** phase, the reorganised data were interpreted into detailed analysis. The implication of the research findings were discussed in relation to the aim of the research. Having found patterns of ERP adoption in UK's retail SFBs from expert interviews and business practices from the SFB cases, the findings were then critically discussed drawing back to the extant literature in chapter 2 to determine the implication of all findings on theory and practice. For example, while findings from experts suggest that ERP adoption within the context is nearly impossible due to resistance, drawing back to the literature shows that while that finding may be true, the limited awareness of the perceived benefits of ERP to contribution to business could be one of the reasons for resistance. Also, while most of the cases studied were found without an ERP system, discussing business processes through the literature and others with ERP in place shows that ERP adoption could in fact improve some aspects of the business that were found to require some improvements. ERP adoption patterns were also found from experts and cases were also further explained through the literature.

In the final phase, the **conclusions** are learned from the interpretation of the data in phase four. The conclusions drawn here reflect the results of the different phases of analysis (Yin, 2011). Drawing conclusions were done through the comparison of findings across the 5 cases

and triangulating those findings using the expert interview findings as well as the archival finding 6 (A6).

It should be noted that the phases of analysis are not linear, rather they are recurrent in nature, i.e. the phases overlap depending on the insights gained as the analysis progresses. For example, the conclusions reached from the expert interviews (see Chapter 5) informed the data collection technique for the SFB cases studies.

It should also be mentioned that the use of computer software for analysis has recently been a widely accepted method of analysis (Creswell, 2009; Yin, 2011). Although different software applications for qualitative data analysis are used by different authors, the most popular ones according to Yin (2001) are ATLAS0-*ti5*, Nvivo and MAXqda2. While the analysis of the expert interviews was done using the Nvivo software, the case study findings were analysed manually due to the quantity and nature of the analysis involved (Yin, 2011). There was the need to find commonalities with the interview findings from experts, hence the need for Nvivo for easy and accurate identification of codes (Yin, 2001). The SFB case studies were, however, analysed individually as the importance of taking note of every detail of the content suggested the need for manual analysis (Creswell, 2009; Yin, 2011). Content analysis is discussed in more detail below.

DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUE	ACTION TAKEN
Data collection	Interviews, observations and document analysis (1 case)
Data compilation	Transcripts, observation reflections
Data categorisation	Evidence based (expert interview) and theory based (case studies)
Data interpretation	Comparing findings to theory and archival findings
Conclusion	Comparison of cases and triangulating with expert interview findings as well as case A6 findings

Table 8 : Data analysis technique

4.11.1. CONTENT ANALYSIS

Content analysis is used to make inferences from documents, such as texts, videos, audio, images, websites and newspapers to name just a few (Holsti, 1969; Hseih and Shannon, 2005; Elo and Kyngas, 2008). Content analysis can either be qualitative or quantitative. Although the process of analysing both types is similar, the difference is the kind of findings generated from such analysis (Hseih and Shannon, 2005). While a quantitative researcher would seek

statistical findings from such an analysis, qualitative researchers would seek detailed patterns and themes (Yin, 2010; Creswell, 2003; Creswell, 2009). This analysis method has been previously used in medical research and organisational research (Holsti, 1969; Elo and Kyngas, 2008).

Some of the advantages of using this method of analysis include the ability to examine volumes of data in detail with relative ease. It is also inexpensive as most documents are freely and readily available (Holsti, 1969; Hsieh and Shannon, 2005).

Elos and Kyngas (2008) suggest that qualitative content analysis is used when there are no prior studies on a phenomenon or when such studies are fragmented. It can also be used to draw models about the phenomenon. Kondraki and Wellman (2002) called it qualitative content analysis while Elos and Kyngas (2008) called it inductive content analysis.

As it has been established that little research has been done on ERP usage in family businesses so far, the use of an inductive content analysis would, according to Elos and Kyngas (2008), help establish meanings to patterns towards understanding ERP adoption in retail small family businesses. According to Hsieh and Shannon (2005) there are three approaches to qualitative content analysis; conventional, directed and summative content analysis.

At the preliminary stage of the investigation i.e. the expert interview stage, the content of the interview transcripts were analysed using the conventional content analysis approach to give meanings to patterns on ERP adoption in UK's retail small family businesses derived from the experiences of the experts. It was important to use conventional content analysis at this stage as the expert interviews served as the building block towards the SFB case studies and prior knowledge or bias of the phenomenon had to be neglected (Moustakas, 1994; Grant *et al.*, 2001). The findings from this stage, on the one hand, served towards establishing how best to approach UK's retail SFBs due to the unclarity about which businesses are the best fit for purpose. It, on the other hand, served towards answering the research question by showing how ERP adoption might work within UK's retail SFBs and the possible contributions of such adoption to the business.

During the main investigation stage of this study i.e the case studies, the content of both documented observation reflections and family manager interview transcripts from each case were analysed individually using the directed document analysis approach (Hsieh and

Shannon, 2005). The analysis at this stage was done manually as deep understanding of the content within each case was more important to understanding individual small family businesses and how they might adopt the ERP system. Having used the instrumental case study, it became important to have a lens or framework through which the cases were studied to keep the researcher within scope (Stake, 1995) hence the need for the directed content analysis approach.

The analysis of content at the different stages of investigation is discussed in Chapters 5 and 6 of this study.

4.11.2. CRITICISMS OF QUALITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS

Some demerits of this method include the difficulty in interpreting the document content, and reliability of the document to test the research aim as the document may have been prepared to serve other purposes.

Studies by Hseih and Shannon (2005) and Neuendorf (2002) suggest that there are no rigid rules as to how qualitative content analysis is undertaken; Hseih and Shannon (2005) named approaches such as impressionistic, intuitive, interpretive, systematic and strict textual analysis. While Bryman (2001), for example, sees the flexibility as a limitation, others such as Hseih and Shannon (2005) see it as the opportunity for a deep exploration of the phenomenon. This study uses qualitative content analysis to gather as much information on the adoption of ERP in retail small family businesses in the UK using both the interpretive and strict textual analysis techniques.

Another limitation of this method is its validity. Bryman and Bell (2007) suggest that the validity of content analysis is based on the credibility, authenticity and representativeness of the document being analysed. The focus of the study at the preliminary stage was primarily on experts dealing with ERP in SMEs as with them there can be a credible and representative evidence of ERP adoption in SFBs. Also, at the main investigation stage, understanding the individual retail small family business was the focus. The sources of credible information such as owner-managers were interviewed while observations were duly carried out and documented within the businesses. For credibility purposes, the content of both the interview transcripts and observations were shown to the family managers for further verification to ensure they were accurate representations of the businesses.

An issue that has repeatedly been raised about qualitative research is maintaining the quality of investigation, and it is important to discuss how the quality of this research was ensured.

4.12. ENSURING THE QUALITY AND VALIDITY OF THIS RESEARCH

Over the years, the main challenge with qualitative research has been the debate about what makes quality research (Seale, 1999). Most of these discussions have centred on the issue of validity and reliability based on the quantitative research yardstick (Bowen, 2005). The idea of triangulation came from such arguments about ensuring validity. However, studies suggest that the purpose of quantitative and qualitative research is not comparable (Rolfe, 2006), and the issue of quality in qualitative research depends on the reader. Yin (2011) also suggests that qualitative research is an art, and the reflection of the writer's preferences should be obvious. To ensure quality, the researcher needs to be thorough, and ensure clarity and credibility in his reporting.

It is evident from the above that there is no one way to ensure research quality but such research must be readable, and the reader should be able to reciprocate the same research and obtain similar findings. It implies that the researcher must be rigorous, and ensure transparency in explaining the research methods and procedures.

The general idea of ensuring quality in qualitative research, according to Yin (2011), is to be able to maintain transparency in reporting so others can trace how the research was conducted. Also, a methodical approach is important as this ensures that research procedures are followed, and there is no room for casual work (Yin, 2011). Moreover, the conclusions must be drawn from the evidence available. According to Morse *et al.* (2002) validity in qualitative research is the responsibility of the researcher and should be reflected through the research process rather than at the end of the research. Below are the steps taken to ensure the rigor, validity and hence reliability of this research.

- The chances of being presented with an artificial environment during the case studies were limited through going into the businesses in different guises for a period of 4 weeks as well as through follow up interviews of the family managers (Foster, 1996).
- The family manager interviews were also structured based on the theory rather than observation findings to avoid the responses being led by the observation. This was also to limit the chances of having observed an artificial business environment.

- Triangulation of this research findings were done through collecting data using different techniques and comparing them to ensure such findings didn't occur by chance (Yin, 2011). For example,
 - a. ERP expert interview findings were compared to the case study findings (see chapter 7).
 - b. The archival finding of ERP adoption in case A6 was also compared to other findings from ERP experts as well as SFB case studies (see 7.2.).
 - c. Also, observation findings within each case were triangulated through family manager interviews for further verification and clarification of the findings (as done in chapter 6).
- Individual interview transcripts from experts were shown to individual respondents to ensure the transcripts are a true reflection of their responses.
- Observation transcripts as well as family manager interview transcripts from each case studied were presented to the family managers within each case to ensure that they are true reflections of the business.
- Critical evaluation of the field findings against the theoretical expectations were done to establish the theoretical relevance of the findings to ERP studies in FBs.
- The openness of the findings to multiple interpretations depending on the context was also established as it was discussed that conflicting family interests could lead to a difference in the findings and requires further studies
- The initial suspicion that small businesses including family businesses may not have the required awareness of ERP to serve the research purpose was made up for through the initial interview of ERP consultants suspected to be experts in the field. This was done to leverage their experience to inform further investigation into ERP adoption in UK's retail SFBs
- Different steps through the research were reported as transparently as possible

The above steps were followed with the aim of ensuring the quality of the study. However, people's interpretation of work is subjective, and it may be impossible to produce a universally accepted piece of qualitative work.

The details on how data were collected at the different stages of this research are discussed in the next chapters. However, the next section of this chapter looks at the research framework or pathway.

4.13. THE RESEARCH PATHWAY

This section explains the pathway for this study from the literature review stage through to the framework comparison stage. The figure below shows a diagrammatic representation of the research framework.

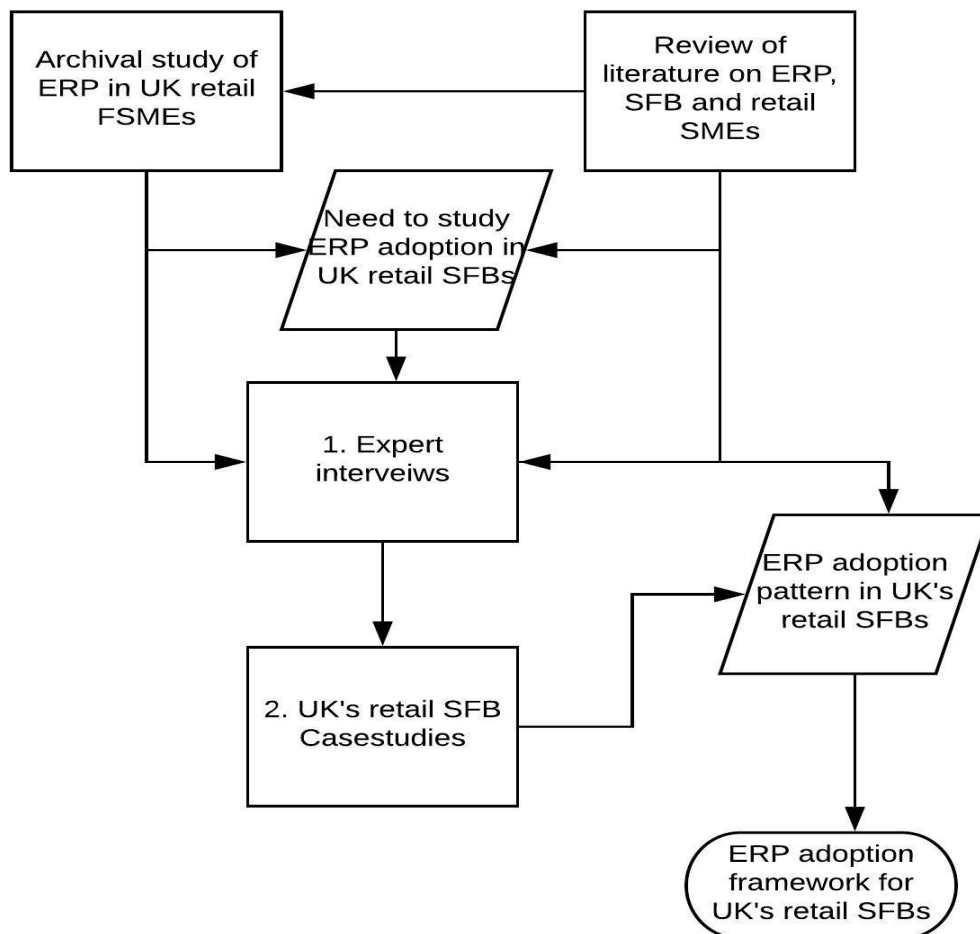


Figure 11: The research pathway.

This section discusses how the research was designed to achieve the research aim by meeting the objectives and answering the research questions.

The literature review on the ERP system, the family business and the retail industry established that ERP adoption is beneficial to retail SFBs but family involvement could be a hindrance to its adoption. The literature finding points to the need for further clarity on how family involvement might affect ERP in retail SFBs. It points to the significance of this research which is aimed at understanding how family involvement affects ERP adoption in the UK's retail SFBs. However, due to the negligible amount of ERP knowledge in FBs, there was a need for a pilot study to inform the research direction.

The archival study of ERP adoption in retail FSMEs was conducted as a reliable source of evidence to offer an insight into ERP adoption in the UK's retail SFBs. The evidence found at this stage, though limited and with little clarity, pointed to the fact that family involvement could aid ERP adoption in the UK's retail SFBs. The limits of the evidence at this stage informed the need to seek further clarity on the impact of family involvement on ERP adoption. Evidence of ERP adoption in the UK's retail SFBs pointed to the fact that expert experience could serve the purpose of offering more clarity on the phenomenon of interest.

The need for further research into ERP adoption in the UK's retail SFBs was established through the review of literature and the pilot study. They also offered a sense of direction on how the research should be conducted. While the literature pointed to the need to study individual SFBs, it was clear that such businesses may have limited knowledge of ERP, hence the need to seek evidence from experts with relevant knowledge. This sentiment was also echoed in the pilot study as the archival data from ERP experts offered the first evidence of ERP adoption in the UK's retail SFBs.

The expert interview stage was conducted to offer better clarity on ERP adoption in the UK's retail SFBs and why such adoption is important. The findings from the literature at this stage, on the one hand, corroborate the suggestion that family involvement is a hindrance to ERP adoption, although, on the other hand, the findings suggest that studying individual SFBs is required for a full understanding of family involvement, how it might affect ERP adoption and the purpose ERP adoption could serve within the business. As the literature also points to the need for FB studies to be done on an individual case basis, it leads to the next phase of this study.

The retail SFB case study stage gave a greater clarity to family behaviour within individual SFBs and their business practices. While some findings were in line with those found in the literature on SFB behaviour, they also contradicted the literature especially on how family involvement affects ERP adoption within the UK retail SFBs.

The next stage shows **ERP adoption patterns in UK retail SFBs** based on the findings across the different stages of the study including the literature review and pilot study.

Based on the discussions of ERP patterns, an **ERP adoption framework for retail SFBs** was proposed to show a path to ERP adoption in retail SFBs.

4.14. SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

All through this chapter, it has been established that the research is of the opinion that there may not be one truth about the influence of familiness on ERP adoption in UK retail SFBs. This study used the inductive approach and hence, it was interpretive in nature. The knowledge needed for this research could only be known if it were part of the research and an in-depth knowledge of the phenomenon was gained from it. It was established that for this reason, the research would use the qualitative methodology and qualitative methods to establish the knowledge required. The research was divided into two stages of investigation and the study utilised two different qualitative methods at the two investigation stages: the experiential method and the case study research method.

During the first stage of the investigation, semi-structured interviews were used to question ERP experts to gain an understanding of ERP adoption decisions within the context of the retail small family business. It was established through archival documents that ERP experts, via their experience, may have a reliable amount of knowledge of the phenomenon to give an initial knowledge of its adoption within the context studied.

Case studies were used to investigate the characteristics of individual retail small family businesses to determine their adoption behaviour. The subjectivity of the phenomenon being studied was considered before deciding on the methodical approach and design. The methods were chosen to

- Explore the ERP adoption decisions in UK retail small family businesses
- Obtain an in-depth knowledge of the businesses within the context
- Deliver an original contribution to knowledge in terms of framework development
- Fit the research into the available timeframe for the completion of the program

This research identifies that there is no single way to approach a problem and the researcher has considered the various options available before making decisions. It can be seen from the justification of the different decisions that such decisions were thought through.

The next chapter discusses the first stage of the investigation, which is the expert investigation.

CHAPTER INTERVIEWS

FIVE:

EXPERT

5.0. INTRODUCTION

With the methodological choices discussed in chapter this chapter presents and discusses the findings expert interviews which is the first stage of field work in the research. As the review of the literature shows that there is little adoption of ERP by the UK's retail SFBs and the literature suggests familiness affects the adoption of such technology within the business. This chapter discusses the adoption of ERP by the UK's retail SFBs through the experiences of ERP experts. It was important to explore the experiences of experts most likely to have dealt with retail small family businesses to seek some understanding of the adoption of ERP in that type of business. The method and investigation procedures are as shown in the figure below.

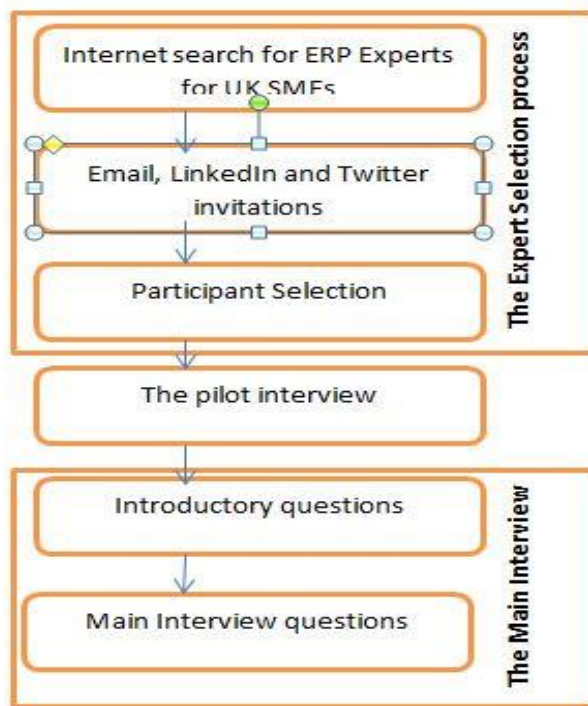


Figure 12: The preliminary investigation process.

5.1. THE SEARCH FOR ERP EXPERTS

ERP experts were sought mainly using internet searches and social media. ERP advisers for family businesses, ERP providers and consultants for retail SMEs within the UK were

searched for using the Google search engine, LinkedIn and Twitter. Although the search yielded numerous results, the profiles of many experts were checked to ascertain which of them would serve the research purpose.

As there is no limit to how many members of a target population are suitable for qualitative research (Bryman, 2001; Punch, 2005; Yin, 2011), as many as 20 of the ERP experts identified who deal with SMEs were contacted via email and social media. While some were sent invitation emails, others were invited to participate in the research through LinkedIn and Twitter. Although 12 responses to the invitation emails were received, not all of them were willing to participate or were suitable for the research. In fact, the majority of the responses were to decline participation for various reasons. The decision to contact about 20 experts came firstly from the fact that not all the experts contacted would be fit for purpose or willing to participate, and secondly from the need to have adequate information to inform this study within the allotted time (Yin, 2011).

5.2. SELECTING THE INTERVIEW RESPONDENTS

Some of the email responses from the ERP experts claimed that the experts do not participate in external research; four others claimed not to have worked with SFBs as their clients are mainly medium-sized enterprises, and they, in fact, referred the researcher back to the information on their websites. As the research was based on voluntary participation (Punch, 2005), the unwillingness of experts could be a limitation in terms of evidence, however, the qualitative nature of this study meant that deductions and conclusions could be made based on the evidence available from willing participants that met the requirements (Bryman, 2001; Punch, 2005). The reluctance of experts could also be an indication of the limited adoption of ERP in the UK's retail SFBs as indicated by Smith (2016). It could also be an indication of the unwillingness of ERP experts to engage with SFBs due to the complex nature of these businesses.

While the remaining experts responded to show interest in participating in the research, one of them subsequently became disinterested during the follow-up emails. Besides the fact that this expert claimed not to be aware of ERP adoption or usage by SFBs, an appropriate time could not be agreed upon for an interview to take place as the expert was travelling for a project and was not reachable at the time of data collection. With only three of the experts contacted willing to be interviewed and fit for purpose, it was decided the three be interviewed before a decision was reached on whether there was a need for more respondents.

The findings from interviewing these respondents may or may not have been sufficient to form patterns that provided answers to the research questions. This decision was taken as the experts' profiles and follow-up emails suggested that they did have adequate knowledge of the ERP system in retail small family businesses to serve the research purpose. The experts' knowledge and experience were further tested with the interview questions to affirm prior claims. It should be noted that the decision that there would be no further interview of experts would only be taken if clear patterns were formed towards answering the research questions or informed further investigation, and also if it seemed that further interviews might not add more value to the research, i.e. if a saturation point was reached. Fusch and Ness (2015) explain data saturation as the point when no added knowledge would likely bring about new codes, themes or patterns and the available information is sufficient to replicate the study. Studies suggest that data saturation should be one of the goals of a research study as it improves the validity of such a study, especially when the study involves a small sample size (Mason, 2010; O'Reily and Parker, 2012; Walker, 2012). The results from the interviews could be acceptable as a representation of the UK as the experts are from different parts of the UK and thus represent the regional diversity of the UK, although generalising the findings of the expert interviews without further studies is not advisable (Yin, 2011).

5.3. THE EXPERT INTERVIEW PROCESS

After recruiting the participants for this stage of the research through their indication of interest, the interviews were gathered in two parts. A pilot interview was conducted to test the questions and structure for appropriateness, and even though the interview was semi-structured, the pilot made the need to divide the questions into sections, obvious.

5.3.1. THE PILOT INTERVIEW

The pilot interview was conducted over two days through email exchanges between the researcher and the respondent. Email was used as the respondent was not available for a face-to-face interview but was willing to devote the time required to answer all the interview questions. This method of interviewing is not uncommon, especially when the respondent is not physically available (Punch, 2005). Other methods such as video calls and telephone calls are also permissible (Punch, 2005). Walker (2012) also agreed that the method of interviewing is not as important as the quality of information obtained through the process. The interview questions, however, were open-ended to allow for a deep exploration of the phenomenon from the experts' perspective (Walker, 2012).

Although the questions were focused on testing the respondents' knowledge and experience of ERP in retail small family businesses, the questions were not particularly structured into any format at this point. The respondents were asked whether the adoption of ERP by retail small family businesses was quite different from its adoption by non-family businesses. Based on the answers to the first question, the respondents were also asked to discuss how ERP could be of benefit to retail SFBs. Based on the previous responses, the respondents were asked to discuss ERP's contribution to human resource management in retail SFBs. The respondents were also asked for further clarification on the role the younger generation plays in the adoption of ERP in SFBs. There was also discussion on the difference that location could make due to the respondents having experience outside the UK. Suggestions were requested on how to improve awareness of ERP in retail small family businesses.

The findings from the pilot interview showed the appropriateness of the questions as the responses were considered relevant to this research. However, the need to add some structure to the questions for the main interviews became evident due to the level of knowledge of ERP by the experts. Based on the findings from the pilot interview, semi-structured interviews were conducted to allow the experts' perspectives to be deeply explored while keeping them within the scope of the research.

5.3.2. THE MAIN INTERVIEW

The first part of the main interview was designed to establish the credibility of the respondents, while the second part was designed to establish their knowledge of ERP adoption in the UK's retail small family businesses.

The first part of the expert interview was important due to the purposive nature of the research sampling. Questions to establish the position of the respondent, as well as number of years of experience with the ERP system, were asked. Also, the respondents were asked to describe the ERP system. This question was important to further show the respondents' credibility and suitability for the interview. Questions were asked about the respondents' involvement with family businesses and especially retail small family businesses. Involvement with retail SFBs was the main quality that qualified a respondent for this research. Having certified the suitability of a respondent, the researcher proceeded to the main questions on ERP usage in retail SFBs.

The second part of the interviews was based on the adoption of ERP in retail SFBs, and the knowledge and benefits of ERP to such businesses. The respondents were questioned on

whether retail SFBs use the ERP system. This question was important so as to understand why there were only a few SFB cases in the archives of ERP vendors. The respondents were also questioned on the adoption behaviour and the role of family characteristics. The main reason for this was to have a clearer view of ERP within the business that would contribute towards answering the research question. The last set of questions was focused on understanding how retail SFBs could benefit from the ERP system. This part of the interview was also important as it was intended to help towards achieving a research objective. It also gave an insight into why it is important to raise ERP awareness in retail SFBs. The findings from the interviews are discussed below.

5.4. DISCUSSING THE EXPERT INTERVIEW FINDINGS

Patterns were formed from the interview findings and the analyses in this section are discussed using those patterns or themes.

All the respondents suggested that family characteristics or familiness affects ERP adoption behaviour in the UK's retail SFBs.

ERP is generally much different for family businesses.- C3.

Not a lot of these businesses of 10-50 employees use the ERP system.- C2.

This finding is not uncommon to SFBs as some studies (Kellermans, 2013; Smith, 2016; Decker and Gunther, 2017) have argued that they are technology averse but others suggest that they commit to the adoption of a beneficial technology to their goals (Casia and De Massis, 2012; De Massis *et al.*, 2016). With the ERP system found to be beneficial to SFBs (PWC, 2014; Lasisi *et al.*, 2017), further findings were made regarding ERP adoption decisions and commitment within the UK's retail SFBs.

Although it has been stated that the heterogeneous nature of families makes individual SFBs unique (Kellerman *et al.*, 2014; Chrisman *et al.*, 2015), there were patterns observed by the experts in the ERP adoption behaviour of such businesses. The themes formed based on the findings are: low investment, resistance by the older generation, limited knowledge, need for ERP awareness, awareness creation and varying ERP benefits. However, those themes were further grouped using labels such as adoption behaviour (low investment and resistance by the older generation), awareness (limited knowledge, need for ERP awareness and awareness creation), and opportunities of adoption (varying ERP benefits). The findings are discussed

below using the labels and themes. All the themes and classifications were formed inductively.

5.4.1. ADOPTION BEHAVIOUR

5.4.1.1. *LOW ERP INVESTMENT*

It was found that the top managers of UK retail SFBs who are usually the older members of the family do not invest in the ERP system. They are usually satisfied with the legacy system even when the business seems disadvantaged. As they are the main decision-makers within these business, the businesses often do not adopt ERP, although, when the next generation is brought into the business they often attempt to adopt the ERP system. The main reason for doing so is so the technology can help improve the business and make the business gain competitive advantage. The next generation of the family, in fact, often go as far as contacting the ERP experts to initiate moves to adopt ERP for the business.

However, despite the willingness and enthusiasm of the next generation they still need the conviction and approval of the decision-makers (the older generation) to get the technology adopted. But the older generation are usually too relaxed and satisfied with business and do not see a reason for such investment.

The original owners are often not interested.- C2

What I tend to find is, there is often a lack of investment from the original owners.” - C1 “I do see a trend that things stall and stagnate as the parents get older and they've been in the industry and are more relaxed to change.- C1

So as the children get older, they get brought into the business; what I tend to find is, there is often a lack of investment from the original owners, but then the young blood comes into the business, they have studied, done their degrees and so on and so forth. They then join the business with a renewed energy and want to go and improve the business with the ERP systems.- C1

The original owners are often not interested but then the younger generation comes into the business and want to improve the business and decides the company needs an ERP system.- C2

It is not uncommon for the decision to use ERP to be driven by the Nexters – the next generation of family business leadership/ownership.- C3

Part of the trend that I see so often and I am very cautious in that area cos when that happens, and I get those call from the son, and I get them on a regular basis, I have to be careful cos in the nicest way and the best enthusiasm in the world, they can waste a lot of our time sometimes.- C1

Looks at the market, comes with massive ideas and enthusiasm but needs to convince the original founders of the business to make the change because they've probably been living without ERP and doing ok but just frankly not changing much; trying to get them to change can be a bit of a hurdle for the 2nd generation.- C1

This often frustrates consultants and providers as we end up wasting a lot of time putting things together for companies that are not willing.- C2

As with the previous finding, this finding is expected of SFBs as the literature found that older SFBs tend to be more technology averse than younger businesses (Decker and Gunther, 2017). Psychodynamics usually increases with succession and business performance (Kellerman, 2005; Decker and Gunther, 2017). For further clarity on ERP adoption within UK retail SFBs, it is important to consider succession of SFBs up to at least the third generation of leadership. It is important to pay attention to succession as experts suggest that SFBs are reluctant to adopt the ERP system and Decker and Gunther (2017) found that the commitment to technology adoption reduces with succession. Although the experts did not point this out, it is important that succession is considered in the next stage of this study.

Despite the heterogeneity of retail SFBs signified by the experts, it can be said that strategic decisions such as ERP adoption are based on what is referred to as the decision premise (Weismeier-Sammer and Von Schlippe, 2013). Decision premise is the situation whereby the business abides by the decision made by the family. However, based on expert findings and studies (Spencer, 2012; Stewart and Hitt, 2012), such decisions are made by the older generation, and the whole business, including other family members, abides by these decisions. Stanley (2015), for example, argues that decisions are made by experienced family members. The experts suggest that in UK retail SFBs, decisions are made by the older

generation and these decisions are usually to not adopt the ERP system even when other family members believe it would be advantageous for the business to adopt ERP.

Using Ibrahim *et al.*'s (2001) strategic decision-making model, it can be said that the family's thought processes in terms of ERP adoption are based on the older generation's perception of the importance of the technology to the business. While this finding is similar to Spencer's (2012) verdict on owner-managed small businesses, it shows that the involvement of the family makes ERP adoption decisions differ from other small businesses.

5.4.1.2. OLDER GENERATION'S RESISTANCE

Even though the next generation of the business are often willing to adopt the ERP system, the experts suggested that attempts to adopt the ERP system are often met with stiff resistance by the older generation. The older generation's resistance comes from the fact that they believe the business has survived a long time and there is no way a technology like ERP would further contribute to the business. They often resist ERP adoption in different ways such as by withholding budget or not giving the necessary support required for such adoption.

But the parents often cannot just see how technology can benefit the business. - C2

Some of the biggest problems that I face whenever I am dealing with a small family business from a commercial point of view, where it is owned by the father and the son just joined and they want to meet us is that they tend to be full of ideas and enthusiasm but have no authority or budget. - C1

Because they've probably been living without ERP and doing ok but just frankly not changing much, trying to get them to change can be a bit of a hurdle for the 2nd generation - C1

What I can say is that there is a trend that the next gen as you called it bring the ERP idea to the business due to their knowledge of it from school but the parents often do not see a need for ERP as they've been in the industry and survived for a long time, so they are more relaxed to change." - C2

The experts, in agreement with the literature, opined that the non-commitment of SFBs to ERP adoption is due to family members trusting the legacy system within the business (Kellermans, 2005; Decker and Gunther, 2017). The experts mainly attribute the reluctance to the older generation of family managers; this finding was not brought out in the literature.

However, feedback from the experts supports the single piece of evidence on ERP adoption found in the pilot study that despite the obvious need for an enterprise system, adoption does not happen until there is a change in leadership. As it was difficult gaining access to retail SFBs, the age of family managers could not be used as a yardstick for participant selection. However, observations and comparisons were made on the cases when considering younger generation and older generation owners.

Considering that top management support is a Critical Success Factor for ERP and the decision premise within SFBs (Dixit and Pratash, 2011; Aarabi *et al.*, 2013), a positive perception of ERP would increase the chances of successfully adopting the technology. A negative perception of ERP, on the other hand, could imply failure to adopt or an unsuccessful adoption as suggested by Smith (2016). As the experts suggest that the ERP system is generally unfavourably perceived by the older or controlling generation of UK retail SFBs, the chances of a successful adoption is low unless succession occurs and the younger generation is interested in ERP adoption. The findings echoed by the experts support Smith's (2016) suggestion that the chances of ERP success in a business with significant family involvement, such as a SFB, are low.

On the other hand, the finding also suggests that, provided the younger generation of the SFB is interested in adopting ERP, succession of ownership could be important for SFBs to stand a better chance of a successful ERP adoption. While Kotlar and De Massis (2013) found that succession could affect the adoption of technology, Decker and Gunther (2017) argued that succession hinders the possibility of adoption. The findings from experts show that both arguments may hold in terms of ERP adoption but it also depends on the perception of the new generation of owners. For example, as seen in the pilot study, the younger manager from the new generation perceived ERP as a positive step for the business and the technology was adopted successfully. However, if the new owner from the younger generation does not see a need for ERP, there will be no adoption.

It can therefore be concluded that the resistance of the older generation to ERP adoption is due to their unfavourable perception of the technology, but the chances of successful adoption of ERP may be high in any business that favourably perceives the ERP system such as the business A6 in the pilot study. This is an aspect of the family business that Smith (2016) could not study due to its quantitative nature. This study clarifies that aspect from the experts' perspective. However, the heterogenous nature of SFBs as seen in the literature and

suggested by experts suggests the need to study individual SFB cases to understand ERP adoption within different contexts.

Based on the findings above, further clarification was sought on how perceptions of ERP are formed in SFBs to inform ERP adoption decisions and further patterns were found as discussed below.

5.4.2. AWARENESS

5.4.2.1. LIMITED KNOWLEDGE

The respondents suggest that the level of knowledge of ERP within the UK's retail SFBs could be a hindrance to its adoption but not a major one. It was found that family members belonging to the older generation in SFBs often have little to no knowledge of the opportunities or benefits the successful adoption of ERP could avail them. They are comfortable with business performance and do not see any aspect of the business that ERP could contribute to.

It was further found that even though the next generation has had formal education and is aware of the enormous benefits of ERP adoption to business, their knowledge is, however, usually generic. Despite their best efforts, such knowledge contributes little to changing the older generation's perception of the ERP system.

What I can say is that there is a trend that the next gen as you called it bring the ERP idea to business due to their knowledge of it from school but the parents often do not see a need for ERP as they've been in the industry and survived for a long time. - C2

It can be due to the level of knowledge they have; they understand the academic side of it but not the practicalities, but it is the reluctance of the owners in this case, often the mother and father, to invest in something they sort of think has been doing alright for years. - C1

While it is not uncommon that small businesses have little knowledge of beneficial technology such as the ERP system (Lenart, 2011; Marsh *et al.*, 2014), the experts opined that, in their experience, knowledge of the ERP system by the younger generation did little to change the perception of the older generation. However, with the literature suggesting that SFBs commit to beneficial technology and that ERP is found to be beneficial (PWC, 2014; Lasisi *et al.*, 2017), there is a need to further study SFBs to establish what influences decisions to adopt ERP. Also, due to the closed nature of the family in SFBs (Carney, 2005;

Chrisman *et al.*, 2015), the experts found it hard to penetrate the business. They were not able to identify what is responsible for the older generation's reluctance aside from being comfortable with business performance. There is therefore a need to study individual UK retail SFB cases to achieve an in-depth exploration of how such strategic decisions are made.

However, the reluctance of the SFBs to allow the experts into the business even after being contacted by the younger generation could also be attributed to the family's fear of external intrusion (BIS, 2013; 2014). BIS (2013) posit that SFBs are usually not open to external aid for fear of losing family control, family money or the business. Expert C1 echoed this by suggesting that SFBs will not commit to ERP adoption unless they are sure of its advantages to their business. The implication could be that for UK retail SFBs to adopt the ERP system, ERP knowledge is better communicated through independent sources that are not affiliated with ERP companies. Rather, ERP knowledge should come from independent bodies perceived to have similar interests as SFBs as seen with C3 who SFBs approach for consultancy and advice due to the years of dedication and affiliation with such businesses.

The experts were further probed on why it is vital for UK retail SFBs to have a clear understanding of the need for an ERP system.

5.4.2.2. *NEED FOR MORE AWARENESS*

The respondents suggest that it is important that UK retail SFBs become aware of the need for an ERP system. It was suggested that such awareness should, in fact, happen before the business becomes disadvantaged by its failure to adopt ERP. The cost of not using ERP early in a business could eventually outweigh the initial costs of its adoption.

It was further found that the ERP needs of the business could range from better management and policy compliance to operational or technological needs. It is important that businesses identify how ERP contributes to those needs to increase any chances of ERP adoption.

So, it's really a case of, and it is a difficult one, but companies need to identify their growth and start investing in appropriate systems before the need for those systems becomes so overwhelming that they no longer have time to deploy them. It is a bit like getting a car serviced before it breaks down and not afterwards. It is always going to be more controlled and cheaper that they do it because otherwise, businesses start to deteriorate and fail in trying to continue with their old legacy systems and only when they start to fail they

sometimes realise that they should have made the investment 6 months ago or 12 months ago.

- C1

It is important that companies identify the benefits of ERP before the urgent need becomes a problem for the business. Although this is difficult especially with small businesses it is important for businesses to start identifying the benefits of systems before the need for those systems becomes so overwhelming that they no longer have the patience or time to wait for its implementation. In my experience, businesses have come to us after the legacy system crashed as a result of an overload and the business had to shut down pending the deployment of an advanced system. In most cases, the companies, after seeing how ERP has helped their business, come back to talk about their regrets of not deploying it a while back. - C2

The need for ERP tends to come when they are looking at coming away from just a core financial system, and they are looking at CRM, perhaps they are expanding into documentation, document management, invoice scanning, workflows, expanding beyond just the financial installations. - C1

Sometimes it's operational needs, a situation where people are taking on new clients, and they look for enhanced functionalities to manage those. For example, we deal with the pharmaceutical firms a lot, and when you get to a certain size, you need to obtain certain approvals from the body that would force you to upgrade your systems. It can be customer led as in the customers demanding them. It can be technology led, where people need to upgrade to keep up with technology such as new workflow systems as the businesses expands. - C1

The retail industry may require documentations invoicing, CRM, etc. It could depend on the industry or the type of business and their situation. - C2

The experts' suggestion that there is an urgent requirement for retail SFBs to understand the need to adopt the ERP system supports PWC (2014) which found that the ERP system is important to FB survival in a competitive market. Even though the experts could not establish the specific ERP needs of UK retail SFBs, the needs identified are typical of retail businesses as found in the literature (Hutchinson *et al.*, 2013; Ahmed *et al.*, 2015; ONS, 2016). The review of the literature also shows that some retail small businesses already take advantage of the ERP system for similar needs. Even though the ERP needs identified by the experts are generic, they cannot be argued as not being typical of retail SFBs. These ERP needs were

also found in A6, the SFB evidence in the pilot study of FSMEs. As found from the literature, ERP adoption can bring about several benefits (Lasisi *et al.*, 2017), and the experts suggest that it is important that individual businesses understand their ERP needs in order to understand the potential benefits of adoption.

The experts could not clearly identify when the need for ERP adoption in a typical retail SFB arises but insisted that the need for ERP adoption in SFBs is urgent. However, as established by Lasisi *et al.* (2017), ERP adoption may not benefit every aspect of a SFB. For that reason, and as established by experts, it is important to study individual cases of retail SFBs to establish how and when ERP might contribute to such businesses.

5.4.2.3. RAISING ERP AWARENESS

Raising ERP awareness in the UK's retail SFBs is difficult due to the uniqueness of individual businesses and their varying needs. ERP knowledge in SFBs, where available, is usually based on generic benefits of the technology. Such knowledge, according to the experts, is usually not applicable to their business and eventually it puts them off adopting the ERP system. It was further suggested that cases showing evidence of the benefits of ERP adoption in similar businesses may serve a purpose in improving awareness, however, there are not many examples of UK retail SFBs benefiting from the adoption of ERP.

The respondents concluded that a clear, unambiguous method of educating such businesses on ERP would be beneficial to business and practitioners alike. Although, how that might be achieved was not explicitly given despite there being a few suggestions. The experts suggested the involvement of the government and other independent bodies to increase SFB's knowledge of the need for ERP adoption as shown below.

A lot of consultants tend to go out and evangelise, if you like, the benefits of ERP and then they tend to get involved in putting together requirements, documents, and so on and so forth. The danger there is that, actually most of the time, the result is that these consultants will, I suppose, invite the customer to put forward every single wish, demand and request that they would like in a perfect world and turn that into 1 requirement document and send it out to providers and finally, when that comes in we have just to ignore them because the request that is made is so ridiculous, and it's not just possible. - C1

It is always a very difficult one as these businesses are not very open. A lot of experts tend to be unwilling to engage with these businesses due to the difficulties faced getting them to understand the system. - C2

To engage more especially with trusted consultants that would give them the exact benefits of ERP to their business and create a link with providers that can deliver the benefits. I mentioned trusted consultants because some consultants, as a result of not doing a good job of giving factual ERP benefits, discourage ERP usage by the few willing small companies when the generic benefits are not achievable with their business. - C2

We keep referring to family businesses but there are not many examples of these companies that did invest and have from say 500k income to 50-60 million in 10 years. But there is a trend that you can see where those that have made that early investment tend to be the ones that succeed. - C1

Well, there are many cases of businesses, which experienced tremendous unhindered growth after the deployment of ERP but there are not many such companies using ERP as we have dealt with some in the past. But I mentioned earlier that there are not so many examples which can be looked upon to serve as inspiration for other retail small family businesses. I personally do not see how such examples could help if the case does not specifically address the business. - C2

So, it needs almost what I would call local business networks like business links, chambers of commerce, etc. to run more workshops to introduce ERP providers and get them engaged with these businesses at an earlier stage, before the businesses start to expand and then start to crumble due to a lack of functionality. - C1

The findings above show that despite the suggestion that there is an urgent need for ERP adoption in SFBs, the authors are at a loss as to how best to make SFBs aware of the technology. It was further found that while the generic benefits of ERP adoption are good, they do little to influence ERP adoption in SFBs. Rather, it is the clarity on ERP benefits to individual SFBs that would better serve retail SFBs in the UK. The finding supports the literature that indicates the perceived benefits of technology to SFBs influence adoption decisions (Carrasco-Hernandez and Jimenez-Jimenez, 2013; De Massis, 2016). It is important that efforts are made to make UK retail SFBs aware of such benefits.

While this study has, through the literature, established the benefits of ERP adoption for SFBs, there is a need to do the same for retail SFBs. It is also clear through the experts that it is hard for experts with other interests than those of the SFBs to convey such knowledge to UK retail SFBs. It then becomes important that independent experts, such as C3, and researchers, among others, to do more in terms of raising ERP awareness in the UK's retail SFBs by focusing specifically on this sector. While the findings support the need for ERP studies focused on SFBs such as this one, the findings also point to the need for more effort by independent ERP experts to focus on making SFBs aware of the need to adopt ERP. Experts, in fact, emphasized the need for such knowledge to be conveyed at the earliest opportunity, especially to retail SFBs, before the businesses become unable to cope with either their own growth or the external competition. This method will help address some of the limitations of using generic ERP benefits from the literature as it was found that such benefits may not work for ERP adoption in SFBs. Rather, the use of such generic ERP knowledge, according to the experts, has over the years been counterproductive in getting retail SFBs to successfully adopt the technology.

Having found that there is a need to raise the level of ERP awareness within UK retail SFBs because adopting ERP brings enormous opportunities, clarification on ERP benefits to retail SFBs was discussed by the respondents.

5.4.3. THE BENEFITS OF ERP ADOPTION

It was found that successfully adopting the ERP system brings enormous benefits to retail SFBs. As ERP is broad and benefits businesses in varying ways, it was suggested that individual businesses be studied to understand their characteristics and the possible benefits that ERP could bring to these businesses. This suggestion was made especially because of the heterogeneous nature of FBs and the uniqueness of individual businesses.

A range of possible benefits of ERP for retail SFBs were, however, identified as improvements to communication management, document management, financial management, decision-making, operations and growth. These benefits are categorised as managerial, operational and strategic benefits.

If we expand it to ERP then we will be talking about better management of communication, i.e. who had spoken to whom about what, when and what emails came in and out. That is a CRM application which forms a part of a company-wide ERP. We could then have document

management which tends to turn a core financial system to more of an ERP system for each unit of the company - sometimes it could be contact management, communication management or document management, it depends entirely on the company. - C1

Clearly, the ERP system can contribute to management, but the managerial needs of businesses could vary, depending on their management style or other things. Some businesses would want a general better management of business while some may just be interested in decision-making. Most businesses are often interested in financial management. Of course, ERP can benefit the business in many different ways but, again, it depends largely on how ERP is viewed by the different businesses and the kind of support they get. - C2

Ironically having/not having an ERP system is a Catch 22 type of situation. Having the ERP system will allow the business to grow in size and profit more quickly. - C3

ERP = infrastructure = analytics = better informed (connected) decisions in all aspects of the operational process (operational efficiency and effectiveness), marketing & sales (customer acquisition and retention) and better management of financial resources. - C3

It is clear there are different modules of ERP to serve different purposes depending on the business needs. - C3

The expert findings agree with the literature, which suggests that competitive pressure is a determinant of ERP adoption in SMEs. It was established that while the benefits of a successful early adoption are clear, the cost of not using ERP could be detrimental to business. These findings were echoed in the literature by Pantano's (2014) suggestion that technology could be a double-edged sword for retail businesses. The findings also affirmed that the ERP system benefits all businesses including retail small family businesses but the benefits depend on business needs (Esteves, 2009; Teittinen *et al.*, 2013). Although one respondent suggested the ERP page on their website may be a starting point to sensitising retail small family businesses on ERP benefits, other respondents argued that understanding specific business requirements is a better way to establish specific ERP benefits as generic benefits are usually not adequate. The findings also support suggestions from the literature that understanding business needs help businesses understand the perceived ERP benefit to them and such knowledge aids adoption decisions (Almahamid and Awsi, 2015).

While many possible benefits of ERP adoption were identified by experts, the need to understand individual businesses was further emphasized. Some of the benefits are generic but agree with the benefits identified by Lasisi *et al.* (2017). Those generic benefits are said to do little in helping the perception of ERP within retail SFBs with the findings further buttressing the need for this study to further focus on specific retail SFB cases. Studies (Almahamid and Awsi, 2015) have also identified the need to understand business characteristics to establish the perceived benefits of ERP to business. Also, despite the vast experience of the experts interviewed, a further investigation of individual SFBs within the context will allow more understanding of the heterogeneity of such business (De Massis and kotlar, 2014). Smith (2016) also echoed that individual businesses should be studied to understand how family involvement affects ERP in family businesses.

While the findings, so far, have given clear insights into ERP adoption in UK retail SFBs, they have repeatedly emphasized the need to study individual UK retail SFBs for further clarity. While, the findings buttress the unique nature of individual SFBs, they suggest a way to handle the limitations of Smith's (2016) study of the ERP system in FBs. Taking a cue from the findings in this chapter, the next chapter examines individual cases of UK retail SFBs to offer clarity on ERP adoption and how such adoption might impact business.

5.5. SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter discussed the findings from seeking expert opinion on ERP adoption in UK retail SFBs. It established how the respondents that fit the research purposes were selected and discussed how consent was sought and explained the pilot interview procedure. The changes that were made to the interview protocol were also discussed as were the interview questions themselves; analysis of the interview findings was undertaken and the findings' implications on existing knowledge, the methodology and achieving the research aim were explained.

ERP ADOPTION IN SFBs	C1	C2	C3
The decision	Older generation family manager	Older generation family manager	Older generation family manager
Rate of adoption	Low due to an unfavourable perception	Low due to favouring the legacy system	Low as SFBs do not see a need for ERP
Level of awareness	Low but generic where available	Low but generic	Low but needs to be specific
Why ERP adoption?	It may have enormous benefits for SFBs	The business may struggle in the future	The business needs it
The benefits of ERP adoption	Better studied on a specific case basis due to business heterogeneity	Enormous but depends on the specific case	
Openness to ERP knowledge	Not open to experts with affiliation to ERP	Not open to ERP knowledge from ERP experts	Willing to engage with experts with FB focus
How to increase ERP awareness	Efforts from an independent body	Independent experts' engagement with SFBs	SFBs need to engage more with FB affiliation or interests

Table 9: Summary of expert interviews

The table above lists the opinions of the three experts C1, C2, and C3 on the different aspects of ERP adoption in UK retail SFBs as explained below.

It was established that ERP adoption is of enormous importance to UK retail SFBs and its non-adoption could have detrimental consequences for business. Despite establishing some benefits of ERP adoption, they come across as being generic to SMEs and not specific to SFB. However, the experts also established that while ERP adoption patterns above may be similar to other one-man owned small businesses, family considerations such as the impact of a divided family interest could change those patterns in SFBs. They also established that to have a clearer understanding of ERP adoption in SFBs in the retail industry, individual SFBs

need to be better investigated to understand their unique characteristics. The table below shows a matrix of the implication of findings in this chapter on the theoretical framework.

Theoretical themes/Experts	C1	C2	C3
Managerial benefits of ERP adoption			
Performance management	Better communication management,	General better management of business	X
Decision-making	X	Faster decision-making	Better informed decision-making
Information & Resource management	Document management, financial management,	Financial management,	Better managed finances and infrastructure
Operational Benefits of ERP adoption			
Better operational structure	Better client/customer relationship through CRM	Better client management	Operational efficiency and effectiveness, customer acquisition and retention
Strategic benefits of ERP adoption			
Support for sustenance & growth	Better management of growth in capabilities	Better management of market growth and resources	Supports growth in size and profitability
Organisational benefits of ERP adoption			
Succession support	X	X	X
The power filter			
Family's perception	There appears to be a lack of investment from the original owners due to them being comfortable with business performance	The original owners are often not interested but then the younger generation comes into the business and decides the company needs an ERP system.	ERP adoption is generally different in Family Businesses as the business money is the family's money. The business wants to be convinced the technology is what they need
Adoption decision and commitment (Output)			
ERP adoption decision/commitment	The original owners frustrate ERP adoption efforts because they are not convinced about the technology partly due to their limited knowledge	The next generation can make the move but the original owners resist through no commitment of funds and other resources	The business rarely adopt the technology but they are usually the best clients due to their commitment if they decide to adopt it.

Table 10: Expert finding matrix with the theoretical framework.

Despite the enormous significance of ERP adoption identified by experts, the decision to adopt the technology appear to depend mainly on the family manager/decision-maker who is usually part of the older generation of the owning family. Their reluctance to adopt ERP could be an explanation to why there are few instances of UK retail SFBs using the ERP system. The insistence on non-adoption was attributed to the perception that the legacy system works better for business and the family manager/decision-maker's relative satisfaction with the business' position. The experts, however, noted the need for UK retail SFBs to understand the need for ERP adoption as failure to do so could leave the business disadvantaged in such a competitive industry.

While the experts buttressed the need for specific studies on SFBs to establish the need for ERP adoption, it was established that it is not uncommon that succession as well as business performance could move retail SFBs to adopt ERP.

The next chapter of this thesis discusses the case studies to further understand ERP adoption within UK retail SFBs.

CHAPTER SIX: THE CASE STUDIES

6.0. INTRODUCTION

Recall that the expert interview findings were discussed in chapter 5, this chapter presents the UK's retail SFB case study findings which is the 2nd stage of fieldwork done for this study. This research has found that although the impact of family involvement or familiness is an important factor in ERP adoption in the UK's retail SFBs (Sections 3.3 and 5.6), ERP adoption has also been found to contribute enormous benefits to businesses including retail SFBs (Laforet *et al.*, 2013; Smith, 2016; Lasisi *et al.*, 2017). It was, however, suggested that the adoption and how SFBs may benefit from ERP depend on the individual businesses due to their heterogeneity (Lasisi *et al.*, 2017; Smith, 2016). For example, it was found in Sections 5.5.1 and 5.5.3 that while there are common trends observed in the adoption of ERP by SFBs, individual SFBs are unique and this uniqueness may affect decisions regarding the need for the adoption of an ERP system. It was also found in Section 5.5.3 that the benefits of ERP adoption to SFBs depend on the capabilities and needs of the business. This chapter discusses the findings from individual case studies of UK retail SFBs to establish their characteristics and understand how these businesses may adopt the ERP system. This is important as it establishes clarity on ERP adoption from the perspective of the SFB perspective and also offers further clarity on the methodological limitation of Smith's (2016) findings on the effect of family involvement on ERP in SFBs. Furthermore, it establishes from an individual case study perspective how ERP might benefit SFBs as the literature suggests.

The cases were each studied for a month to understand the business enough to establish its organisational characteristics. Yin (2011) suggests that it is important to study cases over a period of time to find out common patterns, stand-alone events of interest and the meaning of such patterns. The pilot study done in each case showed that the four-week period was adequate to investigate repetitive events such as business management, processes/operations and also understand the strategic position or actions within the businesses. Over this period, the research studied business characteristics, such as the managerial structure, operational and business performance, and the competitive strategy. These aspects of the businesses were focused on, as the literature established that they are vital to ERP adoption by SFBs (Lasisi *et al.*, 2017). Also, interviews were conducted with the family managers to corroborate

observational findings on business processes. The need to corroborate observational findings with interviews was to ensure there was no possibility of observing an artificial environment as discussed in Section 4.7.2.3 (Yin, 2011). While, interviewing one manager may seem to be a limitation to the evidence gathered in each case, it was necessary as permission was given to speak only with one designated member within the business. However, as the findings from the interview do not significantly differ from the observational findings, there may be little need to worry about the inability to conduct more than one interview within each case study. The findings of the observations and interview for each case study are analysed and discussed later in this chapter. It should be noted that as some SFBs had no ERP in place and the family managers did not have an ERP knowledge, findings from these cases were compared to findings from expert interviews, archival findings and the literature to establish possible ERP benefits and the influence of family involvement on adoption.

The next sections explain the data collection including the sampling, selection of participants and analysis of findings.

6.1. SELECTING THE SFB CASES

As discussed in Chapter four (4.7) of this thesis, this study used theoretical sampling for the selection of participants at this stage of the investigation. The definitions of retail business, small business and family business as given in Sections 2.15, 2.10 and 2.8, respectively, were relied on to identify the SFBs that served the purpose of this research. Selecting cases were based on their convenience, case fit based on the definition of SFBs and the willingness of the participating businesses.

Identifying retail businesses across the country was relatively easy, but the need for the eventual participants to have less than fifty employees was ensured as a condition to meet the definition of a small business used in this research (ONS, 2016). The difficult part of the selection process was identifying small retail businesses that are family owned. It should be noted that the businesses had to meet any of the criteria for FBs set by Chua *et al.* (2003) and the definition of FBs by PWC (2015). However, as observations could not determine whether businesses were family owned or not, some businesses were approached to ascertain this fact and to seek their consent for participation. As discussed in Section 4.7.1.2, the earlier statement establishes the element of convenience in the selection of participants despite the theoretical considerations (Marshal, 1996). Of the 20 small retail businesses contacted in

person during networking events and through telephone calls, five businesses were both willing to participate and met the theoretical conditions of being family owned and managed. While there were a few more companies willing to participate, they were either sole traders, a partnership or were charity owned businesses. While some other businesses confirmed that they were family owned and managed, they were unwilling to allow their business to participate in the research process. This was not unusual as BIS (2013) had already pointed out that SFBs are largely closed systems and may not welcome external interference.

As the aim of this research was not to generalise findings and the willing participants cut across the first, second and third generations of ownership, the evidence from the data collected from the five cases were reasoned to be accurate and reliable in establishing ERP adoption patterns within UK retail SFBs. The reasoning behind the evidence probably being adequate was also informed by studies which suggest that between two and ten case studies are sufficient for multiple case study research (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2011). As explained above, aside from the theoretical sampling style, the cases were selected based on convenience regarding accessibility, the cost of obtaining information, the available timeframe and the willingness of participants (Carney, 2005; Yin, 2011). Note that there was no snowballing through participant companies because none of the businesses were willing to connect the researcher to competitors. The participants might have considered the study as strategically beneficial, and so it was difficult to investigate more than one business within the same market. This further buttresses the competitive nature of the retail industry and the extent the businesses were willing to go to stay ahead (Elkady *et al.*, 2014; Jimisiah *et al.*, 2016). Also, all the participant companies requested a report on how adopting the ERP system could contribute to their business as they thought the knowledge might be useful for their business. For some, it was the condition for participation, and for others, the report request was made at the end of the investigation period. On the one hand, it buttresses what retail businesses are willing to do to gain competitive advantage (Rhodes, 2015; Jimisiah *et al.*, 2016) and, on the other hand, the observation points to the fact that UK retail SFBs may be open to adopting the ERP system if it is perceived as beneficial to their business goals as suggested by Carrasco-Hernandez and Jimenez-Jimenez (2013) and De Massis *et al.* (2016).

The researcher was also met with some hostility when he was initially perceived as a representative of a technology provider. However, most businesses became more welcoming once convinced that the purpose of the study was not to sell an ERP system but was purely for independent research. This observation supports the finding from the ERP experts in

Chapter five that UK retail SFBs are not open to ERP experts deemed as not having business interests but only ERP sales interest. On the other hand, it points to the fact that these businesses may be open to an independent knowledge of the ERP system for their business and not the potential bias of experts toward the companies they represent. The welcoming nature of these businesses gave the researcher a better environment for investigation purposes and he was able to go into the business either as a customer or a researcher at any time. The openness of the SFBs being investigated once convinced about the researcher's purpose contradicts the closed and hostile system described by experts in Section 5.5.2. The implication of this finding in relation to the research aim is that independent bodies may have more power to propagate ERP adoption to retail SFBs than ERP experts with company affiliations. The reason for this is that SFBs tend to associate with people perceived to have business interests rather than other interests (Kellerman *et al*, 2014).

6.2. THE CASESTUDY FIELDWORK

As discussed in Chapter four, the case studies were based on business observations and participant interviews. However, in one of the cases, the examination of the existing ERP system document was allowed. The document was studied to establish the type of technology already within the business.

The case study businesses were each observed for about a one-month period. Participant interviews were the last data collected. The need to have collected adequate information through observations to inform the interview dictated the schedule. Although the observation involved every aspect of the businesses, activities such as sales, customer relations, resources and their management, employee conduct and management, competitive strategy and the intensity of the competition received special attention. These formed both the internal capabilities and the competitive environment and strategy and also enabled the exploration of strategic decisions within the case studies. The findings from the literature, the pilot as established in the theoretical framework and the expert interviews informed the design of this aspect of the research.

In all the cases, the interview participants were either a family manager or a nominated representative. In most cases, the interview was with the family manager, however, in two cases, it was a family member designated by the decision-maker. The design of the interviews focused on the affirmation, clarification and establishment of facts after the observation. The

interviews were designed to offer clarity on observations and limit the chances of having observed an artificial environment (Yin, 2011). They were not designed to reflect a preconceived idea of the business based on observations, rather they were designed based on the theoretical framework to understand the important characteristics of the business. This approach was undertaken to encourage open-mindedness by the respondents to the interview questions. Such methods, as seen with semi-structured interviews, are often used when clarity is sought on a phenomenon from an individual's perspective (Punch, 2005; Yin, 2011). Hence, this is why the interview questions did not ask questions that were already obvious from the observations. It was also done partly to have recorded evidence for such findings and partly to see if there were any contradictory perceptions from the respondent. The use of observations and interviews to corroborate each other, and to offer further evidence and clarity of case study findings is not unusual and has been suggested for family business studies by De Massis and Kotlar (2014).

The data collected from each of the five case studies were reasoned to be sufficient to establish evidence towards achieving the research aim.

Having collected the data, the findings were each presented followed by their analysis in each case. For example, in case study 1 below, the findings relating to family-styled leadership were first presented before its analysis (discussion) was presented. The sections below present and discuss the findings from each case study and eventually compare the findings.

6.2.1. THE CASESTUDY FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The data analysis at this stage was done manually mainly using the patterns derived from the theoretical framework as explained in chapter 4. The findings from the observation and family manager interviews were first presented before the critical discussions based are presented. Based on the findings from the literature, expert interview findings and the evidences presented in each case, the ERP adoption patterns and meanings of those patterns were developed. The business processes are then pictorially presented using the BPMN to show how the business might operate with an ERP system in place.

The Business Process Model Notation (BPMN) as its description by Chinosi and Trombeta (2012) conotes, it was used to create a more understandable picture of where each case might when they take advantage of an ERP system through its successful adoption. These models

are easily understood by business owners/managers (family managers) irrespective of their level of expertise, as well as experts in the ERP field (Haisjackl *et al.*, 2018).

6.3. CASE STUDY 1

This case study is a second-generation Afro-Caribbean grocery store with fifteen employees. It is a business owned by a Pakistani family and have been in the retail business for 20 years prior to this study. The business was selected based on the established family ownership, the existence of family members working within the business and the willingness to participate in the research.

The study included the observation of activities including sales, stock, decision-making, financial management, the customer relationship, employee performance and the rate of sales. At the end of the study period, the eldest family member who was also the top manager participated in the interview to clarify and confirm some of the findings of the observations. Patterns formed through the study of the case are discussed below.

6.3.1. FINDINGS FROM CASE STUDY 1

Patterns were formed deductively based on the theoretical framework and findings from this case study investigation. The following labels are based on patterns formed through the study of managerial, operational, strategic and organisational goals of the business.

Table 11: CASE 1'S THEMES

CATEGORIES	THEMES
MANAGEMENT	Family-styled leadership
	Majority family employees
	Expert controlled finances
	Manual stock management
OPERATIONS	Customer satisfaction is important
	Automated Sales
STRATEGY	Market information required
	Growth potentials
ORGANISATIONAL GOAL	No clear succession plans

6.3.1.1. MANAGERIAL CHARACTERISTICS

Based on the observations and an interview with the top manager, the findings on the managerial characteristics of the business, as summarised in the above table, are discussed below.

6.3.1.1.1. FAMILY-STYLED LEADERSHIP

It was observed and further supported through an interview that the leadership style of the business is hierarchical and based on the family. The eldest member of the family (top manager) within the business is the ultimate decision-maker. He makes all business decisions while other members of the business, including family members, follow. He was also the only person that gave an interview as other within the business were not allowed to talk to the researcher. Based on these findings, it may be said that the leadership style of case study 1 is hierarchical and family-styled. In a family, the eldest member of the family makes the decisions while others follow (Carney, 2005; Stewart and Hitt, 2012). While some studies have attributed such a relationship to family altruism, others have termed it the decision premise in SFBs (Chrisman *et al.*, 2012; Zellweger *et al.*, 2012). While this is not any different from previous literature and expert findings, it is important to emphasise what makes up family leadership in each case as it is a selection criterion for each retail SFB investigated. It is also important to do so as Spencer *et al.* (2012) suggest that strategic decisions, e.g. ERP adoption are made by family managers. Also, as studies found that decision premise exists within SFBs, i.e. the whole business abides by the decisions made by the family manager or business leader, it is important to understand leadership and decision-making in case study 1 (Weismeier-Sammer and Von Schlippe, 2013).

Even though there was another member of the family who took charge when the top manager was not available, especially between the opening time and midday, this other family member does not take decisions. He takes orders from the top manager and relays them to other employees within the business. When the second person in charge was asked for an interview, he refused and directed the researcher back to the top manager. It was stated that the person was not authorised to talk and could only direct other employees on their duties based on directives. Considering this finding and the literature (Spencer, 2012) reviewed in Chapter 2 of this study, it may be proposed that the strategic decisions and hence, ERP adoption decisions within this business appear to be dictated by the family manager. This is also as suggested by some studies (Stewart & Hitt, 2012; Spencer *et al.*, 2012) and it also agrees with the expert suggestions on the management make-up of the UK's retail SFBs. The

implication is that in case study 1, ERP adoption may be dependent on the family manager's decision. According to Weismeier-Sammer and Von Schlippe (2013), such a decision brings about the commitment of other members of the business once it is made.

The manager's initial perception was that the ERP system could not benefit the business as the only sales system within the business was done to imitate their larger competitors. As the family manager perceived that the technology may not be of benefit to the business, it could be implied that the chances of case study 1 adopting the ERP system may be low. The inferences are corroborated by the literature (Carrasco-Hernandez and Jimenez-Jimenez, 2013; De Massis *et al.*, 2016), as are the findings from the ERP experts, which posit that the perception of the family manager on adopting the ERP system appears to usually dictate its adoption chances.

In the company, I am the owner. The owner me and my brothers.

I definitely make the decisions. I am here, and I make all decisions.

We have three branches in Manchester, and I manage here while my brothers manage the other two. I am not the eldest, but I am the eldest here, and we make the decisions for our different branches.

The system has many functions but most of it is not for us but stores like Morrison. There are many options, but I use like 30-40%.

Listen, this business is difficult to do with systems because products come in every week.

However, considering other studies (Kotlar and De Massis, 2013; Patel and Chrisman, 2014; Decker and Gunther, 2017), other business characteristics such as business performance or succession could influence ERP adoption within Case 1. Other Case 1 characteristics are discussed below.

6.3.1.1.2. MAJORITY FAMILY EMPLOYEES

It was found that even though there are about fifteen employees within the business, most of them are members of the same family, with the others belonging to the same ethnic group as the owning family. This was observed from the informal nature of the relationships between

the employees and also from further questioning. The employees do not generally have a formal job description except for what the family manager or second-in-command directs the employees to do. The main observation was that the few female employees are only allowed to work at the till due to the physical nature of other activities within the business. It was also observed that due to the informal relationships within the business and unclear job descriptions, it was difficult to know which employees were responsible for the different activities. While some may be idle as a result of not being directed to do anything, others may be working extremely hard.

The top manager affirmed the informal nature of job descriptions as he confirmed that he instructs employees on what to do and monitors all activities, even though it was found that he is not always available to do so.

Although the top manager confirms that the employees are being checked, it appears that the existing system does not adequately check the employees. However, being an FB, checking employees may not be deemed important for such a business due to trust and altruism (Chrisman *et al.*, 2014). However, with such a system may come limited accountability and a loss of employee management, which may affect business performance (Pazzaglia *et al.*, 2013). With the loss of employee management and lack of accountability already noticeable in the business, there may be a need for an employee management system. The ERP has the capability for employee management, and its adoption could serve such a purpose for Case 1 (Teittinen *et al.*, 2013; Songini and Gnan, 2015). However, having such a system could be deemed as a disruption to the trust platform on which the family business was built (Songini and Gnan, 2015). This could be seen as a possible limitation to the adoption possibilities of the ERP system within Case 1. The accountability brought about through ERP adoption could, in fact, prevent future conflict which could result from the loose system presently in place. There could be a chance of commitment to ERP adoption if the decision is made by the family manager as a result of the trust brought about by a high level of family involvement in the business.

You sometimes know when it comes to labourers; we want to give good service to the customers. Sometimes it is very busy, and we have like 15-20 but sometimes 12.

I am here, I keep an eye on them. I am always around; if I am not around my cousin will be here to check them.

6.3.1.1.3. EXPERT CONTROLLED FINANCES

Throughout the observation period, it was not evident how the business finances, including profit, loss and tax payable are managed, but the interview findings show that such finances are managed by legal experts. The experts help the business calculate profits, expenses and taxes for a particular period of time.

Although the experts engaged by Case 1 for financial management may be well trained to handle such tasks, it is without a doubt that such a method could suffer from human error. Also, the time taken to sort such financial documents could be a disadvantage, especially when such experts are busy with other clients or the documents are needed urgently. This finding points to the effort by Case 1 to have an accurate financial record and it opposes the suggestion from the literature that retail SMEs hardly keep financial records (Cant *et al.*, 2015).

Considering that managing finances was identified as a typical problem found within retail SMEs, there may be the need to have an updated and error-free financial record (Ahmed *et al.*, 2015; Cant *et al.*, 2015). Case 1 could take advantage of the resource management part of the ERP system to have an updated, error-free and real-time financial record (Dechow and Mouritsen, 2005; Teittinen, 2013; Songini and Gnan, 2015). The adoption of the ERP system for financial management purposes could also be cheaper than the use of experts especially as the company already pays a premium for a stand-alone point of sale (POS) system (Teittinen *et al.*, 2013). Also, there are cheap ERP options and in fact open-source ERP that could serve small businesses like Case 1 (Johnson *et al.*, 2015; Scholtz and Atukwase, 2016).

Also, as the family manager confirms the need for assistance by outsourcing the business finances, the business could commit to the adoption of ERP to take back control of the finances. However, the family manager needs to be made aware of an enterprise system that can serve the purpose (Marsh *et al.*, 2014; Almahamadi and Awsai, 2015).

No no no, I have solicitors that take care of financial documents and records because it is difficult to do everything yourself so I allow solicitors to handle financial records in case of any problems.

6.3.1.1.4. MANUALLY MANAGED INVENTORY

Although new stock was received during the observation period, it was difficult to understand how the records were updated without further questioning the process as part of the observation. Although other employees could not clarify this as they were not authorised to discuss business operations, further questioning during the interview made it clear that there are actually no regular inventory record updates. Planning and restocking are done mainly based on assumptions that products are usually due to be replenished fortnightly. There were no real checks on how much of the actual products were sold, went missing in different ways or remained unsold.

It can be said that without a structured way of keeping a record of stock, products could go missing without any accountability (Songini and Gnan, 2015). As found with employee management, keeping such records may not be deemed necessary even if it takes little effort or time. Such practices may, however, have detrimental impacts on the business and the family in the long run (Pazzaglia *et al.*, 2013).

The ERP system has the capability to manage business resources in such a way that it promotes transparency and accountability (Teittinnen *et al.*, 2013; Marsh *et al.*, 2014). The transparency and accountability that ERP adoption promotes could bring about improved business performance and management such as faster decision-making (Marsh *et al.*, 2014; Chabouni and Yahia, 2014).

Considering that SFBs usually function based on family trust, such a structured method of performance management could be counterproductive in the sense that it may appear as betraying the sense of altruism within the business (Chrisman *et al.*, 2014). The family manager, despite having the decision-making power, may not be willing to jeopardise the family interest in terms of trust to gain business advantage (Miller and Le-Bron Miller, 2006). However, being aware that the accountability brought about through ERP adoption could further promote family trust and unity rather than disrupt it by eliminating doubts from missing stock or unbalanced business accounts, could aid the chances of ERP adoption (Almahamadi and Awsi, 2015).

Listen, this business is difficult to do with systems because products come in every week. Like so many products, you know, when we bring it we know in two weeks we have to replace. So it is not easy to use a system for the business.

Deliveries come in two weeks; I know when a pallet is going to finish, so we count like once a month. We don't count like every day because we deal with different companies and different products come in every time.

You know it is not a business like Best way; you know Best way deal in containers, but we don't do containers here.

While internal resistance was stated in the literature as being one factor that could make businesses fail to take full managerial benefits from ERP adoption (Teittinen *et al.*, 2013), if a SFB as in Case 1 made the decision to adopt ERP they would tend to fully commit to the course due to their trust in the main decision-maker (the family manager). This finding was echoed both by expert C1 and Carrasco-Hernandez and Jimenez-Jimenez (2013). For this reason, it may be important that the managerial benefits of ERP adoption to Case 1 are communicated to the family manager if the business is to commit to the adoption of the ERP system. While the managerial characteristics of Case 1 point to the need to adopt an ERP system and how that might happen through family involvement, the next section discusses the operational characteristics of the business.

6.3.1.2. OPERATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Through observation of the business operations and subsequent interview of the top manager, the following patterns were found.

6.3.1.2.1. AUTOMATED SALES

It was observed that there is already a system in place within the business. The system helps automate the sales of all products and issue an instant receipt to all the customers. Although there was an initial suspicion that it could be an ERP system in place, the interview findings as well as other evidence (sales receipts) showed that the system is mainly used as a stand-alone point of sale (POS) system and not an ERP system. The automated sales system makes sales easier for customers and even the family manager likened the sales system to that of the larger competitors in the area.

When customers pick items from the shelf, it is just like Asda and Tesco. They go to the till and make payment.

The payment is taken and entered into the system here. It includes the scaling system.

Although the system is used as a stand-alone system, the business pays quarterly to maintain it as it functions through the Cloud. As the cost of maintaining such a system is not a

problem, the decision not to take further advantage of the system or adopt a more advanced system may not be due to the cost but to the top manager's preferences.

This finding confirms the literature and expert suggestions that family preferences are an important factor in strategic decision-making in retail SFBs (Ibrahim *et al.*, 2001). However, in this case, the limited ERP knowledge within the business tends to lead to the negative perception of the business on ERP adoption.

Even though there is a sales management system in place, the business adopted such technology just for the professional look it provides and not because of a conviction that the technology can benefit the business operationally. Although the finding may agree with the need for SFBs to professionalise business through technology adoption (Gedajlovic *et al.*, 2004; Pazzaglia *et al.*, 2013), the technology was not adopted for its operational benefits. As found in the literature and in this case, customer satisfaction is important to survival in the retail industry and Case 1 customers appeared happy with the seamless sales process within the business (Elkady *et al.*, 2014; Rhodes, 2015A; Jimisiah *et al.*, 2016).

This finding also points to the fact that the adoption might have been triggered by the family manager's decision that the business needed a professional operational outlook while maintaining the legacy style. While the finding does not support the literature (Smith, 2016) which alludes that SFBs are technology averse, it supports the fact that SFBs are reluctant to let go of the legacy system (Kellerman *et al.*, 2014).

However, as Case 1's interest is just in the outward appearance of the business and not the actual operational benefits of the technology, the technology was not being used to its capacity and this was confirmed by the family manager. The system does not manage inventories for the business as only product price records are kept on the system. There are more ways in which such technology could benefit Case 1, if it is an ERP system as the family manager suggests. While it is not uncommon for small businesses to adopt the ERP system in modules based on their needs (Haddara and Zach, 2011; Johanson *et al.*, 2015), the findings suggest that ERP adoption or extending the capabilities of the existing system could better serve the business operationally than just providing the business with a professional outlook. As found so far, the adoption seems to be based on the family manager's awareness of the operational benefits of such technology (Spencer *et al.*, 2012; De Massis *et al.*, 2016).

The system is a straightforward system; it is connected to each other and connected to the server. So there is a management of this.

The system has many functions but most of it is not for us but stores like Morrison. There are many options, but I use like 30-40%.

6.3.1.2.2. CUSTOMER RELATIONS ARE IMPORTANT

It was found that, as a retail business, Case 1 customers are treated with the utmost respect. Customers are given a warm welcome, all their queries are well received and all efforts are made to make the customers' buying experience as effortless as possible. It was further observed that customers' complaints and feedback are acted on based on the directions of the top manager. The business even goes as far as giving discounts to loyal customers or replacing any product that is associated with a complaint.

At the interview, the importance of customers to the business was further affirmed. It was found that all customer feedback is important to the survival and growth of the business. However, the traditional verbal style of feedback was being relied on as there was no structure to how such feedback should be received.

As found with the sales system, all the operations within the system are aimed at satisfying the customers. The importance of customer satisfaction was further exemplified by the family manager as it was said that customer complaints and feedback are treated as a matter of urgency. The finding buttresses the importance of the customer relationship to small retail businesses (Hutchinson *et al.*, 2013). While some retail SMEs employ innovative methods such as the loyalty card, enterprise systems, etc. (Zakaria *et al.*, 2013), SFBs like Case 1 rely on the legacy system and do not see the need for technology to help the customer relationship (Dan and Floris, 2010; Dessi and Floris, 2010; Dessi *et al.*, 2014). Although relying on the legacy system, as found in Case 1, is often seen as a strategic advantage that SFBs have over other businesses (Dessi and Floris, 2010; Dessi *et al.*, 2014), it is important that the business is aware of the opportunities that ERP adoption may avail them. It could be important as studies by, for example, Hutchinson *et al.* (2013) have suggested technological innovation as a way to help small retail businesses leverage their limited resources for customer satisfaction.

Definitely, it is going to help improve business. I keep my eye on that side that was complained about, and I tell my staff to keep an eye as well. Customers are important to us, don't give a chance to get a customer angry.

Ah, we don't use anything like an online system. Sometimes people normally come to the store, and they discuss the things we need or talk about price.

Looking at how important customers are to the business and the feedback system in place, the business might benefit from a more structured way of receiving feedback as not all customers will come back to share an experience or complaint. An angry customer is unlikely to come back, so it would be easier to give feedback online as it is now common practice for customers.

Considering the aim of this study and the literature (Carrasco-Hernandez and Jimenez-Jimenez, 2013; Lasisi *et al.*, 2017) which suggests that ERP adoption is dependent on the family manager's perceived benefit of the technology, Case 1 may not be willing to adopt ERP for a better customer relationship. However, as found from the pilot study and as is evident from the literature (Marsh *et al.*, 2014), the ERP system is able to increase both customer satisfaction and the customer base for UK retail SFBs. Findings in this research (Carrasco-Hernandez and Jimenez-Jimenez, 2013; Lasisi *et al.*, 2017) suggest the importance of making such knowledge available to the business to inform ERP adoption. The implication of making such knowledge available especially to Case 1's family manager is that it could change his perception of ERP and move the business towards committing to its adoption.

6.3.1.3. STRATEGIC CHARACTERISTICS

Some characteristics found in the business are strategic to its survival and growth. These characteristics are discussed below.

6.3.1.3.1. THE NEED FOR UPDATED MARKET INFORMATION

Through the investigation, it was observed that the business requires up-to-date market information as a strategy for survival and growth. It was observed that the business always pays attention to how much similar products to theirs are sold at in other stores. Also, having up-to-date information on the product needs of customers is important to the business. Such information helps inform the decision on the products to stock and which ones to drop.

It was observed that any information on the price or quality of a similar product sold elsewhere was given utmost attention and immediately reported to the top manager for direction. Also, any request for a new product by the customer is treated in a similar fashion. Every detail of such a product is obtained from the customer and fed back to the top manager for further action.

These observations were further confirmed during the interview as the top manager emphasised the importance of having up-to-date market information and even gave a scenario of when a business only deals with outdated information.

It is clear that the business depends on a lot of market information for competitive advantage and there is no existing system other than the legacy system to help with this. While ERP adoption presents an opportunity for the business to obtain such information faster and in a more structured way (Chabouni and Yahia, 2014), earlier findings show that the business is comfortable with the present system. The business may not look to adopt the ERP system for this purpose. However, on considering that fact from the case study, it was found that the main competitors are the large enterprises who already have a lot of technology, e.g. online stores in place (Rhodes, 2015a), and ERP adoption can source the necessary competitor's information for the business in real time (Johnson, 2014). It was found in Section 2.18.3 that the larger retail businesses now base their competitive advantage on the use of enterprise systems and it is becoming important for small businesses and particularly SFBs to adopt accessible technology, e.g. an ERP system to avoid being left behind (Lipi *et al.*, 2015; Romero and Martinez-Roman, 2015).

It should be noted that Case 1 has not just survived but grown despite the presence of larger competitors over the years. While the argument for SFBs to adopt the ERP system may be valid (PWC, 2014; Lasisi *et al.*, 2017), Case 1 may not see a need for the technology based on strategic performance. This is an inference drawn from the fact that SFBs are reluctant to adopt technology when they are comfortable with business performance (Casia and De Massis, 2012; De Massis *et al.*, 2016).

However, it is important that knowledge of the strategic opportunities of ERP adoption to the business be established and made available to inform adoption decisions. This is suggested by the experts and the literature (Almahamid and Awsi, 2015; Lasisi *et al.*, 2017), and the experts suggest, in particular, that non-adoption of ERP by the UK's retail SFBs could be counterproductive for growing businesses like Case 1.

Suppose you open a shop, and you bring a container of Arabic food, and you don't have Arabic customers that mean you will lose. Unless you understand the customers, then you understand what kind of goods you need in the store. Otherwise, you will sell same buyers, the same item then you will be losing them.

Price is the main thing. We need to keep an eye on the price. Like Morrison selling an item for five pounds (£5) and you are selling ten pounds (£10), you need to compete on price. Sometimes maybe you are losing because Morrison and Lidl buy in containers.

6.3.1.3.2. GROWTH POTENTIAL

It was mainly observed that the business records high sales on a daily basis and with the kind of products and the location of the business, there is a potential for further growth. However, the suspicion from the observation was confirmed and further clarified by the top manager as he explained how the business has grown over the years despite the continuously growing competitive pressure especially from larger businesses, which according to the manager has led to the closure of lots of other small businesses in the area

Despite the growth in market share the business has experienced, the larger business threat and the optimism for further growth, the family manager could not see how any technology would benefit the business more than it already has. The family manager, however, requested a report to see the aspects of the business that ERP adoption can benefit.

The insistence of Case 1's family manager that ERP adoption may not be of benefit to the business is synonymous with findings from the experts and some of the literature, as seen in Section 2.12. However, further findings from the case study, the literature in Section 2.14, the pilot study and expert opinion suggest that ERP adoption may, in fact, be important for business survival and growth amidst increasing competition (Lipi *et al.*, 2015). The experts also raised the fact that increased business capabilities due to growth may require the adoption of ERP for better management. However, the fact that Case 1 has grown tremendously, according to the family manager, despite the competition suggests that ERP adoption may not appeal to the business except if there was clarity on how the technology may benefit the business that is relevant to Case 1 (Carrasco-Hernandez and Jimenez-Jimenez, 2013).

The literature in Sections 2.7.3 and 2.14.5 also affirmed the need for businesses, and especially SFBs where family control is highly important, to adopt the ERP system to support growth (Kosalge and Ritz, 2015).

The company started doing a different kind of business a long time ago but doing this kind of business, it is 15 to 20 years' now.

Actually, the company has grown, it was like 200 to 300 customers coming in, but now you can see it has doubled, and not even doubled, it has tripled - hahaha! So many big stores coming into this business as well, some people think we won't survive, but we keep growing, and in years to come we will still be growing”

6.3.1.4. ORGANISATIONAL GOALS

6.3.1.4.1. UNCLEAR SUCCESSION PLANS

Despite the fact the business is in its second generation of ownership and management, no clear plans for future succession were found either during observations or the interview. Although it was found that a family member takes charge when the family manager is not physically present, it could not be said that the managerial training of the second-in-command is part of long-term succession plans.

Contrary to the literature (Chua *et al.*, 2003; Gilding *et al.*, 2015; Collins *et al.*, 2016; Chen, 2016) which suggests that one primary goal for SFBs is the succession of ownership, Case 1 does not appear to have clear succession plans. While it is not a strange finding for a business not to plan early for succession, such a delay may lead to failed succession (Laforet, 2013).

As Case 1 is a SFB, it may be argued that ERP adoption may not help manage the tacit family knowledge of the business (Dessi and Floris, 2010; Dessi *et al.*, 2014). While, Case 1 may not deem it important to adopt the ERP system for succession planning, it could help to show that effective information management is a way to plan succession early (Gilding *et al.*, 2015; Collins *et al.*, 2016). The ERP system, through a centralised database may help the business keep and disseminate business information over a long period (Teittinen *et al.*, 2013; Ruivo *et al.*, 2014), hence, preparing the business for succession from when it is successfully adopted (Lasisi *et al.*, 2017).

I am here, I keep an eye on them. I am always around, if I am not around my cousin will be here to check them.

In the company, I am the owner. The owner? Me and my brothers. Our parents started it like many years ago. We divided the branches when we took over, and I own this place.

Based on the findings above, it seems that ERP adoption in Case 1 may be important for its continuous survival, growth, and improved management and operations. However, the satisfaction of the business manager with business performance and the existing system implies that the business may not be looking to adopt the ERP system. As there appears to be little awareness of ERP within Case 1 and the family manager was interested in having a

better awareness of the technology, the perception of the family manager could be impacted by improved awareness of ERP. The next section discusses the possible benefits of ERP adoption as established in this section and draws comparisons to the present business state to offer clarity on how such benefits may contribute to Case 1. The section that follows modelled the business processes with ERP using BPMN to offer pictorial clarity on how the business might change with ERP adoption. The pictorial representation is important as it offers an easier way of knowledge transfer to non-experts such as Case 1's family manager.

6.3.2. THE BENEFITS OF ERP ADOPTION TO CASE 1

Based on the findings above, it appears as though familiness is important to strategic decisions such as technology adoption within the business in such a way that it could increase the tendency to adopt ERP. The investigation shows that although the characteristics of the business suggest that ERP adoption may be strategically beneficial, such decisions lie with the family manager's perception of ERP based on their level of awareness of the technology. These findings support the literature that the family manager's decision on adopting a technology dictates the business commitment to such adoption (Ibrahim *et al.*, 2001; Spencer *et al.*, 2012; De Massis *et al.*, 2016).

However, the perception of the family manager was that such technology may not be for the business. This section discusses how ERP adoption might benefit the business. The family manager's initial perception agrees with studies by Carrasco-Hernandez and Jimenez-Jimenez (2013), which argue that SFBs are technology averse. It also supports the earlier findings from the experts that SFB managers or decision-makers usually resist the adoption of ERP due to their long-term survival (Decker and Gunther, 2017). It may be said that based on literature finding, for example, by Patel and Chrisman (2014) and expert interviews, the chances of ERP adoption within Case 1 could be low except if the family manager's perception changes. However, the literature (Lenart, 2011; Marsh *et al.*, 2014) suggests that the perceived benefits of ERP within such businesses could increase the chances of adoption and the findings point towards some ways in which ERP might be of benefit to the business. The experts also suggest that it is important that such business identifies how ERP can benefit the business so they may adopt the technology before not adopting becomes a problem for the business. Also, the family manager requested a report on how ERP adoption can benefit the business to improve the level of ERP awareness within the business. The benefits as found from above are discussed in the following section.

6.3.2.1. MANAGERIAL BENEFITS OF ERP

6.3.2.1.1. CENTRALISED MANAGEMENT

Case 1 is a typical SFB as discussed in the literature; it is set up to maintain centralised control of the business in such a way that the decisions are made by the eldest member of the family within the business. While such a centralised system suggests that the decision to adopt ERP may be down to the family manager from the older generation, as opined by the experts, it was also found that ERP adoption could bring about a more centralised control of the business than presently exists within Case 1 (Weismeier-Sammer and Von Schlippe, 2013; Teittinen *et al.*, 2013; Kramer, 2016).

The findings above suggest that in the course of trying to maintain control when the family manager is not available, another family member must be around. It should be stated that the family manager is relied on for every strategic decision, even when not available. Gelogo and Kim (2014), however, allude that if the ERP system is adopted, and especially mobile ERP, the top manager can maintain control of business and monitor activities such as sales, stock levels, employee performance and make important decisions, remotely. Although, the ERP system might be able to maintain centralised business management, the type of ERP adopted determines the aspects of the business that are managed. As the ERP system is a technology that integrates business processes (Teittinen, 2013; Kramer, 2016), business data can be made available to whoever has the permission to do so, and decisions can be made on the go by the family manager.

If the ERP system is adopted within Case 1, the family-styled, centralised system of management could be more easily maintained than it presently is. However, the family manager might have to see a need to understand how ERP adoption can improve the management system within the business (Carrasco-Hernandez and Jimenez-Jimenez, 2013; Lasisi *et al.*, 2017). While it may be argued that making the decision to adopt ERP does not amount to its success due to its complex nature and various CSFs identified in the literature (Ghosh *et al.*, 2010, Dey *et al.*, 2013), it was found both from the experts and in the literature that SFBs tend to commit to the success of such adoption once the decision is made by the family manager (Carrasco-Hernandez and Jimenez-Jimenez, 2013; Weismeier-Sammer and Von Schlippe, 2013). There is a need to note that this condition may hold provided no family conflict resulting from differing business and family goals exists (Songini and Gnan, 2015; Nose, 2015). At the time of this research, no evidence from Case 1 pointed towards any family discord as the whole business appeared to abide by the family manager's decisions.

Based on the evidence available in this case, it appears that if the business is to consider adopting ERP for more centralised control, the family manager has to see a need for such adoption before making a decision. The trust and decision premise observed in the business due to family involvement also suggests that the business might commit to successfully adopting the ERP system once the family manager makes the decision for this purpose.

6.3.2.1.2. BETTER EMPLOYEE MANAGEMENT

If ERP is adopted within the business, it could help re-engineer business processes such that employees have clearer job descriptions and the correct information is fed into the system (Christofi *et al.*, 2013). With possible employee codes, it would be easy to monitor employee activities and better manage them. However, as SFBs such as Case 1 are reliant on family trust as a strategic strength, a system that formalises employee management may not be perceived as important to the business (Chrisman *et al.*, 2014). While that argument may hold, the rate of growth and expansion of the business implies an urgency to employ non-family members. Losing business control as a result of non-family members' involvement remains a major fear for SFBs (BIS, 2014). The ERP system, if successfully adopted, has the capability to maintain the management of employees irrespective of family affiliation (Teittinen *et al.*, 2013).

Also, as Case 1 is a business that cherishes a professional business outlook, the automated employee management that ERP adoption can bring about would further professionalise the business while maintaining family control (Christofi *et al.*, 2013). While Pazzaglia *et al.*, (2013) have suggested business professionalization through technology as one way for SFBs to survive in a competitive market, better employee management in the long term may also appeal to Case 1 as a business interested in family control (BIS, 2014). However, as evidence points to the fact that ERP adoption is the decision of the family manager, the benefits of employee management as part of ERP may not be realised in Case 1 if the family manager does not perceive it as necessary (Cassia and De Massis, 2012; De Massis *et al.*, 2016).

6.3.2.1.3. AUTOMATED STOCK MANAGEMENT

It is evident from findings that the business deals in various products and it is difficult to keep a manual daily record of stock. That is why the business resorted to keeping a record of an annual stocktake. While, the record of stock is based on family trust (Chrisman *et al.*, 2014), it does not allow for accountability and this may hinder business performance in the long-term (Gedajlovic *et al.*, 2004; Pazzaglia *et al.*, 2013). Adopting the ERP system could, nevertheless, help the business automate and provide real-time stock management (Kanellou

and Spathis, 2013). With such real-time stock management, it is easier to see if all the products were sold or if some were misplaced. It gives room for better accountability and a clearer movement of stock (Kanellou and Spathis, 2013). Coupled with the security measures already within the business, ERP adoption for stock management within the business could also reduce the risk of theft.

However, it requires the right information to function accurately and provide the right outputs (Christofi *et al.*, 2013). The implication is that successful adoption of ERP for the purpose requires internal cooperation even after the family manager makes the decision (Teittinen *et al.*, 2013). There is no evidence to suggest that such cooperation will not be achieved within Case 1, especially as the information gathered points towards a united family following a decision premise system (Weismeier-Sammer and Von Schlippe, 2013). It may then be said that if the decision to adopt ERP is made by the family manager for stock management purposes, the chances of success could be high due to internal cooperation by the family (Teittinen *et al.*, 2013) This finding opposes the conclusion reached by Smith (2016) which posits that high family involvement in a business implies a reduced success rate in the adoption of ERP. This contradiction could be attributed to the difference in methodology between this study and Smith's (2016). While Smith's (2016) study was quantitative in nature and unable to explore how family involvement works within businesses, the study herein explores the different components of Case 1, including family involvement, qualitatively through observations and interview to attain this finding.

6.3.2.1.4. AUTOMATED FINANCIAL RECORDS

Although the family manager believes the business has the best financial system as it is handled by experts, the ERP system if adopted could serve the same purpose even in real time and without human error.

As ERP is an automated system which could manage sales, stock and prepare financial documents based on the information already available to it, it could do a good job of preparing profit and loss, taxes and so on as based on the business needs.

Although the business may not see a need for such technology as the business trusts the experts to do a good job with their finances, such services come at a cost, and the manager points out that it is only a periodic service, while ERP can provide financial information in real time. Both systems of financial management are, however, prone to human error. If the right information is not fed into the ERP system, it may fail to produce the correct financial

documents, just as the experts would also need such information to have accurate financial records. The main difference is that the integrated nature of the ERP system means it would take a system wide human input error for the system to fail (Chabaoui and Yahia, 2014). Considering the business as a stand-alone system managed through the Cloud, and being paid for quarterly, a Cloud-based enterprise system can be a cheaper financial management option than the use of experts (Johanson *et al.*, 2015).

6.3.2.2. OPERATIONAL BENEFITS

It was found that the business already uses an automated sales system which, according to the manager is believed to ease sales stress and help the business function more like a larger business. However, the system is a stand-alone system, and the business could benefit more from an all-round automated operational system like the ERP system (Davenport, 1998; Maguire *et al.*, 2010; Marsh *et al.*, 2013). An ERP system would improve the operational structure of the business and, in fact, contribute strategic benefits as seen with the customer relationships below.

However, as an internal rift may cause ERP failure, it is important that Case 1 maintains the harmony within the business if the business wants to adopt ERP and do so successfully (Dixit and Pratash, 2011; Bansal, 2013). The implication of having a harmonious atmosphere within Case 1 as a result of family involvement is that it could aid the success of ERP (Teittinen *et al.*, 2013); the evidence also shows that the adoption decision needs to be made by the family manager to maintain such harmony as is required for any chance of successful ERP adoption (De Massis *et al.*, 2016; Lasisi *et al.*, 2017). While the findings show that Case 1 could successfully adopt ERP due to family involvement, the fact that the family manager, as a result of limited ERP awareness, does not see an operational need for such a system could imply limited chances for successful adoption for operational purposes.

6.3.2.2.1. BETTER CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP

As the customer relationship and feedback are important to business operations, the business would benefit from a more structured feedback system which further opens the business to the customers' world.

With social-ERP, the business would be able to engage with customers through social media platforms. Such a platform allows customers to share their views freely unlike going into the store to provide such feedback. Customers with not such a good review are unlikely to revisit the business and so have little chance of leaving any feedback, but an ERP system would

enables such customers to provide feedback. The business also has the chance to address the feedback and keep the customers informed on how their comments are being addressed. Such measures would make the customers happy, keep them turning to competitors and even increase the business' market presence. It also represents a strategic opportunity for the business as discussed below.

However, similar to the previously discussed ERP benefits to Case 1 (see Section 6.3.2.1), the chances of ERP adoption for this purpose may be slim as the family manager was not aware of such a benefit from the ERP system. This chance could, however, increase with an improved level of ERP awareness as the family manager agreed that an improved awareness of the technology could influence his perception of ERP and consequent decisions.

6.3.2.3. STRATEGIC BENEFITS

6.3.2.3.1. UP-TO-DATE MARKET INFORMATION

It was found that market information, such as price and demands by customers for new products are important to the business. ERP could help the business gain such information in real time if successfully adopted for this purpose. The social-ERP which connects businesses to the social media platforms as explained earlier (see Section 2.3.4) would open the business up to more market opportunities. Their customers would be able to make product enquiries while the business updates them on the availability of such products (Johnson, 2014; Gelogo and Kim, 2014). The business could then also easily monitor competitors' prices, especially larger competitors, through the Cloud (Elragal, 2014; Bharathi and Mandal, 2015).

This information, gathered from the investigation, represents a strategic tool as the business competes mainly based on market information, such as price and product variations. Also, if customers are aware of such a platform where they can enquire and get their products ready, it could improve trust between the business and their customers. The ERP system could therefore help the business maintain and retain existing customers, and the tacit knowledge of the market maintained by the business could also bring new customers, leading to increased market share (Dessi *et al.*, 2014).

6.3.2.3.2. SUPPORT FOR GROWTH

It is evident from earlier discussions that ERP adoption could open the business not just to market survival but further growth. The technology, as evident from the literature and pilot study, would not just help the retail SFB grow but could also support such growth.

The growth being discussed comes from the fact that ERP could open the business up strategically to more customers within and beyond the business location. Also, such growth does not come at the expense of the well-integrated automated system that ERP ensures. It thus means that ERP would still maintain the centralised control of business despite the growth. It is also evident from the history of the ERP system that it can lead a business into the future, remain with the business as it evolves, and contribute more benefits over the years (Lasisi *et al.*, 2017).

Despite the possible strategic benefits of the ERP system, the chances of its adoption in Case 1, as at the time of this study, appear slim due to the limited awareness of such benefits especially by the family manager. While acknowledging that other factors may affect ERP adoption within Case 1, the evidence available identifies that an increased awareness, by the family manager, of the benefits of ERP is one important factor to ERP adoption within the business.

6.3.2.4. ORGANISATIONAL BENEFITS

6.3.2.4.1. LONG-TERM SUCCESSION PLANNING

It was found that Case 1, like several other SFBs, has no clear succession plans (Laforet, 2013), despite the business being in the second generation of ownership. If the ERP system is adopted successfully, it, by default, keeps business information and important documents in its database. Such information can be retrieved as and when needed by an authorised person (Staehr, 2012). Some of this information could be the difference between a successful and failed succession in the future (Lasisi *et al.*, 2017). While ERP may not be adopted solely for succession purposes, it could serve as a repository for important business information required for a successful succession of ownership. It should be noted that the tacit business information commonly known by family members within SFBs may not be manageable through technology. So, the business needs to be aware that the adoption of ERP is not disruptive to the existing legacy system. In fact, some of the legacy systems, e.g. product pricing may be better left untouched as they are also strategically beneficial to the business.

While the value attached to legacy systems and tacit knowledge is well established in the literature (Dessi *et al.*, 2014; Kellerman *et al.*, 2015), ERP adoption is seen as a replacement for the existing systems (see Section 2.20.2). However, studying cases through observations and especially via interviews with family managers made the importance of tacit knowledge and the legacy system obvious. The business may not look kindly on a disruptive system unless there is an obvious need for it. Based on the findings so far, ERP could, in fact, be

adopted to complement the existing system to support the organisational goals. Although it has been discussed repeatedly that an increase in awareness of the benefits of ERP by Case 1 could increase its chances of adopting ERP, the orderly nature or compatibility of the ERP system needs to be part of such awareness. While the compatibility of the ERP system is an established factor affecting ERP adoption (Stefanou, 2014; Bhati and Trivedi, 2016), raising the awareness of its compatibility to Case 1's existing systems may be vital to ERP adoption by Case 1.

6.3.3. THE PRESENT BUSINESS PROCESS IN CASE 1 ('AS IS' STATE)

A typical business process in Case 1 starts when a product is delivered and placed into stock on the shelf. The employees then seek the price of the product from the family manager. No confirmation of product quantity would be done at this stage. Once the price is confirmed, it is either pinned to the shelf close to the item, stored manually on the system or written in a note for the female employees at the till.

Customers come into the store, look at the different items and their prices to select the desired items. However, in the case of meat products, the customer goes to the butcher section to get the cost of meat items from employees at that section. The customer then takes the meat along with other products to the till for payment. In this case, the employees at the till rely on the customers' words to know the cost of meat items but rely on the system or note book for the prices of other items. Once total costs are calculated, the customer pays and obtains a receipt. The receipt as shown in the appendix only shows the cost of unknown items and the summation. Customers can hardly trace products bought from the store using this receipt as the receipt shows no product information.

The customer then makes arrangement for delivery of the products bought. The customer can either provide feedback to the family manager or not. While records of sales revenue are kept in this business, there was no indication that the stock records are also kept for accurate financial records keeping. The next section shows how the business processes might be different when ERP is adopted successfully.

6.3.4. BUSINESS PROCESSES WITH ERP FOR CASE 1 ('TO BE' STATE)

As discussed above, the business process model below shows how ERP adoption impacts the business processes in Case 1, based on the research findings and comparisons made.

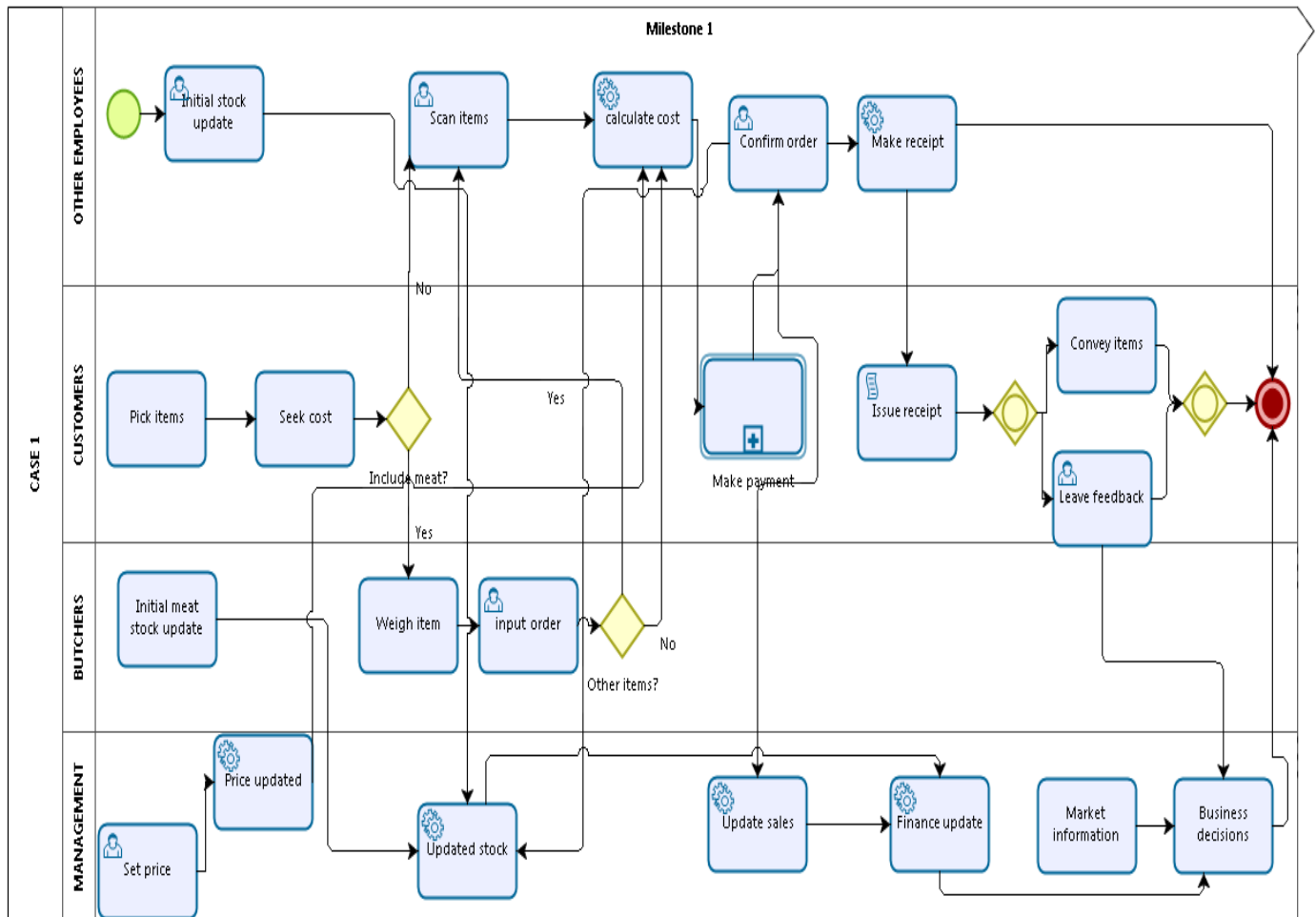


Figure 13: Automated business processes with ERP for Case 1

A typical retail business such as Case 1 starts its processes when items are stocked in the store and are ready for sale. The record is kept in the ERP database, while the manager sets the prices and updates them on the same system. The manager's update can be done from anywhere in the system and can also work on mobile devices.

When customers pick items from the shelves, they either go to the butcher's section if it contains meat products or head to the till to complete the order. After the butcher weighs the meat item, he enters the price based on the weight into the system. The entry will already be available for the employee at the till for the system to calculate the customer's final purchase cost.

At the till the customer presents all items picked from the shelf. The employee at the till, who must have logged on with his/her ID, scans all items for the system to calculate the total cost of the order. The customer makes payment and once the employee confirms the payment, the system prints out a receipt.

The customer can either decide to leave feedback before exiting the business with the items bought or just exit without leaving any feedback.

However, all the information entered into the system is updated on the database accessible to the manager anywhere and at any time. Once the employees enter the initial stock into the systems, it gets updated on the database. As soon as an order is confirmed and receipt issued, the system updates the stock and sales records. Also, the feedback is available only to the manager. With the sales and stock information available as and when needed, the manager can decide when to restock and knows which products customers buy more of. The manager can decide to act on customers' feedback in different ways he deems fit. Also, if the system uses social-ERP, the system can make market information such as products in demand and product prices available in real time. It should also be noted that as employees cannot access the system without their ID, the manager can keep track of who does what and at what time.

With all that information readily available to the manager, the centralised management of the business becomes easy. With faster and more efficient operations, the business' performance is expected to improve significantly. Also, faster decisions made with the accurate market and business information will undoubtedly help the business grow. The system also makes the business function more like larger competitors and would also help support future growth.

However, it may be important that the business commits to the adoption of the ERP system for Case 1 to take advantage of any of the benefits identified above. For this to be achieved the family manager's perception needs to support ERP adoption, and it is believed that knowledge of the benefits of ERP to the business can help make this happen.

6.3.5. SUMMARY OF CASE STUDY 1

This study was done through observation of business activities and the interview of the family manager. It was found that the business has a management style in which a one-man family manager makes the strategic decisions. While there was an existing system within the business that no member of the business could name, further information on the system showed it to be a stand-alone POS system. It was further found that the decision to adopt that system was based on the family manager's perception that such a system could give the business a professional outlook. For that reason, the business was not concerned about anything else the system could offer.

It was further found that despite the relative success of the business over the years there are aspects of the business that adopting an ERP system could improve. While family involvement in Case 1 makes it exhibit some characteristics which suggest that ERP may be adopted successfully, the primary factor may be top management support (family manager) due to the decision premise in the business. However, the main hindrance found for the

family manager's support for ERP adoption was his limited awareness of the benefits of ERP to the business.

Despite the relevance of the findings, the case study is not without limitations.

6.4. CASE STUDY 2

Case study 2 is an example of a first-generation retail business with twenty employees. The business deals in the sales of rice and pasta and has four branches in the same location. It is a business that have existed since 1996 (20 years) prior to the study. Selecting this case was based on the established family ownership, existing family members within the business, the size of the business based on employee numbers as well as the willingness of the family member manager to participate in the research.

The case study included the observation of activities including sales, stocking, decision-making, financial management, the customer relationship, employee performance and the rate of sales, as indicated by the theoretical framework. At the end of the observation period, a member of the family was interviewed for clarification and confirmation of the observation findings. Through the study, the patterns were deductively formed as discussed below.

6.4.1. FINDINGS FROM CASE STUDY 2

Through the month-long observation and subsequent interview, the following themes were formed based on the business' characteristics.

CATEGORIES	THEMES
MANAGEMENT	Family-styled centralised leadership
	Internally managed finances
	Daily stock management
	Ineffective employee management
OPERATIONS	Manual sales system
	Hybrid customer relations
STRATEGY	Price-based competition
	Delivery as a strategy
	Continuously growing
ORGANISATIONAL GOAL	Existing succession plans

Table 12: CASE 2'S THEMES

These themes will be analysed and discussed in the following sections.

6.4.1.1. MANAGERIAL CHARACTERISTICS

6.4.1.1.1. FAMILY-STYLED CENTRALISED LEADERSHIP

Even though the business has four branches, the business is centrally controlled by the original owner of the business who happens to be the father/husband. He is referred to as the Managing Director (MD). Although his wife also works within the same business as the General Manager (GM), she, according to findings, does not have decision-making powers. It was also found that another member of the family manages one of the business' branches, but he does not have any control other than just to oversee the branch.

It was found that several calls were made to the MD through the week to obtain his decision on different issues and update him on happenings whenever he was not in any of the branches. The family member overseeing a branch did not grant an interview because he was not given permission to do so. Although the MD did not grant an interview due to his busy schedule, another member of the family was given permission to be interviewed on his behalf. The respondent confirmed that all business decisions are made by the MD even if there may be some deliberations prior to any decision.

In a business where decisions are made by a single person who cannot always be available, it is important that business information is made available to such a person to help in decision-making. The constant calls made to the MD throughout the period of observation suggest this is the situation within Case 2.

Although Case 2 is a first-generation family business and the decision-making style is centralised as found from Case 1, the family composition of the business is different. The findings show how individual family businesses are unique in terms of management composition and this supports the need to research them as individual cases (De Massis and Kotlar, 2014). Also, as expected of an SFB, the decisions are usually down to the family manager's perception, even though advice from others may be sought. The implication of this finding, as in Case 1, is that the decision to adopt the ERP system is down to the family manager's perception of the technology. The finding is synonymous with the literature, which suggests that the family manager's perception is important to decision-making in SFBs (Spencer *et al.*, 2012). When considering studies by, for example, Spencer *et al.* (2012) and Ibrahim *et al.* (2015) and the aim of this study, it appears as though ERP adoption may be dependent on the family manager's decision based on his perception. However, further

findings in this case study help to identify that such a system of leadership is good for ERP adoption.

We seek advice from the staff members if any decision is to be made, but the final decision is always made by the Managing Director, the head of the family - family member.

6.4.1.1.2. INTERNALLY MANAGED FINANCES

There are several files where different financial documents are kept and updated. Calculating profit, losses and taxes due are some of the things that keep the MD (family manager) busy when he is not keeping an eye on the business. It was found that he had an MSc in mathematics and this was why he would not allow anybody else to handle that part of the business.

Although he does it with relative ease due to the years of experience in the business, there is no doubting the fact that the process is cumbersome and time-consuming as it takes up most of the MD's day. This deduction came from the respondent's concession that the business could benefit from a faster and more accurate way of keeping financial documents in-house and within the control of the MD.

The business manages its finances internally, and this is done manually by the family manager. If the four business branches and the busy nature of the business are considered, it may be said that an integrated method of financial management through ERP is needed by the business (Teittinen *et al.*, 2013). It is also important as it was found in Section 2.18.2. that inaccurate financial management is a major problem for retail SMEs (Ahmed *et al.*, 2015; Cant *et al.*, 2015).

The ERP system as discussed in Section 2.7.2 is able to effectively and accurately manage business finances in real time (Teittinen *et al.*, 2013; Songini and Gnan, 2015). While the literature suggests that long-lived SFBs tend to be comfortable with the legacy system (Dessi *et al.*, 2014), it was found that Case 2 already recognised the need to manage finances through integrated technology. Based on that finding and the fact that SFB's business performance affects technology adoption (Kotlar and De Massis, 2013; Patel and Chrisman, 2014), the chances of ERP adoption within Case 2 to manage business finances could be high as adopting a technology with financial management benefits is perceived to be helpful to the business (Teittinen *et al.* 2013; Lasisi *et al.*, 2017). However, the business, as at the time of data collection, lacked the knowledge of the appropriate technology to manage and integrate

business finances and so persisted with the legacy system. While this finding is synonymous with other small businesses where the knowledge of ERP is low (Almahamid and Awsi, 2015), it is apparent that the lack of knowledge or awareness of the benefits of ERP to the business is one hindrance to its adoption. While other factors such as the cost of ERP adoption matter (Kale *et al.*, 2010; Haddara and Elragal, 2013), establishing how ERP adoption can benefit Case 2 on financial management could help the perception of the technology and contribute towards the adoption within the business (Almahamid and Awsi, 2015).

Financial management is part of why we need technology to manage sales and stock.

6.4.1.1.3. MANUAL DAILY STOCK UPDATE

It was found that the business takes the stock record very seriously and updates it manually before sales in the morning and before closing for the day. It was observed that the manual process does not just involve counting but also checking the manually counted stock record against the daily sales to ensure that there are no discrepancies. Although this process takes a lot of time both in the morning and evening, it is deemed an effective and accurate method of stock control. However, the GM later emphasised the need for a more effective way of keeping the records as some products go missing at times. It is also not seen as stressful by the GM as it is a daily task.

However, the respondent confirmed that the business intends to adopt technology to manage the business in future. Stock management is an important part of what technology is expected to help the business with.

The daily inventory management system was found to no longer be effective with the expanding business and increasing capabilities. As this situation is similar to the one the expert warned retail SFBs about in Chapter five (5.5.2.2), the business has also recognised the need to move on from the legacy system for an effectively integrated inventory management system. It is evident that with sufficient knowledge of the managerial benefits of ERP to Case 2, the chances of committing to ERP adoption increase (Kotlar and De Massis, 2014; Carrasco-Hernandez and Jimenez-Jimenez, 2013).

The ERP system is able to manage business resources including inventories effectively (Teittinen *et al.*, 2013; Kosalge and Ritz, 2015). Such an automated inventory system will save the time and energy that Case 2 expends in its daily inventory management tasks.

However, the lack of knowledge of technology within the business remains a hindrance to the adoption of the technology (Almahamadi and Awsi, 2015). Considering the literature (Spencer *et al.*, 2012) and expert findings (see Section 5.5.1.2), it can be said that ERP knowledge may not be enough to inform ERP adoption in Case 2 if not made available to the family manager. This is because of the centralised management system in Case 2 in which the oldest family member is the family manager and is the one who makes the strategic decisions.

We take stock in the morning and at the closing hour. The stock taking is manual!

It is always accurate and does not require any stress as it is what we do every day.

At times they lie about the stock, but because you cannot rely on them solely, we go there to check the stock by ourselves.

We want technology to help with stock taking.

6.4.1.1.4. INEFFECTIVE EMPLOYEE MANAGEMENT

It was found from the investigation of Case 2 that there is a legacy system of monitoring and managing employees. It should be noted that there are only three family members within the business: the Managing Director (family manager), the General Manager (his wife) and the son-in-law. While the MD and GM rotate the checking of the different branches throughout the day, the son-in-law is left to oversee only one branch. However, as observed, the interview findings also confirm that there is a need for a more effective way of managing the employees. Even though the respondent initially maintained that the method of managing employees was effective, it was later confirmed by the respondent that it was one of the main problems facing the business.

Also, employees are made to pay for missing items as an accountability measure because of there not being clear job descriptions. It makes it difficult to tell who did what and who should be held responsible for any anomaly. It was confirmed by the GM that this is another part of the business that technology could help with.

As most of the employees are non-family members, the business does not enjoy the trust expected of typical SFBs that have family members within the business (Westhead *et al.*, 2002; BIS, 2014). Despite this, the employee management system looks like it is loose, as there are existing accountability problems within the business as mentioned above.

If the business adopts the ERP system successfully, the management of employees, finances and inventories could become more efficient, accurate and ultimately improve accountability (Pazzaglia, 2013; Teittinen *et al.*, 2013). With the ERP system, Case 2 could efficiently enjoy the centralised, family control of the business desired by the family (Teittinen *et al.*, 2013). However, like other small businesses the lack of knowledge of a technology like the ERP system that can serve their purpose remains a hindrance for its adoption within Case 2 (Casia and De Massis, 2013; Almahamid and Awsi, 2015). While some studies (BIS, 2014, Chrisman *et al.*, 2014) suggest that overreliance on the legacy system as well as family trust may be a hindrance to technology adoption in SFBs, it may not be the situation in Case 2 as the business does not have a lot of family employees and already experiences accountability problems with the non-family employees. Hence, it may be suggested that the chances of successful adoption of an ERP system for managerial purposes looks high (Smith, 2016). However, evidence, in Case 2 as in Case 1, makes it appear as though such adoption is dependent on the ERP knowledge available to the family manager as the decision-maker. Also, considering work by Carrasco-Hernandez and Jimenez-Jimenez (2013) and the expert findings, which posit that if the decision to adopt ERP is reached by a family manager, the business tends to fully commit to it, it may be said that ERP adoption in Case 2 depends on the family manager's decision. Also, such a decision is dependent on the level of awareness of the benefits of ERP by the family manager.

We visit the outlets at least twice a day, and that makes the management of staff and finances easy. We will be there for some time to observe what is going on and check how much sales have been made. Check their stock on a daily basis.

They will tell you that they don't know what happened if anything is missing but they all have to pay for it, and that is irrespective of who did what.

We watch them and their relationship with customers. You know there are some that are of bad behaviour and do not have good customer relation. Some will just be there not willing to do anything. They will just sit down and listen to whatever they have on their phone. But we check them and correct them sometimes.

The main challenge is with the staff as there is no permanent staff. Even if they intend to be permanent, because of their wayward attitude, they will not stay. If someone should steal your good or money, there is no way of keeping such staff. You will just let the person go.

We will also like a technology to help monitor the performance of our staff members.

6.4.1.2. OPERATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

After the analysis of the managerial characteristics of Case 2, this section analyses the operational characteristics, such as sales and customer relations.

6.4.1.2.1. MANUAL SALES SYSTEM

As this business deals both in wholesale and retail, it is a very busy business. Sales start as soon as the stock counting ends in the morning. All through the investigation period customers were often noticed waiting for the stock counting to be over so they could be served.

The business still uses a manual system of sales, which is the legacy system. Most customers, especially the ones buying a few units pick what they want and wait in the long queue for minutes before they are attended to. It was observed that while some waited in the queue, some came in with notes and received their products. It was further observed that most of the customers with these notes were the ones buying larger numbers of units. This was further clarified during the interview. Based on the interview, it was found that not all purchases or payments are made in-store. Some decide to make payments directly to the company's account and arrange for delivery with the company or go to the store to collect their goods. Others make enquiries and/or purchase via a phone call to the MD or the GM.

It was conceded that the business may be outgrowing the legacy system and would need a new system in the future for sales processing.

Despite the busy and seemingly complex nature of the sales in Case 2, the business has persisted with the manual sales system for many years. While it may appear, in hindsight, that Case 2 is a typical SFB described by some studies as technology averse (Decker and Gunther, 2017), it was found that the business is already looking to adopt a technology that is capable of integrating their inventories and sales to make it faster and more effective. In an effort to ease the sales pressure on in-store staff, the company encourages remote sales over the telephone. However, such sales cannot be completed without them passing through the in-store manual system. While such a method appears to increase market reach, it does add to the sales pressure.

If the business adopts the ERP system as the technology to improve sales operations, the whole process could become faster and could ease sales pressure (Christofi *et al.*, 2013;

Roskill, 2014). Also, the remote sales encouraged by the business can be processed through the system without adding pressure to the in-store personnel (Shang and Seddon, 2000; Zamiri *et al.*, 2010; Kanellou and Spathis, 2013).

Considering that the online stores are growing at a high rate in the retail industry, Case 2 can take advantage of ERP adoption to use its existing online presence for online shopping (Rhodes *et al.*, 2015; Romero and Martinez-Roman, 2015). All this can be done without compromising the inventory and financial management craved by the business if ERP is successfully adopted (Teittinen *et al.*, 2013; Kanellou and Spathis, 2013).

However, as evidence shows that the business, at the time of the study, was not aware of any enterprise system that can deliver these benefits, the business was yet to adopt such technology (Almahamid and Awsi, 2015). Though the lack of ERP knowledge in Case 2 is not surprising, it points to the importance for SFBs like Case 2 to understand the benefits of technology, like the ERP system, and to encourage its adoption (Carrasco-Hernandez and Jimenez-Jimenez, 2013; De Massis *et al.*, 2016). Even though the longevity of Case 2 as a SFB suggests that it may persist with the manual system (Chrisman *et al.*, 2014; Dessi *et al.*, 2014), the fact that the business is growing points to the possible need for an ERP system. Available evidence also points to the willingness to adopt an integrated technology like the ERP system to improve sales operations. Although such willingness by the management may be a factor indicating possible ERP adoption (Boonstra, 2013), the obvious lack of awareness of the operational benefits of ERP affects how it is perceived, and hence the chances of adoption for that purpose (Marsh, 2014; Almahamid and Awsi, 2015).

We have wholesalers, retailers and final consumers as customers.

If you want to buy from us, you can call on the phone to confirm the price and make payment to the bank, so we deliver to you.

You will have to come into our store, and if you want us to bring it to you, you can request to pay directly into a bank account, and after seeing the alert or a confirmation of payment, we will then load the goods and arrange the delivery. Or you can pay cash in the store and request delivery.

Technology? For now, everything is manual.

We want technology to help with stock taking, to be able to use the POS machine for sales processing, that is what we are looking for now.

6.4.1.2.2. HYBRID CUSTOMER FEEDBACK SYSTEM

It was found that maintaining good customer relationships is important to the company's daily operations. A lot of effort is put into making the customers happy in terms of, for example, discounts and working on customer feedback to improve the business. As retail businesses are keen on maintaining the customer relationship, it is not unusual to find that Case 2 puts a lot of effort into this.

It was found that besides the face-to-face traditional feedback system typical of SFBs, the business also has an online presence through its website. Feedback is received from customers through this medium and is duly addressed irrespective of subject. The importance of a good customer relationship was further emphasized by confirming that employees could be laid off if they lack good customer relations. It was also confirmed that employees are specially trained just to maintain good customer relations.

Like other retail businesses, the customer relationship was found to be important to the operations of Case 2 (Elkady *et al.*, 2014; Rhodes, 2015A; Jimisiah *et al.*, 2016). For that reason, the business does not solely rely on the legacy system for customer feedback as some studies suggest SFBs do (Dessi and Floris, 2010; Dessi *et al.*, 2014). The business has a website through which customers give useful feedback and suggestions to help improve the business. Despite having an online feedback system, the business also maintains the traditional mechanism for verbal feedback as expected of SFBs (Dessi and Floris, 2010; Dessi *et al.*, 2014). The business operates what can be termed a hybrid customer service system. As this feedback is important to the business, the information is accessed quickly enough to impact operational decisions, and adopting the ERP system could contribute this benefit to the business (Hutchinson *et al.*, 2013). While it may be conveniently argued that SFBs do not look to any technology for customer relationships (Dessi *et al.*, 2014) and Case 2 may not be willing to adopt ERP for the same purpose, the existence of an online system for customer service and the fact that the business requires an integrated technology for other purposes shows that the business may be willing to adopt the ERP system for that benefit alongside the other purposes.

The ERP system is an integrated technology with a customer relationship management module (Johnson *et al.*, 2015). ERP can help the business gain access to real-time customer

information from the website and in, fact, the social media (Johnson *et al.*, 2015). The business may also consider ERP for that purpose as larger competitors now keep customer information in a database as such information can be mined and analysed to attain market information such as sales predictions or customer preferences (Lamberti and Noci, 2010). While the ERP system may not be able to analyse the data for that purpose, it is able to keep such data in the database for immediate and future use (Kosalge and Ritz, 2015). Again, it appears as though an increased awareness of ERP for customer service may increase the tendency to adopt it as the business struggles but persists with the legacy system due to limited awareness of the available beneficial technology (Reijonen and Laukkanen, 2010; Spence and Essoussi, 2010). Considering that larger businesses analyse customer information from databases for customer/market predictions (Garverick, 2014), the possibilities of Case 2 enjoying such a benefit through the ERP system could appeal to the family manager and prompt a decision and eventual commitment to ERP adoption (De Masisi *et al.*, 2016).

Note that the difference found in how Case 2 deals with customer services when compared to suggestions by Dessi *et al.* (2014) may not be a methodological flaw or demerit for that study. Rather, it buttresses the expert findings and the methodological stance that despite the commonalities found in SFBs, individual businesses have unique characteristics and should be studied as such (De Massis and Kotlar, 2014). It may also be an explanation for why Smith's (2016) quantitative study found strong family involvement was a hindrance to the successful implementation of ERP but evidence from Case 2 shows that family involvement could serve as a catalyst. However, the limited awareness of ERP looks like the major deterrent.

We watch them and their relationship with customers. You know there are some that are of bad behaviour and do not have good customer relations.

They used to tell us any information that helps the company move forward. They tell us on the phone, and some would come into the store to tell us. If they have any complaint, they will come into the store and tell us.

We have a company website, and some customers lodge complaints through the website and company emails. Some also make enquiries and drop any feedback through this medium.

It's been helping us because we used to work on whatever feedback the customers tell us and it has been helpful. Like if there is any complaint about any member of staff, we will need to

invite such staff and train them on how to better relate to customers, and if he or she doesn't heed the advice, we send him or her away.

6.4.1.3. STRATEGIC CHARACTERISTICS

Despite the level of competition within the market, the business is perceived to be in a good strategic position, and some strategic characteristics were found as analysed below.

6.4.1.3.1. PRICE-BASED COMPETITION

Although the GM denied there being any form of competition within the market, she later confirmed that customers are mainly won or lost based on price. The need to stay in touch with the latest prices from within and outside the market was reemphasized all through the investigation. Several calls were made by the MD to different sources to find updates on prices to inform his decision on the present selling price of different products within the business. Also, the respondent confirmed the importance of up-to-date price information and even tagged it a challenge for business. Even the respondent does not think there is any competition for the business despite the fact that there are similar businesses in the market. The respondent confirmed that customers seek the lowest price and there is a need to always sell at the lowest possible price.

Just like Case 1, Case 2 is also reliant on up-to-date market information, but in this case, it is solely price information. The competitive environment in Case 2 involves not just small businesses but also large enterprises. This is typical of retail SMEs as they have to build a competitive advantage over other small businesses and remain competitively healthy in respect to their larger competitors, despite the resource gap (Elkady *et al.*, 2014; Jimisiah *et al.*, 2016). As competitive pressure is found to be a factor driving SMEs towards ERP adoption (Palicious-Marques *et al.*, 2015; Bhati and Trivedi, 2016), the prospect of the ERP system being able to make the required market information available almost in real time could appeal to Case 2 (Bharathi and Mandal, 2015). It is more so as businesses are now increasingly dependent on market information through the Cloud for strategic decisions (Elragal, 2014; Kshetri *et al.*, 2017). Also, the fluctuating product prices suggest that Case 2 could be open to a technology that makes such information readily available as a strategic advantage over competitors.

However, as previously discussed, the business needs to be aware of the existence of such benefits from the technology (Marsh *et al.*, 2014). Considering the family's unity within the business and the trust the family has for decisions made by the family manager, the business

could commit to ERP adoption if the family manager makes such a decision (Spencer *et al.*, 2012). For this reason, it may be stated that the family manager needs to be aware of the benefits of ERP to information management to make a decision to adopt ERP for that purpose. If the family manager made an informed decision to adopt an ERP system, the decision premise system, typical of SFBs, that exists within Case 2 would ensure the decision was supported by the rest of the family (Weismeier-Sammer and Von Schlippe, 2013).

Prices of goods are unstable this day; it keeps going up almost on a weekly basis. If you sell something today, you may not be able to buy at that price tomorrow. So, whatever gains you think you have made may go into buying at a higher price the next time.

I don't think we are competing with anybody. We are just a small business, and there are bigger companies, but I don't think we are competing. Customers will look for where goods are cheaper, but I don't think it is competition because the buying price would dictate the selling price.

6.4.1.3.2. DELIVERY AS A STRATEGY

It was found that the business offers a delivery service as a strategy to outperform the competition. Although the service comes at a premium, it makes it easier for customers to access the products. As observation could not gather the full story, further clarification was sought during the interview.

The respondent confirmed that delivery is offered only to those customers who are willing to pay the premium however, from observation a lot of customers who buy a large number of units also opt for this option. The business runs the service with only one truck, and therefore not all customers who would like the service are able to use the service.

Delivery is offered as a strategy for the business to retain and attract customers irrespective of distance. This finding, on the one hand, further shows that retail SFBs deploy different means to gain market share using their knowledge of the market (Dessi *et al.*, 2014). On the other hand, it represents an aspect of the business that could be better explored if the ERP system is adopted in Case 2 (see Case A6 in Section 2.20.1).

Although offering delivery as a service was found to be an effective strategy for the business, Case 2, as expected of SFBs (see Section 2.13.4), is limited by resources and cannot serve all the customers that require the delivery service. While the finding is not any different from typical retail SFBs with limited resources (Simon and Hitt, 2003; Hutchinson *et al.*, 2013), it

could be a reason for the business to adopt the ERP system. As found in Sections 2.7.3, 2.14.4 and 2.20.2, the ERP system is able to support the business in collaborating with courier companies to enhance the outsourcing of delivery to customers. The collaboration will, on the one hand, make the delivery service accessible to all customers, thereby keeping more customers satisfied and retaining such customers based on the service offered (Kotlar, 2000; Zakaria *et al.*, 2013). On the other hand, the collaboration will enable the business to focus their limited resources on other aspects of the business, e.g. sales operations. As it is already known that Case 2 is willing to adopt an intergrated technology system for different purposes, the prospect of an improved delivery service could also appeal to the business. However, as it has become a common theme in this chapter, the main hindrance to ERP adoption for this purpose or other purposes in Case 2 is the lack of ERP knowledge within the business.

Then if we need to supply the customers. Because there are some customers that we convey the goods to. So, the staff will load the goods into the vehicle and deliver the goods to the customer.

So, you will have to come into our store, and if you want us to bring it to you, you can request to pay directly into a bank account, and after seeing the alert or a confirmation of payment, we will then load the goods and arrange the delivery. Or you can pay cash in the store and request for delivery.

6.4.1.3.3. CONTINUOUS GROWTH

Judging from the brief history of the company conveyed by the respondent, it can be said that the business has grown enormously over the last twenty years. The observation exercise also found that the business has great growth potential, especially if the daily sales volumes and positive experiences of its customers are considered.

The business also recognises that it might have outgrown the legacy system and there is a need to do things differently to help future growth. The respondent also shared the sentiment that further growth in the business will have to be dictated through technology adoption.

Judging from the Case 2 findings above, it can be said that the business is looking to a technology that integrates business processes for more efficiency, accuracy and accountability.

Although some studies suggest that SFBs do not often look to grow but sustain business at a level easy to manage by the family (BIS, 2012, 2014), Case 2 has grown enormously in twenty years. The business has not just grown enormously; they are planning for further growth. While the finding is synonymous with other arguments that SFBs are willing to expand their market share (Calabrò & Mussolino, 2011; Chen, 2011), Case 2 intends to do so through an integrated technology. The decision to adopt such a system came as a result of the awareness that the growth may not be successfully managed due to the existing challenges faced by the business. While the finding also contradicts the suggestion that SFBs are ERP averse due to the high level of family involvement (Smith, 2016), the Case 2 findings show that the limited knowledge of specific technology remains a major hindrance (Carrasco-Hernandez and Jimenez-Jimenez, 2013; De Massis *et al.*, 2016). It also shows that knowledge of the impact of a technology like the ERP system to the growth needs of Case 2 is likely to influence the business' commitment to ERP adoption.

The business started about 21, no 20 years ago. That was in 1996 with a little, some of money, and with the grace of God and the cooperation of the family members, it has been growing gradually. We started with rice, with little bags. Few bags of rice that's what we started with. But with the grace of God and the cooperation of the family members, it has been growing gradually."

Based on where it is today and the special grace of God, it will keep growing beyond where it is today. By then, we believe the business growth will be dictated by the use of technology. We expect everything to have been computerised (automated).

6.4.1.4. ORGANISATIONAL GOAL

6.4.1.4.1. EXISTING SUCCESSION PLANS

It was found that Case 2 already has succession plans in place as the family manager's next of kin already works within the business. The next of kin is already familiar with the business processes and any trade secrets. Case 2 follows Collins *et al.*'s (2016) suggestion that succession planning should start early and be progressed in stages in FBs. However, in the case study, the successor only oversees one of the four branches of the business, and that experience may not be sufficient when the time comes to take over the business. However, the business has unwritten information, especially in relation to strategic advantage, which the next generations learn as part of being a member of the owning family.

As expected of SFBs, Case 2 formulated early succession plans by bringing the next of kin into the business (Chua *et al.*, 2003; Gilding *et al.*, 2015; Collins *et al.*, 2016; Chen, 2016). However, as the next of kin only oversees a branch of the business, there is the need for an acquaintance with other aspects of the business to ensure a successful succession of power (Chen, 2016).

As explained in Section 6.3.1.4, the ERP system is able to manage and disseminate the information useful for successful leadership succession to the next of kin (Lasisi *et al.*, 2017). However, business legacies and any trade secrets in SFBs are tacit and may not be manageable through the ERP system (Lasisi *et al.*, 2017).

6.4.2. THE BENEFITS OF ERP ADOPTION TO CASE 2

It was found that familiness plays an important role in strategic decisions within the case study. Decisions, such as technology adoption or business direction, are solely made by the Managing Director, who is the eldest member of the family. This case study also agrees with the argument that leadership in SFBs is usually family-based (Carney, 2005; Stewart & Hitt, 2012). Although it was suggested that there might be deliberations, strategic decisions are usually the responsibility of the MD and are based on his perceptions, a finding which also supports Spencer *et al.*'s (2012) argument. Although it was found that the business is planning the future adoption of technology to solve existing business problems, it was found that the potential benefits of ERP to the business may influence the family manager's perception and adoption decisions. The business decision-makers are, however, not aware of such technology that can help with the business needs. The experts' investigation, as well as the literature on FBs (Casia and De Massis, 2012; De Massis *et al.*, 2016), suggest that the knowledge of the benefits of specific technology to business aids the adoption possibilities of such technology. Based on the characteristics of this business and the findings from the literature discussed in Chapter 2 as well as the archival findings, the potential contributions of ERP to the business are discussed below.

6.4.2.1. MANAGERIAL BENEFITS TO CASE 2

6.4.2.1.1. BETTER CENTRALISED MANAGEMENT AND DECISION-MAKING

It was found in the literature that adopting the ERP system could help SFBs improve centralised management and promote faster decision-making. It may be said that based on the managerial style found in Case 2, ERP adoption could help the business maintain the centralised management of business and aid faster decision-making by the MD. Through the

adoption of ERP, and especially through mobile-ERP, the MD could have access to the business information necessary to make important decisions even when not he was not on the business premises (Gelogo and Kim, 2014). It makes decision-making faster and cheaper as it reduces the number of calls made to the MD daily. The MD or any authorised family member can also have a real-time knowledge of data such as the rate of sales among other operations within the business. While this benefit is positive, the cost of adopting an ERP system may not be cheaper than the present cost of seeking appropriate information to help with decisions (Supramaniam *et al.*, 2014). However, as the business requires such technology for other purposes, awareness of the benefit of faster decision-making could further improve the perception of ERP within Case 2 ((Almahamid and Awsi, 2015).

6.4.2.1.2. EFFICIENT FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

As the finances in Case 2 are internally managed by the MD, ERP adoption could help make this less stressful and more accurate. Although no inaccuracy was suggested in the findings, human error cannot be ruled out within a manual system. Better and faster management of finances can be made possible if sales, stock records and other financial records are kept on the centralised database that the ERP system offers (Teittinen *et al.*, 2013). However, the accuracy of the financial records depends on initial human input or data made available to the system. So, some business process re-engineering (BPR) may be required to ensure ERP success for this purpose. BPR is known as a Critical Success Factor for SMEs and the findings from Case 2 show this may be needed (Christofi *et al.*, 2013; Xiang *et al.*, 2014). However, the need for BPR could serve as a hindrance for ERP adoption in Case 2 if such reengineering is considered to hinder the legacy system (Chrisman *et al.*, 2014). However, as found in Case 1 (Section 6.3.2.4), the ERP system may not disrupt innovation for SFBs. The business needs to be aware of this to help perception of ERP towards adoption within Case 2 ((Almahamid and Awsi, 2015).

6.4.2.1.3. BETTER PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

As discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis (Section 2.14.4), ERP adoption could help the business manage employee performance. As the findings suggest the employees require a lot of monitoring, and there are lapses with the existing legacy system of managing employees, the ERP system could help better manage this aspect of the business if adopted.

If the business processes are reengineered with ERP as discussed in Section 6.4.2.1.2 above, employees could have clear job descriptions, and it becomes easier to know who did what and when. The ERP system is able to keep such records, and it could make holding

employees responsible for anomalies, possible. It thus helps limit the chances of making everyone pay unduly for errors as it presently is with Case 2 (Kanellou and Spathis, 2013). ERP adoption for this purpose could also ease management's stress of having to visit all the branches for employee monitoring purposes as it becomes remotely monitored with the system in place (Songini and Gnan, 2015). Considering that the business already finds employee management problematic, ERP could bring about benefits associated with improved employee management that could influence commitment to its adoption.

It may be argued that the cost of adoption could put small businesses off ERP (Kale *et al.*, 2010; Haddara and Elragal, 2013). However, the fact that the business continues to outgrow its present resources and that it recognises the need for such technology serves as a boost for possible adoption.

6.4.2.1.4. BETTER INVENTORY MANAGEMENT

As stock records are manually updated twice a day, ERP adoption could help automate the stock management process by keeping real-time updates (Dechow and Mouritsen, 2005; Teittinen, 2013). This could, on the one hand, reduce the stress of manual counting of stock twice a day and, on the other hand, adoption of ERP could reduce possible human error to which some missing stock may be attributed.

Generally, ERP adoption could contribute to better management of the business and this would be expected to lead to better business performance as discussed in the operational benefits section below. As a SFB and a business already clamouring for better management of business, the managerial benefits of ERP discussed in Section 6.4 are benefits that may influence the decision to adopt ERP (Almahamid and Awsi, 2015). However, the success of the ERP system for this purpose also depends on the cooperation of the whole business as it requires human communication with the system (Teittinen *et al.*, 2013). Teittinen *et al.*'s (2013) study shows how a business did not fully benefit managerially from ERP due to internal rifts. Case 2 does not look to be in such danger as the decision premise system for SFBs exists in Case 2 (Weismeier-Sammer and Von Schlippe, 2013).

6.4.2.2. OPERATIONAL BENEFITS

ERP if successfully adopted could change how business is done in Case 2, and a big part of that change besides better management would reflect in the operation of the business, which includes sales and the customer relationship as discussed below.

6.4.2.2.1. AUTOMATED SALES SYSTEM

The present system in the business is a manual sales system in which orders, payments, receipts and invoices are processed manually. An ERP system would automate the sales system, making the order fulfilment time faster as the literature suggests and has been seen with the archival study (Zamiri *et al.*, 2010; Kanellou and Spathis, 2013). Also, the long queues presently experienced due to the amount of time taken to process each order would drastically reduce because of the significantly reduced order processing time that ERP adoption would afford the business.

In a bid to reduce the long queues, the business resorted to taking some big orders via the telephone and fulfilling such orders once payment is confirmed. Adopting ERP could also make such a system of taking orders better. ERP could enable the integration of online sales into the company's existing website (Shang and Seddon, 2000; Almahamid and Awsi, 2015). Such orders will be made available to the business in real time without the need for notes as is currently the case; it makes the processing of remotely made orders fast. Customers who prefer delivery then may not have a need to come into the company and this could drastically reduce the number of customers having to queue up to be served and reduce total order processing time (Kanellou and Spathis, 2013). While the new system disrupts the legacy operations system, ERP adoption for improved sales operations is the improvement that the business requires of this technology.

6.4.2.2.2. BETTER CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS

As discussed above, a better sales experience would make customers happy and more willing to come back. Adopting the ERP system can also help make customer feedback available to the business in real time by integrating the feedback section of the website with the ERP database. Undoubtedly customers will be happier if their feedback and queries are treated as a matter of urgency. As the business thrives on customer feedback, having such information available as and when required will boost the business in terms of satisfying customers, which is a key operational aspect of retail businesses (Zakaria *et al.*, 2013; Rhodes, 2015A; Rhodes, 2015B).

Also, social-ERP could help link the business directly with existing and potential customers by enabling a more social relationship through social-ERP (Gelogo and Kim, 2014). While this benefit was mentioned in the literature (Gelogo and Kim, 2014), it was also found in the archival study (see Section 2.20.2) that such a benefit is achievable in SFBs. As the literature also found that the customer relationship is important to retail businesses and remains a

challenge for SMEs, a better customer relationship brought about through the adoption of ERP could represent both operational and strategic opportunities for Case 2 (Zakaria *et al.*, 2013; Staehr, 2012).

6.4.2.3. STRATEGIC BENEFITS

Although the business appears to be in a strategically good position considering the daily sales in comparison to other similar businesses, it was, however, found that ERP adoption could further boost the business strategically.

6.4.2.3.1. FASTER ACCESS TO MARKET INFORMATION

It was found that up-to-date market information, especially on price, is important to the business. Social-ERP could directly link the business to market information, such as the latest price, new products, and customer demands, etc. (Gelogo and Kim, 2014). This could also be linked back to managerial benefits as information management allows for faster decision-making. It is also a strategic benefit in this case as the competition is primarily based on price and the prices are reported to be unstable. It becomes a strategic advantage if a business obtains such information ahead of the competition.

6.4.2.3.2. EASY COLLABORATION FOR DELIVERY

The business offers delivery to customers who demand it as a strategy to gain competitive advantage, however, as the business only has one truck, the service is not always available to customers that require it.

If the business adopts the ERP system, the business could easily collaborate with delivery companies to make such a service available to as many customers as require it. As the customers are willing to pay the required premium, it becomes easier if a company that specialises in delivery helps the business manage that aspect of the sales process. This could enable Case 2 to then focus mainly on other important aspects of business and allow the delivery company to handle delivery while still within the control of the business. It means that the adoption of ERP could allow Case 2 to take full advantage of delivery as a competitive strategy through collaboration. The possibility that adopting ERP could aid collaboration was discussed in the literature (Benfell *et al.*, 2013) and was also evident in the archival study (see Section 2.20.2). Although SFBs are reluctant to make external links due to the fear of losing control, ERP adoption allays those fears through its effective management system and the fact that it still supports collaboration (Shang and Seddon, 2000; Staehr, 2007).

6.4.2.3.3. SUPPORT FOR CONTINUOUS GROWTH

It is evident from findings that Case 2 is a growing business. However, the business seems to have outgrown some of its existing systems as confirmed by observation and the interview. The business is already looking towards taking advantage of a technology that could help with sales, stock and financial management. The ERP system represents a technology that delivers such benefits and much more (Shang and Seddon, 2000; Benfell *et al.*, 2013; Johanson *et al.*, 2015) as discussed above. Adopting the ERP system will not deliver the benefits individually but as an integrated system (Kale *et al.*, 2010). As found from the history of the ERP system, the technology is an enduring system; it will not only help the business now but stay with the business as it grows in the future. As a growing business aiming to do so with the help of technology, the contributions of ERP to such growth could influence an adoption decision in Case 2 if the information is made available to the family manager (see Section 6.4.1.1.1).

6.4.2.4. ORGANISATIONAL BENEFIT

6.4.2.4.1. SUPPORT FOR SUCCESSION

As found in Section 2.14.6, ERP adoption in SFBs could support succession planning through the information management and dissemination capabilities. The important files and data required for a successful succession can be saved on the ERP database to be retrieved and transferred as part of the succession process when needed (Lasisi *et al.*, 2017).

The specific benefits of ERP adoption identified in Section 6.4.2 are mapped to business characteristics as shown and explained in the model in the next section.

6.4.3. THE PRESENT BUSINESS PROCESSES IN CASE 2 ('AS IS' STATE)

It was found that the business process at present starts when a product is delivered, the quantity verified manually against the invoice and the item stacked by the employees on the store shelf. The employees then ask the family manager for the sales price of the product either via the telephone or face-to-face, depending on his availability. The family manager gives this information verbally and everybody acknowledges it.

The customer either comes into the store or makes a call to the family manager to enquire about product availability and costs. The transaction proceeds only if a price is agreed. On agreeing the price, the customer proceeds to make payment based on the handwritten note given to them by either the family manager or another employee.

Once payment is made and confirmed, the customer either requests delivery of the products or takes the products home themselves. At the end of the day, the record of all daily sales is calculated manually while other employees manually count all the products stocked in the store. The two records are then made available to the family manager, who checks to see if the sales and stock records tally. This is a daily repetitive process and it may seem simple and uncomplicated considering the volume of daily sales and products stocked in the store at any one time; this explains why the process may be tedious and error prone. The next section shows the business process with an ERP system to understand the differences.

6.4.4. CASE 2'S BUSINESS PROCESS WITH ERP ('TO BE' STATE)

The model below shows how ERP adoption could help improve business processes in Case 2 based on the investigation carried out.

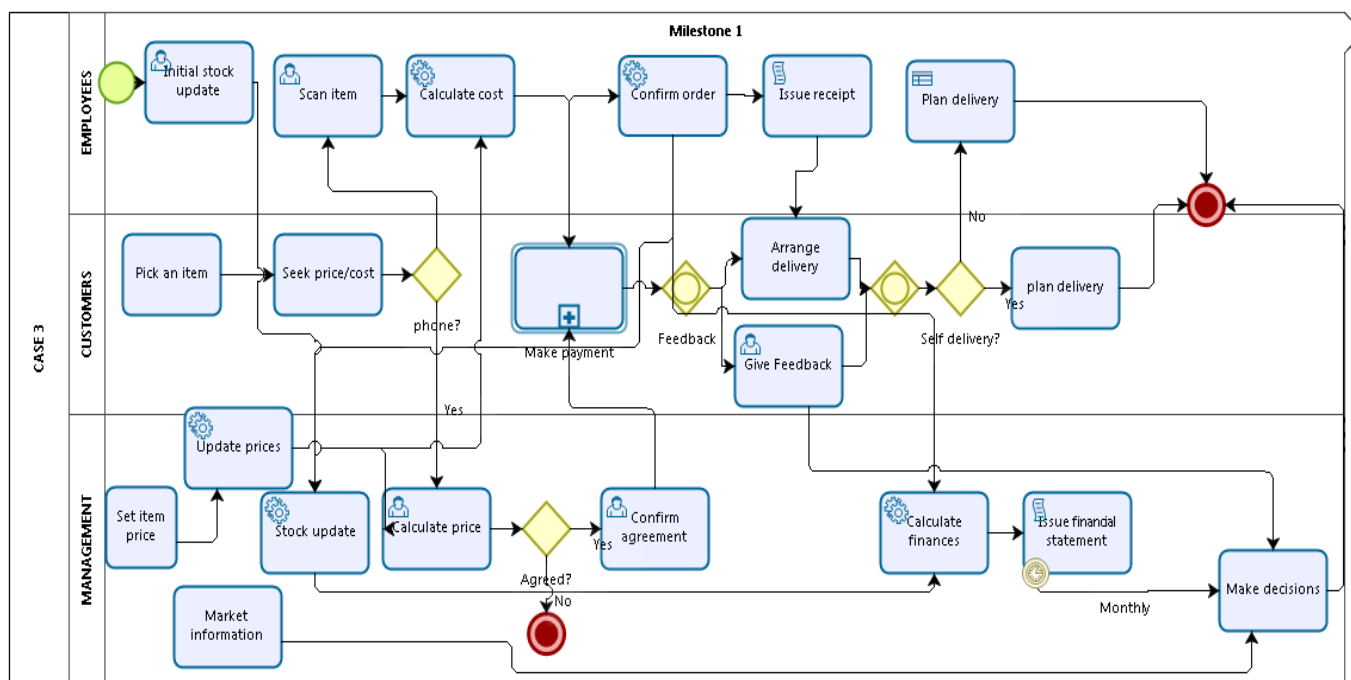


Figure 14: Automated business process with ERP for Case 2

With ERP adoption, Case 2's business processes can move from a manual to a fully automated system. The system might help the business solve some of the obvious problems and do more as illustrated above and explained below.

The process starts with the employees updating the system with the correct stock information so it can be automatically updated moving forward. The customer decides on items of interest

and either phones to make enquiries on price or collects the item from the store and asks the cost of the order.

In the case of a phone enquiry, the call goes to either the family manager or a female family member. The phone transaction either ends if a price is not agreed, or proceeds if the price is agreed. When the price is agreed, the transaction and the agreed price are then entered onto the system by the family manager for immediate access by the employees.

In the case of both phone and in-store transactions, the customer will make the payment either to the employees in store or directly into the business' bank account. Once the payment is confirmed, the system issues a receipt. The system also updates both the stock and sales records as soon as the order is confirmed.

The customer then decides to either opt for the delivery offered or plans transportation of the items. In the case of business delivery, the employee organises the delivery for the customer based on company policy. The customer can either decide to leave feedback before leaving the store or not. The sales operation ends at this point.

However, with the stock, sales and feedback information readily available to the management team, the calculation of finances becomes available as and when needed. In the case of the business using a social-ERP system, market information such as customer preferences and price updates can also be made available to the management through the system. With all the information available to the management team, the MD can easily make business decisions on the go.

With faster and more efficient operations, business performance might improve. With faster action on feedback and better decision-making through accurate and readily available market information, the business may edge in front of the competition and grow. The ERP system, being an enduring system used by retail mid-sized and large enterprises, could support any future growth of the business.

6.4.5. SUMMARY OF CASE 2

Through the month-long investigation of Case 2, it was found that the business is a first-generation family business and the eldest family member makes strategic decisions which others within the business follow. It was also found that the business had not adopted the ERP system but was in need of an enterprise system to help the business cope with pressure resulting from continued growth. Although the business confirmed the need for such technological intervention for the business, there was little awareness of the ERP system like other systems within the business. The business, on their part, was unwilling to listen to ERP experts for fear of them not having the business' interests at heart, hence, the reason for the initial resistance faced by the researcher.

It was, however, found that adopting ERP could benefit Case 2 in many ways ranging from managerial, operational, strategic and organisational benefits. Despite these benefits, the business confirmed that not being aware of a technology to help the business had prevented any adoption.

6.5. CASE STUDY 3

The third case investigated in the study is a first-generation retail SFB that deals, for the majority, in continental foods (Afro-Caribbean foods). The business has about twelve employees. Most of the employees are non-family members but few are members of the owning family and the main manager (family manager). The business is just over a year old but has grown enormously in terms of market share within the period. Also, it was observed that there is an existing system within the business which further documentary evidence shows is an ERP system or is one that runs on the ERP platform.

6.5.1. CASE STUDY 3 FINDINGS

Through a week-long observation of the business and subsequent interview of the family manager, some themes were formed as discussed below.

CATEGORIES	THEMES
MANAGEMENT	Family-styled management
	Automated stock management
	Automated financial management
OPERATIONS	Automated employee management
	Automated sales system
STRATEGY	Mixed customer relationship
	Tacit product knowledge
	Delivery as a strategy
	Up-to-date market information required
	High growth potential

Table 13: CASE 3's THEMES

Note that no organisational goal of succession was found in this case as it is a new business and the priority appeared to be sustained strategic growth.

6.5.1.1. MANAGERIAL CHARACTERISTICS

6.5.1.1.1. FAMILY-STYLED MANAGEMENT

Although the business is fully funded and owned by the family, a young member of the family, who was the initiator of the business, is the sole controller and decision-maker. The fact that a younger member of the family is the family manager, in this case, contradicts the arguments of some studies (Carney, 2005; Stewart and Hitt, 2014) which said that SFB management is usually family styled, such that the oldest family member within the business makes the decisions. Although the expert and the findings from Cases 1 and 2 are in agreement with the literature, the contradiction found in Case 3 shows the heterogeneous nature of SFBs which makes it difficult to clearly define or measure family involvement in the business (Kellerman *et al.*, 2014; De Massis and Kotlar, 2014; Smith, 2016) without being immersed in the business. Note that Case 3 meets the definition of a UK retail SFB as used by previous studies in terms of management composition, size and nature of business.

Although he gave permission for the business to participate in the research, it was not clear if he was the decision-maker until the interview. This non-clarity emanated from the fact that there are two older family members working within the business. Also, it was confirmed during the interview that there is a non-family manager within the business; the observation showed that the non-family manager takes orders from the family manager just like other employees with no managerial responsibilities. However, it was confirmed during the interview that the purpose of employing him was for his experience sourcing the products and not for managerial purposes. All decisions including job descriptions are made by the young member of the family who permitted the investigation and granted the interview for the case study. He also established the need always to be present to be able to oversee every aspect of the business especially as the business is still young.

Despite the difference in the family managerial make-up of Case 3, it was found that, like other SFBs, strategic decisions are made by the family manager and everyone else commits to these decisions (Spencer, 2012). The implication is that the adoption of ERP within the business could be dependent on the family manager's perception of and decision on the technology since the commitment of the business depends on such a decision. Agreeing with previous findings (see Sections 2.12; 2.20.2; 5.5.1; 6.3.1.1; 6.4.1.1), it was found that the decision to adopt the ERP system was made by the family manager and supported by the whole business.

While available evidence shows that the adoption of the ERP system already supports the centralised management of the business, it could also improve the speed and accuracy of decision-making (Teittinen *et al.*, 2013). While the business already adopts ERP and has experienced some benefits, the level of ERP knowledge was found to be low as the family manager could not establish the type of technology beyond the provider's description. Only through documentation could the research establish that the system runs on an ERP platform. This sort of limited knowledge of ERP is not uncommon for small businesses (Almahamid and Awsi, 2015); it was also found in Case 1 that the type of technology in place could not be established beyond its standalone usage by the business.

After looking at the potentials in the business as my brother explained, I deemed it interesting to come into the business. I was helped by the family to fund and start the business.

Dealing in a lot of products, it has not been easy sourcing the different products, so I had to employ an external manager with vast experience in the area of business. That has made it easy to source the products. Otherwise, it could not have been possible to be at this level.

I work with other members of staff to oversee everything going on in the area. I am spending more of my time in the shop to ensure that every sector is working all right. My duty mainly is to give directives. So, according to our daily activities, I play a role in every aspect of it.

But at the moment the initiatives to run the business are coming from me. So, I need to be present almost all the time during the running hours of this business to decide and direct on the necessary things to be done and how it should be done.

They have come in as a financial backing to support my initiative. Because they are not into the business, they do not know what goes on with the business. They only support financially and add general ideas or advice on improving the business. The major person within the family supporting this business is also into other businesses but not in this field so has a general knowledge of business but not in this field. So, when it comes to general challenges relating to business, he always advises but does not make the decisions.

For Case 3 to take further advantage of the ERP system there is the need for an increased level of awareness of the technology, especially for the family manager as his perception and decision seems to supersede that of others within the business.

6.5.1.1.2. AUTOMATED STOCK MANAGEMENT

It was initially observed that the products were only counted after delivery, but it was not clear at the time why this was and how the stock record was maintained. However, it was clarified at the interview that technology exists within the business that keeps a stock record. Once the accurate value of the product is recorded after delivery, the system keeps an accurate and updated stock record. However, it was mentioned during the interview that some products are manually recorded due to their perishable nature and the need to keep fresh daily stock. Such records are still kept on the system to ensure an accurate account of which ones are sold or which perished.

As generally expected of a successfully adopted ERP system, the management of inventories is automated (Teittinen *et al.*, 2013; Ruivo *et al.*, 2014). The automated inventory management system provided better accountability which was not found in the previous two cases. Note that while Case 1 did not see a need for accountability due to having family employees, Case 2 was already looking to a technology that could improve accountability. While it is not unusual that ERP provides better accountability, the finding further buttresses the pilot finding (Section 2.20.2.2) that UK retail SFBs, like other businesses, can enjoy an effectively managed inventory through ERP adoption. It thus supports the assertion that the ERP system can benefit all businesses irrespective of their characteristics (Duan *et al.*, 2012; Al-Gholaiffi and Al-Mashari, 2014), but the family needs to be aware of such benefits to be able to adopt ERP for that purpose (Almahamid and Awsi, 2015).

It can be said that the adoption of the ERP system in Case 3 was due to the family manager's perception that the technology can manage inventories in a cost-effective way. While the finding buttresses the suggestion that technology adoption in SFBs is based on the family manager's perceived benefits of the technology (De Massis *et al.*, 2016), it also shows that the decision may be dependent on knowledge of the benefits of ERP to the business (Parikh, 2012; Lewandowski *et al.*, 2013). Also, contrary to other cases, Case 3 was open to providers improving ERP within the business. While Parikh (2012) and Lewandowski *et al.* (2013) argue that ERP awareness is better propagated by its providers, such as in Case 3, evidence from other case studies shows that some SFBs may not be open to such knowledge unless the propagator is independent or has the business' interests at heart.

So generally it is done on a daily basis. The ones we are particular about for now are the perishable products like vegetables. Due to their perishable nature, we monitor the stock

closely so as to know which ones have been sold and the ones that are going off (perishing). We record the vegetable stocks every evening before closing. When the stock is low, we buy new products to ensure that we do not run out, almost on a daily basis. In other dry products, we check them once or twice in a week because we are still introducing more products. So we ensure that we restock every week.

We have got the scanners which are connected to the system. We move the scanner around in the shop, so any product that is going short, we scan it and check the quantity in the shop. So, when a product arrives, we take the record of such product and input it into the system. For example, if its bread, we say the bread is 5 pieces, and when it goes down to say 2 or 3, we use the system to check how many has been sold or how many we've lost and how many is left in the store because we sometimes lose products in the store.

6.5.1.1.3. AUTOMATED FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

The findings on how finances are managed were mainly formed from the interviews as it is an aspect of the business that is difficult to observe. It was, however, found that the system within the business is an integrated system which ensures easy management of finances for profit, loss and tax purposes. The respondent, in fact, believes that it would not have been possible to manage the business' finances effectively without such an integrated system.

As found with the inventory management, the existing system automates and effectively manages the business finances. The family manager pointed out the importance of the system to the business in meeting government regulations on tax payment. Although this finding was not specifically established in the literature, the pilot study in Section 2.20 also shows that the retail SFB from the archives adopted the ERP system to comply with government regulation. An effective management system could be seen as another benefit of adopting ERP (Teittinen *et al.*, 2013).

The finding also represents a further affirmation of the inferences on ERP's contribution to financial management in the earlier cases. It also represents a welcome development not just for retail SFBs but retail, small businesses as financial management remains a problem for such businesses (Dalberg, 2010; Ahmed *et al.*, 2015; Cant *et al.*, 2015). It can be inferred from the findings on financial management in Case 3 that the adoption of ERP for this purpose was solely based on the perception of the family manager (De Massis *et al.*, 2016). The perception turned to conviction after successful adoption of the ERP system.

Government regulation is, partly, why we use software, but it is not a rule that businesses must use software for sales, stock or financial management. Taxes are paid for trading and for you to be able to pay your tax rightly you need to show your full account to the tax man. So, there is no way you can give an accurate account of sales without such software, especially considering the amount of trading that goes on

6.5.1.1.4. AUTOMATED EMPLOYEE MANAGEMENT

It seemed during the observation that there were no clear job descriptions except for the butchers who are specifically employed for their specialist skills in that area. However, it became clear at the interview that besides the CEO being always present to oversee the business, the system also helps manage the employees. The management of employees includes the CEO himself and the other family members within the system. The system functions such that employee details are in the database and the activities entered into the system must be linked with these employee details. It makes it easy to track who carried out different activities and when they were carried out.

It was found that with the ERP system in place Case 3 was able to effectively manage employees by having an accurate record of their activities. As found in Sections 2.7.3 and 2.14.4, the finding is not unusual for an ERP system. The management of employees brings about accountability and easier performance management (Shang and Seddon, 2002; Kolsagie and Ritz, 2015). Also, it was found that the family manager realised the importance of such automated management and opted for a system that delivered such a benefit (Carrasco-Hernandez and Jimenez-Jimenez, 2013). Without knowledge of how the technology can contribute to business needs, deciding to commit to adopt an ERP system within the business would have been difficult (Carrasco-Hernandez and Jimenez-Jimenez; 2013; De Massis *et al.*, 2016).

At the moment, because of the financial challenges talking about wages, I have not been able to employ as many people to enable me to distribute people to different departments. So, at the moment, I employed few (12) employees which the company can afford to pay at the moment.

If I had bought an existing business it would be easier to assign people to sections or departments.

The system tells you the product that was brought in, who put the record in the system, the date and at what time of the day.

Because it has to be in the system like that to show that if the product was sold by so-and-so, so many an hour and by so-and-so staff.

6.5.1.2. OPERATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

6.5.1.2.1. AUTOMATED SALES SYSTEMS

It was first observed that there is a sales system in place that makes the sales operations seemingly fast and effortless. All products are scanned and paid for at the till with the system printing receipts and customers collecting goods on the spot. It was further clarified at the interview that the same system that manages stock, employees and finances also manages sales. It was, in fact, emphasised that the stock and sales information on the system makes financial management possible.

It is well known that sales is a core operation of the retail industry and it is important that it is done effectively (Rhodes, 2015a). In Case 3, one important reason for adopting the ERP system was to improve the sales system. Evidence shows that the sales processing system in Case 3 is similar to that of Case 1 in terms of its automated nature. It was, however, found to be more effective than the manual systems found in Case 2. Findings from Section 2.20 also support the fact that adoption of ERP improves the sales system in a retail SFB. As an effective sales system could lead to having satisfied customers, an effective sales system is important to a retail business in many ways (Pantano, 2014; Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson, 2014). Based on the findings and the perception of the family manager, Case 3 enjoys the dividends of such an effective system with the adoption of ERP.

The system also helps keep the record of transactions done with the customers. Someone might come back after buying, but if you have processed such sales manually, it will be difficult to remember such customer or recall the transaction. But if the customer provides the receipt, all the information can be recalled from the system and you can deal with the queries appropriately.

So there is no way you can give an accurate account of sales without such software, especially considering the amount of trading that goes on.

6.5.1.2.2. CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP

It was observed that customer relationships are important to the business and the business takes customer satisfaction seriously. In fact, customer feedback sometimes dictates the business operations. However, the business relies on the traditional face-to-face means of getting customer feedback.

Although customer satisfaction and sales may be related, and customer satisfaction dictates retention ((Zakaria *et al.*, 2013; Rhodes, 2015a), Case 3 was found to not have a defined customer feedback system. Even though this study has established that the adoption of an ERP system can improve relationships with customers through a feedback system (Johnson *et al.*, 2015), the business has not yet taken advantage. Available evidence made it clear that customer feedback is important in dictating the operational direction in Case 3 but the business relies on traditional word-of-mouth for feedback. While it may be argued that the system is effective as the company recently changed its mode of operation after receiving feedback, it can be made better through the CRM module of the ERP system (see Section 5.5.3). The ERP system is able to obtain feedback from customers remotely, which is then made available in real time for prompt action.

However, understandably, the family manager did not see a reason to include the CRM system in the ERP system, hence, its non-inclusion. While the finding suggests that the business cherishes customer feedback, it goes to show that the family manager's perception and decision was vital to the adoption of the ERP system in Case 3 (Spencer, 2012; De Massis *et al.*, 2016). However, as Case 3 relies on feedback to improve the business and may welcome the inclusion of the CRM system to improve customer management, it could be that it is unaware of such benefits due to its limited knowledge of ERP (Shahawai, 2009; Lenart, 2011). For that reason, if informed knowledge of the benefits of ERP on customer relationships is made available to Case 3, it could dictate how ERP is perceived and ensure its continuous usage after adoption (Almahamadi and Awsi, 2015).

We get feedback daily.

Some customers voluntarily come in to talk about the product they bought. Some people come to you to tell you that a product is cheaper elsewhere. Some, in fact, explain that they understand the situation as being new but advice on how to get the products at a cheaper rate. Some as well come in acknowledgement of buying a cheaper product or buying a product of better quality than the competitors. At the moment, it is because of the feedback of

the customers to bring in all the vegetables. Because it is a tradition for businesses like this one to put all their vegetables outside. But we have worked on customers' feedback through our enquiries to bring our vegetables into the store. We have more customers advising that it is more hygienic to do the vegetables inside the store than outside.

6.5.1.3. STRATEGIC CHARACTERISTICS

6.5.1.3.1. TACIT PRODUCT KNOWLEDGE

The business depends a lot on the tacit knowledge of some of the products that the other competing businesses do not have. The CEO is from the same continent from which most of the products are imported and for this reason, he has a vast knowledge of the different qualities that should be sold due to his personal experience. This knowledge is what the business believes is lacking with their competitors as most of them are not from that part of the world.

Like some other retail SFBs identified in Section 2.18.1, Case 3 uses its intuitive market knowledge of product quality to gain competitive advantage. However, as the business has only existed for two years, such knowledge was not gained from the years of doing the business but as a result of the manager's family background. This finding opposes the literature findings which suggest that the tacit market knowledge is gained from years of being in the business (Lamberti and Noci, 2010; Dessi *et al.*, 2014). While the literature finding on the strategic use of tacit market knowledge by SFBs was found to be true in Case 3, the findings shows that there are more ways that SFBs can acquire the tacit knowledge required for a competitive edge than through years of doing the business.

Having discussed this characteristic of a SFB in Case 3, there is the need to discuss how such a characteristic affects the adoption of ERP within the business. Although ERP adoption was found to be beneficial to Case 3 in different ways, the business may not look to the information management part of ERP for this purpose as intuitive knowledge is not usually written down (Dessi *et al.*, 2014). Only members of the family or those of a similar background would, by default, possess such knowledge. For this reason, the family manager's perception and hence decisions may not be affected by this SFB characteristic of Case 3.

I would say the store is competing very well with others because we deal in some products that come mainly from my own country. When it comes to the UK, the people from my country are not into this trade, but others from other continents are the ones into such

business. But these people do not have a vast knowledge of the product. They only identify the products by name while I can identify them by the quality and other means of identification. We are already doing well because it is easier for us to source the products than it is for those that were into it before. We also source the products cheaper than others do. I can say the business is in a position of a market leader.

6.5.1.3.2. UP-TO-DATE MARKET INFORMATION REQUIRED

Like many retail businesses, market information such as price or a customer request for new products is important as a strategy for the business to compete. The company pays extra attention to price updates especially on products that competitors also sell. Also, as discussed earlier, market information on the quality of products is also very important as well as the prices of such product from suppliers.

Like other retail businesses, Case 3 requires updated market information to make important decisions (Lee, 2017). It becomes crucial that small businesses like Case 3 acquire such information using technology as the advent of big data analytics represents a game changer in the retail industry (Lee, 2017; Bradlow *et al.*, 2017).

The knowledge of the possibility that the integration of a module that acquires market information in real time can benefit Case 3 could appeal to the family manager and lead to the adoption of more ERP modules (Elragal, 2014). Although little research has been conducted on ERP and big data (Elragal, 2014), ERP providers, e.g. Epicor, are already planning a release of ERP packages with big data analytics capabilities (Belisent, 2016). Although ERP providers already recognise the need to integrate big data analytics into ERP systems, it is yet to be seen if such prospects could influence the adoption of additional modules of ERP in Case 3, especially as the business relies on intuitive market knowledge. However, the business need for updated market information ahead of competitors could mean Case 3 may consider the real-time information management capabilities of social-ERP (Gelogo and Kim, 2014).

Some, in fact, explain that they understand the situation as being new but advise on how to get the products at a cheaper rate. Some as well come in acknowledgement of buying a cheaper product or buying a product of better quality than the competitors.

6.5.1.3.3. FREE DELIVERY AS A STRATEGY

The business offers a delivery service to a few customers that desire such a service and meet the conditions for free delivery. The service is offered for free but within a certain distance of the business location. The distance limitation is due to there being only one vehicle for delivery, and there is also a time constraint to carry out all deliveries daily.

As found in Case 2, Case 3 also offers delivery as a service to gain competitive advantage. However, in Case 3 unlike in Case 2, the service is offered without any premium, and it is only available for sales above fifty pounds (£50). While the finding shows the efforts retail SFBs put into beating the competition, it should be noted that the availability is limited due to the limited resources (Songini and Gnan, 2015).

While the business is not willing to seek partnership or external funding for business, collaboration with delivery companies could make the delivery service available to more customers. As seen in Sections 2.14.5 and 2.20, adopting the ERP system could support such a collaboration and still help the business keep control of increasing capabilities (Castellina, 2013; Koslage and Ritz, 2015). Considering that the delivery service is an important competitive strategy for Case 3, the possibility of collaboration support with the existing ERP system could be a welcome idea if the knowledge is available to the family manager as an determinant for the adoption of ERP. The family manager is mentioned again as, despite not being the eldest, he makes the decisions that the whole business commits to (Spencer *et al.*, 2012).

Yes, on customer request we deliver their products, and we have got a purchase limit. Any customer within the range of 14 miles from the shop who has spent over fifty pounds (£50) should, on request, get free delivery.

The company has a car and a driver whom we assign such a duty to. We do all deliveries by 4pm, but if the delivery needs to be earlier than that, the customer should have discussed it and make a special arrangement. Order deliveries are processed manually.

It is a way of getting customer interest and competing with others in the market because some of the people doing the same business around have not got such a facility.

6.5.1.3.4. GROWTH POTENTIAL

As explained earlier, the business is just over a year old but has grown tremendously and is in a good strategic position for further growth. Although the business is faced with financial challenges, the business is expected to continue growing. The respondent, however, expects the business to grow through continuous family support and employment of more people to further help with sourcing products.

Although the existing system within the business is not expected to grow with the business, it is not to be changed until the business starts to notice system limitations.

Despite being a relatively new business, Case 3 is perceived as a market leader in the community. The perception is due to the size of the business compared to others, the product offerings and the level of daily sales. The business has grown enormously in over a year of existence, and it is projected that the growth will continue.

With the rate at which the business has outperformed competitors, it is suggested that technology like the ERP system may be required to manage such growth (Kosalge and Ritz, 2015). As the business has adopted an ERP system, the family manager testifies to the effective management of the business and performance. Despite the benefits, the family manager believes that opening more branches and employing more people is what the business needs for future growth. However, as seen in Section 2.20, the ERP system can add further capabilities such as online stores (Johanson, 2015). As online stores represent a way for retail businesses to reach a wider market, it could be a cheaper option for Case 3 to grow with the ERP system (Rhodes, 2015a; ONS, 2016). However, it appears as though the family manager is not aware of such a possibility with the existing system, so there is the need for more awareness of the ERP system for there to be a chance of the business taking advantage of the system's full potential.

The different characteristics of Case 3, like the previous two cases, suggest that the adoption of ERP could be of immense benefit. The next section discusses the benefits of ERP that have been identified for Case 3.

Another challenge is a financial challenge. A lot of bills are involved in running a business like this. Coping with the financial demands of the business with the income generated at the moment is a big challenge. The people employed needs to be paid and paying them and other bills could sometimes mean that you run at a loss. So, we are trying to source more funds.

At the moment we are not looking at external investment but advertising the business so as to probably double our sales and be able to cover our bills.

In the next few years, I expect the business to have given birth to many other ones within the UK.

Planning for such growth is simple. As the business is growing financially and it has different branches, more people would be employed to source more products as it is done now. The additional labour force would also help process some products better than it is done now. More branches would be opened up in other areas in the UK.

Because the business is still growing, we have not experienced any limitations or challenges with this system, but over time as the business grows other things would be introduced and by then we can start to figure out the limitations of this system. By then we may need a more advanced system to be able to cope with the growth.

6.5.2. THE BENEFITS OF ERP TO CASE 3

It was found that there is an integrated system already in use within Case 3 that further research certified as being run on an ERP platform. It became clear that the decision to adopt this system was primarily down to the family manager, and CEO's, perception of the technology, and the decision to add to the functionalities of the system or adopt a new system would also depend on the family manager's perception.

Despite the existence of an ERP system within the business, it was found that the technology could contribute more to the business that it is currently used for (Shang and Seddon, 2000; Benfell *et al.*, 2013). However, the family manager's perception of the technology is that it cannot, for now, do any more for business. The case study findings show that there are other aspects of the business that automation through ERP may benefit. The literature, as well as the opinions of experts, suggest that the limited knowledge of the perceived benefits of ERP is a hindrance to the possibility of its adoption within such a business. The existing benefits of the current system and the potential benefits of extending the functionality of the ERP system to Case 3 are discussed below.

6.5.2.1. MANAGERIAL BENEFITS

Even though the existing system contributes some managerial benefits, such as resource management, financial management and employee management to the business, the ERP system can further benefit the business in other aspects of management.

6.5.2.1.1. REMOTELY CONTROLLED BUSINESS AND FASTER DECISION-MAKING

The business is centrally controlled by a member of the family who makes all decisions. It was found that because of the need to be aware of activities going on within the business he is mostly present. However, with the adoption of the ERP system, especially mobile-ERP (Gelogo and Kim, 2014), the business can be controlled and decisions made remotely. With mobile-ERP, the business information required to make important decisions would always be available to the decision-maker as and when needed. Also, business performance, such as rate of sales, stock levels, etc. could be remotely monitored and controlled as sales, stock and financial records are already in the integrated system; social-ERP makes all this information available to the family manager remotely. It thus makes the management of the business easy from anywhere.

As the decisions on ERP modules adopted in this business were based on the family manager's perceived benefits of the technology to the business, the chances of taking advantage of mobile-ERP can only increase if the family manager is aware of such benefits.

6.5.2.2. OPERATIONAL BENEFITS

The main operation of any retail business is sales (CG, 2009), and with Case 3 it is already automated. However, the ERP system could still benefit the business in terms of improving the customer relationship. Customers are important to the business' everyday operations.

6.5.2.2.1. BETTER CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS

Due to the importance of customers to retail businesses, different ways of maintaining and improving customer relationships are usually adopted, and this includes the adoption of technology (Oh *et al.*, 2012; Chen and Tsou, 2012; Romero and Matinez-Roman, 2015). The business has a good relationship with customers as they receive constant positive feedback mainly through word-of-mouth. Customer queries, especially relating to products purchased, are traced and addressed using the system. The transparency provided through this system could improve customer trust and the customer relationship (Hutchinson *et al.*, 2013; Elkady *et al.*, 2014).

However, with social-ERP, the business could get feedback through the social media and report how such feedback was being acted upon via the same medium. This method would take the business closer to customers and hence improve customer satisfaction (Zakaria *et al.*, 2013). This method could also open the business up to a wider market as seen with the SFB in the archival study (see Section 2.20.3.1). While the benefit is both operational and strategic, the chances of adopting such a module with the existing system depend on the family manager's perception. While the awareness of such a benefit can inform the manager's perception, the cost of setting up a social presence for the business could also affect adoption of ERP (Supramaniam *et al.*, 2014).

6.5.2.3. STRATEGIC BENEFITS

Although this business is new to the market, it is already in a good market position because some strategic actions were taken. Based on these findings, it became obvious that adopting the ERP system could further benefit the business strategically in maintaining its position as market leader.

6.5.2.3.1. FASTER MARKET UPDATES

ERP may not be able to contribute to the tacit knowledge of products that serves as an important strategic characteristic of the business as such knowledge can only be improved upon through experience. However, through online access to information, the business can have direct market updates such as prices of products, new customer demands, etc. (Chabouni and Yahia, 2014). Such information could be directly from suppliers or customers. With such information reaching the business faster than other businesses, it could help towards ensuring the business retains its position as market leader as other businesses would look to them for information.

Even though the adoption of ERP may be perceived as a disruptive technology to the legacy system which SFBs are keen to keep (BIS, 2013), having a hybrid of the legacy system and technology-driven information management will be hugely beneficial to Case 3. While the legacy system provides an inbuilt knowledge of the market that is strategically important (Dessi *et al.*, 201), ERP provides fast access to other important market information (Chabouni and Yahia, 2014).

6.5.2.3.2. IMPROVED DELIVERY SERVICE

The business offers a delivery service as a strategy to maintain a competitive advantage. This service is limited due to the resources available to the business. ERP adoption could help the

business take full advantage of delivery as a strategy (Ruivo, 2012) by collaborating with delivery companies as seen with the archival study. The collaboration would make the delivery service available to more customers and remove some of the limitations, such as distance and quantity of product.

Delivery would also be processed faster with ERP as the delivery company would have instant access to orders without interfering with other business activities (see Section 2.20.3.3). It thus implies that with ERP already adopted, the business can collaborate with courier companies for the benefit of the business and still maintain the level of control desired by the management (Ruivo, 2012; Benfell *et al.*, 2013). Collaboration for a better delivery service is crucial to retail small businesses due to the rising competition amidst retail businesses and the limited resources of small businesses (Lasisi *et al.*, 2016). If the family manager is aware of such benefits, it could prompt the addition of the supply chain management (SCM) module to the existing ERP system.

6.5.2.3.3. SUPPORT FOR SUSTAINED GROWTH

Although the system within the business helps the business, the enormous growth of the business was not attributed to its adoption. However, the contribution of ERP to the business will undoubtedly bring about further growth. The system could increase the business' reach through the delivery service, its market share through the social media and, in fact, add more capabilities to the business (Ruivo, 2012; Benfell *et al.*, 2013; Johanson *et al.*, 2015). Also, as seen in the archival study, discussed in the literature and emphasised by the experts, the ERP system would not just help the business to grow but would also help it cope with growth and sustain the business through the growth. According to evidence gathered through this thesis (see Sections 2.3, 2.7.2, 2.20.3.3), it becomes clear that the ERP system is an enduring technology that can grow with the business if adopted.

The next section shows a comparison of current business processes in Case 3 ('as is') and if it takes advantage of the ERP system as explained above.

6.5.3. THE PRESENT BUSINESS PROCESS IN CASE 3 ('AS IS' STATE)

In Case 3, the process also starts with product delivery. The product quantity is confirmed and entered into the system in the back office. The price is also updated on the system by the family manager. The employees then stick price labels on individual items and arrange the products on the shelves while the meat products go into the freezer.

When customers come in, they find prices on the items including the meat products. The butchers may have to cut some meat items to size and stick the label on the product for the customer. The customer reaches the till and the employees scan each item to obtain the total cost of the customer's order. Once the customer makes payment, the employees confirm the transaction on the system and a receipt is issued. The receipt shows the time of transaction, cost of the individual items, the total sum and the method of payment.

As the system issues the receipt, the sales and stock records are updated automatically. This automatic update is important especially for perishable products as they are replaced often even without being sold. The automated system helps the business keep an accurate record of products sold and those thrown out.

The up-to-date sales and stock records also help the family manager obtain accurate financial records as and when needed. It also helps him in reaching decisions especially on tax payment and the restocking of particular products.

The business process below shows a representation of Case 3 with more benefits of ERP applicable to the business.

6.5.4. CASE 3'S BUSINESS PROCESS MODEL WITH ERP ('TO BE' STATE)

Based on the findings from the investigation of Case 3 discussed above and the request by the business for a report on how the adoption of ERP can contribute to their goals, an achievable process automation model was developed as shown below.

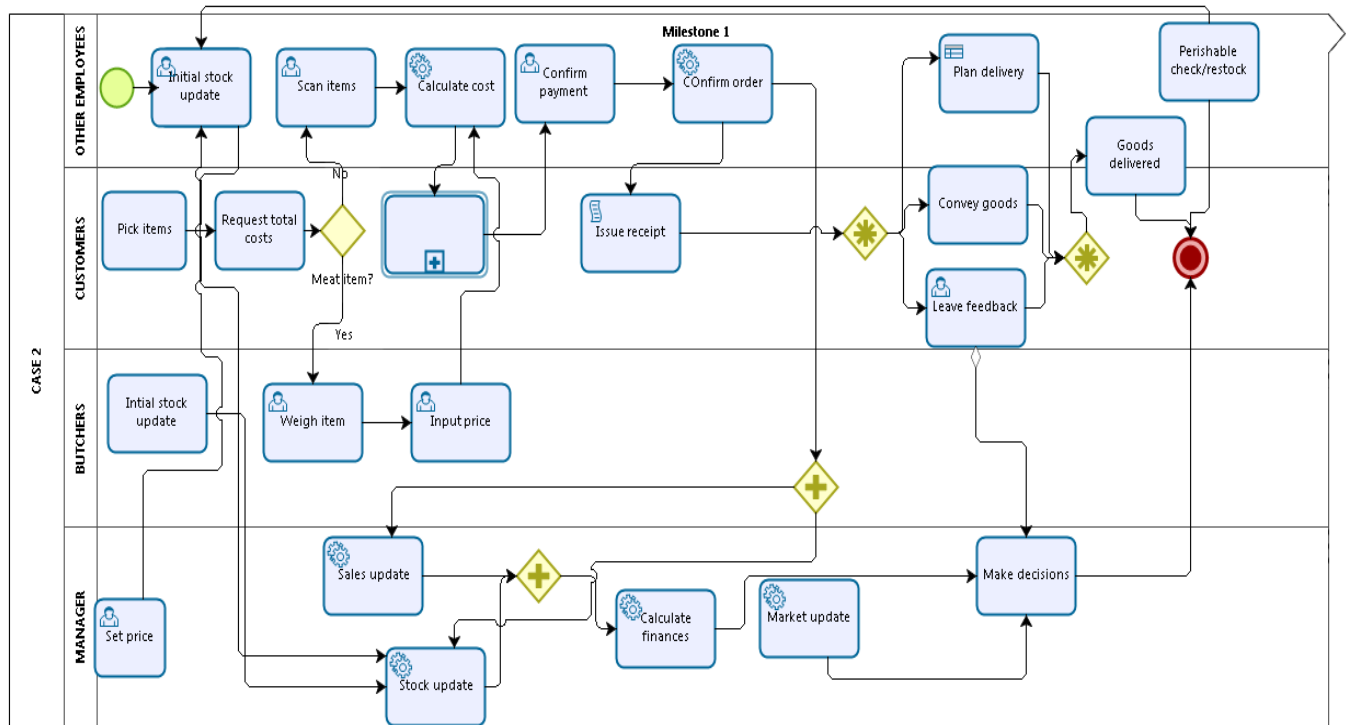


Figure 15: Case 3's automated process with ERP

With the adoption of the ERP system, the business can move from partly automated processes to fully automated business processes. This will solve some obvious problems and prevent the future occurrence of others.

With an automated business, the job descriptions become clearer and operations become faster. As it is already done, the employees input the initial stock record into the system which is saved in the central database (local or Cloud). The manager decides upon and inputs the price of every product on the system.

Once a customer picks an item and takes it to the till the item is scanned, the system automatically locates the price of the item and eventually sums the total cost of all items. However, if the item or one of the items is meat the customer takes it to the butcher's section. The process here is slightly different and more efficient than the current system. The butcher weighs the item and inputs the cost into the system with a transaction number. When the customer gets to the till to pay for the other items, the cost of the meat is already visible to the employee at the till. Once the customer makes payment and the employee confirms payment, the system issues a receipt. Also, as soon as the payment is confirmed, the system updates the stock and sales record, a record that is only available to the manager for performance monitoring and decision purposes. It should be noted that with mobile-ERP, the manager can receive business updates anywhere. The record is available in the Cloud, and so it is accessible anywhere with the right permissions.

Also, the customer decides whether to use the company's delivery service. In the case of the company's delivery service being used, the employees follow the company's delivery policies otherwise, the customer transports the items on their own.

The customer, irrespective of the type of delivery chosen, can also decide whether to leave feedback through the feedback system the business provides.

The feedback, as well as the stock and sales records, are made available to the manager no matter where the manager is located. Also, as the employees' access to the system is through their unique ID, each employee's activities are easily monitored through the system as it would be in larger businesses.

With faster order processing brought about by the automated butcher section, which is not yet in the system, and better performance management, the business is expected to grow faster. Also, the presence of an actual feedback system within the business shows the customers how important they are to the business. Faster decisions based on feedback, and sales and stock information readily available to the business could help increase market share and enhance the business' survival and growth. Considering the kind of products sold by this business, the system may not be useful in obtaining market information at this moment. However, this feature could become valuable in the future as technology advancement becomes more accepted in the developing parts of the world.

Based on this model, it is obvious that the ERP system can offer more benefits to the business than how the business presently uses it.

6.5.5 SUMMARY OF CASE 3

Case 3 was found to be a first-generation family business in its second year of existence. Unlike the previous two cases, the family manager was found not to be the eldest family member but the one who was perceived to have the most business knowledge. It was, however, despite the difference in the managerial make-up of the business, the decision premise system exists within the business.

The business already had an ERP system in place, the purpose of which was found to be based on the family manager's perceived business needs. However, further findings showed that the ERP system is able to serve more purposes within the business but the family manager was not aware of these additional ERP benefits.

The findings concluded that while family involvement made the adoption of ERP in Case 3 successful, it could better benefit the business than its present usage. The improved awareness of the family manager of the full benefits of ERP appears to be the catalyst for the addition of more ERP modules to the existing ones.

6.6. CASE STUDY 4

Case study 4 is a second-generation retail small family business that deals in a variety of home products ranging from home furnishings and electrical fittings to air fresheners. The business has ten employees, most of which are not members of the owning family but are from the same ethnic group. This business appears to be in a period of ownership succession as the owning manager already stopped being present in the business but a family member always comes in to check business performance and report back to the owning manager for strategic decisions. This business was chosen as it showed willingness to be a part of the study, was found to be fit for purpose, and it was easily accessible.

The business was observed for four weeks as with the other cases, and an unrecorded interview with a member of staff was conducted on the final day of observations. The findings are as discussed below.

6.6.1. FINDINGS FROM CASE STUDY 4

Based on the findings of the observation and interview, themes were formed which were further grouped into categories as shown in the table below.

CATEGORIES	THEMES
MANAGEMENT	Family-styled leadership
	Manual stock and finance management
	Loose employee management
OPERATIONS	Manual sales system
	Loose customer relationship
STRATEGY	Wide range product offerings
	Up-to-date market information required
ORGANISATIONAL GOAL	Succession driven

Table 14: CASE 4'S THEMES

The findings were analysed based on the themes identified above.

6.6.1.1. MANAGERIAL CHARACTERISTICS

The observation and interview lead to some findings relating to the management style in this case and this section explains those characteristics.

6.6.1.1.1. FAMILY-STYLED LEADERSHIP

It was at first not clear how decisions are made or how the business is managed in this case. However, it was later understood that the main decision-maker is not always available as he is in the process of retiring. The main decision-maker is the second-generation owner of the business. He is already in the process of handing over the business to the third-generation owner: his daughter. The second-generation manager who makes all decisions is the eldest

member of the family within the business. This finding echoes Spencer *et al.*'s (2012) argument that SFBs maintain a family-styled leadership which they strive to maintain.

Despite the family manager's absence from the business, it was found that nothing is done without his approval. For that reason, it sometimes takes a day or two before the employees receive decisions on issues, no matter how important. The incoming owner comes into the business early in the morning to convey the present owner's decisions to the employees, checks the sales records and leaves to return in the evening. She receives updated information on the business and takes it home to the current owner who makes important decisions based on that information. It was found that even though the business is about to be handed to a successor, the incoming owner does not make decisions and her view does not yet count. This finding became obvious as she could not grant the needed access for the investigation until the main owner agreed to allow the research. Also, no recorded interviews or pictures were allowed because a decision was not received from the owner until the time permitted for the investigation had elapsed.

At the time of collecting this data the business was in the process of succession from the second generation to the third generation of management however, it appears as though Case 4 was not prepared for succession. While it is not clear why the second generation had to retire, and the new generation take over, the business appears to be one of the many SFBs found to have not prepared for this change (Laforet, 2013; Gliding *et al.*, 2015). As found in Section 2.10, few SFBs survive succession as a result of, among other things, not preparing effectively, and Case 4 is already experiencing difficulties due to the succession process; the incoming manager does not work in the business yet and the outgoing manager has already stopped working but still makes the business decisions. The implication is that business information takes a long time to get to the decision-maker and, as a result, decisions are delayed. The respondent confirmed that this had already started happening and things were better when the family manager was always present. While this finding buttresses the fact that family managers make strategic decisions in SFBs, it also supports the argument that the eldest family member is usually the family manager (Weismeier-Sammer and Von Schlippe, 2013; Spencer, 2012; De Massis *et al.*, 2016). It thus implies that the decision to adopt the ERP system is dependent on Case 4's family manager. However, as the second-generation manager is not present within the business, the decision may be delayed as was experienced with the decision to participate in this research. This finding also shows how succession might affect business performance and the adoption of technology (Patel and Chrisman, 2014; Decker and Gunther, 2017).

The adoption of an ERP system could, however, help the business improve existing problems in terms of decision-making (Teittinen *et al.*, 2013; Staehr, 2012). The technology has the capability to make business information available to both family managers remotely (Bharathi and Mandal, 2015; Johanson *et al.*, 2015). An ERP system could save the business time and costs in decision-making (Elragal, 2014; Lasisi *et al.*, 2017). The business recognises the need for this technology but has little knowledge of ERP, so it becomes important that the family managers are made aware of its benefits in order to improve the chances of adopting ERP as they make their strategic decisions (De Massis *et al.*, 2016).

The lady that comes in the morning and evening is the daughter, and she will be taking over soon. Her father is retiring, and that is why he doesn't come anymore.

The father makes all the decisions based on whatever his daughter reports to him from here. We are only here to work and go by his decisions.

It was easier when he was around; we used to get things done faster. But now, we can wait for days before a new product is ordered or even a faulty screen is repaired.

6.6.1.1.2. MANUAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The stock record is usually manually updated at the start of a new day. It is done to keep the family manager updated and to allow him to decide when it is right to make new purchases. The products, despite their variety, are usually counted manually and the employees are tasked with identifying the different products and brands. It is important that they can identify these products as it helps to ensure accurate stock records. Also, records of products sold are kept in a book which is checked by the incoming owner in the evening. It was found that the process is stressful mainly because all stock updates must be done before the start of sales as sales may disrupt the whole process. Finance records are also kept manually with the sales record.

The business inventories are manually managed on a twice daily basis. While this system was designed to improve accountability, it was found to be stressful and time-consuming mainly because of the varied product types. Findings from Sections 2.7.3 and 2.14.4, and from experts (see Section 5.5.3), suggest that the adoption of ERP is able to help SFBs automate resource management such that it is seamless and faster.

However, adopting an ERP system depends on the family manager (Spencer *et al.*, 2012), and the chances of adopting ERP may be slim due to the uncertainties relating to the succession process. It was also found that things were much better before the succession process, which supports the argument that factors such as succession or business performance affect how family involvement influences business and the adoption of technology (Kotlar and De Massis, 2013; Patel and Chrisman, 2014; Decker and Gunther, 2017).

Stocktaking is a very stressful process considering all the products we have in store. One product can even have different brands, and we must have the knowledge of all these brands to help us when counting and recording.

It was tough when I started, but after years of doing it, I am used to it, and I do everything even within one hour of opening in the morning.

We have to do it early before customers come in to pick items and before the lady comes to check records around 9 in the morning.

There is a book where we keep a record of every sale, from this book we know how many items were sold and the total amount made per day.

6.6.1.1.3. LOOSE EMPLOYEE MANAGEMENT

It was found that due to the fact that none of the owners are usually present in the business, the employees are not properly monitored. There are no clear job descriptions as the different staff members engage in different activities depending on how busy the store is. As the store is usually busy all through the day, it is difficult for anyone to monitor their activities. As the employees get paid for work done, they are expected to work for the pay. However, it was observed that some employees decide to work as they wish. Some do not engage with customers even when they are obviously in need of assistance.

As suggested in Section 2.13.3 and found in Cases 1 and 2, Case 4 has a loose employee management style. Previous findings suggest that a loose system is a result of family members within the system (Chrisman *et al.*, 2014), however Case 4 shows that contrary to existing studies, the primary cause of the loose employee management emanated from the absence of a family member within the business. Neither the incoming nor outgoing family managers are always present. They depend on the daily recorded information from the non-family employees to have any insight into the business' performance. This evidence represents a unique SFB, and such uniqueness of an individual SFB may not have been found using other methods than a case study (De Massis and Kotlar, 2014). The finding buttresses how this study tackles the limitations identified from Smith's (2016) study.

Adopting the ERP system represents one possible way for Case 4 to succeed during this period of uncertainty (Lasisi *et al.*, 2017). The technology is able to support the management of employees and business performance even remotely (Teittinen *et al.*, 2013; Kosalge and Ritz, 2015). It may be important, especially for the outgoing family manager, to consider such technology because it could save the time and cost of the incoming manager coming into the business twice a day to collect business information. With ERP, both managers could have access to the same business information in real time no matter where they are (Johanson *et al.*, 2015; Bharathi and Mandal, 2015). Having access to such information can also make the succession process less daunting and uncertain.

When customers are around we already know it is time to work. We are paid to work, and we must justify the money we receive. Some of us can be lazy at times, but we try to make sure all customers are happy.

6.6.1.2. OPERATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Based on the observation and interview on the daily operations of the business, the findings are analysed below.

6.6.1.2.1. MANUAL SALES SYSTEM

It was observed that the usual sales system is that the customer chooses the desired items and takes them to the till for payment. At the till a staff member uses a calculator to calculate the total sum of the items chosen. All sales are manually recorded without issuing any form of receipt to the customer for the transaction. It was observed that a lot of customers buy more than one item in the store, just as they would buy in bigger stores. It is usually difficult to trace items already bought by customers due to many customers coming into the business

daily. Also, not issuing receipts makes it difficult for customers to make any claims or return items bought.

As expected of retail SFBs, Case 4 trusts the legacy system for doing business (Reijonen and Laukkanen, 2010; Spence and Essoussi, 2010). However, due to the volume of sales in the business, the legacy system already poses problems for Case 4. Considering the fact that the problem includes non-traceable transactions due to receipts not being issued, the business could benefit from a technology that promotes accountability and traceability (Staeher, 2007, Staeher, 2012). It is especially important because customers have already expressed their displeasure with the company's no returns policy. The policy came about as mitigation against the risks that come with non-traceable transactions. Considering the customers' displeasure and the importance of customer satisfaction to the business, it is important that the business embraces a more traceable system (Elkady *et al.*, 2014; Rhodes, 2015A; Jimisiah *et al.*, 2016). An ERP system then becomes a possible option in this regard as it promotes traceability of business processes (Pazzaglia *et al.*, 2013).

There is a book where we keep a record of every sale, from this book we know how many items were sold and the total amount made per day.

All records of sales are manual, and we can't give customers receipt.

We are just a small business and can't take any item already bought from the store back. The items would have been removed from packaging and customers can easily bring products from other stores to change here.

The customers have to make up their minds up on what they want because we won't take any item back once they leave the store.

6.6.1.2.2. LOOSE CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS

Despite the high volume of daily sales, the customers are not very happy with the mode of operation of the business, especially the no returns policy. Also, due to the loose employee management style, the staff members do not often pay a lot of attention to customers in the store. Even the importance of customers and the need to make them happy was emphasised during the interview; customers were not treated as being important during the period of observation.

Customers are often lost in the middle of the different items not knowing where to find the exact items being sought, and without any employee available to help. This makes a lot of customers angry. Also, customers are usually not happy with the long queues at the till due to the manual payment system. Ultimately, there are no means for customers to provide feedback as complaints about employees are not usually documented. It means such reports and feedback are not seen by the main decision-maker or the incoming generation.

As discussed in Section 6.6.1.2.1, the customers are dissatisfied with the no returns policy. While findings from the literature (Rhodes, 2015a; Jimisiah *et al.*, 2016) as well as the respondent confirmed the importance of customers to the business, they appear dissatisfied. Besides the policy, the lack of employee management means the employees do not often care

to help customers out when it is needed. All this has brought about the customers' dissatisfaction with the business.

It may then be important that the business finds a solution to the dissatisfaction of customers before the dissatisfaction becomes a problem for the business (Zakaria *et al.*, 2013). Experts suggested in Section 5.5.2.2 that because of situations like this one, retail SFBs need to understand how an ERP system can benefit them. As discussed earlier in Sections 6.6.1.1.3 and 6.6.1.2.1, the adoption of ERP to bring about traceability and better employee management can go a long way towards satisfying Case 4's customers.

We are paid to work, and we must justify the money we receive. Some of us can be lazy at times, but we try to make sure all customers are happy.

Customers complain about not being able to find items easily. It is difficult to get anything done because we cannot tell the lady everything the customers want.

Some of them also get angry when we don't take items back from them after buying it. They cause a lot of trouble, but we can't do anything about it since it is the boss' decision.

6.6.1.3. STRATEGIC CHARACTERISTICS

The business has a lot of competition mainly from the bigger stores due to their varied range of products. Some characteristics of the business were found to be strategies to gain competitive advantage, and they are discussed below.

6.6.1.3.1. WIDE RANGE OF PRODUCTS OFFERED

The business deals in a wide range of products to beat the competition from smaller businesses. Customers prefer to go a store where they can buy everything at the same time, rather than moving from shop-to-shop to get all that is needed. As a strategy, the business also deals in products that are rarely stocked by big stores but are sought by customers. The confidence that most products are usually found in the store draws customers to the store despite the poor customer service. With this strategy, the business has survived for many years. The products are also usually cheaper than in the big stores.

The findings from this case further buttress the different strategies retail SMEs use to gain a competitive edge (Danes and Flores, 2010). Case 4 designed the business such that it is difficult for other small businesses to compete as they offer a wide range of products. While the larger enterprises pose a threat, the business offers other rare products that the large enterprises do not offer. This is found to be a strategic means of survival as, despite customer dissatisfaction, sales are usually high in the business. This is not an unusual finding as the literature suggested in Section 2.13.5 that SFBs strive to run the business at least at a level sufficient to sustain the family (Bhaumik, Driffield and Pal, 2010; Sciascia *et al.*, 2012). While the growth of the business may be tricky due to the problems faced, it is clear that the business strategy is good enough to help the business survive.

However, the wide range of products offered and emphasis by the respondent further points to the need for a system like ERP to be adopted for an effortless and accurate automated inventory management.

We sell so many products that are only found in big stores. People prefer to walk in here and shop then take the bus to town. Other small stores around cannot have so many items stocked, so they prefer to come here.

We also sell some products that are not very common. Like the foam toilet seat now, it is an uncommon product, but we always have it. The energy efficient bulbs are usually found here for less than a pound, whereas in bigger stores, it is more than that. People will always come here because they know they can find anything here and at a good price.

UP-TO-DATE MARKET INFORMATION REQUIRED

Due to the rarity of some of the products sold, the store always needs to know customer requirements so they can keep stocking those items. The main strategy for the business is never to disappoint customers in terms of products sought.

Also, there is a constant need for the business to keep up to date with market prices, especially in relation to the bigger stores as that is the strategy to maintain the competitive edge currently enjoyed.

Due to the varying range of products offered and the rarity of some, it becomes important that the business stays updated with market trends and customer needs. Also, the business competes with both small and large businesses and need to be aware of prices on both sides.

The ERP system is able to connect a business to this information especially now that there is a wide range of information available in the Cloud (Johanson *et al.*, 2015; Kshetri *et al.*, 2017). If Case 4 adopts the ERP system, the business can effectively take advantage of remote, real-time access to business data and information.

We try to monitor the big stores and check their price so we can keep selling at a better price than them. We update the boss with that information so he can decide on the price to sell.

We try to understand the products customers are looking for but are uncommon in the market that is how we stock the products. Like the 5 set pots, they are not common in this area, but families prefer to buy the set than individual pots.

6.6.1.4. ORGANISATIONAL GOAL

6.6.1.4.1. SUCCESSION DRIVEN

The business is a succession-driven business as it has survived for many years without necessarily growing but having experienced the transition of ownership. The business is in the process of transferring ownership to the third generation as the second generation intends to retire.

It was established that the business, like a typical SFB (Chua *et al.*, 2003), is succession driven, however, like some SFBs, the business is not well prepared for the succession it is going through (Laforet, 2012; Chen, 2016). As we have found so far, in this case, the ERP system if successfully adopted, has the capability to proffer solutions to the problems faced by Case 4 resulting from the succession process.

Case 4 requires an integrated system such as the ERP system for it to survive the succession into the third generation and into the future. This finding is supported by Laforet (2012) who suggests that SFBs rarely survive the transition of power and they may require technology to do so. While, the family manager is aware of the problems the business faces due to succession, evidence points to the family manager being lost as to solutions to the problems. Making the older-generation family manager aware of how an ERP system can solve the existing problems in the business will provide a first impression of ERP within Case 4. Such awareness, as described in the literature (see Section 2.5.2.5) improves the chances of adopting ERP within the business as the older generation still makes the strategic decisions. However, making such a decision could prove challenging due to existing uncertainties within the business and the complexities of adopting ERP (Ghosh *et al.*, 2010, Dey *et al.*, 2013).

The lady that comes in the morning and evening is the daughter, and she will be taking over soon. Her father is retiring, and that is why he doesn't come anymore.

6.6.2. THE BENEFITS TO CASE 4 OF ADOPTING ERP

The findings from this case study also show that the decision to adopt ERP within the business lie with the family decision-maker or manager. Even though the power or ownership of the business is being transferred to the next generation, the younger/incoming generation still cannot make decisions until the succession process is finalised.

Although the perception of the main decision-maker could not be judged, the problematic manual processes within the business suggest the need for automation. Studies by Almahamid and Awsi (2015) as well as from the experts suggest that identifying the perceived benefits of technology, such as ERP, to business are important to the possibility of it being adopted; this section discusses the potential benefits of ERP to the business based on the research findings.

6.6.2.1. MANAGERIAL BENEFITS OF ERP TO CASE 4

The ERP system has many managerial benefits for business and based on the managerial characteristics of Case 4 above, the ERP system could improve the business.

6.6.2.1.1. FAST AND EFFICIENT DECISION-MAKING

It was found that the main decision-maker for the business is not always available and relies on information from the incoming generation to make even the most important decisions. The adoption of ERP could provide real-time access to business information such as stock levels, sales, etc. even while the decision-maker is not in his office (Bharathi and Mandal, 2015; Johanson *et al.*, 2015). As discussed in the literature and identified in the archival study (see Section 2.20.3.2), faster availability of accurate information through ERP makes informed decision-making faster. As identified from the Case 4 respondent (see Section 6.6.1.1.1), delayed decision-making is one major problem the business currently faces. Decisions, such as restocking the store and setting product prices could be made easily through ERP without the need for intervention from the incoming generation. The ERP system could be an effective communicator of business activities and decisions between the employees and the decision-maker if successfully adopted.

While adoption of ERP reduces the need for the incoming manager to go into the store, there is the need for the new generation to be updated on events within the business. The ERP system has the capability of making information available to any authorised individual even remotely (Johanson *et al.*, 2015). If Case 4 adopts ERP, all authorised stakeholders in the business, from both the old and new generation, could have real-time access to business information.

6.6.2.1.2. EFFICIENT STOCK AND FINANCE MANAGEMENT

With the ERP system, stock taking and financial records become automated thereby promoting accountability and efficiency (Kanellou and Spathis, 2013; see Section 2.20.3.1). If the business adopts ERP, it means that an updated record of every product stocked in the store is kept on the system (see Section 6.5), including the price and accurate quantity in stock. For every completed transaction, the stock of the different products as well as the financial records are updated accordingly (see Sections 6.5.2.1 and 6.5.2.2).

The implications of these automated stock and financial records are that the employees save the time they usually need to manually count products and operational efficiency is also improved (Zamiri *et al.*, 2010; Kanellou and Spathis, 2013). The readily available financial information also means that every transaction or finance record is easily traceable unlike the current situation where no paperwork is present.

Financial details such as business performance in terms of profit and loss, tax calculations, product performance, etc. are easily calculated with the ERP system (see Section 6.5.1.1.2). As it is an automated system, depending on the accuracy of the initial input, all information provided by the system is free of human error. However, as the employees within the business already recognise this to be a problem there is a need for the family manager to view the adoption of ERP as a possible solution because, while the employees identify the problem, only the family manager makes the decisions (see Section 6.6.1.1).

6.6.2.1.3. BETTER EMPLOYEE MONITORING AND MANAGEMENT

The ERP system offers a secure system in which only authorised personnel are allowed access (see Section 6.5.1.1.4). This system could make it easier to manage employees and monitor performance because the system keeps a log of activities performed by the individual logged onto it using their unique identification details. Employee performance can be monitored in terms of sales processed per day, who carried out an activity such as the initial stock entry or who received a product, aspects already enjoyed by Case 3 (see Section 6.5.1.1.4).

If employees are monitored using such a system, it improves accountability, trust and thus solves the problem of some employees not taking their responsibilities seriously, as observed in the case study (Kanellou and Spathis, 2013). As experts suggest, see Section 5.5.3, it is important that Case 4's family manager considers an ERP system for this purpose if the business is to survive.

6.6.2.2. OPERATIONAL BENEFITS OF ERP TO CASE 4

Based on the operational characteristics of the business, it is obvious that ERP will benefit the business as discussed below.

6.6.2.2.1. FASTER SALES PROCESSING

If the business adopts the ERP system, processing sales becomes automated and faster as the products are scanned to generate the individual prices, and the system automatically generates the total cost of the products purchased (Ruivo, 2012; Marsh *et al.*, 2013). As this is a faster way of processing sales than the present manual system using calculators, it is expected that with ERP the huge volume of daily sales could be processed faster.

It should be noted that the standalone POS system can automate sales operations but will not provide the traceability that ERP provides (Catano and Wahls, 2015). The transparency and traceability resulting from the ERP system could help change the company's no returns policy. It is possible that this could happen because evidence points to the fact that the no returns policy was based on the fact that the manual legacy system produced no traceable paperwork. The fact that customers are important to the business (Zakaria *et al.*, 2013) and awareness of their discontent with the no returns policy improves the chances of Case 4 adopting ERP to improve traceability of sales.

6.6.2.2.2. BETTER CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS

With the traceability provided through the issuing of receipts, and the no returns policy having been amended, the customer relationship is expected to improve. Also, faster sales processing will make customers happier as they can enter and exit the store within a short time.

In addition, through social-ERP the business can connect faster with customers to obtain comments, feedback, product requests, etc. (Johanson *et al.*, 2015). While this is a benefit the business may consider later, it does not represent an immediate need for the business. Despite the use of social media to connect with customers not being of immediate importance, other operational benefits of ERP point to the urgent need for adoption of ERP in Case 4 for business survival as suggested by studies conducted by, for example, PWC (2014) and experts (see Section 5.5.2.2).

6.6.2.3. STRATEGIC BENEFITS OF ERP TO CASE 4

As the business competes with both small and large businesses, there is a need for the business always to get their strategy right so as not to fall behind the competition.

6.6.2.3.1. BETTER LINKS WITH SUPPLIERS

As the business deals in a wide range of products from different suppliers, there is a need for an easy way to source and purchase these items so they can always have the products stocked in the store. However, most of these suppliers are big brands, which use advanced systems such as ERP (Papagianidis, 2012; Dey *et al.*, 2013). If Case 4 adopts an ERP system that is compatible with that of its suppliers, communicating and sourcing items from them could become easier and faster (Staeher, 2007; Staeher, 2012). Although the ease of sourcing products was not identified as a problem for the business and may not be important to Case 4, it is important that all the potential benefits are fully explored to inform the business' perception of ERP (Almahamid and Awsi, 2015). It is especially important, as was found in Case 1, as the outward appearance of the business prompted the adoption of the POS system rather than other aspects of the business that were considered as important (see Section 6.3.1).

6.6.2.3.2. READILY AVAILABLE MARKET INFORMATION

As the business requires up-to-date market information, such as customer needs, competitors' prices, etc., it is of strategic importance that the information is readily available to allow important decisions to be made (Hutchinson *et al.*, 2013; Elkady *et al.*, 2014). If the business adopts ERP, depending on the module, there could be easy access to competitors' prices and up-to-date information from customers through the Cloud (Mashari, 2014; Bharathi and Mandal, 2015). If such information is readily available to the family manager, the business will be in a better competitive position as strategic decisions would be more informed and made faster (Chabouni and Yahia, 2014). The business could, however, depend on the information acquired through the legacy system for strategic decisions rather than from any technology (Dessi *et al.*, 2014). The surge in the use of data analytics for strategic decisions suggests that adopting ERP for such a purpose should be considered by the business for strategic purposes (Elragal, 2014; Kshetri *et al.*, 2017). Like with the other benefits, for Case 4 to adopt ERP for this purpose, the family manager must realise the need for ERP to collect

the required market information and how this information can benefit the business (Carrasco-Hernandez and Jimenez-Jimenez, 2013; Almahamid and Awsi, 2015).

6.6.2.4. ORGANISATIONAL BENEFITS OF ERP TO CASE 4

As the business is in the process of succession, the ERP system could make the process a lot more effortless than it is now (Lasisi *et al.*, 2017). Adopting ERP could make all the required business information readily available to whoever is granted permission to access it (see Section 6.5). With the system in place, the new family manager would not have to come in to the store in the morning and evening for business updates as the information would be already accessible on the system (Teittinen *et al.*, 2013). It then becomes easier for the incoming manager to understand the business and its market position when through the succession process. However, Lasisi *et al.*, (2017) posits that the tacit business information acquired as a result of being part of the family cannot be disseminated through ERP.

Also, as found throughout the analysis and discussion of Case 4, an ERP system is able to ease all the problems that have arisen as a result of the succession process (Lasisi *et al.*, 2017). For this reason, it is important that Case 4 adopts this integrated technology if it is to effectively survive the succession process (Laforet, 2012).

Despite the benefits of ERP that have been identified for Case 4, adoption of the ERP system is dependent on the decision of the outgoing family manager (De Massis *et al.*, 2016). As the available evidence shows that he may not be aware of the benefits of ERP, disseminating such information may be difficult as the manager is not usually available in the store. Although the change in business performance since the beginning of the succession process did not lead to the adoption of ERP, a successful change in management could change the prospects of adopting ERP (Kotlar and De Massis, 2013; Patel and Chrisman, 2014).

6.6.3. THE PRESENT BUSINESS PROCESS IN CASE 4 ('AS IS' STATE)

When products are delivered, the stock is manually counted and updated. The price is then sought via the incoming family manager from the present family manager. The employees wait for the update either via a telephone call or a face-to-face meeting in the evening. The products are then stocked on the shelves for customers.

When customers come into the store, they either ask the employees to help identify the items they want as they are not familiar with the layout of the store or they decide to search for the items themselves. The customer then asks for the cost of individual products before heading to the till to get the total cost of all items. The customer then makes payment and takes the products away without any evidence of purchase being offered by the store, which means that the transaction cannot be traced in the future.

The sales records and quantity of products sold are kept in a book. The stocks are counted manually in the evening and updates are recorded in the stock book. The incoming family

manager comes back into the store and takes the two books away for the current family manager to look at and make any necessary decisions.

The next section shows how Case 4 could be different with an ERP system in place.

6.6.3. BUSINESS PROCESS MODEL WITH ERP FOR CASE 4 ('TO BE' STATE)

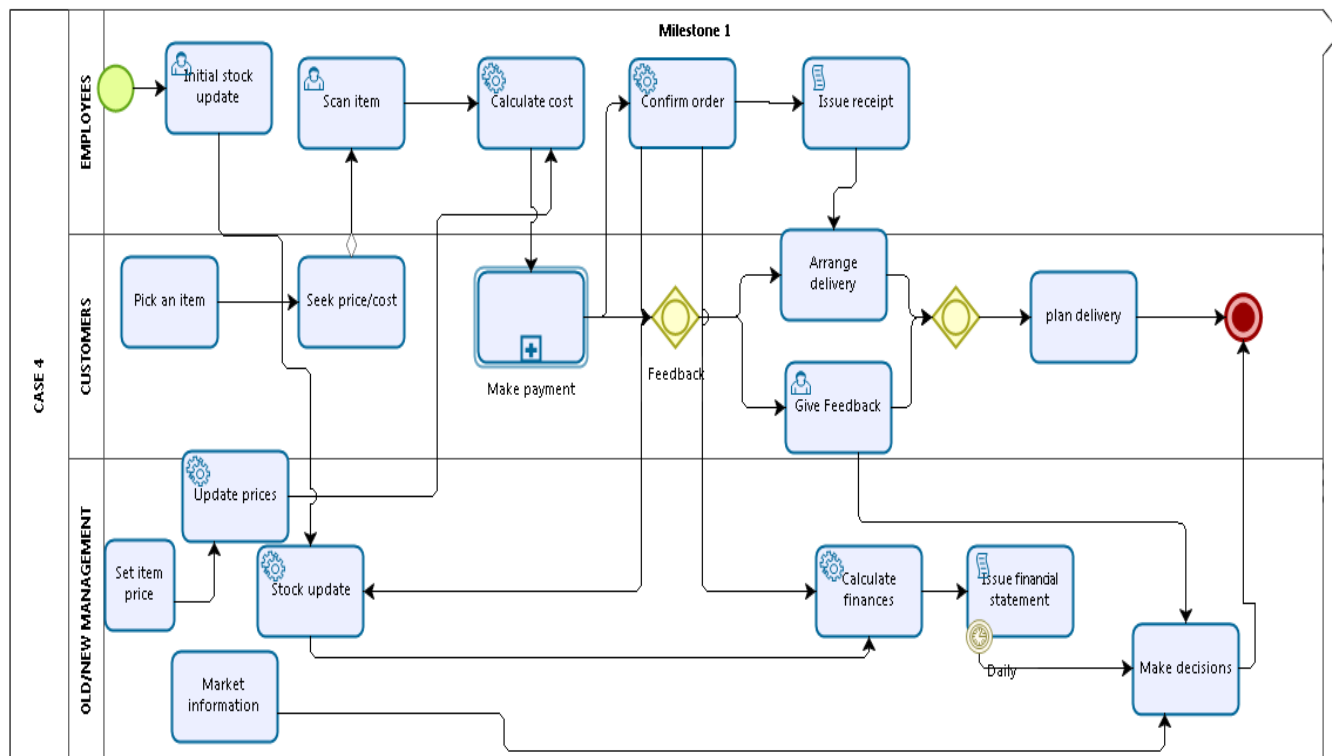


Figure 16: Automated business process model for Case 4.

The process starts when new products are stocked in the store and updated into the system by employees. The product price is then set and is entered onto the system by the family decision-maker remotely. As soon as a customer chooses an item and presents it at the till, the product is scanned and the system indicates the price of individual products and then the sum total of all items. Once the customer makes payment, and it is confirmed, the system issues a receipt detailing all products bought and the corresponding prices. The customer can then decide to provide feedback before leaving with the items or just leave without providing feedback.

It should be noted that as soon as the transaction is confirmed, the system automatically updates the stock and sales records. All this information remains readily available for the family decision-maker at any time. The management can then make decisions based on the stock, financial and market information available to the business. All these decisions can be made on the go as the information needed is always readily available.

Also, the faster sales processing time will undoubtedly satisfy customers. The ability to provide feedback will also result in happier customers.

Although this model does not cover all the benefits of ERP to Case 4 as discussed in Section 6.6.2., the model shows the aspects of the business that ERP will contribute to based on the present-day priorities of the business.

6.6.4 SUMMARY OF CASE 4

Case 4 was found to be a second-generation retail small family business in the process of a management change to the third generation. While the succession process was ongoing, the two family managers were not always present in the store. Findings show that the unavailability of the current family manager, who still makes all strategic decisions, has had some impacts such as delayed decisions and stocking of the store.

The business was found to have a fully manual business process and although it appears simple, the workload and limited accountability within the businesses suggested a need for change. Findings also show that customers may be unhappy with the no returns policy of the business due to the inability to trace transactions, another reason which suggests the business might benefit from adopting the ERP system.

Although there is no indication that the business might adopt the ERP system, the findings suggest that the decision could be down to the family manager. As a result of his unavailability though, the adoption of ERP may be delayed. As the succession process was not concluded till the end of the study, it could not be ascertained how succession to the third generation might impact adoption of ERP within the business. However, evidence suggests that the business could be in dire need of an automated business process which an ERP system could provide.

6.7. CASE STUDY 5

Case study 5 focuses on a third-generation retail SFB that deals mainly in wallpapers and paints. The business has about twelve employees, all of which are members of the same family. There are two managers within the business and they were found to be brothers and a member of the third generation of the owning family. The business was said to have existed for over 40 years prior to the study. The selection of this case was based on convenience in terms of accessibility, its fit for purpose in terms of family involvement, and the size of the business.

The business was observed for four weeks and one manager was interviewed at the end of the investigation period. The findings below are based on the period of investigation.

6.7.1. FINDINGS FOR CASE STUDY 5

Specific patterns were found in the business based on the week-long observations and eventual interview of a manager. These patterns formed the themes for this case study. The themes are further grouped into categories and capabilities.

CATEGORIES	THEMES
MANAGEMENT	Family-styled leadership
	Annual stock keeping
	No employee management
	Internally managed finances
OPERATIONS	Complex sales system
	Good customer relationship
STRATEGY	Product differentiation
	Price-based competition
ORGANISATIONAL GOAL	Survival but no growth or succession plans

Table 15: CASE 5'S THEMES.

6.7.1.1. MANAGERIAL CHARACTERISTICS

The observation and interview resulted in some findings on the management style and this section explains those characteristics.

6.7.1.1.1. FAMILY-STYLED LEADERSHIP

Although the leadership style was not initially clear from the observations as there was nobody giving instructions, it was found that one particular person granted permission for the business to be a part of this research. However, it became clear during the interview that the business is a third-generation family business in which two brothers are the main managers. While one of the brothers takes care of managing the business' finances, the other takes care of business operations.

It was also found that the management of the business was shared amongst the brothers based on their perceived experiences. While the manager in charge of operations worked with the

second-generation manager, the one in charge of finances has a background in finance management.

Although the two managers were present throughout the investigation, the researcher only needed the permission of one manager, and the same manager granted the interview. An attempt to interview the other manager was turned down. It was suggested that the respondent had a better knowledge of the business than the other manager.

While it was found that the business is family owned and managed, the leadership style is quite different from the previously studied SFBs. This is not unusual as individual SFBs are said to be heterogeneous (Kim and Gao, 2013), however, the finding supports the argument that the family manager is usually the eldest member of the family (Carney, 2005; Stewart & Hitt, 2012) and that family management is based on the perceived expertise or experience of the family members (Stanley, 2015). The literature suggests that the adoption of technology depends on the perception of the family manager but could be affected by the family management style (De Massis *et al.*, 2016; Zellweger *et al.*, 2012; Kim and Gao, 2013)). In Case 5, the decision to adopt ERP could be dependent on the two family managers, however, the findings below show how the different family management style can affect the possible adoption of ERP and the potential benefits of ERP to the business.

My grandfather started the business in the 60s. He handed it over to my Dad in the 80s and me. But now, it is just my brother in charge of the business and me.

Both of us, but he is more focused on the finances due to his background. I oversee the other aspects of business because I was with my father back in the 80s.

Like I said, my brother does that. He keeps the financial records mainly from his experience and the lessons from our father. I manage the other aspects of business.

6.7.1.1.2. ANNUAL INVENTORY MANAGEMENT

During the observation, it was found that while the records of deliveries were kept in a file, no further counting or recording of stock was done. This is despite the fully manual operation of the business. The method of sales also made it more complicated to understand how the stock records were maintained as not all of the wallpaper was sold as whole units: some of the rolls were cut to different sizes depending on customer demands.

It was, however, found from the interview that the stock records are checked annually by analysing the different records kept in the file and comparing them to the in-store stock.

The inventory management style is quite different from the previously studied cases, supporting the SFB heterogeneity theory (Kima and Gao, 2013). Despite this difference, the inventory management style was found to be as loose as the previous cases without an ERP system. It was further found that the loose inventory system can be attributed to the family trust within the system (Chrisman *et al.*, 2014).

However, it was found that SFBs need to have clarity on resource management as they do not have this in abundance (Simon and Hitt, 2003). The ERP system if successfully adopted will bring about more clarity on stock records and the management of other business resources (Teittinen *et al.*, 2013; Kosalge and Ritz, 2015). However, for such a decision to be made, the perception of the two managers may need to align to avoid family conflict (Miller and Le Breton-Miller, 2006).

We always know, we keep an eye on the stock. We are not like B&Q where they have too many products. We take stock every February, but we monitor and replace stocks that are running out all year. We compare supply records from March till February the following year. We do that every year.

6.7.1.1.3. NO EMPLOYEE MANAGEMENT

Due to the busy nature of the business, every staff member is usually busy doing something. It seemed as though it was a structured business with clear job descriptions. Throughout the week-long observations, there was no time that all members were not busy. Despite the size and family nature of the business, it was difficult to argue against there being a professional structure to the business.

However, the respondent made it clear that there was no structure or job description except for the functions of the two managers. However, the commitment of staff members was attributed to the altruism within the family. The respondent said that the fact that there are only family members within the business suggests that the success of the business implies that the family is successful.

As expected of a business with a strong family involvement, due to family trust the business does not have any means of controlling employees (Chrisman *et al.*, 2014). It was found that every worker within the business has a clear knowledge of the business and does not need to be directed. All employees work diligently and the respondent attributed such commitment to altruism. Altruism, in this case, is when the workers attribute their satisfaction to the survival of the business (Bergstrom, 1989).

While adopting the ERP system could bring about an accountable employee management system (Songini and Gnan, 2015), ERP adoption could be disruptive to the family harmony and trust within the business. For this reason, the business may not adopt the ERP system for employee management purposes.

We just come into the shop in the morning, and we work.

We are busy all the time, and we all know we must work hard as it is our own business. There is no need to keep an eye on anybody because we are all committed to sustaining the business.

6.7.1.1.4. INTERNALLY MANAGED FINANCES

As discussed earlier, it was found via the interview that one of the two family managers deals with the management of all business finances. It was further found that all financial records are kept manually, and every aspect of financial management is handled manually.

However, there is a plan to automate financial management as it was confirmed that dealing with paperwork is cumbersome and difficult. It is expected that automating the management of finances will make it more efficient and accurate.

The financial management style of Case 5 points to the fact that the business shares responsibilities between the brothers based on their expertise and experience (Stanley, 2015). It was found that the business already intends to automate the financial system but the managers have little knowledge of possible beneficial technologies. While a lack of knowledge of technology is synonymous with SMEs (Shahawai, 2009; Lenart, 2011), it points to the need for more specific studies on technology in SFBs. Also, while the ERP system could help manage business finances (Kanellou and Spathis, 2013), findings from this case so far suggest that a standalone system could be more beneficial than an integrated system such as ERP. However, studying other aspects of the business could change this position.

Like I said, my brother does that. He keeps the financial records mainly from his experience and the lessons from our father.

We do everything manually. But we are thinking of starting to use the computer (automate) to do it.

We know that it can be easier with the computer. Doing paperwork is a lot of hard work, but with the computer, it is a lot easier and faster.

With the managerial findings discussed, some operational characteristics also found are discussed below.

6.7.1.2. OPERATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Although some findings were made through observing the business, a lot of clarification was made in the interview. The operational findings are discussed below.

6.7.1.2.1. COMPLEX SALES SYSTEM

It was observed that even though some of the customers coming into the business are new, they all seem to know what they want before coming into the business. The customers walk up to a member of staff, discuss their requirements for a few minutes and then get the product they want either cut for them or sold as a whole unit. The customer pays the same person. Besides the seemingly smooth sales structure, no further conclusions could be made through the observations.

However, the respondent clarified that the business deals mostly in specialised wallpaper and the customers usually come in to ask questions as they know that it is the only place they are likely to find such products. Due to the level of commitment and efficiency of the staff

members, they have a good knowledge of their business. There is then the perceived efficiency while observing the business. The respondent is happy with the level of commitment and efficiency within the business operations, so much so that the perception is that there is nothing any technology can offer in terms of operations that the business does not already have.

Although the sales system seemed complex and difficult to understand, all the workers within the business have a good grasp of the system due to years of being part of the business. This tacit business knowledge is synonymous with retail SFBs as found in Section 2.18.1. Also, as found in the literature, the interests of the family employees are aligned with the business, which implies that the business runs smoothly despite its manual sales system (Miller and Le Breton-Miller, 2006).

Although the ERP system has the capability to simplify the operational process and support accountability (Zamiri *et al.*, 2010; Kanellou and Spathis, 2013), nothing suggests that Case 5 is in urgent need of such a system. While adopting ERP for this purpose will do more good than harm, the case study defies the expert suggestion that all retail SFBs urgently need the ERP system. This finding further suggests why an in-depth study of individual SFBs is important for this study (Kotlar and De Massis, 2014).

We just come into the shop in the morning, and we work. When customers come in, they look around or ask questions about their desired product and we serve them. We all know the business well, and everything just works well.

We are also like a specialist wallpaper store which big stores cannot afford to be.

I cannot see how that technology will help this business. It wouldn't work for our business because we know ourselves and we've done it for like forty years. That kind of knowledge, you cannot get it through technology. Everything here is done manually.

6.7.1.2.2. GOOD CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS

It looked as though the customers are always happy because of the efficiency within the business. The customers do not spend a lot of time within the business because there is never a case of moving them around. The staff members are always aware of the products, prices and the sales procedure. Also, due to the long-term tacit knowledge of customer preferences, the business knows what makes customers happy, willing to come back and even refer others.

The business does not rely on customer feedback as there is not a changing customer demand within the business. The business largely depends on the business knowledge that has been acquired for the past forty years. It looks like such tacit knowledge works for the business considering the level of satisfaction of customers with the product offerings of the business and the referral of new customers. The respondent also shared this sentiment as it was found that the business judges the level of satisfaction of customers by the referrals of new customers.

For this business, like other businesses, customer satisfaction results from the way the business operates, but it also leads the business to gain competitive advantage (Elkady *et al.*, 2014; Rhodes, 2015A; Jimisiah *et al.*, 2016). The efficient business performance suits customers and the business is quite satisfied as it keeps getting referrals while other small businesses fold.

Like the previous findings in this case study, even though the ERP system is able to contribute to the customer relationship (Hutchinson *et al.*, 2013), there is no suggestion that the business needs such a service.

We make sure they (the employees) are talking to them properly, and they get the necessary help. The kind of help they don't get from the big stores who are our competitors.

They come back every time to say we've been good to them. We also get more customers coming in because of our being good to customers. They always come in and talk to us about it. We don't advertise so we depend a lot on the words our customers say about us. For example, if you say you want to buy wallpaper and a customer tells you I have a good place you can go. Such person comes in and says I was referred by another customer and we get that a lot.

The strategic characteristics of Case 5 as found from the investigation are discussed below.

6.7.1.3. STRATEGIC CHARACTERISTICS

It was identified that the business mainly competes with larger businesses, however, the managerial makeup and operational characteristics of the business, as discussed above, have led to the identification of some characteristics which are strategic to the survival of this competitive environment. These characteristics are discussed below.

6.7.1.3.1. PRODUCT DIFFERENTIATION

Case 5 was identified by the respondent as a specialist wallpaper business. It means that the business stocks the usual wallpapers found in larger businesses together with other wallpapers which are no longer found in the market. Sourcing such products requires importing products from across Europe.

However, the process of sourcing these products requires entering the order into the suppliers' system to ensure fast delivery. As such a system does not exist in Case 5, the management team always calls the London office of the supplier to help with entering their order into the system. Being a specialist wallpaper store has been strategic to helping the business survive the intense competition from larger businesses.

It was found that Case 5's main competition comes from the large enterprises that have forced other similar businesses to close down. It shows the level of competition within the

retail industry and why no business intending to stay in business should lag behind (Zakariah *et al.*, 2013; Elkady *et al.*, 2014; Jimisiah *et al.*, 2016). The business has so far survived on product differentiation, i.e. the sales of a specialised product which may not be found in bigger stores. The competitive strategy came from years of market knowledge. This strategy is typical of European retail SFBs (Dessi *et al.*, 2014).

However, sourcing the products from outside the UK remains a challenge for the business. Their suppliers use an automated and integrated system, and this suggests that the ERP system could be the technology to adopt for Case 5. This may be so as the ERP system is able to support external links and collaboration (Shang and Seddon, 2000; Staehr, 2007). As discussed in Cases 2 and 3, the ERP system can support collaboration, and in Case 5 it could also support links with suppliers (Staehr, 2007).

We have our strategy as some of the things we sell are not in the big stores. In the old days, everybody used to buy the same wallpaper, but now it is a lot wider. We import most of our wallpaper. We source our wallpaper from across Europe and even Korea. These businesses run an online system whereby we can pick what we want and make the payments. They arrange the delivery, and we receive it in few days.

Most of the companies have offices in England, so we just ring our orders through to them. They send it to Germany, and it arrives in three days. The order is fast with them because it is a large business and they use technology to deal with their orders. In one factory in Cologne, there are only twelve people working there, but they send wallpaper around the world. The technology makes everything work faster for them.

6.7.1.3.2. PRICE-BASED COMPETITION

As the business is in competition with larger businesses, it is important that their products are sold at a similar price as the competitors or even cheaper. For that reason, there is always the need to keep up-to-date with prices in those big stores.

It was found that the business keeps an eye on the competitors' advertisements to gain an insight into their prices; their online stores are also often checked to confirm these prices. Doing this makes it easy for Case 5 to sell at a similar price, and the respondent referred to this as co-pricing.

As the business competes with larger enterprises, there is the need to compete based on price. The business requires updated price information from the larger competitors. Although the business does this manually, the ERP system could make this information available as and

when needed (Johanson *et al.*, 2015; Kshetri, 2017). The business would benefit from this technology as the survival of the business is dependent on having such information readily available (Hutchinson *et al.*, 2013; Zakariah *et al.*, 2013; Elkady *et al.*, 2014; Jimisiah *et al.*, 2016). It was confirmed that the business “co-prices,” i.e. sells at a lower rate than the competitor. Adopting the ERP system appears to be more relevant to Case 5 based on strategic benefits than operational or managerial benefits.

Well, we compete with big companies, so we look at the advertising book or their online store to know the prices they are selling whenever we need to check.

There are not many of them anymore. When we came here, there were five, but they have closed now. It is just us left around here. When B&Q came, all the greedy shops panicked and could not cope with the competition in terms of selling at a lower price. But we have always co-priced our products so it was easy for us to cope and that is why we are still running.

6.7.2.3. ORGANISATIONAL GOAL

6.7.2.3.1. CLEAR SURVIVAL BUT NO SUCCESSION PLANS

Even though the business appears to be in a comfortable position in the competitive market, the present generation is not looking at the next generation to take over the business’ leadership. Rather, the business intends to shut down in the next few years. The main reason is that the family managers are near retirement and there are no succession plans, as the younger generation are not willing to continue with the business. It is the intention of the business owners to sustain the business until the time is right for the family managers to retire.

Unlike the other businesses studied and the fact that typical SFBs strive to survive, Case 5 is intent on closing down in the next two years. The family managers are retiring and the younger generation is unwilling to succeed them. This finding shows how important maintaining family management of the business is to SFBs (Chua *et al.*, 2003; BIS, 2012). The business would rather close down the business than allow non-family members to get involved in the business even if bringing in non-family members means growing the business (Bhaumik, Driffield and Pal, 2010; Sciascia *et al.*, 2012). The finding supports the notion that SFBs are unwilling to collaborate or open the business to non-family members for fear of losing control (Sciascia *et al.*, 2012).

Despite the plans to close down the business, the ERP system if adopted for financial management could help make closing down the accounts easy when the time to close down comes (Kanellou and Spathis, 2013). Investing in ERP technology at a later stage of the business may not be appealing, especially after surviving for several years without it (Decker and Gunther, 2017). However, the urgent need for technology for financial management was emphasised by the respondent. The business would then benefit from being aware of the benefits of a specific technology like the ERP system to the business, a finding which largely supports previous suggestions from the literature (Carrasco-Hernandez and Jimenez-Jimenez, 2013), pilot study, experts and other case studies in this chapter. As the business demonstrates a need for such knowledge, it could help the business to perceive the ERP system positively and hence increase the possibility for adoption (Casia and De Massis, 2012; De Massis *et al.*, 2016).

We keep the business running, but in a few years, we are going to finish. Pam (Close) the store because our sons don't want to continue. They want to do something else. The plan is that by the end of five years, we will turn this place into apartments and just relocate to Spain. My Dad worked here till he was eighty, I have worked here ever since but soon we will just turn the place into flats and move away.

The benefits of ERP adoption for Case 5 as discussed above will be further explored in the next section.

6.7.2. THE BENEFITS OF ERP ADOPTION TO CASE 5

Although family ownership and management were established in this case study, it is quite different from the previous case studies because there are two family managers with varying responsibilities based on their perceived experience or expertise. While the findings support Carney's (2005) suggestion that the eldest member of the family leads the business, in this case, there are two older members of the family leading the business.

However, as the adoption of technology is dependent on the family perception of such technology (Spencer *et al.*, 2012; Carrasco-Hernandez and Jimenez-Jimenez, 2013), the possibility of adopting the ERP system is low due to limited knowledge of its benefits. Due to long years of survival and the acquired tacit knowledge using the legacy system, the perception is that an integrated system may not benefit the business in some areas. This finding agrees with the study by Decker and Gunther (2017) which suggests that the chances of adopting technology reduce with succession, especially after the second generation. As this is a third-generation business, it can be said that Case 5 supports Decker and Gunther's (2017) suggestion.

Despite the family's commitment to the business and the perceived efficiency of the business, the study has established some benefits to the business of adopting the ERP system. The benefits are discussed below based on categories ranging from managerial and operational to strategic implications.

6.7.2.1. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Unlike other businesses previously discussed and indications from the literature, there seems to be little the ERP system can contribute managerially to this business.

DECISION-MAKING

In terms of making decisions, the ERP system integrates business information to enable more accurate and faster decisions. However, the family managers are always available to oversee the business and the staff members have a tacit knowledge of dealing with different situations. There may therefore not be a need for the adoption of an ERP system. In fact, adoption of ERP could bring about complexities in the management and decision-making (Dey *et al.*, 2013). Such complexities may lead to a family rift such as divided commitment of family members (Schulz *et al.*, 2003). Regarding decision-making, the business may not need to adopt the ERP system, however, the need for automated financial management was emphasised.

AUTOMATED FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

It is known that adopting an ERP system automates financial management among other managerial benefits (Teittinen *et al.*, 2013). As much as Case 5 can benefit from this if ERP is adopted, considering that the business only seems to need a financial management system, ERP adoption may not be the best option due to its integrated nature (Bhati and Trivedi, 2016). A standalone financial management system could be more compatible to the business than an ERP system.

EMPLOYEE MANAGEMENT

Due to the trust and altruism within the business, all the staff members are fully committed to the business. According to the agency theory, an alignment of family and business goals reduces agency costs (Shuklah *et al.*, 2014). The cost of adopting an ERP system may outweigh its benefits in this regard as the commitment of the family members may be affected by the perceived lack of trust (Acquaah, 2016; Supramaniam *et al.*, 2014).

BETTER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Adopting the ERP system could help businesses better manage resources such as products in the store. (Teittinen *et al.*, 2013; Ruivo *et al.*, 2014). As managing the stock in Case 5 involves keeping files of invoices and analysing them annually, adopting the ERP system could help manage the resources in real time (Ruivo *et al.*, 2014) and eliminate the need to keep files of information for a year. As ERP is an integrated system, resource management could be done alongside financial management, which would ultimately lead to higher

efficiency, more accuracy, and reduced working time on financial and resource management (Kolsage and Ritz, 2015).

In terms of management, it appears the business may only benefit in terms of financial and resource management. As the ERP system is now made in modules, it is possible to implement the system without including other aspects of the business; the operational and strategic contributions to the business of adopting ERP are discussed below.

6.7.2.2. OPERATIONAL BENEFITS

The tacit knowledge of the business due to the long years of being in business brings about efficiency reminiscent of a professionally structured business. Even though the adoption of ERP can bring about similar efficiency, this business does not require such technology to achieve it. Also, despite all the benefits of ERP, it cannot enhance the tacit knowledge of the business which is enjoyed in Case 5. The adoption of ERP for operational purposes could, in fact, cause disruption to the business and a possible internal conflict due to a perceived loss of trust.

6.7.2.2.1. CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS

As found in the literature (Lamberti and Noci, 2010; Dessi *et al.*, 2014), this business uses the long-lived knowledge of the business to maintain good customer relationships. This is possible as the customers' demands were found not to rapidly change as found in the other retail SFBs studied. For that reason, it is easy for the business to keep customers happy and attract new ones.

Even though the adoption of ERP can help the business improve customer relationships through the business operations, in this case adopting the ERP system for that purpose may not be cost effective, especially as the business is stable and not looking for further growth of the business. The business can retain customers and attract new ones through maintaining good customer relationships; the strategic implication of an ERP system to the business is discussed below.

6.7.2.3. STRATEGIC BENEFITS

As a business competing with large enterprises but have survived over such long periods, the perception is that no technology adoption can help the business gain a competitive advantage as they have over the last forty years. Below are the discussions of the strategic implications of ERP adoption on the business.

6.7.2.3.1. BETTER SOURCING OF DIFFERENTIATED PRODUCTS

It was found that an important competitive advantage for the business is the fact that they deal in specialist wallpapers which are no longer readily available in today's market. It is then of high importance that such a product is always available in the business to maintain their competitive advantage.

It was found that the suppliers use an integrated system which all orders must go through, so if Case 5 adopts a technology like the ERP system, communicating with the supplier's system could be easier (Shang and Seddon, 2000; Staehr, 2012). The processing of Case 5's

specialist wallpapers could become faster and the deliveries could come in earlier. The implication is that the business would then have updated information on products running out and they could immediately place an order which would go directly into the supplier's system. With such a system in place, the process of telephone calls to the London office and inputting orders on the business' behalf would be cut out. The system, therefore, simplifies the ordering process.

6.7.2.3.2. FAST AND ACCURATE PRICE INFORMATION

The business depends on knowing the product price from its competitors to set its own price. If the ERP system is adopted, the system can make this market information readily available; it could be sourced from social media or through the internet, depending on the purpose the ERP system is adopted to serve. The ERP system could save the business the time it currently uses to monitor competitors' prices as this price information would become readily available (Kelogo and Kim, 2014). The business could then use the time it saves to pursue other productive activities for the business.

6.7.2.3.3. BUSINESS SUSTENANCE

Based on the findings above, it can be said that the business is not looking to outperform its competition but sustain the business long enough for the family managers to retire. While the ERP system can do this, the business appears to be comfortable in the competitive market. For that reason, adopting the ERP system may not be cost effective for the business, especially considering that there is a possibility of disruption during the implementation of the ERP system. However, the financial benefits of the ERP system may help the business when the time to close arrives.

With ERP, the business could benefit from up-to-date market information, faster sourcing of products, and better financial and non-financial resource management. As the business does not intend to grow but to shut down soon, the business should be able to survive long enough without adopting any technology. The benefits of an ERP system may not be sufficient to change the family manager's perception towards ERP. As opposed to the literature and expert findings, it may in fact not be the best financial and operational decision for the business to adopt the ERP system.

The next section looks at the pictorial representation of the business with an ERP system in the form of a business process model.

6.7.3. THE PRESENT BUSINESS PROCESS IN CASE 5 ('AS IS' STATE)

The business process in Case 5, as in the other cases, starts with the delivery of products. After the delivery, the quantity is ascertained and products are stacked in the store. The family manager then communicates product prices to other family employees. These prices are not made available to customers unless enquiries are made. While this could be a strategy to avoid competitors knowing the product prices, it makes the business process a little complex to understand.

When a customer comes into the store to buy any product, enquiries are first made to ascertain the price before the sale is processed. At the conclusion of that transaction the customer then makes arrangements for the delivery of the products.

While, the sales records are updated mainly for financial purposes, the stock records are not updated or compared to the sales records. Based on tacit knowledge of the company, the family manager in charge of operations is able to predict when to restock the products. The other family manager in charge of finances mainly deals with the inflow and outflow of money.

Although an ERP system could offer some benefits to improve the business process in this case, the chances of adoption the system appear to lie with the two family managers as they make the decisions that the other employees commit to. As the financial family manager has already identified a possible need for such a system, the next section shows how the business might operate having implemented an ERP system.

6.7.4. BUSINESS PROCESS MODEL WITH ERP FOR CASE 5 ('TO BE' STATE)

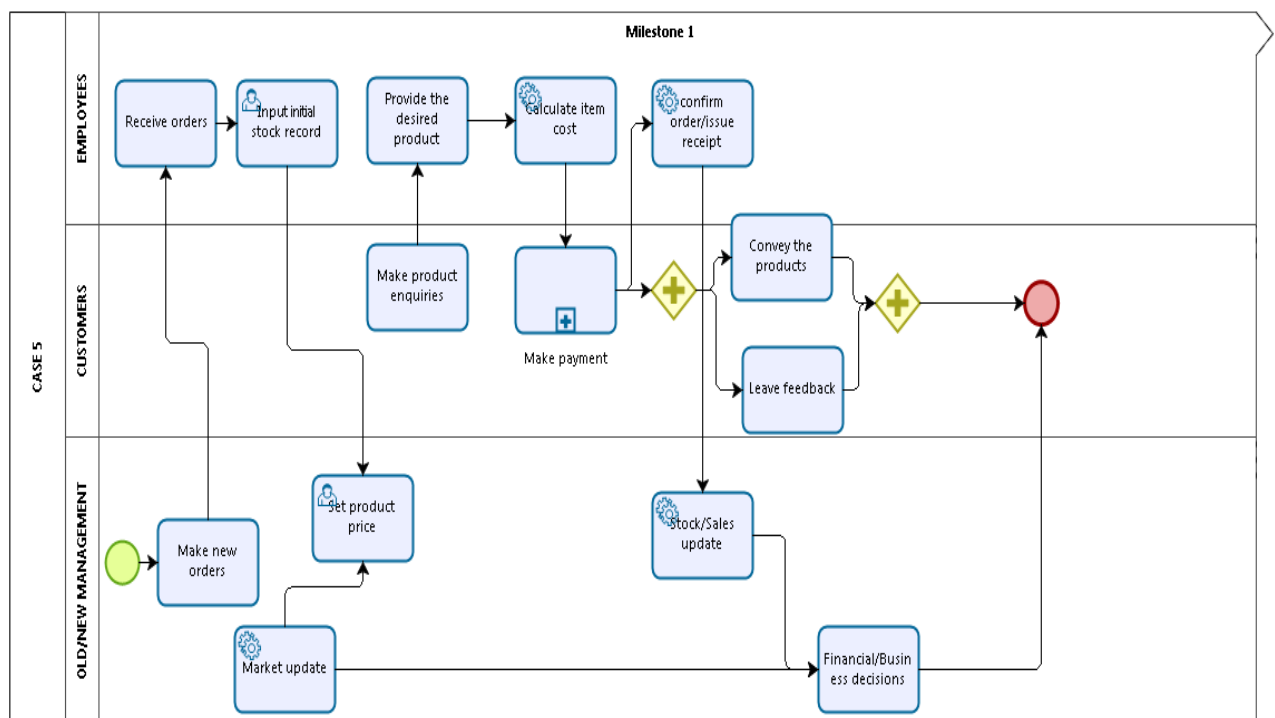


Figure 17: Automated business process model for Case 5.

The start of the business process is when the family manager orders new products for the business. Other employees receive the products and input the confirmed quantity into the ERP system. The family manager then sets the price based on the order information and especially the market information made available through the ERP system.

When a customer comes into the store, as already practised, they meet a member of staff who serves the customer with the desired product. The sales details are entered into the system and the total cost is generated. After the customer pays for the goods, the transaction is confirmed by the system through the issuance of a receipt. The customer then takes the product and can either decide to leave feedback or not. Such feedback, when given, is accessible to the management in real time.

The management team has access to all business information such as market, financial and sales information, which also includes stock information. With all the information readily available in real time through the ERP system, decisions can be made more accurately and efficiently.

Even though the analysis and subsequent discussion of Case 5 shows that there is no urgent need to adopt ERP, the business process model above shows that the ERP system can improve the business in relation to management and operations. It can also help the business to gain the competitive advantage needed for survival through up-to-date price information.

6.7.5 SUMMARY OF CASE 5

Case 5 is a third-generation retail SFB with two family managers. The business deals in paints and wallpapers and competition is mainly from large businesses. The business has a typical family-styled leadership in which the family managers make decisions which others follow.

It was found that the business is fully manually operated and all employees, who are also family members, have a tacit knowledge of the business. The tacit nature of the manual system within the business was found to be a strength for the business, which helped it gain competitive advantage.

However, further findings suggest that the business may in fact need to adopt an automated system such as the ERP system. The adoption of an ERP system could, however, be considered by the family members as disruptive to the family legacy. Considering the decision premise within the business, all concerns may be allayed if a decision is reached by the family managers.

As the business was found to be in its last year of active operations, the decision to adopt an ERP system may be jettisoned in favour of other priorities in this business.

6.8. COMPARISON OF THE RETAIL SFB CASE STUDIES

Through the findings from the case studies, it can be seen that there are comparisons to be made between the case studies despite the varying family leadership styles and succession plans. This section compares the findings from the five case studies and also includes the single SFB case from the pilot study. The section will discuss the style of adoption of ERP within the businesses studied and how such adoption might impact their businesses.

6.8.1. FAMILY INFLUENCE ON ERP ADOPTION IN UK RETAIL SFBs

Through the study of retail SFBs in the pilot and the main study, it was found that the adoption of the ERP system may be dependent on the family manager and how the technology is perceived by the manager. It was also found that the family manager's perception of the ERP system could be informed by their knowledge of the technology about their business. While this knowledge may not be readily available to them as small businesses, all the businesses studied were open to an independent review of their business and how the technology may benefit the business.

6.8.1.1. SUCCESSION AND ERP ADOPTION

Furthermore, the evidence from the case studies, including A6 shows that as opposed to the literature (Decker and Gunther, 2017), succession or the generation of ownership might not affect the chances of adopting technology in UK retail SFBs. It was buttressed by the finding that a first-generation SFB (Case 2) was found without any technology but was willing to adopt, while Case 3, another first-generation SFB had already adopted the ERP system and was reaping some benefits. It was also found that a second-generation SFB (Case 1) had point of sale technology in place, while another second-generation SFB (Case 4) had no technology in place and there was no indication of their willingness to adopt any technology. The findings from the first and second-generation businesses studied do not indicate a relationship between succession of ownership and ERP adoption. However, this finding may require further studies to affirm these findings as they are based on studies of only four of the UK's retail SFBs.

Decker and Gunther (2017) suggest that the reluctance to adopt technology is more noticeable after the second generation. However, findings from two third-generation UK retail SFBs (Cases 5 and A6) do not indicate any evidence supporting this theory. In fact, the two third-generation cases studied, both in the pilot and the main study indicate that the need for technology such as an ERP system came as a result of years of existence and business performance. While in A6 the third-generation manager initiated the adoption of the ERP system after succession, in Case 5 the business is looking to adopt an integrated technology even in the latter stages of the business' existence.

The implication of this finding is that succession may not have an impact on ERP adoption in UK retail SFBs. If it does, succession appears to likely positively impact ERP adoption.

6.8.1.2. A TECHNOLOGY'S PERCEIVED BENEFITS TO BUSINESS NEEDS DRIVE ADOPTION DECISIONS

While the findings from all the case studies do not support the notion that adoption of technology is affected by succession, the findings support the fact that decisions to implement technology may be business performance driven (Kotlar and De Massis, 2013; Patel and Chrisman, 2014). In all the businesses, irrespective of the generation of ownership, the business performance dictated the need for technology and what type should be adopted. In A6, the third-generation manager found that the business was losing market share and there was a need to cope with competition. The business opted to adopt an ERP system and reaped the benefits. In Case 1, the second-generation manager felt the need for the business to have a large enterprise sales system and opted for a standalone system to serve the purpose. Even though the manager believes the adopted technology may have other benefits, the perception is that those benefits are not for a business of a small size. In Cases 2 and 5 the need for better resource management and an effective sales system are the main reasons these businesses are considering technology adoption. Likewise, Case 3 adopted the ERP system for better business, financial management and an effective sales system. In Case 4, however, it was not clear what the motivation for technology adoption would be, but it was found that the existing business needs may require urgent attention and ERP adoption represents a possible solution (Shang and Seddon, 2000; Staehr, 2012).

Despite the fact that the literature points to the different ways in which adopting the ERP system can benefit all the cases studied, it was found that the businesses (A6 not included), may have little to no knowledge of how such technology can contribute to their identified business needs. All the businesses were willing to acquire such knowledge through this research (an independent source). With the literature suggesting that being aware of the benefits of ERP may change the perception of the technology in SMEs, establishing such knowledge could impact SFB manager's perceptions of ERP adoption. Also, with ERP adoption in SFBs found to be dependent on the family manager's perception (Casia and De Massis, 2012; De Massis *et al.*, 2016), the next section compares the ERP benefits for the businesses studies.

6.8.2. THE POSSIBLE BENEFITS OF ERP ADOPTION TO UK RETAIL SFB CASES

It was found that adopting the ERP system may be dependent on establishing its benefits specifically to UK retail SFBs. As such knowledge appears non-existent in theory, at the time of this study, a comparison of the benefits of ERP adoption to the SFB cases to establish the commonalities and differences will be made. The benefits are classified using Shang and Seddon's (2000) benefit classification framework.

6.8.2.1. MANAGERIAL BENEFITS

Despite the varying styles of management found in all the retail SFB case studies, it was found that in all the cases ERP adoption would bring about managerial benefits. These managerial benefits include better decision-making, resource management (i.e. financial, employee and inventory) and performance management. Aside from the fact that it was already established through the literature that adopting the ERP system brings managerial benefits to SFBs, it was found that retail SFBs with ERP enjoys such benefits. Also, findings

from the cases without ERP in place suggest that the businesses require such benefits to improve.

In A6 as well as Case 3, the two businesses with an ERP system in place, the technology helped manage information, inventory records and employee accountability and promote faster decision-making. The technology also helped the businesses manage business performance such as profitability. Financial records such as profit, loss and tax calculations are accurately kept with the ERP system.

However, in Cases 1, 2, 4 and 5, the four businesses without an ERP system, the management of resources, performance and decision-making were either loose or non-existent. In Cases 1 and 2, employee management efforts were inadequate, and there was a need for it to improve. In Case 4, there was no existing employee management style, and the need for improvement was evident. However, in Case 6, the business appeared not to need employee management as it depends on family trust. The adoption of the ERP system can, however, promote accountability within the business. In all the cases, inventory management was stressful, and sometimes inaccurate or ineffective. The need for a system to improve inventory management became evident as the businesses were already feeling the effects of an ineffective inventory management. Financial records were either stressful to administer or were managed externally without the ERP system. Lastly, due to inaccurate information management, decision-making was sometimes not accurately informed. The need for all cases to have market information readily available also became evident, and the ERP system can obtain such information through the Cloud.

The table below shows a summary of the cases with and without ERP.

ERP ADOPTED	ERP NOT ADOPTED
A6 AND CASE 3	CASES 1,2,4 AND 5
Efficient employee management	Ineffective and problematic employee management
Accurate inventory management	Stressful and inaccurate inventory management
Real-time and accurate finance management	Stressful finance management
Fast, informed and cheap decision-making	Slow, expensive and uninformed decision-making
Effective performance management	Ineffective performance management

Table 16: Managerial comparison of cases with and without ERP.

6.8.2.2. OPERATIONAL BENEFITS

It was also found that despite the varying operational functions of the businesses studied due to sectoral differences, adopting the ERP system can enormously benefit the businesses in this regard. In all the cases studied, the ERP system could improve sales operations and the customer relationship in varying ways.

In the businesses with ERP in place, i.e. A6 and Case 3, the adoption of the ERP system improved order processing times, and promoted faster invoicing and overall customer

satisfaction. It was, however, found that in the businesses without the ERP system, i.e. Cases 2, 4 and 5, the sales system was slow and lacked traceability. The complex sales system led to customers not being satisfied. Due to the importance of customer satisfaction to retail businesses and the need to improve business performance, the businesses need an automated sales system.

However, it was found in Case 1 that the existing sales system helped promote faster sales processing and pointed to the fact that some businesses may require standalone systems and not an ERP system. However, the fact that ERP brings other vital benefits suggests an ERP system could be more suitable for the businesses.

It was also found that all the businesses presently use a traditional verbal feedback system, but the ERP system can promote an online connection between the business and its customers. Such a system could promote a business-customer relationship and open the business to a bigger market. The table below shows the operational differences between cases with and without the ERP system and with a point of sale system.

ERP ADOPTED	ERP NOT ADOPTED	STAND-ALONE system
A6 AND CASE 3	CASES 2, 4 AND 5	CASE 1
Fast sales processing	Complex and slow sales system	Fast sales processing
Traceable sales history	Non-traceable history	Traceable sales history
Integrated with other systems	N/A	Standalone
Satisfied customers	Unsatisfied customers	Satisfied customers
Traditional feedback	Traditional feedback	Traditional feedback

Table 17: Operational comparison between cases with and without ERP.

6.8.2.3. STRATEGIC BENEFITS

It was found that even though all the businesses have unique strategies that have given them a competitive edge, adopting the ERP system can make these strategic strengths more efficient. It becomes more important for the businesses to seek the efficiency of their strategies as their competitors can easily imitate the obvious ones. ERP adoption will, on the one hand, make the strategies more efficient and, on the other hand, raise the barrier to make it more difficult for competitors to imitate.

For example, the automated delivery system through the adoption of ERP made A6 deliver customer orders faster. Order delivery to customers is a strategy that others may already use, but ERP made it work better. While Cases 2 and 3 offer order delivery as strategies, they do so manually and with limited resources. The ERP as found in the literature can support this strategy by enabling collaboration between the businesses and delivery companies. Doing so

saves the company’s resources for other purposes, and allows more customers to have access to the service.

Also, Cases 1, 4 and 5 base their competitive strategies on product variation. It was found that ERP could support easier ordering of the varied products as some of the suppliers have an ERP system already in place, and this, according to the ERP classification framework, is termed support for an external link.

Adopting ERP will also help all the businesses to keep an accurate and real-time track of product prices, especially from the larger competitors with an online presence. All these benefits contribute to the seamless increase in market share for these businesses.

It should, however, be noted that ERP may not support the competitive advantage achieved through tacit market knowledge as found in Cases 3 and 5 and supported by the literature. It is important that such a limitation is clearly established to give the businesses a realistic perception of the technology. The experts confirmed that false hopes or perceived benefits given by experts (ERP evangelists) often discourage SFBs from considering adopting ERP.

The table below shows the strategic benefits of an ERP system and the comparison of strategy with and without ERP.

ERP ADOPTED		ERP NOT ADOPTED
IDENTIFIED BENEFITS	A6	1,2 3,4 AND 5
Collaboration support for delivery	Faster order delivery	Limited delivery service
Accurate and real-time market update	N/A	Traditional, slow and expensive market update
Supports external links for varied product supply	Increased product lines	Manual and complex product sourcing
Supports increased market share and business capabilities	Supports growth and profitability	Complex growth planning or need for technology to plan growth
Tacit knowledge not managed	N/A	Tacit knowledge kept in-house

Table 18: Strategic benefits of ERP adoption to retail SFBs.

6.8.2.4. ORGANISATIONAL BENEFITS

The organisational goal of SFBs remains the aspect of the business along with management in which the family is most involved. It was found that the organisational goal of the business is intertwined with the family's goals as is expected of typical SFBs. In most of the cases, the succession of ownership remains the ultimate goal for continuity, while in one case shutting down the business for the good of the family was the goal.

Case 1 had a member of the family who takes some managerial responsibilities in the absence of the main family manager. While there was no clear indication of the business' succession plans, it could be said that this person would have acquired adequate business experience to take over ownership when succession time is reached. However, there is no certainty about this and SFBs are advised to have a clear succession plan. Case 2 confirmed their succession plans by suggesting that the family member who oversees one branch of the business is being groomed to have attained the right experience to ensure a seamless succession when the time is right. Case 3 is a new business still trying to find an identity, and there were no succession plans as at the time of this study. Case 4 was in the process of succession from the second to the third generation of ownership at the time of the study. However, all the business problems were found to be as a result of the ill-planned succession process. Case 5, on the other hand, had already survived three generations of ownership but had decided to shut down the business in the best interests of the family.

However, in all the cases it was found that ERP can contribute to family goals through the effective management of files and other information that may be vital to either succession or closing the business accounts for profit share or other purposes. In Case 4 especially, it was found that adopting the ERP system is vital not just to manage information for succession but to proffer solutions to existing business problems as a result of succession. However, any tacit business knowledge may not be transferable or manageable using the ERP system. Such knowledge is acquired through experience or being a member of the family (Lasisi *et al.*, 2017).

The table below shows the contribution of the ERP system to organisational goals

ERP BENEFITS	BUSINESS CLOSURE	OWNERSHIP SUCCESSION
	CASE 5	CASES 1,2,3 AND 4
Information management	Supports account closure	Supports transfer of facts and files
No tacit knowledge managed	N/A	Tacit knowledge gained through experience

Table 19: The organisational benefits of ERP to retail SFBs.

6.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, five case studies of retail SFBs within the UK were analysed and discussed with regard to the adoption of the ERP system. The case studies cut across different generations of family ownership to put the heterogeneous nature of FBs and possible impact of succession into perspective. It was done because the literature established the fact that despite the heterogeneous nature of FBs, there are usually patterns regarding business performance and technology adoption. The literature also established that succession has an impact on how family involvement affects technology adoption in SFBs.

The analysis of the cases found that, despite the generational and structural differences, the family manager's perception of the technology matters in making decisions relating to the adoption of technology in the UK retail SFBs investigated. It was further established that the knowledge of the family manager on the contribution of the technology to business needs helps inform their perception. While some of the businesses do not positively perceive the ERP system due to their limited knowledge, others acknowledge the need for technology to improve business performance. While the finding suggests a low chance of ERP adoption within some businesses, it also shows that the right knowledge of ERP could change how ERP is perceived.

However, further investigation shows that adopting the ERP system could, in fact, be of help to the businesses if successfully adopted now rather than later. The ERP system could potentially proffer solutions to the problems faced by the businesses and in fact contribute more benefits to improve the business. The benefits the businesses are likely to derive from a successful implementation of ERP are classified as managerial, operational, strategic and organisational. Although these benefits have varying subcategories, they all fall within the original classification framework.

The table below summarises the findings that are useful for this research.

Theoretical themes/Cases	Case 1	Case 2	Case 3	Case 4	Case 5
Managerial Benefits of ERP adoption					
Performance Management	The business might benefit from a system that allows the family manager (uncle) effectively manage the business performance such as rate of sales even when not physically available	ERP adoption could help the business maintain the centralised management of business performance even when not within the business. This brings about a faster decision-maker.	Business performance, such as rate of sales, stock levels, etc. could be remotely monitored and controlled as sales, stock and financial records are already in the integrated system; social-ERP makes all this information available to the family manager remotely. It thus makes the management of the business easy from anywhere.	The ERP system could be an effective communicator of business activities and performance to the outgoing manager remotely as he doesn't come into the business anymore.	The adoption of ERP could bring about complexities to the trust based management of performance and such complexities may lead to a family rift such as divided commitment of family members.
Better decision-making	The technology can help the business reduce phone calls to and from the store to help the family manager make strategic decisions as the information can be readily and accurately made available through a centralised database	ERP adoption can make decision-making faster and cheaper in case 2 as it reduces the number of calls made to the MD for decisions daily	With mobile-ERP, the business information required to make important decisions would always be available to the decision-maker as and when needed	Delayed decision-making is one major problem the business currently faces. Decisions, such as restocking the store and setting product prices could be made easily through ERP without the need for intervention from the incoming generation.	ERP adoption can help improve the speed and accuracy of decision-making within the business through the centralised information database especially if the system is set to obtain market and supplier information through the cloud.
Information & Resource	With possible employee codes, it	As the finances in Case 2 are	Rate of sales, stock levels and financial	If the business adopts ERP, it means that an updated record of	While the technology can bring about better

<p>management</p>	<p>would be easy to monitor employee activities and better manage them irrespective of family affiliation. It is evident from findings that the business deals in various products and it is difficult to keep a manual daily record of stock. That is why the business resorted to keeping a record of an annual stocktake. Adopting the ERP system could help the business automate and provide real-time stock management. Although the family manager believes the business has the best financial system as it is handled by experts, the ERP system if adopted could serve the same purpose even in real time and without human error</p>	<p>internally managed by the MD, ERP adoption could help make this less stressful and more accurate through a better managed inventory and financial record. As the findings suggest the employees require a lot of monitoring, and there are lapses with the existing legacy system of managing employees, the ERP system could help better manage this aspect of the business if adopted. As stock records are manually updated twice a day, ERP adoption could help automate the stock management process by keeping real-time updates</p>	<p>information are already controlled manually within the business. Employees are also centrally managed through their unique ID.</p>	<p>every product stocked in the store is kept on the system, including the price and accurate quantity in stock. For every completed transaction, the stock of the different products as well as the financial records are updated accordingly. Financial details such as business performance in terms of profit and loss, tax calculations, product performance, etc. are easily calculated with the ERP system. Employee performance can be monitored in terms of sales processed per day, who carried out an activity such as the initial stock entry or who received a product. If employees are monitored using such a system, it improves accountability, trust and thus solves the problem of some employees not taking their responsibilities seriously. As managing the stock in Case 5 involves keeping files of invoices and analysing them annually, adopting the ERP system could help manage the resources in real time and eliminate the need to keep files of information for a year</p>	<p>financial, human and other resource management, a stand-alone system appears to be better suited to the business than an ERP system.</p>
<p>Operational Benefits of ERP adoption</p>					
<p>Better operational</p>	<p>The business already uses an</p>	<p>The long queues presently</p>	<p>The automated sales system</p>	<p>If the business adopts the ERP system, processing sales becomes</p>	<p>Even though the adoption of ERP can</p>

<p>structure & service</p>	<p>automated sales system which, according to the manager is believed to ease sales stress and help the business function more like a larger business. As the customer relationship and feedback are important to business operations, the business would benefit from a more structured feedback system which further opens the business to the customers' world through social-ERP.</p>	<p>experienced due to the amount of time taken to process each order could reduce through the automation of the sales process. A better sales experience would make customers happy and more willing to come back. Adopting the ERP system can also help make customer feedback available to the business in real time by integrating the feedback section of the website with the ERP database.</p>	<p>already gives the business a professional outlook and also easier and faster order processing. The transparency from the automated sales system means transactions are easily traced and customers are happy with the returns policy that transparency brought about. Customer feedbacks as craved by the business can also be automated if a CRM module is added to the existing system.</p>	<p>automated and faster as the products are scanned to generate the individual prices, and the system automatically generates the total cost of the products purchased. With the traceability provided through the issuing of receipts, and the no returns policy having been amended, the customer relationship is expected to improve. Also, faster sales processing will make customers happier as they can enter and exit the store within a short time.</p>	<p>bring about operational efficiency, this business does not require such technology to achieve it due to the long-term experience within the business. This business uses the long-lived knowledge of the business to maintain good customer relationships. This is possible as the customers' demands were found not to rapidly change as found in the other retail SFBs studied. For that reason, it is easy for the business to keep customers happy and attract new ones</p>
<p>Strategic Benefits of ERP adoption</p>					
<p>Support for extended capabilities (growth)</p>		<p>It was found that up-to-date market information, especially on price, is important to the business. Social-ERP could directly link the business to market information, such as the latest price, new products,</p>	<p>ERP adoption could help the business take full advantage of delivery as a strategy by collaborating with delivery companies.</p>	<p>If Case 4 adopts an ERP system that is compatible with that of its suppliers, communicating and sourcing items from them could become easier and faster.</p>	<p>It was found that the suppliers use an integrated system which all orders must go through, so if Case 5 adopts a technology like the ERP system, communicating with the supplier's system could be easier. The processing of Case</p>

		and customer demands. If the business adopts the ERP system, the business could easily collaborate with delivery companies to make such a service available to as many customers as might require it			5's specialist wallpapers could become faster and the deliveries could come in earlier.
Support for sustenance	It was found that market information, such as price and demands by customers for new products are important to the business. ERP could help the business gain such information in real time if successfully adopted for this purpose. ERP could open the business up strategically to more customers within and beyond the business location. Also, such growth does not come at the expense of the well-integrated automated system	The ERP system, the technology is an enduring system; it will not only help the business now but stay with the business as it grows in the future.	The system could increase the business' reach through the delivery service, its market share through the social media and, in fact, add more capabilities to the business. The ERP system would not just help the business to grow but would also help it cope with growth and sustain the business through the growth	Depending on the module, there could be easy access to competitors' prices and up-to-date information from customers through the Cloud. If such information is readily available to the family manager, the business will be in a better competitive position as strategic decisions would be more informed and made faster.	If the ERP system is adopted, the system can make market information such as prices and products are readily available; it could be sourced from social media or through the internet, depending on the purpose the ERP system is adopted to serve

	that ERP ensures.				
Organisational Benefits of ERP adoption					
Support for seem-less succession	ERP is able to manage business information to allow the next in command with ease 1 easily learn the business over a long time in preparation for succession.	The important files and data required for a successful succession can be saved on the ERP database to be retrieved and transferred as part of the succession process when needed.		Adopting ERP could make all the required business information readily available to whoever is granted permission to access it. With the system in place, the new family manager would not have to come in to the store in the morning and evening for business updates as the information would be already accessible on the system. It then becomes easier for the incoming manager to understand the business and its market position when through the succession process.	No succession plans as the business is shutting down
Power filter for ERP adoption commitment					
Family perception	The perception of the family manager was that such technology may not be for the business because the business is small	The GM's perception is that the business requires an integrated system like the ERP system to solve some managerial and operational challenges the business	The family manager perceived the technology as being able to effectively manage finances, inventory and the people especially to tax calculation purposes.	Although the perception of the main decision-maker could not be judged, the problematic manual processes within the business suggest the need for automation, a sentiment shared by some employees. The outgoing family manager also requested a report on the business to inform his perception.	The family manager is of the view of that the business requires an integrated system to help improve financial and stock management but was not aware of any technology to help achieve such feat
Decision leading to commitment	The business committed to the adoption of a stand-alone POS system when the family manager decided to adopt it.	It was confirmed that any decision made by the MD is committed to by the business and so if the technology is to be adopted, a decision needs to come from the GM	The business committed and successfully adopted the EPOS system once the family manager decided to adopt the technology	Even though the power or ownership of the business is being transferred to the next generation, the younger/incoming generation still cannot make decisions until the succession process is finalised. The business still fully commits to the decisions made by the outgoing family manager.	The stakeholders within the business agree with the family managers' decision and fully commits to it.

Table 20: Case study summary

Having analysed and discussed the case studies and found that ERP adoption is beneficial to the business characteristics, the next chapter discusses the empirical findings and attempts to modify the theoretical framework to establish how ERP adoption possibilities may be improved in retail SFBs.

CHAPTER SEVEN: IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS ON TESTING THE AIM

7.0. INTRODUCTION

With all the investigations concluded and findings discussed in chapters 5 and 6, this chapter shows exactly how the findings have tested the conceptual framework and proposes amendments, where necessary, to the final framework. The chapter also audits the research objectives, question and aim through the research findings. The research contribution, recommendations, limitation and research reflection are also presented in this chapter.

It should be reiterated that this study is to investigate the impact of family involvement on ERP adoption within the UK's retail SFBs. The theoretical framework suggests that when the knowledge of ERP benefits to the managerial, operational and strategic characteristics as well as the organisational goals of an SFB is made available to the family, it informs the perception of the family on the ERP system and, as a result, influences the commitment to ERP. In essence, adoption of the ERP system in SFBs may be dependent on the family's perception of the technology. However, the family's perception is informed by knowledge of ERP's contribution to management, operations, and strategy among other organisational characteristics. Using this framework, the findings of this thesis are discussed below.

7.1.1. FAMILY MANAGER AS A POWER FILTER FOR ERP ADOPTION

Despite the evidence from the case studies suggesting that ERP adoption could be of immense benefit to both the internal capabilities of SFBs and their competitive environment (PWC, 2014; Lasisi *et al.*, 2017), both expert interviews and case study findings support the theoretical indication that the family's perception is the factor that impacts such a decision. However, the fieldwork findings offer further clarity as to whose perception really matters in making strategic decisions. Both the experts and the case studies identified the family manager as the person who makes the decision regarding adoption of ERP based on personal perceptions of the technology. However, such perception is usually informed by the amount of ERP awareness within the business (Alshamaila and Pappagianidis, 2012; Lewandowski *et al.*, 2013). Studies by Carrasco-Hernandez and Jimenez-Jimenez (2013) and De Massis *et al.* (2016) also found such perception of a technology as the usual determinant for SFBs to commit to its adoption. However, Miller and Le Breton-Miller (2006) and Stanley (2015)

suggest such a decision may not lead to a successful adoption if there are conflicting family and business interests. The findings from this study suggest that such conflicting interests were not found within UK retail SFBs as all the businesses tend to follow the family manager's strategic decisions, a sentiment also echoed by the experts as the reason SFBs may not adopt ERP. Also, findings from Case A6 and Case 3, SFBs with ERP, show that the adoption commitment emanated from the family manager making the decision (see Sections 2.20.2 and 6.5).

There is, however, a need to note that as the SFBs studied were found with some characteristics similar to other SMEs, the outcome of any adoption may also be attributable to other Critical Success Factors identified in the literature than just the family manager's decision (Ghosh *et al.*, 2010, Dey *et al.*, 2013). It may then be said that family involvement affects ERP adoption in terms of the decision and subsequent commitment to the course of action. Even though the findings oppose the suggestion that the stronger the family involvement in FBs, the lower the chances of successful implementation of ERP, it points to the need for further studies to investigate how different CSFs may affect ERP success in a retail SFB. The findings show that family involvement in business could imply a higher commitment to ERP, especially when the decision is made by the family manager and there are no conflicting family interests.

It was also found that one hindrance to ERP adoption in SFBs is similar to that of other small businesses in terms of limited ERP knowledge (Shahawai, 2009; Almahamid and Awsi, 2015). As ERP adoption is generally not favourably perceived in small businesses and SFBs being characteristically different (Marsh *et al.*, 2014; De Massis *et al.*, 2016), ERP adoption may not improve within UK retail SFBs without improved knowledge of ERP that specifically focuses on SFBs.

A surprising finding about the composition of the family managers in the UK's retail SFBs is that the family managers are not necessarily the oldest member of the family as some literature suggests (Carney, 2005; Stewart and Hitt, 2012). Although the experts suggest this to be the case and it was found in most of the cases studied, one exceptional case was also found. A case was found in which the family manager was young and had been chosen based on his level of business expertise, while some of the older generation offered financial support, and others were employees within the business. Another case was found in which two of the eldest family members shared responsibilities based on their expertise and not the

eldest taking all managerial responsibilities. While Stanley (2015) agrees with the finding that family managers are chosen based on expertise, the managerial findings point to the heterogeneous nature of individual SFBs. It also goes to show that SFBs are better studied through case studies as suggested by De Massis and Kotlar (2014) because a cursory view of SFBs through interviews or surveys (Smith, 2016) may not pick up the differing managerial styles. Despite the differences found in the managerial composition of the SFBs, it was found that ERP adoption may be dependent on the family manager's perception and decision as the business stakeholders appeared to usually commit to the family manager's strategic decisions, including ERP adoption in Case 3.

Having discussed the impact of family managers on ERP adoption, the aspects of the retail SFBs that adopting the ERP system may benefit are discussed below. This discussion is vital as the literature (Marsh *et al.*, 2014) as well as fieldwork findings suggest that such knowledge could be crucial to ERP adoption in SFBs and this knowledge is limited within UK retail SFBs.

7.1.2. THE BENEFITS OF ADOPTING ERP IN UK RETAIL SFBs

The categorisation of the characteristics of the UK's retail SFBs found to be important are not very different from what the theoretical framework proposed. It was found that management, operations, strategy and organisational goals are important aspects of the businesses studied. It was, however, found that the adoption of the ERP system could improve the different parts of the business' characteristics in different ways. Note that the discussion of the benefits of ERP to the business' characteristics in Chapter 6 showed that some of those benefits may not appeal to some businesses, while it could be the motive behind ERP adoption for others. It was, nevertheless, concluded that irrespective of whether or not the benefits could appeal to the business, the knowledge needs to be made available to the business as may help inform the perception of the ERP system within the business, hence, leading to a decision and commitment to ERP. The decision to make the information on the benefits of adopting ERP available to SFBs was reached as the experts as well as the family managers suggest that while a true picture of the business with an ERP system could provoke a decision and commitment, an untrue representation of the technology could be counterproductive. Also, due to the closed nature of the business, it could be difficult to tell which benefits may or may not be vital to the business. For example, it was found in Case 1 that having a professional outlook for the business was the reason for adopting the point of sale (POS) system, whereas, based on the literature (BIS, 2014; Chrisman *et al.*, 2014), that kind of benefit would have

been ruled out as being an unimportant contribution of an ERP system to the business. Although, Pazzaglia *et al.* (2013), for example, suggest a professional operational structure for SFBs, there is negligible evidence in the literature indicating that SFBs attach a value to having a professional outlook for their business. The benefits of ERP as found in this study are discussed below. Bhati and Trivedi (2016) also suggest that it is important to establish the benefits of ERP to the business as selecting an incompatible ERP system could lead to its failure.

7.1.2.1. MANAGERIAL BENEFITS

While it was found that the SFBs studied have a centralised family management system which they are keen to maintain, not all the businesses fit Carney's (2005) description of family-styled leadership. Family-styled leadership is when the eldest family member within the business leads the business as they would in the family setting (Carney, 2005). It was found that in the different SFB case studies, an ERP system could help improve centralised management within the business, especially remotely using mobile-ERP (Johanson *et al.*, 2014). While the prospect may appeal to some SFBs (e.g. Case 2 and Case 4) as a result of business performance, others may not see the need for such a benefit for the same reasons (Kotlar and De Massis, 2013; Patel and Chrisman, 2014). However, it was found in all cases that for the family managers to always keep an eye on the business, there is a need for an ERP system to be adopted.

Such remote management also increases the speed of decision-making and its accuracy. It was found that in most of the cases, communicating vital business information for decision-making was expensive and time consuming, and that ERP could improve speed and reduce long-term communication costs (Chabouni and Yahia, 2014).

As part of the centralised management, resources and inventories can be managed in real time with the ERP system (Marsh *et al.*, 2014). It was found in most cases that inventory control was stressful and human resource management was ineffective. It is worthy of note that family trust is a trademark of SFBs and the adoption of ERP system could disrupt this legacy system (Chrisman *et al.*, 2014). However, it was found in some cases that resource management based on trust was already problematic and the implementation of an ERP system for that purpose could increase accountability, thereby, improving trust throughout the business irrespective of the family affiliation (Lasisi *et al.*, 2017).

Financial management is another managerial aspect of retail SFBs that may benefit from the adoption of an ERP system. While financial management is an established problem with small retail businesses, some cases had the perception that the legacy system was good enough but further findings proved otherwise. ERP, based on evidence from theory (Teittinen *et al.*, 2013) and the fieldwork, is able to manage business finances, and if ERP is adopted for this purpose, then the business will enjoy real-time updates to financial records and greater accuracy.

Based on knowledge of the managerial benefits of ERP adoption to UK retail SFBs, such knowledge might inform the perception of family managers if made available to them (De Massis *et al.*, 2016). However, no assurances can be made on how the knowledge might inform a decision to adopt ERP or not especially if the managerial benefits are perceived as a disruption to the family trust the businesses enjoy (Chrisman *et al.*, 2014; De Massis *et al.*, 2016). As internal cooperation was identified as being crucial to the success of ERP (Dixit and Pratash, 2011; Bansal, 2013), a negative perception of the managerial benefits of ERP could hinder commitment to its adoption within SFBs.

7.1.2.2. OPERATIONAL BENEFITS OF ERP ADOPTION

It was found that successful adoption of the ERP system in the UK's retail SFBs can improve business operations in various ways (Lasisi *et al.*, 2017). With findings suggesting that it is important to convey the benefits of ERP to SFBs to allow them to make an informed decision on its adoption, the operational benefits of ERP are discussed below.

As expected of retail businesses (CG, 2009; Hutchinson *et al.*, 2013), the core operation of the SFBs studied is the sales of their products. Also, the majority of the businesses studied rely on the legacy sales system for their operations. While it is neither unusual nor surprising that SFBs adhere to their legacy system (Chrisman *et al.*, 2014), the SFBs with a successfully adopted ERP system experience an improved operational system than those without ERP. The adoption of ERP can automate the sales process in such a way that the operation is seamless and faster (Marsh *et al.*, 2013).

The ERP system can also improve customer service and satisfaction (Ruivo *et al.*, 2012; Marsh *et al.*, 2013). With customer satisfaction being a main challenge for retail small businesses, it could be that the benefits to the customer relationship associated with ERP may appeal to SFBs (Zakaria *et al.*, 2013; Rhodes, 2015A, 2015B). However, as SFBs tend to rely on the intuitive knowledge of customers and the market rather than technology for their

customer relationship (Dessi and Floris, 2010; Dessi *et al.*, 2014), these benefits may not appeal to UK retail SFBs. The continuing growth of technology in the retail industry has been identified as being a challenge to small businesses (Bradlow *et al.*, 2017; Lee, 2017) and this explains why ERP experts insist on SFBs being made aware of the benefits of ERP to their operations. For instance, while having an intuitive knowledge of their customers works for existing customers, it may not be adequate for the businesses to predict customer and market behaviour as businesses now do with big data (Elragal, 2014). However, ERP can collect information such as customer feedback and market trends that can be analysed to make the predictions as described earlier. The experts, as well as studies by, for example, Almahamadi and Awsi (2015) opined that if SFBs are made aware of why benefits of ERP are important, it could help inform a decision on ERP adoption. Such a decision, when reached, then enjoys the full commitment of the SFB (Carrasco-Hernandez and Jimenez-Jimenez, 2013).

7.1.2.3. STRATEGIC BENEFITS OF ERP ADOPTION

The evidence from the UK's retail SFBs studied suggests that they have different strategic approaches. While all the businesses studied relied on market information such as product prices and trends for competitive advantage, few others offer a delivery service as a strategic edge over their competitors. It is common knowledge that small businesses adopt different strategic approaches to beat the increasing competition in the retail industry (Elkady *et al.*, 2014; Jimisiah *et al.*, 2016), and the pilot case A6, for example, has adopted the ERP system for strategic purposes (Lipi *et al.*, 2015; Romero and Martinez-Roman, 2015). Although adoption of ERP for strategic purposes was said to be dependent on the type of ownership in the small business (Romero and Martinez-Roman, 2015), it was found that small businesses are increasingly looking to the ERP system for competitive advantage (Pantanon, 2014). As suggested by experts and also found within the case studies, it is then important that the strategic contribution of ERP to retail SFBs is discussed as such knowledge may influence possibilities for adoption (De Massis *et al.*, 2016).

The ERP system is able to gather the market information needed by the retail SFBs to gain competitive advantage. While the businesses currently collect such information manually, the ERP system is able to extract information such as product prices from the Cloud, especially from larger competitors who already have an online presence (Al-Gholaiffi and Al-Mashari, 2014; Bharathi and Mandal, 2015; Kshetri *et al.*, 2017). The businesses studied may be willing to continue with the legacy system of keeping up with the market, but considering

that even other small businesses are adopting technology for this purpose, the SFBs studied may consider the possibility of adopting ERP if the knowledge is made available to them.

Also, while ERP adoption can make the delivery service faster and more accurate through real-time information management as found in Section 2.20, its adoption could also support collaboration with delivery companies to make the service accessible to more customers (Staehr, 2012). It should be noted at this point that SFBs are not keen on external collaboration mainly for fear of losing control of their business (BIS, 2013, 2015). As discussed in Section 7.1.2.1, an ERP system will support a more centralised management of SFBs and adopting ERP for collaboration will make the limited delivery service accessible to more customers, maintain the family management of the business and allow the business to focus on other aspects of business management (Benfell *et al.*, 2013).

As discussed in this section, ERP can help retail SFBs survive and probably grow. It was also established in Section 7.1.2.1 that an ERP system will support any growth in terms of resources, and employee and general business management.

7.1.2.4. ORGANISATIONAL BENEFITS OF ERP ADOPTION

The primary organisational goal of any SFB is usually the succession of power to the next generation as part of the bid to sustain the business for the benefit of the family (Collins *et al.*, 2016; Chen, 2016). Even though the literature (Kotlar and De Massis, 2013; Patel and Chrisman, 2014) as well as the pilot study point to the fact that succession is one family factor that could affect ERP adoption, the fieldwork findings do not support such an indication. Most of the SFBs, irrespective of the generation of ownership, showed an interest in having knowledge of the ERP system towards its possible adoption.

How an ERP system can support ownership succession may be difficult to understand as the process involves a long-term exchange of some codified and tacit business information (Cohen, 2016), however, ERP may contribute to a positive change in leadership. While the technology may not be able to manage the tacit family knowledge of business, it can support the long-term retention, transfer and management of codified business information across generations (Chabouni and Yahia, 2014; Lasisi *et al.*, 2017). As the accuracy of the information managed by ERP is dependent on the information fed into the system, the cooperation and training of stakeholders in ERP could also be crucial to its success in this regard (Lewandowski, 2013; Teittinen *et al.*, 2013).

Having discussed how family involvement might affect the adoption of ERP in the UK's retail SFBs and the benefits of such adoption, the next section reviews the theoretical framework.

7.2. THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK REVIEWED

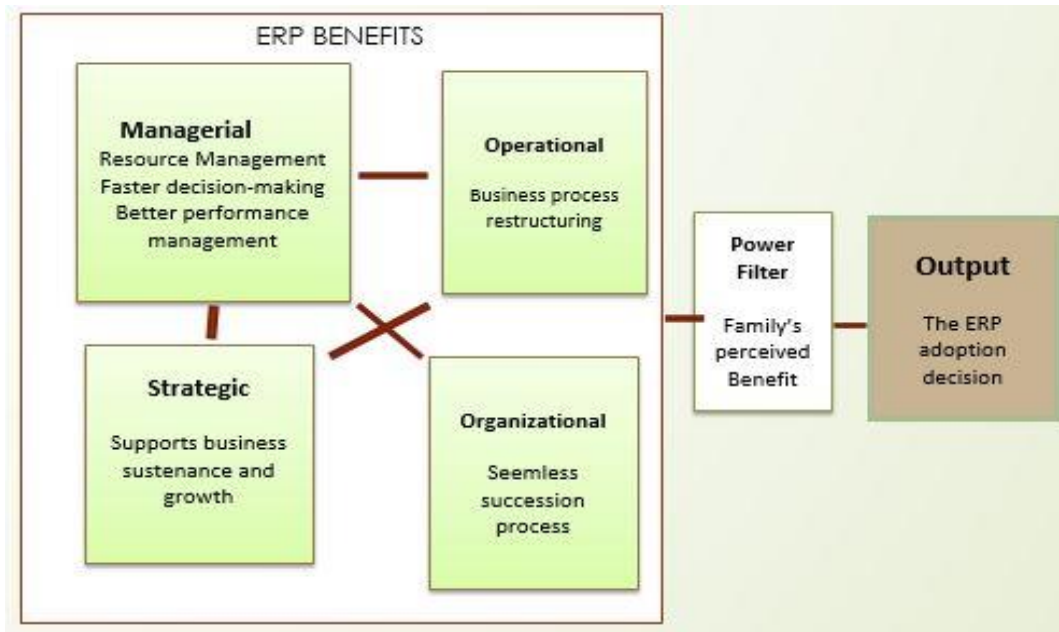


Figure 18: The theoretical framework.

To reiterate, the theoretical framework as shown above points to the fact that awareness of the benefits of ERP adoption to the owning family serves as the catalyst to ERP adoption. The framework also shows a range of different benefits of ERP under four main categories namely managerial, operational, strategic and organisational.

While the study findings agree with the theory up to a point, there are some significant differences which suggest the need to modify the framework. Although all findings agree with the four categories of ERP benefits to the UK's retail SFBs, the theory fell short of showing the links between those benefits to signify the integrated nature of the ERP system. Showing the intertwined nature of the benefits was deemed crucial as findings show that some SFBs, due to their limited awareness of ERP, could end up adopting different standalone systems when adopting an ERP system would satisfy all their different needs. The clear link between the components under each category of benefits was established through the field study as discussed in the next section.

The theory also suggests that making the owning family aware of the benefits of ERP could be sufficient to inform ERP adoption but further findings in the study show that such knowledge may serve no purpose if not known to the family manager. It was then found that the family manager's knowledge of the benefits of ERP and his perception dictates the decision on ERP adoption. Similar to the theoretical findings, it was found that other stakeholders, including family members, tend to commit to such a decision when made. The decision premise observed within the businesses shows why the theory generalises the family as one unit in making strategic decisions. The table below shows how evidences through this research have tested the research framework.

Table 21: Summarised research findings through the theoretical framework

Theoretical themes/Cases	Case 1	Case 2	Case 3	Case 4	Case 5	C1	C2	C3	A6
Managerial Benefits of ERP adoption to retail SFBs									
Performance Management	The business might benefit from a system that allows the family manager (uncle) effectively manage the business performance such as rate of sales even when not physically available	ERP adoption could help the business maintain the centralised management of business performance even when not within the business. This brings about a faster decision-maker.	Business performance, such as rate of sales, stock levels, etc. could be remotely monitored and controlled as sales, stock and financial records are already in the integrated system; social-ERP makes all this information available to the family manager remotely. It thus makes the management of the business easy from anywhere.	The ERP system could be an effective communicator of business activities and performance to the outgoing manager remotely as he doesn't come into the business anymore.	The adoption of ERP could bring about complexities to the trust based management of performance and such complexities may lead to a family rift such as divided commitment of family members.	Better communication management	General better management of business	X	A more structured business management style
Better decision-making	The technology can help the business	ERP adoption can make decision-making faster	With mobile-ERP, the business information	Delayed decision-making is one major problem the business currently faces.	ERP adoption can help improve the speed and	X	Faster decision-making	Better informed decision-making	X

	reduce phone calls to and from the store to help the family manager make strategic decisions as the information can be readily and accurately made available through a centralised database	and cheaper in case 2 as it reduces the number of calls made to the MD for decisions daily	required to make important decisions would always be available to the decision-maker as and when needed	Decisions, such as restocking the store and setting product prices could be made easily through ERP without the need for intervention from the incoming generation.	accuracy of decision-making within the business through the centralised information database especially if the system is set to obtain market and supplier information through the cloud.				
Information & Resource management	With possible employee codes, it would be easy to monitor employee activities and better manage them irrespective of family affiliation. It is evident from findings that the business deals in various products and it is difficult to keep a manual daily record of stock. That is	As the finances in Case 2 are internally managed by the MD, ERP adoption could help make this less stressful and more accurate through a better managed inventory and financial record. As the findings suggest the employees require a lot	Rate of sales, stock levels and financial information are already controlled manually within the business. Employees are also centrally managed through their unique ID.	If the business adopts ERP, it means that an updated record of every product stocked in the store is kept on the system, including the price and accurate quantity in stock. For every completed transaction, the stock of the different products as well as the financial records are updated accordingly. Financial details such as business performance in terms of profit and loss, tax calculations, product performance, etc. are easily calculated with	While the technology can bring about better financial, human and other resource management, a stand-alone system appears to be better suited to the business than an ERP system.	Document management, financial management	Financial management	Better managed finances and infrastructure	Accurate stock and price information

	<p>why the business resorted to keeping a record of an annual stocktake. Adopting the ERP system could help the business automate and provide real-time stock management. Although the family manager believes the business has the best financial system as it is handled by experts, the ERP system if adopted could serve the same purpose even in real time and without human error</p>	<p>of monitoring, and there are lapses with the existing legacy system of managing employees, the ERP system could help better manage this aspect of the business if adopted. As stock records are manually updated twice a day, ERP adoption could help automate the stock management process by keeping real-time updates</p>		<p>the ERP system. Employee performance can be monitored in terms of sales processed per day, who carried out an activity such as the initial stock entry or who received a product. If employees are monitored using such a system, it improves accountability, trust and thus solves the problem of some employees not taking their responsibilities seriously. As managing the stock in Case 5 involves keeping files of invoices and analysing them annually, adopting the ERP system could help manage the resources in real time and eliminate the need to keep files of information for a year</p>					
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Operational Benefits of ERP adoption to SFBs

Better operational structure & service	The business already uses an automated sales system which, according to	The long queues presently experienced due to the amount of	The automated sales system already gives the business a professional	If the business adopts the ERP system, processing sales becomes automated and faster as the products are scanned	Even though the adoption of ERP can bring about operational efficiency, this business does	Better client/customer relationship through CRM	Better client management	Operational efficiency and effectiveness, customer	Increased customer satisfaction Faster order delivery time Faster delivery
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	<p>the manager is believed to ease sales stress and help the business function more like a larger business. As the customer relationship and feedback are important to business operations, the business would benefit from a more structured feedback system which further opens the business' world through social-ERP.</p>	<p>time taken to process each order could reduce through the automation of the sales process. A better sales experience would make customers happy and more willing to come back. Adopting the ERP system can also help make customer feedback available to the business in real time by integrating the feedback section of the website with the ERP database.</p>	<p>outlook and also easier and faster order processing. The transparency from the automated sales system means transactions are easily traced and customers are happy with the returns policy that transparency brought about. Customer feedbacks as craved by the business can also be automated if a CRM module is added to the existing system.</p>	<p>to generate the individual prices, and the system automatically generates the total cost of the products purchased. With the traceability provided through the issuing of receipts, and the no returns policy having been amended, the customer relationship is expected to improve. Also, faster sales processing will make customers happier as they can enter and exit the store within a short time.</p>	<p>not require such technology to achieve it due to the long-term experience within the business. This business uses the long-lived knowledge of the business to maintain good customer relationships. This is possible as the customers' demands were found not to rapidly change as found in the other retail SFBs studied. For that reason, it is easy for the business to keep customers happy and attract new ones</p>			<p>acquisition and retention</p>	<p>of customer invoices via email</p>
Strategic Benefits of ERP adoption to SFBs									
Support for extended capabilities (growth)		<p>It was found that up-to-date market information, especially on price, is important to the business.</p>	<p>ERP adoption could help the business take full advantage of delivery as a strategy by collaborating with delivery</p>	<p>If Case 4 adopts an ERP system that is compatible with that of its suppliers, communicating and sourcing items from them could become easier and faster.</p>	<p>It was found that the suppliers use an integrated system which all orders must go through, so if Case 5 adopts a technology like</p>	<p>Better management of growth in capabilities</p>	<p>Better management of market growth and resources</p>	<p>Supports growth in size and profitability</p>	<p>Increased turnover folds Increased product lines and orders Business now grows</p>

		<p>Social-ERP could directly link the business to market information, such as the latest price, new products, and customer demands.</p> <p>If the business adopts the ERP system, the business could easily collaborate with delivery companies to make such a service available to as many customers as might require it</p>	companies.		<p>the ERP system, communicating with the supplier's system could be easier. The processing of Case 5's specialist wallpapers could become faster and the deliveries could come in earlier.</p>				profitably
Support for sustenance	<p>It was found that market information, such as price and demands by customers for new products are important to the business. ERP could help the</p>	<p>The ERP system, the technology is an enduring system; it will not only help the business now but stay with the business as it grows in the future.</p>	<p>The system could increase the business' reach through the delivery service, its market share through the social media and, in fact, add more capabilities to</p>	<p>Depending on the module, there could be easy access to competitors' prices and up-to-date information from customers through the Cloud. If such information is readily available to the family manager, the business will be in a</p>	<p>If the ERP system is adopted, the system can make market information such as prices and products are readily available; it could be sourced from social</p>				<p>The system is expected to lead the business into the future</p>

	business gain such information in real time if successfully adopted for this purpose. ERP could open the business up strategically to more customers within and beyond the business location. Also, such growth does not come at the expense of the well-integrated automated system that ERP ensures.		the business. The ERP system would not just help the business to grow but would also help it cope with growth and sustain the business through the growth	better competitive position as strategic decisions would be more informed and made faster.	media or through the internet, depending on the purpose the ERP system is adopted to serve				
Organisational Benefits of ERP adoption to SFBs									
Support for seem-less succession	ERP is able to manage business information to allow the next in command with ease 1 easily learn the business over a long time in preparation for succession.	The important files and data required for a successful succession can be saved on the ERP database to be retrieved and transferred as part of the succession process when		Adopting ERP could make all the required business information readily available to whoever is granted permission to access it. With the system in place, the new family manager would not have to come in to the store in the morning and evening for business updates	No succession plans as the business is shutting down	X	X	X	X

		needed.		as the information would be already accessible on the system. It then becomes easier for the incoming manager to understand the business and its market position when through the succession process.					
The power filter									
Family perception	The perception of the family manager was that such technology may not be for the business because the business is small	The GM's perception is that the business requires an integrated system like the ERP system to solve some managerial and operational challenges the business	The family manager perceived the technology as being able to effectively manage finances, inventory and the people especially to tax calculation purposes.	Although the perception of the main decision-maker could not be judged, the problematic manual processes within the business suggest the need for automation, a sentiment shared by some employees. The outgoing family manager also requested a report on the business to inform his perception.	The family manager is of the view of that the business requires and integrated system to help improve financial and stock management but was not aware of any technology to help achieve such feat	There appears to be a lack of investment from the original owners due to them being comfortable with business performance	The original owners are often not interested but then the younger generation comes into the business and decides the company needs an ERP system.	ERP adoption is generally different in Family Businesses as the business money is the family's money. The business wants to be convinced the technology is what they need	The 3 rd generation family manager perceived ERP as the technology to help the business compete in a changing market
ERP adoption Decision and Commitment									
Decision leading to commitment	The business committed to the adoption of a stand-alone POS system when the family	It was confirmed that any decision made by the MD is committed to by the	The business committed and successfully adopted the EPOS system once the	Even though the power or ownership of the business is being transferred to the next generation, the younger/incoming generation still	The stakeholders within the business agree with the family managers' decision and	The original owners frustrate ERP adoption efforts because they are not convinced about the technology	The next generation can make the move but the original owners resist through no	The business rarely adopt the technology but they are usually the best clients due to their	Despite the need for change, the commitment to ERP adoption did not happen until the 3 rd

	manager decided to adopt it.	business and so if the technology is to be adopted, a decision needs to come from the GM	family manager decided to adopt the technology	cannot make decisions until the succession process is finalised. The business still fully commits to the decisions made by the outgoing family manager.	fully commits to it.	partly due to their limited knowledge	commitment of funds and other resources	commitment if they decide to adopt it.	generation manager with a positive perception of ERP took over management and decided to adopt the technology
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Based on the slight but significant differences between the theoretical and empirical findings of this study, a modified ERP adoption framework is proposed in the next section.

7.3. THE ERP ADOPTION FRAMEWORK FOR UK RETAIL SMALL FAMILY BUSINESSES

It was found that despite the uniqueness of SFBs mainly in terms of management and organisational goals, adopting the ERP system could be of tremendous benefit to the businesses and it may be important that the knowledge of such benefits is made available to retail SFBs. Such awareness informs their perception of the technology towards a possible adoption. It was, however, found that the family manager is solely responsible for such strategic decisions while others commit once the decision is made. It may then be better that knowledge of the benefits of ERP to retail SFBs is directed to the family manager as the whole business is likely to commit to the decision when made by the family manager. A pictorial representation of the ERP adoption process for the UK’s retail SFBs is developed below. The framework includes the precise benefits of ERP to UK retail SFBs, their links to each other and how the ERP information might flow to inform ERP adoption.

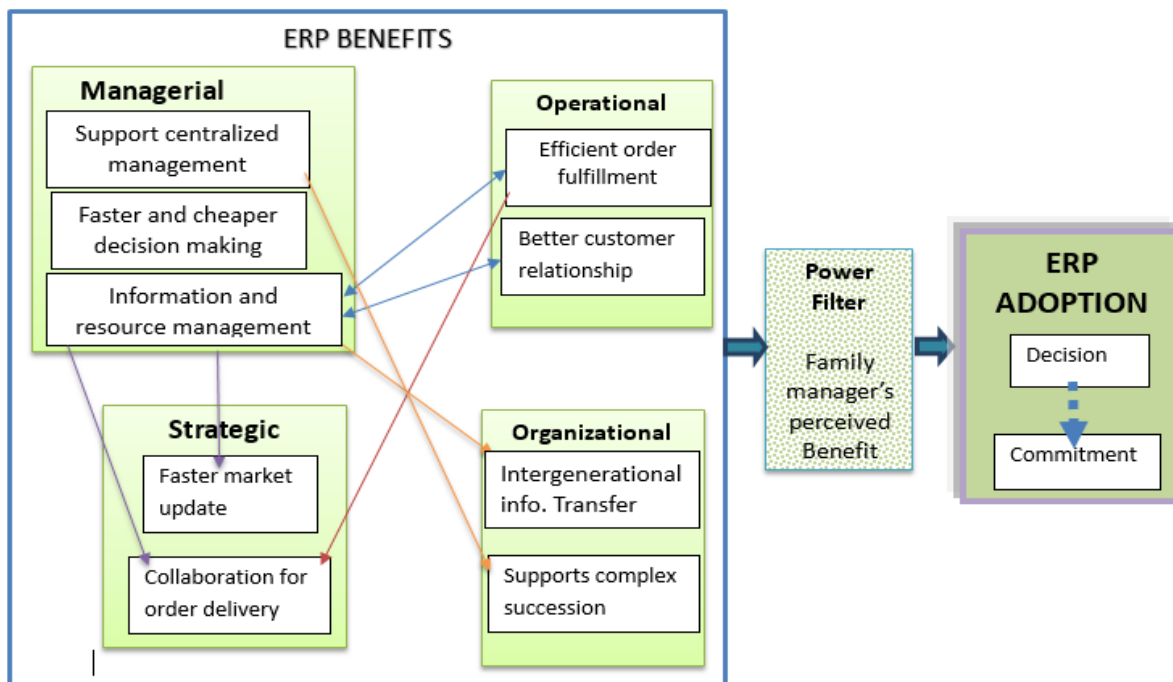


Figure 19: ERP Adoption process in the UK'S retail SFBs.

The framework approach shows the ERP adoption process based on evidence gathered throughout this study. The framework shows the benefits of ERP that are specific to UK retail SFBs and how they might influence ERP adoption within retail SFBs. It shows where such knowledge may be directed to influence a decision and hence, commitment to ERP adoption. The framework also shows the relationship between the different categories of ERP benefits to improve the SFBs as discussed below.

Managerial benefits: The framework shows that SFBs may benefit managerially from an ERP system as it can support the centralised family management structure of the business that is so desired by SFBs. It could provide a platform for effective inventory, financial and human resource management to promote accountability and improve the trust craved by SFBs. The results of the improved management of business, information and resources is that strategic decision-making becomes faster and may be cheaper than with the legacy system. However, any feeling that ERP adoption may disrupt family trust could cause internal rifts that may halt any chance of adopting ERP, hence, the reason for the family manager to be informed of its benefits. The family manager's commitment was found to usually lead to the cooperation of others within the business due to family trust.

Operational benefits: The framework shows a two-way link between the managerial benefits of ERP and its operational benefits to UK retail SFBs. The improved inventory management supports an improved order fulfilment system; improved order fulfilment often also brings about customer satisfaction. The system could provide a platform for customer feedback and the importance of such data being available to the business is to predict customer and market behaviour as emphasized in Section 7.1.2.2. Note that the automatic update of inventory after order fulfilment is also a managerial benefit, hence, the two-way link between managerial and operational benefits of the ERP system.

Strategic benefits: There appears to also be a one-way relationship between the strategic benefits of ERP, and its managerial and operational benefits. Due to the real-time resource/information management capability of the technology, SFBs may be able to benefit from timely access to market information on products and competitors' prices that give the business a competitive edge. It was also found that an ERP system could support collaboration with delivery companies to improve the delivery service for customers. It is important to emphasize that the effective management that ERP provides could ensure that there is a reduced fear of loss of business as a result of such collaboration. Also, the faster order fulfilment supports information exchange across businesses to ease order delivery. An improved customer relationship supports business survival and growth. The ERP system is also capable of managing the business through long-term growth and this provides further explanation for the relationship between the strategic and managerial benefits.

However, there is a need to ensure that the delivery company's system is compatible with the ERP system that the SFB adopts to ensure success (Ruivo *et al.*, 2014; Bhati and Trivedi, 2016).

Organisational benefits: The ERP system is able to manage and transfer vital business information across generations to support a seamless succession. Also, ERP can support the business during a difficult succession process through effective business management.

The power filter: Ultimately, the framework shows that while it may be crucial to establish the benefits of ERP adoption to SFBs, it is important that such knowledge is directed to the family manager for it to have an impact on the decision to adopt ERP. As the family manager makes the strategic decisions, knowledge of the benefits of ERP may influence the family manager's perception of the technology. The decision made by the family manager appears to be the **filter** for ERP adoption in the UK's retail SFBs and such a decision may be dependent on the level of awareness of ERP.

ERP adoption: The family manager's perception of the ERP system influenced by knowledge of ERP could inform the decision to adopt the technology. If such a decision is made by the family manager, evidence shows that the UK's retail SFBs tend to fully commit to the adoption of the ERP system.

With the findings throughout this study and the ERP adoption framework for UK's retail SFBs developed above, an audit of the research objectives, question and aim is discussed below.

7.4. AN AUDIT OF THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Three objectives were established at the start of this research and how each was met is discussed below.

7.4.1. EXPLORE THE ERP ADOPTION PROCESS IN UK RETAIL SFBs

Having found that ERP might be of enormous benefit to the UK's retail SFBs and that the involvement of family in business impacts its adoption, the objective was to understand the ERP adoption process in the UK's retail SFBs. The expert explanation of how the UK's retail SFBs adopt the ERP system agrees with both the literature and case study findings. The case studies involved businesses that had already adopted ERP and those that had little intention of adopting ERP. The findings appear to be similar and agree with expert opinions, hence, the submission on the ERP adoption process in the UK's retail SFBs with family involvement.

It was found that ERP adoption might be dependent on the family manager's perception of the technology. However, awareness by the family manager of the benefits of ERP to the business seemed to be the catalyst to influence the decision to adopt ERP. The family manager's decision, if made, would then be adhered to by other business stakeholders due to

the decision premise found within the UK's retail SFBs studied. For that reason, once a decision is reached on ERP adoption by the family manager, the business tends to commit to its adoption, which usually results in successful implementation of ERP within the business.

7.4.2. UNDERSTAND THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE FAMILY ON ERP ADOPTION IN UK'S RETAIL SFBs

To test this objective, ERP experts were interviewed to understand the impact of family members on ERP adoption. The findings as well as the literature led to the study of UK retail SFBs to recognise the pattern of family involvement and how it might impact the adoption of ERP. While the experts, due to their knowledge were directly asked if ERP adoption in SFBs was different from other businesses, SFBs were studied systematically through observations, which involved discussion with some stakeholders as well as participating in operations and top management interviews to understand usual family involvement patterns that could influence the decision to adopt ERP.

The findings of this research confirm that familiness or family involvement could have a significant impact on ERP adoption in the UK's retail SFBs. While the finding supports the literature that the mostly family-styled hierarchical management in SFBs affect ERP, it opposes the notion that such involvement negatively affects the chances of a successful adoption. The family involvement found is such that ERP adoption could be dependent on the decision of the family manager to commit to it. However, the decision is reliant on the amount of ERP knowledge in relation to the business that is available to the family manager. While the family managers trust the existing system, they were willing to adopt the ERP system if it is beneficial to business. However, the amount of knowledge of ERP that is SFB specific was found to be negligible. Due to the importance of knowledge of the benefits of ERP adoption, there is an urgent need to establish such knowledge for retail SFBs as the non-adoption of ERP was, according to the experts, found to be potentially detrimental to business.

The limited adoption of ERP within the UK's retail SFBs may then be due to the limited availability of SFB-specific ERP knowledge as the businesses studied wanted a report on their business in the hope that it would inform a decision to adopt ERP. The experts also opined that knowledge of the ERP benefits be made available not just generally but specifically to the businesses as the need for retail SFBs to adopt ERP is urgent for the businesses and the UK at large. The failure of SFBs in the UK especially in the retail industry

will affect the economy because retail SFBs represent the majority of retail small businesses in the country. Having discussed the first objective, it leads to discussion of the second objective as found below.

7.4.3. INVESTIGATE THE BENEFITS OF ERP ADOPTION TO THE UK'S RETAIL SFBs

The expert interviews found that ERP adoption in UK's retail SFBs could be of immense benefit to the business especially in terms of gaining competitive advantage. The case studies also identified that there are specific aspects of the businesses that might benefit from an ERP system.

Findings from this research point to the fact that adoption of an ERP system by a retail SFB could be more than just a luxury as it can bring about enormous benefits to the business.

The evidence suggests that the benefits of ERP to retail SFBs seem to cover four categories according to Shang and Seddon's (2000) benefit classification as modified by Staehr (2007). These benefits are identified as managerial, operational, strategic and organisational as discussed in 7.3. above.

Having discussed the study findings in relation to the objectives, the research question is audited below.

7.5. THE RESEARCH QUESTION AUDIT

Having set the research objectives to investigate the question put forward by this study, the findings are discussed in relation to the research question, which is: How might family involvement impact ERP adoption in the UK's retail SFBs?

Evidence from this study shows that familiness impacts ERP adoption within the UK's retail SFBs. This impact is such that the commitment to ERP adoption may be dependent on one family member's (family manager) decision on the technology. However, the family manager's decision can be influenced by awareness of the benefits of ERP to the business' needs. Contrary to Smith's (2016) opinion that strong family involvement in FBs implies a low chance of successful adoption of ERP, the findings from this study suggest otherwise. It shows that the strong family involvement in UK retail SFBs could imply that the businesses can fully commit to the successful adoption of the ERP system if such a decision is reached by the family manager. The evidence is found in the pilot case study A6 (see Section 2.20)

and case study 3 (see Section 6.5). The hindrance for ERP adoption in the UK's retail SFBs, based on findings, appears to be the limited SFB-specific awareness of ERP by the family managers.

With the research objectives discussed and research question audited, the research aim is discussed below.

7.6. TESTING THE RESEARCH AIM

The aim set at the start of this study was to **investigate ERP adoption in the UK's retail SFBs from the perspective of family involvement** and both the objectives and research question were set to test this aim. While it was found through the literature, archival evidence and expert interviews that there is limited adoption of ERP within UK retail SFBs, the evidences suggest that it can be of huge importance to the business. Some of the literature suggests that family involvement in SFBs implies a poor rate of success in adopting ERP, but findings from the four-week observation of five SFB cases and further interview of the owner managers suggest otherwise. The findings suggest that family involvement could impact ERP adoption positively but the family manager needs to make the decision. The evidence from the study seems to agree with other studies (Carrasco-Hernandez and Jimenez-Jimenez, 2013; De Massis *et al.*, 2016) which suggest that a positive perception of a technology is required to commit the business to adopt the technology. It shows that awareness of the benefits of ERP by the family manager can impact a decision to adopt, which could lead to a full commitment of SFB stakeholders to ERP adoption. The commitment of the stakeholders including other family members was found to be due to altruism, which unites the family and business goals. However, studies such as Nose (2015) points to the need for further studies to look into ERP adoption in SFBs with conflicting family interests as it could be the difference between success and failure. The SFBs investigated in this study were, however, all found with agreeing business and family interests. Although, the parttern found from the five cases creates a clearer understanding of ERP adoption in SFBs, the heterogeneity found with individual SFBs suggest that other SFBs might have conflicting interests and it would be remarkable to know the difference that such context could make to these findings.

While Smith (2016), through a quantitative study, offered little evidence on how family involvement may imply a poor rate of success in adopting ERP, this study offers a deep insight into how family involvement influences ERP adoption through a qualitative approach.

However, despite Smith's (2016) limitation being the inability to explore family involvement, it concluded that strong family involvement implies a poor rate of success when trying to adopt ERP. This study, on the other hand, was undertaken to explore family involvement and the impact it might have on ERP adoption.

Through the qualitative evidence available that is expert interviews, business observation and owner manager interviews, it was established that ERP adoption in the UK's retail SFBs appears to be dependent on the family manager's perception of the technology. While the family manager may not necessarily be the eldest family member within the business (see case 3) as some literature suggests (Carney, 2005; Stewart & Hitt, 2012), strategic decisions made by the family manager are adhered to by the whole business. It was also found that awareness of the benefits of ERP specifically to retail SFBs can influence the perception of the family manager and hence the business commitment to ERP adoption.

While some studies suggest that high family involvement in FBs could hinder the successful adoption of ERP, this study shows that family involvement in UK retail SFBs could be a positive influence on the business' chances of a successful ERP adoption if the decision is made by the family owner manager and family interests align. However, for the decision to be made, knowledge of the benefits of ERP needs to be made available to the family manager. Having tested the aim of this research, the contributions of the study are established below.

7.7. THE RESEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS

Like all academic research, this study is not without theoretical, methodical and practical contributions as discussed in this section.

- **This study offers clarity on the impact of family involvement on ERP adoption in the UK's retail SFBs.** The importance of this contribution came from the fact that studies by, for example, PWC (2014) and Smith (2016) emphasised the importance of ERP adoption to FBs but opined that family involvement may be a hindrance to successful adoption of ERP especially in FBs with high family involvement. However, there remained little evidence prior to this research that established exactly how family involvement impacts ERP adoption in FBs. This study contributes to

bridging that knowledge gap by establishing the impact of family involvement on ERP adoption in UK retail SFBs and proposing a pathway to a successful adoption.

This study shows that contrary to studies such as Smith (2016), family involvement where interests align could positively influence a successful ERP adoption in UK's retail SFBs if the decision is made by the family manager. The main hindrance to ERP adoption in the UK's retail SFBs studied appeared to be the limited awareness of its specific benefits to business.

- **This study offers contribution to establishing SFB-specific ERP knowledge, especially in the UK.** The need for SFB-specific ERP knowledge became apparent as studies point to the uniqueness of SFBs as being a reason why they may not identify with the generic benefits of ERP for SMEs. This study shows that the benefits of ERP to the UK's retail SFBs may be different from some of the already established ERP benefits especially in terms of ERP's contribution to succession of family ownership. The UK-based knowledge is also important as the increasing competition in the UK's retail industry is technology based, SFBs making up a significant number of retail businesses, and PWC (2014) suggesting that ERP adoption could help UK's SFBs survive the competitive market.
- **This study also offers a pathway to how retail SFBs can successfully adopt the ERP system.** While the literature helped deduce the benefits of ERP to retail SFBs, knowledge on how the business might adopt ERP was elusive (Lasisi *et al.*, 2017). This research contributes towards bridging that gap by developing a framework which shows how ERP can be adopted where there is family involvement in business.
- **The study establishes a methodical approach to studying ERP in SFBs.** While there is limited literature on ERP in SFBs, Smith's (2016) quantitative study could not establish how family involvement influences ERP success due to its quantitative approach. This study, however, shows a deep insight into family involvement in ERP adoption through expert interviews, month-long case observation and family manager interview. The approach in this study shows that the qualitative approach of interviews and case studies is an appropriate tactic to deeply explore the influence of family involvement on ERP in SFBs.

While, this study offers clarity on the limitation of other studies (Smith, 2016), it is not without its limitations.

7.8. RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

- One of the main limitations of this study like every qualitative study is the fact that the findings are not a representation of the whole of the UK's retail SFB population but are based on a small sample. For this reason, while this study offer clarity on ERP adoption in UK's retail SFBs, further research will be required to generalise the findings.
- The amount of ERP literature focusing on SFBs was also a limitation. This was mitigated by making deductions from the ERP studies for SMEs and the SFB studies on the adoption of technology and innovation. The pilot evidence as well as the expert interviews were also used to offer initial ERP knowledge that was taken forward to inform the case study research.
- The limited evidence of ERP adoption means that few of the SFBs investigated had an ERP system already in place. This was made up for by having a comparison of businesses with and without an ERP system to confirm the ERP adoption process and the benefits of ERP to the retail SFBs. The framework developed in this research could be further tested with a larger population of SFBs that have already adopted the ERP system.
- The inability to interview more than the owner manager within each case could be seen as a limitation to understanding family involvement. However, that was made up for by methodically observing each case over a period including unrecorded discussions with family and non-family employees as well as customers to understand usual business partterns. These partterns were further clarified and validated through the managerial interviews.

With research being a project that must be concluded for others to pick up from where it is stopped, recommendations for further studies are given below.

7.9. RESEARCH PROCESS EVALUATION

Having gone through this research process and answered the research question raised, this section evaluates the investigation processes using Klein and Myers' (1999) seven principles as a form of reflecting back on the reliability of the process and hence the findings and contributions of this research. Klein and Myers (1999) designed these principles for the evaluation of interpretive quality studies and as this is an interpretive study, it becomes important that such evaluation is done to prove the reliability of the outcome of the research.

Principles	Actions
The Fundamental Principle of the Hermeneutic Circle	Studying each case as a whole was done through the understanding of individual business practices such as the management style, operational processes, the strategic processes and the organisational goals within each goal.
The Principle of Contextualization	While the initial phase of the study was done outside the context, the main investigation was conducted within UK's retail SFB cases through month long observations and follow up family manager interviews.
The Principle of Interaction Between the Researcher and the Subject	The researcher was engaged in unrecorded conversations with employees to clarify some aspects of the business processes and there was recorded interview of the family manager as further evidence for each case study partly to not rely solely on the researcher's account of findings within the cases
The Principle of Abstraction and Generalization	The findings were generalised to both ERP studies in SMEs and Family Business studies to establish the theoretical significance of the research in extending ERP knowledge in Family Businesses
The Principle of Dialogical Reasoning	The initial conception was that SFBs may benefit from ERP adoption but might struggle adopting the technology successfully. That presumption was challenged using that the strategic decision-making framework for SFBs which FB studies suggest may lead to the commitment of the SFBs to technology adoption.
The Principle of Multiple Interpretations	While the conclusions from this study is that family involvement can be leveraged to increase the chances of ERP adoption in UK's retail SFBs, family conflict was could also be a possible deterrent to such successful adoption.
The Principle of Suspicion	The chances of being presented with an artificial environment during the case studies were limited through going into the businesses in different guises for a period of 4 weeks as well as through follow up interviews of the family managers. The family manager interviews were also structured based on the theory rather than observation findings to avoid the responses being led by the observation

Table 21: Research evaluation table

Having evaluated and confirmed the reliability of this research means the findings can be taken forward based on the recommendations below.

7.10. KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Future research is needed to take the findings of this study forward by focusing on generalising the ERP adoption framework for retail SFBs within and outside the UK. It is vital to do so as the qualitative nature of the study did not allow for a population representation.
- There is also a need to further test the established ERP benefits for retail SFBs within more businesses that have successfully adopted an ERP system. It becomes important as one limitation for this study was the limited availability of such businesses and the difficulty faced in ascertaining the type of technology in some SFBs.
- While this research established using systems thinking approach that family involvement determines the commitment of SFBs to ERP adoption, it is important that further research looks specifically at how the different CSFs affect ERP success in SFBs as previous studies have done with SMEs and large enterprises. It is important to do so as the family involvement in the business can make a difference to the influence of such factors on ERP adoption.
- More studies need to focus on the sensitization of SFBs on the significance of, not just the adoption of ERP, but other beneficial technology to the business. Focusing on specific beneficial technology is important as it is the limited knowledge of such technology, e.g. ERP in SFBs that remains a likely hindrance to its adoption.
- It will also be fascinating to understand, through further research, how the findings of this study can be influenced by a greater access to explore more family stakeholder's opinions through interviews or focus groups instead of the observations.
- Also, exploring if there is a difference between the ERP adoption process in UK's retail SFBs with common goals, as in this research, and without collective goals. As studies suggest such conflicting ambitions could affect SFB's business performance among other things, it may be worth further studies.
- Further studies need to focus on SFBs in other industries as it became apparent from this study that specific benefits of ERPs to SFBs across industries may vary.

For that reason, an increased awareness of the benefits of ERP in other SFB sectors through further studies could be crucial to an increased adoption rate.

- The use of the systems thinking approach in future IS studies such as ERP studies can help researchers focus on the influence of human interaction with the system while acknowledging but paying less attention to other factors that might impact the system.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: ARCHIVAL ERP ADOPTION EVIDENCE FROM A6

Delivering excellence is the perfect motto for company A6; it describes both the company's service proposition and its product range. The £5 million, 24-employee business is a supplier of high quality dry food products to the London restaurant trade, including several Michelin-rated establishments, and it offers unparalleled service to this demanding clientele. A6 is a long-term user of ERP, and has continually added new modules to meet evolving customer needs and take advantage of new business opportunities.

The business was established more than 40 years ago, when the family set up A6. For years, this was a very successful operation, delivering catering products to pubs and cafes around London. In 1982 his son took over; he continued to steer the business in the same direction and continued the firm's good reputation. However, other competitors had begun to emerge and by the late 1980s, demand was changing too - the arrival of new pubs meant a different type of customer, requiring different products and services.

The grandson became the third generation of the family to work in the business, eventually taking over as managing director in 2000, at which time he seized the opportunity to refocus the business and rebrand it. "My parents had a tried and tested formula for the business, and it worked," he explains. "However, in the late 1990s just before they retired, I could see the business was in danger of being left behind - as our customer base changed from individual publicans to corporate buyers, we had to raise our standards to be more professional. Our competitors were using the latest systems and we weren't; it was putting us at a disadvantage."

He proposed the company invest in a software system and they evaluated several solutions, before choosing the provider. The task of moving the business - a completely paper-based organisation - to the new automated system was a major project but it was to prove a great legacy. "It was a hugely different way of working, but the introduction of the ERP system was the significant step we needed to lay the foundations for our future," he says.

Prior to ERP, A6 ran entirely on manual systems, with orders and invoices handwritten. "We had to change," says the owner manager. "Working the way we were at the time, it was hard for us to deal with corporate buyers from the pub chains and difficult to become a recognised supplier."

The next couple of years proved to be a challenge. A6 saw its customer base change from hundreds of independent customers to three or four large firms, and eventually those buyers moved their accounts to major national suppliers. The family manager is convinced that without the solution, A6 could not have adapted to these market changes. "ERP helped us change the way we worked, which was critical, and it gave us the means to develop and move in new directions."

When the grandson took over in 2000, the business was breaking even. Many of the customer accounts were not profitable and the business was highly inefficient. His goal was to refocus the company and return it to profit.

"We started by looking at the customer groups and decided to focus solely on the top end restaurant trade, for whom the key requirement is service. At that stage, we couldn't compete with national suppliers on cost, but we could beat them on service."

APPENDIX 2: THE RECRUITMENT MATERIALS

APPENDIX 2A: Email Information Sheet

Researcher: Mukhtar Lasisi

Doctoral student,

Salford Business School,

University of Salford,

Manchester

M5 4WT

m.o.lasisi@edu.salford.ac.uk

Research Title: The Investigation of ERP adoption in retail Small Family Businesses in the UK

Research Outline: This project focuses on the UK's retail SFBs and the adoption of the ERP system. It is intended that the in-depth knowledge of ERP adoption in SFBs be acquired first through expert interviews based on their experiences and through the experiences of those SMEs using the ERP system. With each participant, the business characteristics will be studied to understand how they might influence ERP adoption and if such adoption could be beneficial. This information is intended to bring about the knowledge of ERP within the UK's retail SFBs. Knowledge which could further open retail SFBs to an improved adoption of the technology.

Note: All information collected for this research would be treated confidentially and anonymized.

Any concerns or queries should be directed to

Dr Jonathan Owens

The University of Salford

The crescent

Manchester

M5 4WT

j.d.owens@salford.ac.uk

+44(0)1612952112

Mukhtar Lasisi +44(0)7440734373

m.o.lasisi@edu.salford.ac.uk

APPENDIX 2B: THE CONSENT FORM

CONSENT FORM

I have been recruited to participate in a research study conducted by Mr Mukhtar Lasisi from Salford Business School, Manchester titled: Understanding ERP adoption in UK's retail SFBs.

1. I understand that the study expects me to share my views on business activities and challenges in a Family-SME based on my experience.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary, and I may withdraw at any time during the study. I also understand that there is no financial commitment for participating in the study
3. I understand that I can decline to answer questions if I feel uncomfortable answering during the interview
4. I understand that the interview would last between 30 to 45 minutes
5. I understand that any input made into this research is treated with utmost confidentiality by the researcher.
6. I understand that this research does not have any known risks or discomforts associated with it
7. I understand that any contribution from me including my name or identity would be anonymized and protected from unauthorised access

Participant's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

APPENDIX 2B: ETHICAL APPROVAL



Research, Innovation and Academic
Engagement Ethical Approval Panel

Research Centres Support Team
G0.3 Joule House
University of Salford
M5 4WT

T +44(0)161 295 7012

www.salford.ac.uk/

16 June 2016

Dear Muktar,

RE: ETHICS APPLICATION SBS 16/13– THE CONTRIBUTION OF ENTERPRISE RESOURCE PLANNING
TO SMALL FAMILY BUSINESSES IN NORTH WEST ENGLAND

Based on the information that you provided, I am pleased to inform you that your
application SBS 16/13 has been approved.

If there are any changes to the project or its methodology, please inform the Panel as soon
as possible by contacting SBS-ResearchEthics@salford.ac.uk.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'David Percy'.

Professor David F. Percy
Chair of the Staff and Postgraduate Research Ethics Panel
Salford Business School

APPENDIX 2C: EXPERT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

EXPERT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Opening questions

1. How would you describe your ERP offerings to business?
2. How many years have you worked with the ERP system?
3. Dealing with SMEs, how would you describe your experience with the Small Family-owned businesses?

Experience prompt

4. Based on your experience with ERP usage in SMEs, how would you describe ERP adoption in Small Family Businesses?
5. How would you compare such usage to non-Family Businesses?

Further aim specific questions

6. In your opinion, at what point do SFBs adopt ERP?
7. What triggers ERP adoption within the business?
8. Based on your experience, how would the ERP system contribute to the needs of SFBs?
9. Can you further discuss the level of awareness of ERP in SFBs?
10. Could there be an increased ERP awareness in SFBs and how in your opinion could this be achieved?
11. Anything else you would like to add either as a form of advice or further contribution to what is said already?

APPENDIX 2D: PARTICIPANT INVITATION LETTER

Researcher: Mukhtar Lasisi

Doctoral student,

Salford Business School,

University of Salford,

Manchester

M5 4WT

Dear Sir/Madam

Invitation to take part in an ERP Adoption research

I am a Doctoral student at Salford Business School, University of Salford Manchester.

The aim of my research is **to investigate ERP adoption in Small Family Businesses in the UK.**

The main objective of the research is to enquire into the ERP adoption processes within the UK's SFBs and understand how ERP might contribute to the business needs. With this being a study of ERP adoption in SFBs, it is intended that the knowledge acquired from this investigation could help the companies have a better understanding of the ERP system and how it might benefit them. This research would interview experts to seek their knowledge of ERP contribution to SFBs based on their experience with these companies. Also, the activities and challenges of some SFBs within the UK will be explored to establish commonalities and differences which could contribute towards testing the research aim.

- The interviews would take between 30 to 45 minutes and could be either face-to-face, telephone or textual.
- Participation is completely voluntary
- Information obtained and analysed would be used solely for the research purposes.
- No information required would cause harm or distress to any individual or the organisation
- Notes would be taking while the interview goes on and the interviews would be recorded.
- The participants would have the chance to review and revise the transcribed version of the interview.
- All sources of raw data collected would be destroyed at the completion of the research
- Anonymity would be maintained in the final writing of the thesis and references would be made using codes

Thank you for your anticipated participation in this research.

Any concerns should be directed to the address below

Dr Jonathan Owens

The University of Salford

The crescent

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+44(0)1612952112

Mukhtar Lasisi

+44(0)7440734373

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Please indicate approval for participation in this research by deleting as applicable

I **wish/ do not wish** to participate in the study titled 'the investigation of ERP contribution to retail Small Family Businesses in the UK.'

Name: -----

Signature: -----

APPENDIX 3: EXPERT INTERVIEWS

APPENDIX 3A: EXPERT C1'S INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Speaker 1: I am a sales director

Speaker 2: Ok, we will go straight into the main questions because of the time

Speaker 1: Sure, yeah, okay

Speaker2: Can you tell me your understanding of the ERP system, please

Speaker 1: An ERP system is a terminology, obviously, for Enterprise Resource Planning. When you say my understanding of it, do you mean what it consists of?

Speaker 2: yeah, generally what you would consider an ERP system

Speaker 1: An ERP system is a very broad term and I can explain anything from the co-financial system through to a business-wide resource planning, document management, manufacturing, its an extremely broad term and depending on needs everybody has a different view of what an ERP system is and what the boundaries are. So it can be a small use of a financial system, right to a complete company and business process management system. It is frankly, however, anybody chooses to interpret would determine, in my opinion.

Speaker 2: Ok, that is fine

Speaker 2: Could you describe your role in relation to the ERP system

Speaker 1: Yes, basically we are a solution providing company for both sage and SAP. We provide in a lose term as we chose to describe, ERP solutions. My role as a sales director is predominantly pre-sales workshops and presentations. I am also a 50% shareholder of the business so I have an overall responsibility of overseeing the deployment and consultancy team as well. So we present, apply, install, configure and support ERP systems.

Speaker 2: You said you deal with SAP and sage, do you cover every aspect of ERP or you have a specific offering?

Speaker 1: Again, it depends on everybody's interpretation of what ERP is and where the boundaries of ERP are. Both sage and SAP can be considered to be ERP software applications but it depends. Sage and SAP have different areas in which they specifically address in more or less detail.

Speaker 2: Ok, is there a specific area your company focuses on?

Speaker 1: No, there isn't. We are very generic, we don't have specific chosen market

Speaker 2: Ok, what size of companies do you deal with?

Speaker 1: yes, more around SMEs but we do get involved with some large and corporate enterprises as well.

Speaker 2: Ok, does dealing with SMEs mean you have dealt with SFBs?

Speaker 1: In the lose sense of the word, yes. Most SMEs we are dealing with tend to start out as family businesses but have evolved into more of board of directors. But yes, loosely so.

Speaker 2: Ok, like how many years' experience would you say you have with ERP?

Speaker 1: personally I have been involved in this business for 26 years

Speaker 1: that is a very long time

Speaker 1: So far, based on your experience, how would you describe small family business adoption of the ERP system and is it any different from others?

Speaker 2: It is a rather difficult question because most of the companies we deal with, if you talk about the very small businesses are different. Like if we are looking at small 1 or 2 man kinds of businesses, then that tends to be very low budget, very entry level applications. Once we get to the point of supplying say 200 SAP, they tend to be larger businesses. Perhaps, started off as family business but then expanded the board of directors. They are probably family founded but they've grown into larger businesses where they've brought other shareholders into the business as they've evolved.

Speaker 2: Ok, if we decide to limit it to the small ones, say between 10-50 employees?

Speaker 1: Yeah, if I think about some of those, it is difficult to answer as they vary enormously from being extremely well organised. From my experience, one of the big challenges to small family businesses and what I mean are the businesses that are with 10 - 50 employees. What tend to happen is a bit of a succession through the family. The father would found the business then pass on to the son, and so on and so forth. So as the children get older, they get brought into the business. What I tend to find is, there is often a lack of investment from the original owners but then the young blood comes into the business from, they have studied, done their degrees and so on and so forth. They then join the business with a renewed energy and want to go and improve the business with the ERP systems. They tend to bring this down to the original owners that are their parents or grandparents in some situations. Some of the biggest hurdle that we face whenever I am dealing with a small family business from a commercial point of view, where it is owned by the father and the son just joined and they want to meet us is that, they tend to be full of ideas and enthusiasm but have no authority or budget. And that tends to be a bit of a hurdle for us at this stage.

Speaker 2: So based on what you just said, the adoption of ERP is usually motivated by the 2nd generation or the next gen?

Speaker 1: I can say the 2nd generation often come with the new blood, new ideas as they are IT enabled and so on and so forth. This isn't always the case, it varies enormously but I do see a trend that things stall and stagnate as the parents get older and they've been in the industry and are more relaxed to change and then the next generation comes in within the family and inject the life but struggle to make the change due to no budget or no approval to do so.

Speaker 2: You focused on succession as the main motivator in SFBs, does growth influence ERP usage?

Speaker 1: It does but it's very difficult to generalise on this. If you have a very successful and growing business, that started as a family business then inevitably what's happening there is they would expand, they would probably get further external investments and would become less of a family-owned small business and more of a SME with a director styled organisation. Where the natural growth of that business means they tend to start investing in enhanced ERP systems. Then you've got the others that perhaps have not necessarily grown that much but they stayed at the 10-50 employees, father-owned business. The son comes in and then suddenly wants to turn the 50 employees into 500 employees in 6 months. Looks at the market, comes with massive ideas and enthusiasms but needs to convince the original founders of the business to make the change. Because they've probably been living without ERP and doing ok but just frankly not changing much. Trying to get them to change can be a bit of a hurdle for the 2nd generation.

Speaker 2: The needs are usually broad, but can you pinpoint like a usual ERP need for SFBs?

Speaker 1: If I look at the companies that have grown i.e. those that are not relying on the second generation. In other words, those that have grown inherently, the need for ERP tends to come when they are looking at coming away from just core financial system and they are looking at CRM, perhaps they are expanding into documentation, document management, invoice scanning, work flows, expanding beyond just the financial installations.

Speaker 2: So operational needs usually don't motivate usage?

Speaker 1: Sometimes its operational needs, situation where people are taking on new clients, they look for enhanced functionalities in order to manage those. For example, we deal in the pharmaceutical firms a lot and when you get to certain size you need to obtain certain approvals from the body that would force you to upgrade your systems. It can be customer led asin the customers demanding them, it can be technology led where people need to upgrade to keep up with technology being new work flow systems as `businesses expand. Or it can be the almost the almost up led, so if I look at the smaller market place we are talking about here i.e. 10-50 succession driven ones, they tend to not invest, they get very out of date, they get caught in a technology trap where they can't replace equipment because their software is so old and then the new blood comes in and they try to change the world straight away. Part of the trend that I see so often and I am very cautious in that area cos when that happens and I get those call from the son, and I get them on a regular basis, I have to be careful cos in the nicest way and the best enthusiasm in the world, they can waist a lot of our time sometimes.

Speaker 2: Is that majorly due to the knowledge they have?

Speaker 1: It can be due to the level of knowledge they have, they understand the academic side of it but not the practicalities but it is the reluctance of the owners in this case often mother and father to invest in something they sort of think it's been doing alright for years.

Speaker 2: You mentioned several aspects of the ERP, how exactly would ERP contribute to say financial management, documentation or other aspects of the business?

Speaker 1: what I would suggest is the understanding of this incredibly broad subject of what is ERP, some people started off with a poor financial solution just purely doing sales invoicing, accounting, cash book, their day to day profit and loss balance shit enough to allow them to trade. some companies would consider that as an ERP system, but in reality I'd call that a financial system but as the companies evolve, they come around to say I'd like a solution where when an invoice comes in, rather than manually enter it into the system and then pass it around, I want to get that invoice in and then get that routed out on a workflow via emails and notifications. People get the request into their inbox and start introducing work flow control etc. That in my mind is where a financial system turns into an ERP system. But that is a very broad explanation of the ERP, like saying what a cloud is. Everyone has a different interpretation of what ERP is.

Speaker 2: What would the contribution of ERP be to other resource management?

Speaker 1: If we expand it to ERP then we will be talking about better management of communication i.e. who has spoken to whom what, when and what emails came in and out. That is what a CRM application which forms a part of a company-wide ERP. We could then have a document management which tend to turn a core financial system to more of an ERP system. Each unit for the company sometimes it could be contact management, communication management, document management, it depends entirely on the company.

Speaker 2: thank you very much for your contribution, is there anything else you would like add to what FBs should do in terms of ERP usage or how they could better benefit from the ERP system?

Speaker 1: What I would advise and is a tricky scenario for any business. A lot of businesses wait till they grow beyond the need of an ERP system before deploying it and what it really means is companies will often put off making the investment in time and money on deploying the ERP system until they are so busy as a result of not having it that they haven't got the time to then deploy it. So it's really a case of, and it is a difficult one, but companies need to identify their growth and start investing in appropriate systems before the need for those systems become so overwhelming that they no longer got time to deploy them. It is a bit like getting a car serviced before it actually breaks down and not afterwards. It is always going to be more controlled and cheaper that they do because otherwise, businesses start to deteriorate and fails in trying to continue with their old legacy systems and only when they start to fail they sometimes realise that they should have made the investment 6months ago or 12 months ago.

Speaker 2: So they should identify the need before it actually goes out of control?

Speaker 1: Yeah, I think a lot of people would see rapid expansion and be so interested in the short term expansion and growth of their business that they are not realising that if it continues and within 3months, it's going to be unsustainable. Anybody running business that was doing that would always look at cash, that are not going to run out of cash or you hope that you do. But they don't look at the system to sort of say am I going run out of capability, functionality and sometimes people would just put normal spreadsheets, more and people to pop up an old system only to realise that it is costing them a lot of money and hindering their growth. It is somehow like trying to get companies to identify the benefits of these solutions before they need the urgent fix as opposed to applied implementation.

Speaker 2: That would then lead us to another question, how would you advice experts or businesses to get to know the benefits of ERP

Speaker 1: it is always a very difficult one. A lot of consultants tend to go out and evangelate, if you like, the benefits of ERP and then they tend to get involved in putting together requirements, documents, and so on and so forth. the danger there is that, actually most of the time, the result of that is that these consultants will I suppose invite the customer to put forward every single wish and demand, request that they would like in a perfect world. Turn that into 1 requirement document send it out to providers and finally, when that comes in we have to just ignore them because the request that are made are so ridiculous and it's not just possible and so it almost makes us as a partner or company run a lot of seminar activities, newsletter activities, trying to somehow get companies to somehow engage with ERP providers earlier so they can be more controlled. But getting external consultants in to put together what I call a kid in a candy shop, like take a kid to a candy shop and tell them they can have whatever they want and its all free. The result is, the consultants charge the companies a huge amount of money only to find that what they put on the requirement document, no system in the world can actually deliver. And we do find an increasing trend of people trying to capitalise on this need and frankly not do a very good job of it. So it needs almost what I would call local business networks like business links, `chambers of commerce etc to run more workshops to introduce ERP providers and get them engaged with these businesses at an earlier stage before the businesses start to expand and then start to crumble with a lack of functionalities.

Speaker 2: Would cases of other businesses that have succeeded with the ERP system be of any benefit to other family businesses?

Speaker 1: We keep referring to family businesses but there are not many examples of these companies that did invest and have from say 500k income to 50-60 million companies in 10 years. But there is a trend that you can see where those that have made that early investment tends to be the ones that succeed.

Speaker 2: Thank you very much, you have been really helpful.

Speaker 1: No problems, I wish you all the best with your thesis and if you have any other question don't hesitate to call back. All the best with your report.

Speaker 2: Bye bye.

APPENDIX 3B: EXPERT C2'S INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Speaker 1: Your position in the company in the company

Speaker 2: I am an ERP consultant for SMEs

Speaker1: Can you tell me your understanding of the ERP system, please

Speaker 2: An ERP system stands for Enterprise Resource Planning. An ERP system is a very broad term and it could be a business-wide resource planning, to manufacturing or other business solutions. It's term and its limits are usually defined by the needs of the business, especially in SMEs

Speaker 1: Could you describe your role in relation to the ERP system

Speaker 2: My role is to help SMEs through the adoption and implementation of the ERP system. As a consultant I assess the ERP requirements of SMEs and advise them on possible ERP offerings. I do not just give a list of ambiguous ERP benefits as some others do but I connect them to providers that could help them achieve those benefits. I also coach or guide them through implementation and post-implementation.

Speaker 1: You said you connect businesses with providers; do you have specific ERP providers or vendors you represent?

Speaker 2: I actually do not represent any provider in particular but based on over 10 years of working with SMEs and different providers, I know what different providers offer and which ones would best serve my clients (SMEs).

Speaker 1: Ok, is there a specific area of ERP benefit you focus on?

Speaker 2: NO, there isn't. I do not have specific ERP benefits I focus on, the ERP offerings or benefits are determined by SME needs or requirements

Speaker 1: ok, does dealing with SMEs mean you have dealt with retail SFBs?

Speaker 2: Most SMEs I have seen often start out as family businesses but evolve into more of board of director's type of business as they grow. The bigger this Family Businesses get, the lesser the family control. So, I would classify the Small businesses as Family Businesses and not the larger ones or the so-called Medium sized businesses. But yes, we deal with retail Small family businesses

Speaker 1: So far, based on your experience, how would you describe retail Small family business usage of the ERP system and is it different from other businesses?

Speaker 2: Talking about the very small businesses are different like the ones with nil to 9 or more employees, then they mostly engage with very small applications which may not be classified as ERP. But the so-called medium businesses, which most times have started to lose the family influence, then we are looking at the more advanced ERP systems. The kind of ERP that can sometimes be compared to that of the very large businesses.

Speaker 1: Ok, what about the businesses with 10-50 employees?

Speaker 2: Not a lot of these businesses 10-50 employee use the ERP system but from my experience, one of the big challenges to them is that the father would found the business then the son would come in most times after going through a level of education. The original owners are often not interested but then the younger generation comes into the business and want to improve the business and decides the company needs ERP system. But the parents often cannot just see how technology can benefit the business. The ERP drive often stops at

this stage for most of these Small Family Businesses. The younger generation often do not get the level of support they hoped for from the original owners.

Speaker 1: So based on what you just said, the usage of ERP is usually motivated by the next gen?

Speaker 2: what I can say is that there is a trend that the next gen as you called it bring the ERP idea to business due to their knowledge of it from school but the parents often do not see a need for ERP as they've been in the industry and survived for a long time, they are more relaxed to change. But with Family Businesses you cannot be sure of anything as there are often exceptions.

Speaker 1: Does growth influence ERP usage?

Speaker 2: Growth does influence ERP usage but what we often see is that as the businesses grow external investors come in and the family influence reduces. What happens at this point is that business needs rather than family preferences dictate the adoption of technology. But the ones that remain small the pattern is usually the same. Due to the legacy system that the parents believe have worked, it is usually difficult for the next gen to get the business into ERP usage. Even when such person decides to go on, they either out-rightly disapprove or withhold the budget, they just do not often give their support in any way. This often frustrates consultants and ERP providers as we end up wasting a lot of time putting things together for companies that are not willing.

Speaker 1: the needs are usually broad, can you pinpoint like a usual ERP need for retail SFBs?

Speaker 2: As I have said before, there are few examples of Small Family Businesses using the ERP system but looking at the medium ones. ERP is very broad and the benefits are far reaching. A manufacturing firm for example may need MRP, CRM, financial systems, distribution etc while the retail businesses may require documentations, invoicing, CRM etc. it could depend on the industry or the type of business and their situation. But the SFBs we are talking about, they are sometimes found with out-dated systems which often draw them back and stall growth. At this point I should note that consultants are usually careful dealing with these type of businesses as they often come, seek advice and after devoting time to them, they end up not adopting the system.

Speaker 1: Is that majorly due to the knowledge or just unwillingness?

Speaker 2: It can be due to the level of knowledge they have, the sons often understand the academic of ERP, that is the general part they were taught in school but it is often difficult for them to pick out exactly how that would translate practically into the business. It is the reluctance of the owners to invest in something they think is of no use to them. And yes, the inability of the sons to convince them may be a factor.

Speaker 1: You mentioned several aspects of operational benefits of ERP, how exactly could ERP contribute to management in retail SFBs?

Speaker 2: Clearly, the ERP system can contribute to management but the managerial needs of businesses could vary, depending on their management style or other things. Some businesses would want a general better management of business while some may just be interested in decision making. Most businesses are often interested in financial management. Of course, ERP can benefit the business in all different ways but, again, it depends largely on how ERP is viewed by the different businesses and the kind of support they get.

Speaker 1: Is there anything else you would like add to how SFBs could better benefit from the ERP system?

Speaker 2: Businesses often wait for growth to happen before they see the need for an advanced system like the need of an ERP system. It is important as a lot of companies may experience unprecedented growth and be so interested in the growth and profit that they are not realising that if it continues, it may go out of control and become unsustainable. It is important that companies identify the benefits of ERP before the urgent need becomes a problem for the business. Although, this is difficult especially with small businesses but it is important for businesses to start identifying the benefits of systems before the need for those systems become so overwhelming that they no longer have the patience or time to wait for its implementation. In my experience, businesses have come to us after the legacy system crashed as a result of an overload and business had to shut down pending the deployment of an advanced system. In most cases, the companies after seeing how ERP has helped their business comes back to talk about their regrets of not deploying it a while back.

Speaker 1: How best can these businesses get to identify the exact benefits of ERP early enough?

Speaker 2: It is always a very difficult one as these businesses are not very open. A lot of experts tend to be unwilling to engage with these businesses due to the difficulties faced getting them to understand the system. That is not to say there are not cases when the implementation process went smoothly with maximum support but it is uncommon. What can be done, I don't know how, is to get the businesses to engage more especially with trusted consultants that would give them the exact benefits of ERP to their business and create a link with providers that can deliver the benefits. I mentioned trusted consultants because some consultants as a result of not doing a good job of giving factual ERP benefits discourage ERP usage by the few willing small companies when they are not the generic benefits are not achievable with their business.

Speaker 1: Would cases of other businesses that have succeeded with the ERP system be of any benefit to other SFBs?

Speaker 2: Well, there are many cases of businesses which experienced tremendous unhindered growth after the deployment of ERP but as I cannot say there are no examples of such companies using ERP as we have dealt with some in the past. But I mentioned earlier that there are not so many examples which can be looked upon to serve as inspiration for other Small Family Businesses. I personally do not see how such examples could help if the case does not specifically address the business.

Speaker 1: Thank you very much for your time, you have been really helpful.

Speaker 2: Do have a good day

APPENDIX 3C: EXPERT C3'S INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Researcher: It is clear there are different modules of ERP to serve different purposes depending on the business needs. It is also known that family businesses are unique and so are their managerial and strategic needs.

I am interested in finding out, based on your experience, the ERP requirements of manufacturing family SMBs and seek to understand if these needs are different from that of non-family SMBs

C3: Mukhtar, ERP is generally much different for family businesses. For instance a mature third generation family business will tend to have the support staff and has the financial resources to support an ERP program. A first generation family business may not have the infrastructure in place – or have competing needs for limited financial resources. Do they buy a new CNC machine or invest in more trucks or invest in an ERP system – generally the decision to buy an ERP system is put off.

Ironically having/not having an ERP system is a Catch 22 type of situation. Having the ERP system will allow the business to grow in size and profits more quickly – but buying the ERP system may be much lower on the “needs assessment” in terms of limited capital.

In my experience, it is not uncommon for the decision to use ERP to be driven by the Nexters – the next generation of family business leadership/ownership

Researcher: Thank you for the response.

You mentioned that ERP usage could mean quick business growth in size and profit, can you elaborate on how ERP could help a family business grow, especially a manufacturing family business?

C3: ERP = infrastructure = analytics = better informed (connected) decisions in all aspects of the manufacturing process (operational efficiency and effectiveness), marketing & sales (customer acquisition and retention) and better management of financial resources.

Researcher: Thank you again.

You mentioned financial management, can ERP, in any way, contribute to Human Resource Management in these companies?

Don: the “benefits” of ERP mentioned in the previous email are “hard” benefits. The HR benefits are soft benefits and of lessor importance to the management of the family business until the business has a reached the size to have the number of employees to justify an HR department vs. a Personnel Dept...

Researcher: Also, you earlier mentioned that ERP usage in Family Businesses could depend on the generation of the business. Based on your experience, could this be different in other locations of the world e.g. the United Kingdom or it is a general view of family businesses?

C3: The US was the first country to start research on family business – and over the years as other countries started to better research/understand the dynamics of a family business, the stats are remarkably similar to those of the US.

Each month our web site hosts visitors from more than 100 different countries. That level of interest indicates to us that the issues involved in a family business transcends borders and cultures.

Researcher: Thank you very much.

Lastly, having talked about the benefits of ERP to manufacturing family businesses; How, in your opinion, could family businesses be made aware of ERP as a necessity and not just a luxury? OR contrary to general believe, the ERP software is not just for all businesses?

C3: When a non-family business is investing in ERP it is the corporation's money that is being spent. In a family business, it is the family's money that is being spent. That's a big difference in the decision making process. It is one of the reasons family-businesses tend to be risk adverse re making technology investments.

Selling services to a family-owned business is very difficult. But when a family business owner comes to us from our web site, they make the best clients. That is why we give so much “free” information – it helps build trust and the relationship.

One way for creating awareness about ERP and retail family-owned businesses – for you to recommend the ERP sections on our web site... Our web pages are written in a simple, straightforward, non-technical way and that appeal to those folks who are beginning to be better informed/gathering info about ERP.

APPENDIX 4: THE CASE STUDIES

APPENDIX 4A: CASE STUDY 1

APPENDIX 4A i: FAMILY MANAGER'S INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Speaker 1: Can you tell me your role in the company?

Speaker 2: In the company, I am the owner. The owner, me and my brothers. Our parents started it like many years ago. We divided the branches when we took over and I own this place.

Speaker 1: Do you have just family members working?

Speaker 2: Yes, different people also work here

Speaker 1: So how do you manage your staff i.e. know who is working and who is not?

Speaker 2: Am here, I keep an eye on them. I am always around, if I am not around my cousin will be here to check them.

Speaker 1: What are the activities that go on from opening till when you close?

Speaker 2: Ok, in the closing time you say?

Speaker 1: From the morning till closing time?

Speaker 2: These are products that sell every time so people walk in and out to buy. Staff members are in different sections, some at the till, butcher section, arranging products on the shelf.

Speaker 1: How often do customers come in to buy products?

Speaker 2: People come in every time but the busy time is usually in the afternoon time like from 11 o'clock till 4 o'clock is busy time. Morning time is not very busy.

Speaker 1: If a customer wants to buy a product, what is the process?

Speaker 2: When customers pick items from the shelf it is just like Asda and Tesco. They go to the till and make payment.

Speaker 1: How is the payment processed at the till?

Speaker 2: It is manual; I have a system in the store but in the other store it is manual. The payment is taken and entered into the system here. It includes the scaling system

Speaker 1: Can you tell me how the system works?

Speaker 2: The system is a straight forward system, it is connected to each other and connected to the server. So there is a management of this.

Speaker 1: So is it used just for sales?

Speaker 2: Yes, it is used for sales.

Speaker 1: so what else does the system do?

Speaker 2: the system has many functions but most of it is not for us but stores like Morrison. There are many options but I use like 30-40%.

Speaker 1: Do you know the name of the system?

Speaker 2: the system is provided by a company called DBA and I am paying premium quarterly

Speaker 1: how old did you say the company is?

Speaker 2: the company started doing a different kind of business a long time ago but doing this kind of business, it is 15 to 20 years now

Speaker 1: Where do you picture the company in the next few years?

Speaker 2: Actually, the company has grown, it was like 200 to 300 customers coming in but now you can see it has doubled, not even double it has tripled. hahahaha. So many people coming in this business as well, some people think we won't survive but we keep growing and in years to come we will still be growing

Speaker 1: When did you start using the system you use for sales now?

Speaker 2: there are different systems, like for security and others. a lot of systems have been introduced to me but I didn't pick it. This system is updated every year.

Speaker 1: How are decisions made in the business?

Speaker 2: I definitely make the decisions. I am here and I make all decisions.

Speaker 1: Other family members do not have a say in how decisions are made?

Speaker 2: Supposing we have a big problem then we can discuss but I manage here and I make the decisions.

Speaker 1: What is your position in the family?

Speaker 2: We have three branches in Manchester and I manage here while my brothers manage the other two. I am not the eldest but we make the decisions for our different branches

Speaker 1: Does the system manage financial records as well?

Speaker 2: No no no, I have solicitors that take care of financial documents and records because it is difficult to do everything yourself so I allow solicitors handle financial records in case any problems.

Speaker 1: How would you react to a system that would help automate your business processes?

Speaker 2: listen, this business is difficult to do with systems because products come in every week. Like so many products, u know, when we bring it we know in two weeks we have to replace. So it is not easy to use a system for the business.

Speaker 1: Are you saying it is not easy for a system to help you manage the movement of products?

Speaker 2: You know it is not a business like Best way, you know Best way they do containers. My container is supposed to come in, but we don't do containers here.

Speaker 1: You are saying even as the business grows the legacy system would remain

Speaker 2: yeah, yeah

Speaker 1: Ok, is there anything you would like to say on the challenges you have faced?

Speaker 2: Challenges, u know when you face a challenge you try to make a solution.

Speaker 1: Can you give examples of such challenges?

Speaker 2: this type of business, it is difficult to know what people want and what kind of good u are supposed to bring without the experience. Suppose you open a shop and u bring a container of Arabic food and you don't have Arabic customers that mean you will lose. Unless you understand the customers then you understand what kind of goods you need in the store. Otherwise you will sell same buyers, same item then you will be losing them.

Speaker 1: Talking about customers, how do you know your customers and what they want?

Speaker 2: Ah, we don't have any like online system. Sometimes people normally come to the store and they discuss this thing we need it or price.

Speaker 1: Ok, the information you get from customers how have you used it for business?

Speaker 2: definitely, it is gona help improve business. I keep my eye on that side that was complained about, and I tell my staff to keep an eye as well. Customers are important to us, don't give a chance to get a customer angry.

Speaker 1: Do you have any kind of service you render to customers as a kind of competitive edge over other stores?

Speaker 2: Price is the main thing, we need to keep an eye on the price. Like Morrisons selling an item for £5 and you are selling £10, you need to compete on price. Sometimes

maybe you are losing because Morrison and Lidl buy in containers. Anyway Morrison items and my items are completely different. They are not selling those items that we sell.

Speaker 1: How often do you count your stock?

Speaker 2: Deliveries come in two weeks. I know when a pallet is gona finish so we count like ones a month. We don't count like every day because we deal with different companies and different products come in every time.

Speaker 1: Like how many staff members do you have?

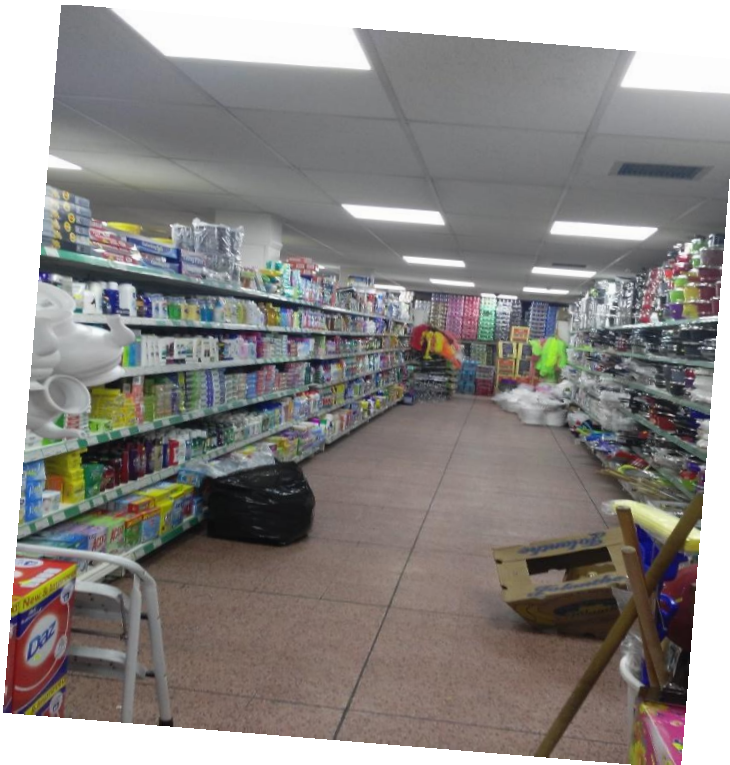
Speaker 2: it depends, you know sometimes when it comes to labourers, we want to give good service to the customers. Sometimes it i svery busy and we have like 15-20 but sometimes 12.

Speaker 1: Is there anything you will like to add?

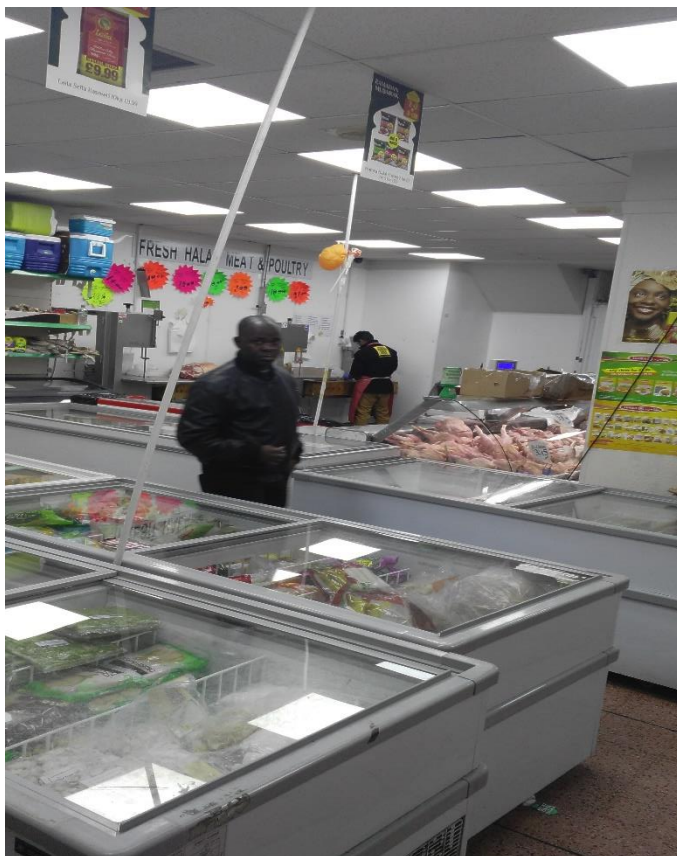
Speaker 2: Ah, you know it is not like something nobody can do. Anybody can do business. You should dedicate the time and patience to the business. Even if there is no customer the business should still be open. That is when they know the business is there. If you close 3 days and open 3 days customers will not come.

Speaker 1: Thank you very much for your time and the information shared.

APPENDIX 4A ii: SOME CASE 1'S PICTURES



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Butcher section

APPENDIX 4B: CASE STUDY 2

APPENDIX 4B i: FAMILY MEMBER'S INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Speaker 1: What are your product offerings?

Speaker 2: We deal in products like rice, spaghetti, and noodles.

Speaker 1: How can you describe your customers?

Speaker 2: We have wholesalers, retailers and final consumers as customers

Speaker 1: How can you describe the business activities on a typical day between opening and closing hours?

Speaker 2: Ok, the first thing in the morning, ehn, stock taking. No, the first thing is to pray in the morning. After that we take the stock, then cleaning of the environment. If we have anything to tell the staff, we gather them and give them the piece of information we have for them.

Speaker 1: Is that for the whole day or just in the morning?

Speaker 2: Then if we need to supply the customers ehn. Because there are some customers ehm, that we use to convey the good to. So the staff will load the goods to the vehicle and deliver the goods to the customer.

Speaker 1: Do you offer delivery service to all customers?

Speaker 2: Some, some customers

Speaker 1: ok, can you give a brief history of the company?

Speaker 2: ehnn, the business started about 21, no 20 years ago. That was in 1996 with a little some of money and with the grace of God and the cooperation of the family members it has been growing gradually. We started with rice and beans, with little bags, ehn. Few `bags of rice and beans, thats what we started with. But with the grace of God and the cooperation of the family members, it has been growing gradually.

Speaker 1: Does that mean the business is a family-owned business?

Speaker 2: it is a family business, it is funded and managed by the family members.

Speaker 1: Can you describe how a product is sold i.e. if I want to be a product, say rice, from you, how do I go about ?

Speaker 2: If you want to buy from us, ehn? ehn, you can on phone to confirm the price and make payment to the bank so we deliver to you. But the prices have been fluctuating so it may be difficult to fix a price as it may change before the payment is actually made. So you will have to come into our store and if you want us to bring it to you. Like ifn you want to

buy from 10 bags, you can request to pay directly into bank account and after seeing the alert or a confirmation of payment, we will then load the goods and arrange the delivery. or you can pay cash in the store and request for delivery.

Speaker 1: Do you use any kind of technology or system in processing sales?

Speaker 2: Technology? for now everything is manual.

Speaker 1: How do you go about stock management?

Speaker 2: We take stock in the morning and at the closing hour, hmm. Ah, the stock taking is manual!

Speaker 1: How can you describe the level of accuracy, energy expended and time taken to take stock record?

Speaker 2: It is always accurate and does not require any stress as it is what we do everyday.

Speaker 1: You kept talking about customers, how often do you get feedback from them?

Speaker 2: They used to tell us any information that help the company move forward. They tell on phone and some would come into the store to tell us. if they have any complaint they will come into the store and tell us.

Speaker 1: Do you have any online presence?

Speaker 2: We have a company website and some customers lodge complains through the website and company emails. Some also make enquiries and drop any feedbacks through this medium.

Speaker 1: Based on your 20 years' experience, how would you say the feedbacks have contributed to the company?

Speaker 2: it's been helping us because we used to work on whatever feedback the customers tell us and it had been helpful. Like if there is any complaint about any member of staff, we will need to invite such staff and train them on how to better relate with customers. And if he or she doesn't yield the advice, we send him or her away.

Speaker 1: Talking about employee management, how do you check the performances of the employees?

Speaker 2: ehahn, we use to watch them and their relationship with customers. You know there are some that are of bad behaviour and do not have good customer relation. Some will just be there not willing to do anything. They will just down and listen to whatever they have on their phone. But we used to check them and correct them sometimes.

Speaker 1: How do you know which ones are not willing to work i.e. is there a way you assess them?

Speaker 2: We can easily know that, hmmm, we can easily get that.

Speaker 1: You mentioned that you have more than one branch, how do you cope with the management of the branches?

Speaker 2: We visit the outlets at least twice a day and that makes the management of staff and finances easy. We will be there for some time to observe what is going on and check how much sales has been made. Check their stock on daily basis. At times they lie about the stock but because you cannot rely on them solely, we go there to check the stock by ourselves. They will tell you that they know what happens if anything is missing but they all have to pay for it and that is irrespective of who did what

Speaker 1: How do you go about decision making in the business?

Speaker 2: We seek advice from the staff members if any decision is to be made but the final decision is always made by the Managing Director, the head of the family.

Speaker 1: What would you say the business challenges are, based on your 20 year experience?

Speaker 2: the main challenge is with the staff as there are no permanent staff. Even if they intend to be permanent, because of their wayward attitude, they will not stay. If someone should steal your good or money, there is no way keeping such staff. You will just let the person go. Prices of goods are unstable this days, it keeps going almost on weekly basis. if you sell something today, you may not be able to buy at that price tomorrow. SO whatever gain you think you have made may go into buying at a higher price the next time.

Speaker 1: Considering the market you are in, how would you rate your market position in comparison to competitors?

Speaker 2: I don't think we are competing with anybody. We are just a small business and there are bigger companies but I don't think we are competing. Customers will look for where good are cheaper but I don't think it is competition because the buying price would dictate the selling price.

Speaker 1: Looking at the business since 1996 till date, the business has grown over time till the point it is today, where do you see the business in the next 10 years?

Speaker 2: Based on where it is today and the special grace of God, it will be where it is today. By then, we believe the business growth would be dictated by the use of technology. We expect everything to have been computerised.

Speaker 1: What do you intend technology to do for the business?

Speaker 2: We want technology to help with stock taking, to be able to use the POS machine for sales processing, that is what we are looking at for now.

Speaker 1: Do you intend to manage finances with the technology?

Speaker 2: That is part of why we need technology to manage sales and stock, we will also like technology to help monitor the performances of our staff members.

Speaker 1: Is there anything else you would like add to what has been said about the business?

Speaker 2: I don't think there is anything, I think we have talked about everything but if there is any further questions you can contact us.

APPENDIX 4C: CASE STUDY 3

APPENDIX 4C i: FAMILY MANAGER'S INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Speaker 1: Thank you for honouring my invitation and signing the consent form. We will just go straight to the questions

Speaker 1: How best can you describe this company in terms of product offerings?

Speaker 2: Ok, the company could be described as a limited company with trade in continental foods, commonly known as African food. But here we are not just based on African foods but we also deal in off-license, European Arabic and foods from different parts of the world. That is how I can describe this company. We also deal in groceries. These are the things we do in this store.

Speaker 1: Tell me a bit about the company's history

Speaker 2: The company came to be in 2015. I started this business and it is through an insight in a way. I finished my studies 2014 and following challenges, my brother gave me an idea and it was through the idea that I started this company. When I used to visit my brother who trades in a small business like a corner shop around here. He told me that this area needed a big shop like cash and carry in this form because there was known. He said the shop should involve everything we are doing here, like the butcher and everything we are doing here. Looking at it, it was a fact, I did my masters in Pharmacology and Drug discovery. After looking at the potentials in the business as my brother explained, I deemed it interesting to come into the business. I was helped by the family to fund and start the business. It took a while to establish the business and get it to this level. From October 2015 when we found the shop to rent, I had to develop support because it used to be furniture shop. It was a big struggle to get it running. The business has consumed a lot of fund which has all been provided by family members. Dealing in a lot of products, it has not been easy sourcing the different products so I had to employ an external manager with vast experience in the area of business. That has made it easy to source the products, otherwise it could not have been possible to be in this level.

Speaker 1: You have indeed come a long way within a very short time. Whilst you were talking I have been able to pick out your position as the founder or CEO of this company. Can you explain what your roles are as the CEO of the company

Speaker 2: At the moment, because of the financial challenges talking about wages, I have not been able to employ as much people to enable me distribute people to different departments. So at the moment, I employed few (12) employees which the company can afford to pay at the moment. I work with other members of staff to oversee everything going on in the area. I am spending more of my time in the shop to ensure that every sector is working alright. My duty mainly is to give directives, so according to our daily activities I play a role in every aspect of it. *If I had* bought an existing business it would be easier to assign people to sections or departments. But at the moment the initiatives to run the business is coming from me. So I need to be present almost all the time during the running hours of this business to decide and direct on the necessary things to be done and how it should be done.

Speaker 1: I can see its been challenging. Can you describe a typical day's activities in the company

Speaker 2: The business trading hours is from 7 am to 11 pm because we have off-license departments here. The activities that go on everyday is that the whole departments open by 7 am. The alcohol department and other departments including the butcher department opens by this time and trading starts. But by 8 pm the butcher section closes not by any limitation or government regulations but because that is how much I can pay the people working in this section. Every other trading continues till 11 pm for 6 days. But the opening hour is different for Sundays, the store opens by 10 am on Sundays.

Speaker 1: Dealing with a lot of products, how do you manage your stock?

Speaker 2: At the moment we have not starting taking stock because we are still introducing more products. So generally it is done on daily basis. The ones we are particular about for now are the perishable products like vegetables. Due to their perishable nature, we monitor the stock closely so as to know which ones have been sold and the ones that are going off (perishing). We record the vegetable stocks every evening before closing. When the stock is low we buy new products to ensure that we do not run out, almost on a daily basis. In other dry products we take them ones or twice in a week because we are still introducing more prodcuts. So we ensure that we restock every week.

Speaker 1: Is the stock taking done manually?

Speaker 2: No, we have got the scanners which is connected to the system. We move the scanner around in the shop so any product going short, we scan it and check the quantity in the shop. SO when a product arrives we take the record of such product and input it into the system. For example, if it bread, we say the bread is 5 pieces and when it goes to say 2 or 3 we use system to check how many has been sold or how many we've lost and how many is left in the store. Because we sometimes lose products in the store. It helps us determine if we have lost a product or if the product has actually been sold, the price they are sold for and who sold such product. Because it has to be in the system like that. to show that if the product was sold by so so hour by so so staff.

Speaker 1: You mentioned a system that you use, can you explain how the system works?

Speaker 2: The system is called an EPOS system. It has an integrated scale whereby even other unscanned products can be in the system in kilos and according to the selling price. It interpretes in the system, what you have sold. The system has the record of every product we bring into the store. We access and input the new products at the back office and it reflects on the till. What we use on the till is mostly for processing sales and other customer enquiries. But at the back office, we have the assessment of what we have input into the system and what has been sold. It can also be done at the till but the easiest place to do it is at the back office due to the volume sales that always go on at the till. It will not be proper to stop someone serving customers at the till to start processing all this so we do it at the back office. The system tells you the product that was brought in, who put the record in the system and at the of the day if any product has gone down and we need to buy more, we check through the system. That is the management aspect of it.

Speaker 1: SO that takes care of every product sold and coming in?

Speaker 2: yes

Speaker 1: Talking about the customers, how often do you get feedbacks from customers?

Speaker 2: We get feedbacks on a daily basis

Speaker 1: How do you get the feedbacks?

Speaker 2: Some customers voluntarily come in to talk about the product they bought. Some people come to you to tell you a product is cheaper elsewhere. Some in fact explain that they understand the situation as being new but advice on how to get the products at a cheaper rate. Some as well come in acknowledgement of buying a cheaper product or buying a product of better quality than the competitors. At the moment it is because of the feedback of the customers to bring in all the vegetables. Because it is like a tradition for businesses like this one to put all their vegetables outside. But we have worked on customers' feedbacks through our enquiries to bring our vegetables into the store. We have more customers advising that it is more hygienic to do the vegetables inside the store than outside.

Speaker 1: that was done as a result of customer feedbacks and not for regulation purposes.

Speaker 1: I have to take you back to the software, why did you decide to use a software?

Speaker 2: Government regulation is partly why we use a software but it is not a rule that businesses must use software for sales, stock or financial management. taxes are paid for trading and for you to be able to pay your tax rightly, you need to show your full account to the tax man. So there is no way you can give an accurate account of sales without such software, especially considering the amount of trading that go on. The system also helps keep the record of transactions done with the customers. Someone might come back after buying but if you have processed such sales manually, it will be difficult to remember such customer or recall the transaction. But the customer provides the receipt, all the information can be recalled from the system and deal with the queries appropriately.

Speaker 1: Do you deal with order delivery?

Speaker 2: yes, on customer request we deliver their products and we have got a purchase limit. Any customer within the range of 14 miles from the shop who must have shopped over £50 should, on request, get free delivery.

Speaker 1: Why are you doing this?

Speaker 2: it is a way of getting customer interest and competing with others in the market. Because some of the people doing the same business around have not got such facility.

Speaker 1: How do you go about the delivery?

Speaker 2: the company has a car and a driver who we assign such duty to. We do all deliveries by 4 pm, but if the delivery needs to be earlier than that, the customer should have discussed it and make special arrangement. The order delivery is processed manually.

Speaker 1: You mentioned at the beginning that even though you found the business, it is more of family business in terms of financial contribution, do you have any say or make decisions for the business?

Speaker 2: The business is my own business and not theirs. They have come in as a financial backing to support my initiative. Because they are not into the business they do not know what goes on with the business. They only support financially and add general ideas or advice on improving the business. The major person within the family supporting this business is also into other businesses but not in this field so he has a general knowledge about business but not in this field. SO when it comes to general challenges relating to business he always gives advice but does not make the decisions.

Speaker 1: Considering the competition and other stores around, how would you place your store in comparison to others?

Speaker 2: I would say the store is competing very well with others because we deal in some products that come mainly from my own country. When it comes to the UK, the people from my country are not into this trade but others from other continents are the ones into such business. But these people do not have a vast knowledge of the product. They only identify the products by name while I can identify them by quality and other means of identification. We are already doing well because it is easier for us to source the products than it is for those that were into it before. We also source the products cheaper than others do. I can say the business is in a position of a market leader.

Speaker 1: Based on how the business has been in the last year, where do you picture the business in the next few years?

Speaker 2: In the next few years I expect the business to have given birth to many other ones within the UK. I also expect the growth and expansion of the business to attract more people from my side who own the products to come into the market and excel.

Speaker 1: How are you planning for such growth?

Speaker 2: Planning for such growth is simple. As the business is growing financially and it has different branches, more people would be employed to source more products as it is done now. The additional labour force would also help process some products better than it is done now. More branches would be opened up in other areas in the UK.

Speaker 1: Before the business grows to that point, do you think the system you use now would still be useful at that time?

Speaker 2: Because the business is still growing we have not experienced any limitations or challenges with this system but over time as the business grows other things would be introduced and by then we can then start to figure out the limitations of this system. By then we may need a more advanced system to be able to cope with the growth.

Speaker 1: Talking about the challenges, can you discuss some challenges the business is facing at the moment?

Speaker 2: As a new business, we have been facing lots of challenges. In general, as we deal in fresh products we tend to lose many products such as the vegetable. We tend not to profit from these products but we cannot stop it due to customer demands. but are trying to reduce the loss over time. Another challenge is financial challenge. A lot of bills are involved in running a business like this. Coping with the financial demands of the business with the income generated at the moment is a big challenge. The people employed needs to be paid and paying them and other bills could sometimes mean that you run at loss. so we are trying to source more funds.

Speaker 1: Are you likely to allow investment from outside the family into the business?

Speaker 2: At the moment we are not looking at external investment but advertising the business so as to probably double our sales and be able to cover our bills.

Speaker 1: Would you like to add other things to what has been said so far?

Speaker 2: There is nothing more to say but I would like to advice others to come into business. I finished my masters in 2014 but I did not sit down to start waiting for employment. Everybody who has been to school should not wait for a job in their field. Business is always a way to go as no specialised knowledge is required to excel in business. Even though challenges would be encountered, with determination you will succeed and even contribute to the society.

Speaker 1: Thank you for letting me into your business and sharing so much information with me. It is very much appreciated.

APPENDIX 4Cii: CASE STUDY 3'S ERP DOCUMENT

EPOS Software

Overview

Boost the efficiency of your retail store and provide great customer service

- A **flexible, scalable** solution that supports any number of retail sites, both local and remote to the central ERP system
- Option to integrate with easy-to-use **touch screen technology**, reducing processing time
- Allocate individual users a secure password and configure various **levels of access** to system features
- **Identify and profile customers**, plus process orders against stock held within other stores and warehouses within the EPOS terminal



Quick sales

Improve the efficiency of your retail stores with De Facto®

APPENDIX 4C iii: SOME IMAGES FROM CASE STUDY 3



3's

general

One of case
isles



Butcher's section

Part of the

APPENDIX 4E: CASE STUDY 5

APPENDIX 4E i: CASE STUDY 5'S FAMILY MANAGER'S INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Speaker 1: What is this business about?

Speaker 2: We sell wallpapers and paints. It is a retail shop.

Speaker 1: Is it a family owned business?

Speaker 2: Yes, yeah, yeah. It is family owned

Speaker 1: Can you explain why you would refer to the business as a family business.

Speaker 2: My grandfather started the business in the 60s. He handed it over to me and my dad in the 80s. But now, it is just me and my brother in charge of the business.

Speaker 1: As it is you and your brother in charge, who makes the decisions?

Speaker 2: Both of us, but he is more focused on the finances due to his background. I oversee the other aspects of business because I was with my father back in the 80s.

Speaker 1: If I may ask, like how many people do you have working within the business?

Speaker 2: Like I said, me and my brother, my nephews, some other family members. We are about 12 but my sons do come around to help at times.

Speaker 1: Can you explain the daily activities from when the business opens in the morning till closing?

Speaker 2: We just come into the shop in the morning and we work. When customers come in they look around or ask questions about their desired product and serve them.

Speaker 1: As all the staff members are family members, how do you manage every staff within the business?

Speaker 2: We are busy all the time and we all know we must work hard as it is our own business. There is no need to keep an eye on anybody because we are all committed to sustaining the business.

Speaker 1: In terms of your finances, how do you manage it?

Speaker 2: Like I said, my brother does that. He keeps the financial records mainly from his experience and the lessons from our father. I manage the other aspects of business.

Speaker 1: Is there a technology that helps in this respect?

Speaker 2: No, we do everything manually. But we are thinking of starting to use the computer (automate) to do it.

Speaker 1: Why do you need the computer?

Speaker 2: We know that it can be easier with the computer. Doing paper works is a lot of hard work but with the computer it is a lot easier and faster.

Speaker 1: As it is you have a lot of products in the store, how do you know when you are running and need to restock? How do you manage the stock?

Speaker 2: We always know, we keep an eye on the stock. We are not like B & Q where they have too many products. We take stock every February but we monitor and replace stocks that are running out all year. We compare supply records from March till February the following year. We do that every year.

Speaker 1: How would you react to a system that helps manage your products every time a new sales is made and you always have an update on products.

Speaker 2: If it is another kind of business maybe it will work but with this business, we have some products that sell fast and others that do not, I cannot see how that technology will help this business. It wouldn't work for our business because we know ourselves and we've done it for like forty years. That kind of knowledge, you cannot get it through technology. Everything here is done manually.

Speaker 1: In terms of satisfying your customers, how do you keep them satisfied and make them come again?

Speaker 2: We make sure they are talked to properly and they get the necessary help. The kind of help they don't get from the big stores who are our competitors. We are also like a specialist store which big stores cannot afford to be. There are no specialist stores left around here now, it is just us. All the specialist wallpapers have disappeared from the market but we still stock them and that is an advantage over the big stores.

Speaker 1: Are you saying if I look around this whole city there are no stores like this one anymore?

Speaker 2: There are not many of them anymore. When we came here, there were five (5) but they have closed now. It is just us left around here. When B & Q came, all the greedy shops panicked and could not cope with the competition in terms of selling at a lower price. But we have always co-priced our products so it was easy for us to cope and that is why we are still running.

Speaker 1: Are you saying you work more on market information in terms of price?

Speaker 2: Yeah, because that is the best way to cope with competition from the bigger companies.

Speaker 1: How do you get feedbacks from customers in terms of either compliments or complaints?

Speaker 2: We get them every time. They come back every time to say we've been good to them. We also get more customers coming in because of our being good to customers. They always come in and talk to us about it. We don't advertise so we depend a lot on the words our customers say about us. For example, if you say you want to buy wallpapers and a customer tells you I have a good place you can go. Such person comes in and says I was referred by another customer and we get that a lot.

Speaker 1: Since you said the business survives through market information, especially product price. How do you get such information?

Speaker 2: Well, we compete with big companies so we look at the advertising book or their online store to know the prices they are selling whenever we need to check. Although, we have our strategy as some of the things we sell are not in the big stores. In the old days, everybody used to buy the same wallpapers but now it is a lot wider. We import most of our wallpapers. We source our wallpapers from across Europe and even Korea. These businesses run online system whereby we can pick what we want and make the payments. They arrange the delivery and we receive it in few days.

Speaker 1: Since you import from different countries and you don't use any technology. How do you identify reputable companies?

Speaker 2: Most of the companies have offices in England so we just ring our orders through to them. They send it to Germany and it arrives in three (3) days. The order is fast with them because it is a large business and they use technology to deal with their orders. In one factory in Cologne, there are only twelve (12) people working there but they send wallpaper around the world. The technology makes everything work faster for them.

Speaker 1: From findings, this is a 3rd generation FB, what is the future plan?

Speaker 2: In a few years, we are going to finish. Pam the store because our sons don't want to continue. They want to do something else. The plan is that by the end of five (5) years, we will turn this plan into apartments and just relocate to Spain. My dad worked here till he was eighty (80), I have worked here ever since but soon we will just turn the place to flats and move away.

Speaker 1: What advice will you give to others starting a similar business?

Speaker 2: It is too hard, I will not advise anybody to start this business now. To start a small business like this one now, you will need about twenty-two thousand (22000). It is not worth it, we can afford it because we already have a lot of the resources but for a start-up, it is not worth the hassle. I'd rather do something else like buy a property and rent it out. You can't find properties like this anymore, businesses have moved to the big stores or City centres. In those places, you cannot compete, so it is difficult. It is not just worth it anymore.

Speaker 1: Is there anything else you will like to add?

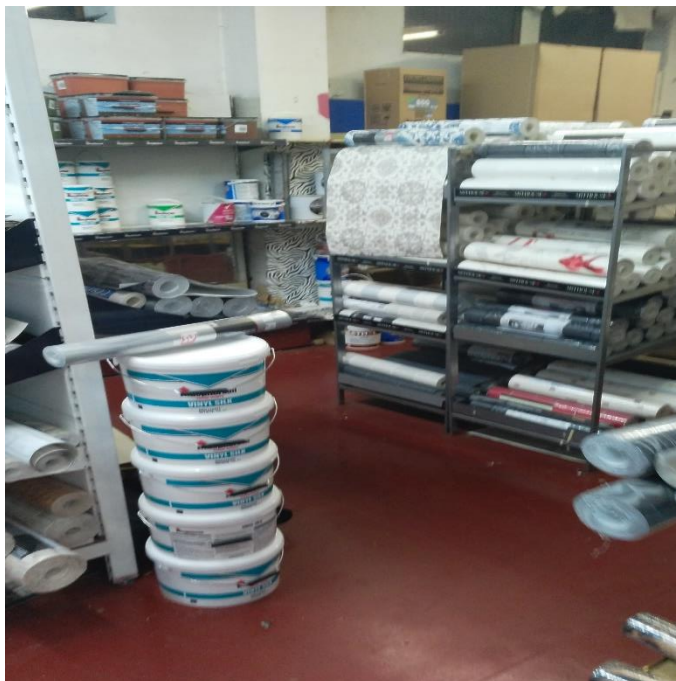
Speaker 2: Nothing else, that is about it

Speaker 1: Thank you very much for your time.

APPENDIX 4E ii: CASE STUDY 5'S IMAGES



A wallpaper isle in case study 5.



Some paints and wallpapers on another section.

APPENDIX 5: CASE STUDY OBSERVATION REFLECTION SUMMARIES

APPENDIX 5A: CASE STUDY 1 REFLECTIONS

This is an Afro-Caribbean food and variety store in the South of Manchester. It is a Pakistani owned business and the initial suspicion was that it would be family owned by all the employees are also Pakistanis.

Gaining access to the business had to be made through 1 on 1 talks as it involved negotiations regarding what can or cannot be done while observing the business. The paper works were signed after this. I was directed to a man when I requested to speak to someone in charge. The man was not ready to listen when the paper works were presented but further explanation of the research purpose convinced him. He, however, requested that a report on the business based on my findings must be made to see if the technology can be of benefit to the business. The observation was agreed to last 4 weeks and I could go into the store at any time during the operational hours. We, however, agreed that my observation would cause no disruption to the business and part of that includes not taking an employee's time to have a recorded conversation. But conversations can take place as part of the daily operations. For example, I am allowed to engage employees in talks while I am buying goods as a customer.

The business appears to be just an open store but further observations show that there are 3 main departments in the main store; the till section, meat/butchers sections and the isles. The co-existence of the departments marks a typical day's operation as the employees work hand in hand.

It was observed throughout the 4 week period that the female employees are usually at the till while the male employees can be in any other section based on the directives given by the

manager, either directly or through a second in command. There was no real way of checking what the employees do while in different sections. Some are sometimes found not doing anything while others may be busy restocking the shelves. However, on occasions, the idle employees are asked to help the busy ones when spotted by the manager or the second in command. This makes it seem as though, the employees are not being checked but they are expected to always act in the business' best interest.

The manager is usually referred to as uncle or brother by all employees. Conversations with the employees while buying some products show that all the employees are family members and that is why some are not always available. The numerous conversations also revealed that the manager took over the business from his parents and so he is the second generation, owner/manager.

Business Operations:

The business opens 8 am and closes 7 pm every day including weekends. The day starts with the filling up the shelves and taking deliveries when the stock in the warehouse upstairs is low. The ones in the butcher section fill up the freezers in the store from the stock in the warehouse's freezer.

A typical sales operation as personally experienced involves a customer coming into the store. The customer either finds what needs to be bought or requests assistance from an employee found on the shelves. The prices are asked and payment is made at the till after calculating the total sum of goods bought. The sales calculations are not done manually but with a Point of Sale system. As the goods are not usually scanned to obtain prices, it remained unclear from observations how integrated the POS system was. Similar to what was found on the shelves, the butcher section cuts meat and manually writes the prices on the bag. The payment is then made at the till after being manually entered into the system.

Observations at this stage suggest that the POS is a stand-alone system that does not communicate with other sections of the business despite the interrelationship between all departments. While no document to ascertain the nature of the system was obtained, further conversation with employees confirmed that the system is only used for sales calculations and the receipts obtained after the different purchases made further confirmed this.



The business is usually busiest in the afternoon and not the best time to get anything done if you are not a customer. It was also found that the manager is usually available from around this time till just about when the business closes.

Customer relationship:

Customers coming into and leaving the store suggest that they are happy with the services provided in the store. They are especially satisfied with the range of products available as some of the goods are ethnically driven. This suggests that it takes a good knowledge of the African, Asian and Carribean cultures to be able to put such products together in a way to meet customers' needs.

To further satisfy customers, it was found that there is a return policy in place (written or not). Customers get a full refund of goods returned once they can provide a receipt for it. The intriguing aspect of this policy as finding out from a personal return made was that the employees are able to identify products by the price on the receipt. Because the product names do not appear on the receipts issued, the employees agree to a refund once the price on

the receipt agrees with the selling price of the product being returned. While this may not be ideal for accountability, its part of the operational style of the business.

It was also found that the business prioritises listening to the customer's feedback. The manager takes it upon himself to address any feedback on business performance and product prices. Any such feedbacks are promptly referred to him to deal with. It was, however, found that dealing with such feedbacks vary and it is usually based on the manager's (decision-maker) perception of the situation. In some cases, the customer gets a refund of the price difference but in most other cases found, the manager asks that prices are changed once he has confirmed the feedback.

THE COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENT

It appears as though, despite the significantly larger businesses, the store has a good market share. One strategic advantage found is the fact of all similar businesses around, only case 1 focuses on the specific food needs of Africans, Asians and Caribbeans. Also, the business appears to continue building the business around the evolving needs of the focused niche.

While the 4-week observation has brought about significant findings such as the decision-making, operations, market position and strategy, there are other aspects of the business that need to be found out. The interview with the owner/manager will be designed to help ascertain the observation findings and clarify aspects that require more information.

APPENDIX 5B: CASE STUDY 2 REFLECTIONS

Caes study 2 is a first generation family business with 20 employees. The business is located in Edinburgh, Scotland and has three branches around the same location. The business deals with different brands of pasta.

Access to this business was through a participation letter handed into the business. A call was received asking me to come in and discuss the research with the owner-manager. He appeared keen to know more about the ERP system and if it will be beneficial to his business. He was, however, told that it can be found out through research. It was agreed that a report about the business will be documented at the end of the study.

Further discussion on how the study needs to be carried out was held and we agreed that I can come into the business to observe daily activities, check hold discussions with employees provided it does not disrupt business operations. We, however, agreed that only the interview with GM is allowed to hold a recorded interview. Attempts to get him as the MD to be apart of such interview was in venne as he said he might be away by the concluding stages of the study. The GM when talked to agreed to entertain the interview.

The business has three family members working in the business as managers. However, the father, called the Managing Director, is the main decision maker who gave authorisation for this research to be conducted. The wife is called the General Manager and the son-in-law manages another branch. It was found that the MD and GM go around all branches at intervals to monitor operations. It was found that a lot of calls are made to the MD on strategic decisions such as to find out changes in prices, refund or change of products. Although the GM gives some orders, the approval usually comes from the MD. For example, the GM was given the permission to be interviewed by the end at the end of the observation

due to the absence of the MD at the time. The GM made it clear that she would not have granted the interview if the decision was not made by the MD.

Business Operations:

The business opens at 8 am and closes at 7 pm Monday to Saturday. A typical day starts with the stock records being manually taken. The record is compared to the previous day's to ensure no product accountability for the new day. What was observed is that due to the volume of products available, the stocks taking process was hectic. Further discussion with some employees also confirmed this. It was also pointed out that customers often wait several minutes to be served while the stock is being taken. Although this appears to be an area the ERP system might help improve, the management view will be clarified during the interview stage.

Sales in the store as observed and personally experienced can be done in 2 ways. The first involves the typical customer going to the store, selecting the desired product, seeking the price and making payment. The second option is for the customer to call either the MD or GM and seek the availability and price of the desired product. The customer either requests that the order is finalised by sent over if it is large quantity or the customer goes into the store for the completion of the order. At this time, an employee calls the GM or MD to find out the agreed price for the customer to ensure the order fulfilment. In the case that the company has to complete the order on behalf of the customer, the GM or MD calls the store and place the order for the customer. Once the payment confirmation is received from the bank, the order is then dispatched using the company's van. This process appears to be complicated and further clarification on how it is done might be sought during the interviews as everything in the business is done manually.

Due to the many customers coming into the store at every interval, there are usually long queues for payment and the store is always busy at any point of the day. The busy environment tends to reduce the level of customer service especially towards the end of the day. Conversations with the employees across the branches also confirmed this as they suggest that the customers tend to overwhelm them with requests while they are still struggling to fulfil their expected roles. Some, in fact, attribute the fact that products often go missing to how busy the business gets towards the end of each day. Especially when products have to be sold too close to when the closing stock taking is done.

A typical day close with the stock records taken again and compared to the one taken in the morning. The sales record is also compared to the financial records to ensure that no cash or product is missing.

The final financial records for the previous days are always checked and confirmed by the MD. He calculates the revenue, profits, loss, and tax to be paid. Conversations with employees and family members also confirmed that he determines the business investments and how money is spent on other strategic decisions.

The competitive environment:

It was found that there are similar businesses to case 2 and the competition for market share appears to be intense. Despite this, it was found that the business' reputation as a pioneer in the market gives a strong strategic position.

Despite the market leader position and the loyalty of old customers, others seem to be keen on buying from the store with the cheapest price. So according to the employees, the MD is constantly seeking price updates so the business remains a market leader in terms of pricing.

The business also has a van to help willing customers convey their products at a cost. Despite the cost of such conveyance, the business appears to benefit from this, as they are the only one offering such service as customers without a van usually finds it difficult to get their products home. However, due to the business having one van, not all willing customers gets the service. It is usually a first come, first served basis.

Customer relationship:

Although the business appears to have some loyal customers as a result of many years of existence, the competition for market share appears to be based on price. The business appears to lay emphasis on good customer service as the MD and GM frown at any negative feedback on the employee's relationship with the customers. It was unfortunately found that these feedbacks come on a regular basis. Some of those behaviours were also evident throughout the observation. Despite the GM and MD's regular tour of the businesses, they rarely pick up these behaviours unless they are reported by customers. Some employees during discussions confirmed the existence of such behaviours towards customers but attributed to stress in the busy hours of the day.

APPENDIX 5C: CASE STUDY 3 REFLECTIONS

Case study 3 is a first generation business in its second year of existence. The business has 12 employees some of which are family members. The business, like case study 1, deals in Afro-Caribbean food products. There is a family owner-manager within the business. Unlike case study 1, the case study 3 is owned by an African family.

The business was physically approached due to the knowledge of the family ownership of the business and being easily accessible from my home. Gaining access to the business was easier than with other cases as there is an already established relationship prior to this study. Also due to the openness of the family manager to technological innovation, he was keen on having the business participate in the research.

The agreement on how the study will be conducted was reached with the family manager. Access to documentation on the existing technology within the business was granted by the family manager, observations were permitted but limited to limited discussions with employees so as not to impact the daily operations. The family manager agreed to hold a recorded interview at the conclusion of the observations to help with clarifications and validations.

The business has a family manager who appears to be the main decision-maker. Despite his young age and the existence of older family members, he appears to make strategic decisions mainly based on his perception and information available to him. Discussions with the family members suggest that he is fully in control of the business and they are only there to support the business operations in any way he wants. No clarity as to why the business does not follow the hierarchical decision-making system known to families was not given and more information will be asked of the manager at the interview stage.

Business Operations:

Having found that the operations within case study 1 and 3 are similar, only the distinguishing reflections will be talked about.

The business operates from 8 am to 9 pm Monday – Saturday but 11 am – 9 pm on Sundays. It was found that there is an integrated technology within the business which automates some of the business operations. It was found that once deliveries are received, the product details are entered into the system in the manager's office to keep the stock record up-to-date. The products are then scanned and arranged on the shelf. I should mention that the business also has 3 main sections on the shop floor; the till, the isles and the butcher section. While the till and the products on the aisle are integrated, the butcher section operations remain manual and unintegrated.

The typical sale involves the customer picking the required products as prices are already on the shelves. The items are then presented at the till to be scanned, paid for and receive receipts. The difference between the receipt issued in the business and case study 1 is that the names and prices of the different items are on the receipt. It shows that the back-room and the shop floor are integrated into the existing system. However, buying from the butcher section involves weighing the item and the price is then written on the bag to be presented at the till.

Till		1
Order Ref.		008792
Description	QTY	Total
MISC VAT	1	9.99
Items 1	Total	9.99
	Grand Total	9.99
Total To Pay		9.99
Payment:		
Card Payment		9.99
Change Given		0.00
Employee ID		1234

It was found that the employees, especially the family members only work based on the manager's directives. While he is mostly around, there are times he was absent in the course of the observation. During this period the employees were either unsure of what to do or not willing to do anything even when the store was busy. No manual stock-taking was found to be done except for the vegetables that get checked every morning.

Customer relationship:

It was found that customer satisfaction is the watchword for the business. All customer feedbacks give to the manager are weighed and acted upon. Refunds are given for returned products even if the packaging has been opened. The price difference is also refunded if such is reported to the family manager. Although, the business is relatively new, when the amount of sales is considered, it appears as though the business has gained a significant market share compared to others.

Competitive environment:

Although there are few other stores in the area dealing similar products, it appears as though case study 3 is a bigger competitor in terms of product range and quantity. From customer's comments, it appears as though the size of the business is a strategic strength as people believe they can get virtually any item in the store.

Also, as a strategic move, the business offers free conveyance of products. What was observed was that some customers get this service while some others that request for it do not get. No clarity regarding this was obtained through observation and so the effort will be made during the interviews to understand this aspect of the business and how it serves the business as a competitive strength.

APPENDIX 5D: CASE STUDY 4 REFLECTION

This is a second generation retail business in the process of succession into the third generation of ownership. The business deals in varieties of home products including some electrical appliances. The business is owned by a family of Pakistani descent.

Access to this business was more difficult than previous cases as the second generation owner/manager was never present to talk to. Despite meeting with the incoming owner/manager a few times, no agreement could be reached until a meeting was scheduled with the outgoing owner/manager who consented to the research being carried out. The manager agreed to the study because he suggested that the business might need to automate operations at some point and it will be important to have such knowledge to hand to inform the decision. Although the manager gave permission for the observation of business, he did not agree to be interviewed as he was in the process of retiring and suggests he did not have the required knowledge of the business at the time. Another family member within the business, however, agreed to an unrecorded interview as no express permission was given by the owner/manager.

What becomes obvious throughout the observation period was the relative managerial absence within the business due to the succession of power. The outgoing manager already stopped coming into the business and the incoming one comes in only in the morning and late in the evening. Series of conversations with the employees show that the managerial absence has adversely affected the business due to their inability to get fast decisions on urgent strategic issues. For example, the products that are running out are not always replaced on time due to the communication gap between the business and the outgoing manager. It became obvious that the incoming manager, at the time of observation had no decision

making powers. Rather, she relates information to the owner/manager and passes decisions from the outgoing manager back to the business.

Business Operations:

The business opens for operations at 8 am and closes 8 pm Monday to Saturday. Similar to case study 2, the stock records are manually taken every morning and late in the evening. It should be mentioned that this business is fully manually operated. No automated system was found within this business.

The sales operation, like other cases, involves the customer selecting the desired item or items, seeking the cost and making payment at the till. However, as easy as the process sounds, sales usually take a minimum of 5 minutes even for a single item. This was attributed to the manual system in place. The employees have to count every cash including coins. The system does not take cash for sales. For this reason, customers usually queue up and wait their turn to make payments. It becomes more difficult when the stock records are being taken as there are unavoidable disruptions to the whole business operations and customers often complain about the time taken to complete their orders. As at the time of this study, it appears as though nothing was being done to change how business was done even as the employees voiced discontent about how the business operated.

The day usually closes after the incoming manager comes into the store to get the opening and closing stock and sales records for the day. The employees confirmed that the records are taken to the outgoing manager for assessment alongside any report for the day. The manager passes any instruction or decision to the employees the following morning. A situation the employees appeared not be happy with as they confirmed that business operated better prior to the start of the sudden succession period. A further probe as to the reason for the sudden succession was not successful at this stage.

Customer relationship:

While customers confirmed that they will continue to patronise the business due to the high possibility of getting rare home products, the relationship between the employees and customers is not all rosy. Customer complaints were a regular occurrence throughout the observation. It was found that there were few aspects of the business that were repeatedly mentioned. The waiting time to complete an order, the employees were not particularly helpful to customers. This may be attributed to the absence of any form of authority within the business. A situation the employees also find as not ideal. Another aspect of the business that customers complained about was the no returns policy of the business. Due to the manual records system operated by the business, no receipt is issued for sales and for that reason, customers are unable to return items after taking them out of the store. Customer believes this should change as it makes them worry about buying items they are not sure about from the store. Also, some customers complain about the inability to pay electronically. They complain the non-flexibility with payment methods makes it difficult to buy from the store without having cash in hand. It is more worrisome as there are no cash machines close to the business.

Competitive environment:

It was found that the business competes with larger businesses due to the range of products being sold. The smaller businesses in the area do not sell an as much wide range of products as the business does. While no clear strategic plans were revealed, it became obvious that the business has some rare products that even the larger stores do not have. That, based on the customers talked to, seemed to be the strategic plan that has worked for the business.

Further validation of this reflection will be sought during the interview and clarification of the business' stance and knowledge on ERP adoption will be sought beyond the outgoing manager's perception.

APPENDIX 5E: CASE STUDY 5 REFLECTIONS

Case study 5 is different from other previously studied cases in terms of the family background and the generation of ownership. The business is owned by a British family and it is in its third generation of ownership. The business has 12 employees and they are all family members. The business deals in paints, wallpapers and stationeries.

There are two managers within the business and they are brothers. They appear to be eldest members of the family within the business. Despite the 2 of them holding managerial posts, it appears as though the eldest brother makes the strategic decisions.

Gaining access to the business was quite straightforward as the first person met was the son of one of the managers. An appointment was fixed for another day but was rescheduled as the oldest manager was not available on the initially agreed date. On meeting with him, an absolute free access to the business was given. He opined that the business might need such technology to help some aspects of their management and he will like to know what ERP can do for the business. He also agreed to hold an interview at the conclusion of the observation. Permission was given to seek clarification from employees at any time during the observation.

Business Operations:

A typical day for this business starts at 8 am and ends at 7 pm Mondays to Saturdays. It should be noted that all employees within the business are family members. It appears as though all members of the business has a tacit knowledge of the business that may not be easily grasped without further learning.

It was found that customers come into the store and approaches an employee to seek information on the desired item. The item is then measured based on the customer's request. The customer makes payment and takes the item away. Considering the varying brands of wallpapers and paints within the business, it was difficult to understand how all employees appear to have the exact knowledge of which ones were available. It needs to be noted that stocks run out fast in the business and there are regular supplies. Discussion with an employee shows that the business deals in specialised products, some of which may not be found even in larger stores and all employees are aware of the range. Also, due to the fact that all employees treat the business as theirs, it is easy to follow occurrences within the business.

It was found that despite the presence of family members within the business, stock records are sometimes taken. It was clarified that the main purpose of keeping stock records was to be proactive in ordering new supplies as, despite the vintage nature of the products in the store, they are in high demand.

The operations of the business are fully manual including measuring paints and wallpapers, as well as keeping financial records. The division of responsibilities between the managers was also established at this stage as the younger manager deals with finances while the older manager handles other operational aspects, including some strategic decisions.

Customer relationship:

Customers appear to have a good relationship with the business as they appear to be loyal customers over a long time. Most customers are well known to the employees and relationships appear to be more personal.

Customers also share that the fact that their desired products are usually readily available even when not present elsewhere makes them always come back.

Customer's good feedback on the business isn't surprising as all employees treat the business as theirs and always go out their way to help customers. Customers are, however, concerned about the price of products that are readily available in larger stores. For this reason, the business tries to keep up-to-date with latest prices as well as their stock.

The presence of vintage stationeries is also an aspect of the business that the older generation of customers is quite happy with.

Strategic environment:

It was found that there are not many stores into a similar type of business but the main competition comes from larger businesses. Although the competitors are less likely to run out of stock due to their larger style, case study 5 tries to keep up with the fast pace of the business by always having an updated to allow for regular supplies.

The specialised and vintage nature of most products in the store represents a strategic strength for the business as the larger business do not stock them anymore. The vintage collection makes the business unique and maintains their customer base over a long period.

As price is a competition driver in the sector, the business tries to beat the competition by regularly getting updates from suppliers as well as keeping an eye on prices from competitors. This is usually done online as the larger businesses have a good online presence

While a lot more information will be sought during the interview with the owner/manager, the information gathered so far shows that the older manager makes strategic decisions based on the knowledge available to him. The business appears to be doing well and ordinarily, appears as it can do without the ERP system but as the manager mentioned before this study the business might need such technology, it is vital to seek further clarification on this.

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