Chapter 6

ERP Systems: Training Quality and Resultant Use Quality Perceptions

Nicole Mayer
Griffith University, QLD, Australia

Training methods used during ERP package implementation remain largely unstudied in Information Systems literature. This chapter investigates the “product quality” of a training program developed at an Australian university implementing PeopleSoft, to develop a definition of training quality. By examining use quality characteristics and assessing user perceptions against training results, conclusions are drawn indicating that high quality training leads to positive user perceptions of an ERP system.

INTRODUCTION

Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems, Information Systems (IS) which have been growing in both popularity and use since the early 1990’s (Kumar and Hillegersberg, 2000) are generally considered quality systems by both their developers and the world at large. This quality is in the form of product quality, one of many available definitions. Much research into IS quality is concerned with this concept of product quality (Eriksson and Higgins, 1994) and this can be applied against the quality of training. However, the product-based view, which is also considered in much ERP literature, does not consider the multitude of user issues associated with ERP implementation and acceptance.

Use quality, strongly related to user perceptions of a system, remains largely unstudied in the context of ERP systems and it is the intention of this chapter to relate the product quality of ERP training back to user perceptions and therefore
ERP implementation quality rather than the more traditional views. It is intended to prove that high quality training leads to positive user perceptions and therefore high use quality of ERP systems. Mahapatra and Lai (1998) acknowledge that for successful ERP implementation, training is of great importance therefore these results are applicable to any manager involved in such an endeavour. It should also be noted that this paper investigates the perception of ERP system quality rather than the quantifiable actuality.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Enterprise Resource Planning systems can be described as “configurable information systems packages” which integrate information and processes across organisational functional areas (Kumar and Hillegersberg, 2000). While the motivations for ERP implementation are quite well studied, there is a significant lack of research in the area of outcomes when examining issues of user acceptance, user training, and more specifically, university environments and successes achieved (Sieber et al., 1999).

It is essential to define training, a term widely understood as a means of transferring knowledge from one party to another. This study will refer to training as a formal effort to transfer IS knowledge, required by users to perform essential tasks (adapted from Nelson and Cheney, 1987a). Many variables such as end-user ability have been cited as impacting training effectiveness, however this study will investigate training quality. Currently, no best practice ERP training approach exists although researchers such as Markus and Tanis (2000) and Brown and Vessey (1999) have proposed general implementation frameworks. This lack of training focus is possibly due to the lack of training research in terms of IS theory development and relation to organisational concepts (Kozlowski and Salas, 1997; Nelson and Cheney, 1987a).

Quality

Many definitions of quality exist and quality, especially when applied to IS, seems notoriously difficult to clarify. As stated earlier, this paper will discuss how the intrinsic “product quality” of ERP training can lead to good “use quality” of an ERP system. Product Quality can be defined as part of a “multifaceted concept” focussing on a precise and measurable variable (Garvin, 1984) whereas Use Quality concerns how well the system serves the user and fulfils their varied requirements (Eriksson and Torn, 1991).

Eriksson and Higgins (1994) give a user-based definition of quality as such: “The quality of a product depends upon how well it fits patterns of customer preferences.” It is acknowledged that this interpretation of quality is the most
Using ICT to Overcome Constraints in the Agriculture Value Chain: Emerging Trends in Ghana
www.igi-global.com/chapter/using-ict-overcome-constraints-agriculture/77248?camid=4v1a

Enterprise Resource Planning Systems in Higher Education
www.igi-global.com/chapter/enterprise-resource-planning-systems-higher/77218?camid=4v1a