Chapter III

The Critical Success Factors Across ERP Implementation Processes

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Abstract

It is very important to identify what are the key factors across different steps within enterprise resource planning (ERP) implementation models. This study consists of two phases. The first phase involves a questionnaire survey among experienced ERP consultants in order to identify the key successful factors of each step within ERP implementation models. In the second phase, experienced ERP consultants are interviewed to examine why these factors are important at each of the implementation steps and what are the difficulties of using Western ERP implementation models in China. The results suggest that ERP implementation is likely to be more successful if ERP implementation models address implementation challenges and leverages. This study provides guidance to ERP consultants on how to utilize their limited resources by considering these factors at each step within the ERP implementation models.

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Introduction

An ERP implementation is usually a large and complex project involving large groups of people and other resources working together under considerable time pressure and facing many unforeseeable developments (Davenport, 1998). Over the past few years, critical success factors (CSFs) of ERP implementation have been well studied (Esteves & Pastor, 2001), but very little attention has been paid to ERP implementation models. On the other hand, the compound annual growth rate of the China ERP market was estimated to be triple the worldwide growth rate, and the China ERP market was forecasted to reach a half billion U.S. dollars in 2008 (IDC, 2004b). However, previous studies on ERP implementation were focused mainly on large companies in Europe and the U.S.; very few have been focused on enterprises in China (He, 2004). Therefore, there is a gap in the study of CSFs across ERP implementation models for ERP implementation in China.

ERP implementations are particularly worth continuing to research because the software and technology bases themselves are changing quickly with time, presenting new risks and issues (Plant & Willcocks, 2007). The purpose of this chapter is to investigate what and why CSFs are relatively important in each step within selected ERP implementation models. Results of this study also help understand the cultural issues of using Western ERP implementation models for ERP implementation in China and, consequently, help to improve ERP implementation success in China.

This chapter commences by summarizing previous research findings relating to the CSFs of ERP implementation. The second part examines different types of ERP implementation models found in the existing literature. A research framework then is developed. Empirical ERP implementation models are selected in order to help to assess major ERP challenges. Finally, the vendor ERP implementation models then are embedded with data from a questionnaire survey and personal interviews in order to illustrate contributions of CSFs across ERP implementation models and the cultural issues of using Western ERP implementation models in China.
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