

TRANSFORMATIONAL PROJECT MANAGER: AN ENABLER OF AN
ENTERPRISE RESOURCE PLANNING (ERP) IMPLEMENTATION SUCCESS

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This dissertation is dedicated to Almighty God the owner and giver of all wisdom,
knowledge, and understanding.

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ABSTRACT

ERP business solution drives and improves business performance, meet business needs, support short and long term business strategic direction, but does not have the capability to make key business decisions on its own. ERP system provides data to assist people in orchestrating and making key business decisions that delivers increase return on investments. In ERP implementation project management, people (team, managements, and users) perspectives are the most challenging aspect to deal with. However, they are the most critical and important factor that determines whether ERP system implementation project will be a success or a failure. Transformational project manager set visions and goals, create new opportunities and values, and integrate and coordinate team diverse perspectives. He undertakes strategic and nonlinear thinking, and utilizes other people's expertise, skills, and abilities, and develops new talents and human capital. In this research we used leadership behavioural characteristics and critical success factors of ERP implementation to develop the underlying transformational leadership core competence qualities of project manager, modelled leadership core competence of an ERP implementation project, and assessed how each of the leadership core competence quality relates to the ERP implementation success by using primary data obtained from respondents who participated as ERP implementation project team members. We believe that the leadership core competence qualities and the leadership core competence model will serve as ERP implementation toolkit, assists in the selection and development of training program for transformational project manager.

ABSTRAK

Penyelesaian perniagaan ERP mendorong dan meningkatkan prestasi perniagaan, memenuhi keperluan perniagaan, menyokong pendek dan jangka hala tuju perniagaan strategik jangka, tetapi tidak mempunyai keupayaan untuk membuat keputusan perniagaan yang penting dengan sendiri. Sistem ERP menyediakan data untuk membantu orang-orang di mendalangi dan membuat keputusan perniagaan utama yang menyampaikan meningkatkan pulangan ke atas pelaburan. Dalam pelaksanaan ERP pengurusan projek, orang (pasukan, pengurusan, dan pengguna) perspektif adalah aspek yang paling mencabar untuk menangani. Walau bagaimanapun, mereka adalah faktor yang paling kritikal dan penting yang menentukan sama ada ERP sistem pelaksanaan projek akan berjaya atau gagal. Transformasi projek visi set pengurus dan matlamat, mewujudkan peluang dan nilai-nilai baru, dan menyepadukan dan menyelaras pelbagai perspektif pasukan. Beliau menjalankan strategik dan pemikiran bukan linear, dan menggunakan kepakaran, kemahiran orang lain, dan kebolehan, dan membangunkan bakat-bakat baru dan modal insan. Dalam kajian ini kita menggunakan ciri-ciri tingkah laku kepimpinan dan faktor-faktor kejayaan kritikal ERP pelaksanaan untuk membangunkan kualiti kepimpinan transformasi kecekapan teras asas pengurus projek, model kepimpinan teras kecekapan projek pelaksanaan ERP, dan menilai bagaimana setiap kepimpinan teras kualiti kecekapan berkaitan dengan kejayaan pelaksanaan ERP dengan menggunakan data utama yang diperolehi daripada responden yang mengambil bahagian sebagai pelaksanaan ERP ahli pasukan projek. Kami percaya bahawa kualiti kepimpinan teras kecekapan dan kepimpinan model kecekapan teras akan menjadi pelaksanaan ERP Kit, membantu dalam pemilihan dan pembangunan program latihan bagi pengurus projek transformasi.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

ERP system is a large-scale complex enterprise-wide application package that takes reasonably lots of effort and time, huge capital outlay of investment, and high-level of project management operations to successfully implement (Mandal and Gunasekaran, 2003). It requires integrated efforts of people, business process, and technology to realize the business solution in an organization (Siriginidi, 2000). More than two decades have passed since ERP systems evolved in the information system domain promising a new dawn for business performance by integrating enterprise through software (Davenport, 2000). ERP system seemed to be more popular for business disruption headlines than for business transformation success stories. They were criticized for being too big, too slow, too complex, and too expensive. According to Gartner's 2008 report, regardless of the huge investment about 20% to 35% of ERP projects are understood to have failed to deliver primary business benefits and up to 80% experienced schedule and cost overruns, and about 50% to 60% ERP implementations are compromised from the initial objectives as a result of their inability to customize the software as earlier designed in the proposal (Gartner, 2008). A survey conducted by Panorama Consulting in 2011 revealed that from 2009 to 2010, 35% to 61% of ERP implementation took longer than expected, 51% to 74% had cost exceeded budget, and 67% to 48% had benefit realization < 50% (Panorama, 2011).

In many cases ERP implementations have proven disastrous to the extent of nearly bringing many fortune 1000 companies, such as Nike, FoxMeyer drug, Dell and Mobile Europe, to their knees (Al-Mashari and Al-Mudimigh, 2003). Research shows after implementation, some companies suffer setbacks in business performance and low returns on investment that may take several years to recover (Davenport, 2000; Bradley, 2006). Project management is management of people, technology, business, risk, change, and expectation (Jones and George, 2007). Project management is a process of decision-making with respect to planning, organizing, leading, controlling, and managing of human resources, time, and cost during a project in order to accomplish the set objectives (Neuhauser, 2007). ERP implementation project management is often challenged by schedule and budget overruns, scope creeping, staff turnover and unexpected manifestation of some hidden cost and some difficulties (Luftman et al., 2006).

A project manager is a management executive appointed by top executives of an organization to oversee project management and the team. Project manager initiates ideas, procedures, techniques and approaches through which ERP implementation runs smoothly to meet the expectation of the organization (Jones and George, 2007). Project manager often tactically applies basic project management principles and processes in the analysis, planning, designing, and implementation of large-scale enterprise system (Neuhauser, 2007). The project manager interfaces with ERP vendor and ERP consultant on behalf of the organization for timely monitoring, directing, and reporting to stakeholders (PMI, 2004). The project manager collaborates with the enterprise business units, functional managers and the consultants to develop scalable innovative state-of-the-art business solution that meets organizational needs and supports its strategic direction to improve business performance and increase its return on investment (Nelson, 2005).

Effective transformational leadership is one of the most critical success driver in intellectually stimulating, inspirationally motivating, individualized considering, and idealized influencing the ERP implementation project team and the organization at large (Bass, 1985). Transformational leader is trusted and respected by the team.

He is an innovator, motivator, advisor, and a facilitator who inspires and influences others to take a particular direction in order to successfully accomplish set goals (Burns, 1978). Bass (1990), Nemanich (2007), Cho et al. (2011) and Rezvani et al. (2012) provides the foundation for leadership characters performed in the form of actions by transformational project manager in relation to ERP implementation, and Neuhauser (2007) and Chen (2009) enlighten project management skills, principles and methodologies in ERP implementation perspective, while Mandal (2003) and Somers (2004) critical success factors informed the actions that deserve strategic attention by transformational project manager for an unusual result.

1.2 Problem Background

Many organizations that implemented enterprise resource planning business solution were unable to unleash the desired benefits and ROI from the ERP investment (Luftman et al., 2006; Bradley, 2006). Consequently this situation has led to multiple problems right from litigation against ERP vendors or ERP consultants for being responsible for the cause of the misfortune (Al-Mashari and Al-Mudimigh, 2003). Large numbers of ERP implementation were successfully delivered significantly very late, with budget overruns and underserved functions than proposed in the original plan (Mandal and Gunasekaran, 2003). Some were completely abandoned while some delivered ERP system failed to support the business needs, nor improve business performance, nor increase return on investment (Luftman et al., 2006).

Several situations have been identified to be responsible for this undesirable ERP implementation outcome. Inadequate top executive commitment and support of the project by not completely releasing ERP implementation team members to be fully dedicated to the project and also not allocating sufficient fund and resources to the ERP implementation project as when needed (Kraemmerand et al., 2003). Lack of dedicated project champion or project sponsor from the executive who takes

ownership of the project, facilitate, and market the project to the entire organization (Mandal and Gunasekaran, 2003). Inadequate training and education of ERP implementation team members and users to gain knowledge and understand ERP business solution (Rezvani et al., 2012). Mismatch of ERP vendor's product to organization's strategic goals and business processes (Kwon and Kim, 2002). Poor project management strategies and methodologies, lack of the use of ERP consultants, and inability of steering committee to effectively performing their role in ratifying and approving project funding contributes to the ERP implementation challenges (Jones and George, 2007; Somers and Nelson, 2004).

Often extensive changes of the original ERP software code to support organization business processes through customization usually have a negative impact on performance, future upgrade, and maintenance of the ERP system (Volkoff, 1999). Data analysis, data conversion, and data integration to the new ERP system are inappropriately performed (Nelson, 2005). Business process reengineering was not done at all or was not properly done prior to ERP implementation (Holland and Light, 1999).

There is no standard enterprise core IT architecture prior to ERP implementation project to serve as a design guide. Most often the ERP implementation team lacks sufficient and appropriate skills, knowledge, and competencies to function and contribute meaningfully to the realization of the team's mandate (King and Burgess, 2006). Lack of effective change management program that enhances users' motivation and counter resistance constitutes the problem (Volkoff, 1999). Lack of effective risk management process that anticipates, identifies, and controls ERP implementation project risk (Nemanich and Keller, 2007). Sometimes top executives lack clear goals and visions, and receive misguided information on the use of ERP system to improve business operations (Luftman et al., 2006). These leading factors collectively trouble the successful outcome of ERP implementation projects.

The following are the problems statement of ERP implementation projects;

- i. ERP system is significantly delivered later than the scheduled time.
- ii. ERP system suffers budget overruns before delivery.
- iii. ERP implementation project are often abandoned without realizing the ERP system objectives.
- iv. ERP system outcome does not support organization's goals and objectives.
- v. ERP system outcome does not meet organization's business needs.
- vi. ERP system outcome does not support organization's business strategies.
- vii. ERP system outcome does not offer significant performance improvement.
- viii. ERP system outcome does not offer significant return on investment.

1.3 Research Questions

Project management practice of ERP implementation in some organizations is ineffectively carried out and therefore could not develop appropriate strategies and methodologies that will facilitate and sustain the needed success (Siriginidi, 2000). Relevant and sufficient project management skills and expertise, complemented by ERP system knowledge are essential tools to tackle ERP implementation failure troubling enterprise information system investment in some organizations in recent time (Somers and Nelson, 2004).

Project management leadership that focused on strategic organization vision by inspiring, motivating and influencing ERP implementation team members and the entire organization to be committed and diligence will successfully realize enterprise information system goals and objectives (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985). The aim of this study is to identify the underlying core competence qualities of project management leadership, develop leadership model of an ERP implementation project, and

determines the relationship of each core competence quality to ERP implementation success. Therefore, this research aims to find answers to the following research questions.

- i. What are the underlying leadership core competence qualities of a transformational project manager?
- ii. How would leadership core competence qualities assist in achieving successful ERP implementation project success?
- iii. How does each leadership core competence quality relate to ERP implementation success?

1.4 Research Objectives

- i. To find the underlying leadership core competence qualities of a transformational project manager.
- ii. To develop leadership core competence model of an ERP implementation project success.
- iii. To determine how each leadership core competence quality relates to an ERP implementation success.

1.5 Scope of Research

The scope of this research is limited to the following subject area;

- i. Leadership perspective of a project management.
- ii. Core competence qualities of transformational project manager as perceived by ERP implementation project team.
- iii. Project management operations of a pre-implementation and implementation phases of an ERP project in an enterprise.

- iv. Success perspective of an ERP implementation project.

1.6 Importance of the Research

- i. Identify underlying leadership core competence qualities of a transformational project manager that enables successful ERP implementation outcome.
- ii. Provide leadership core competence model that will assist project managers in assessing and developing leadership skills and competencies that are required to implement enterprise information system project.
- iii. Assist organizations in creating leadership training program for middle managers and project managers for enterprise information system implementation.
- iv. Benefit the industry by serving as project management career development roadmap and guide.
- v. Open the door of multiple research opportunities for researchers in academia and industry professionals.
- vi. Increases the amount and value of knowledge in the knowledge base of leadership, project management, and ERP implementation domains.

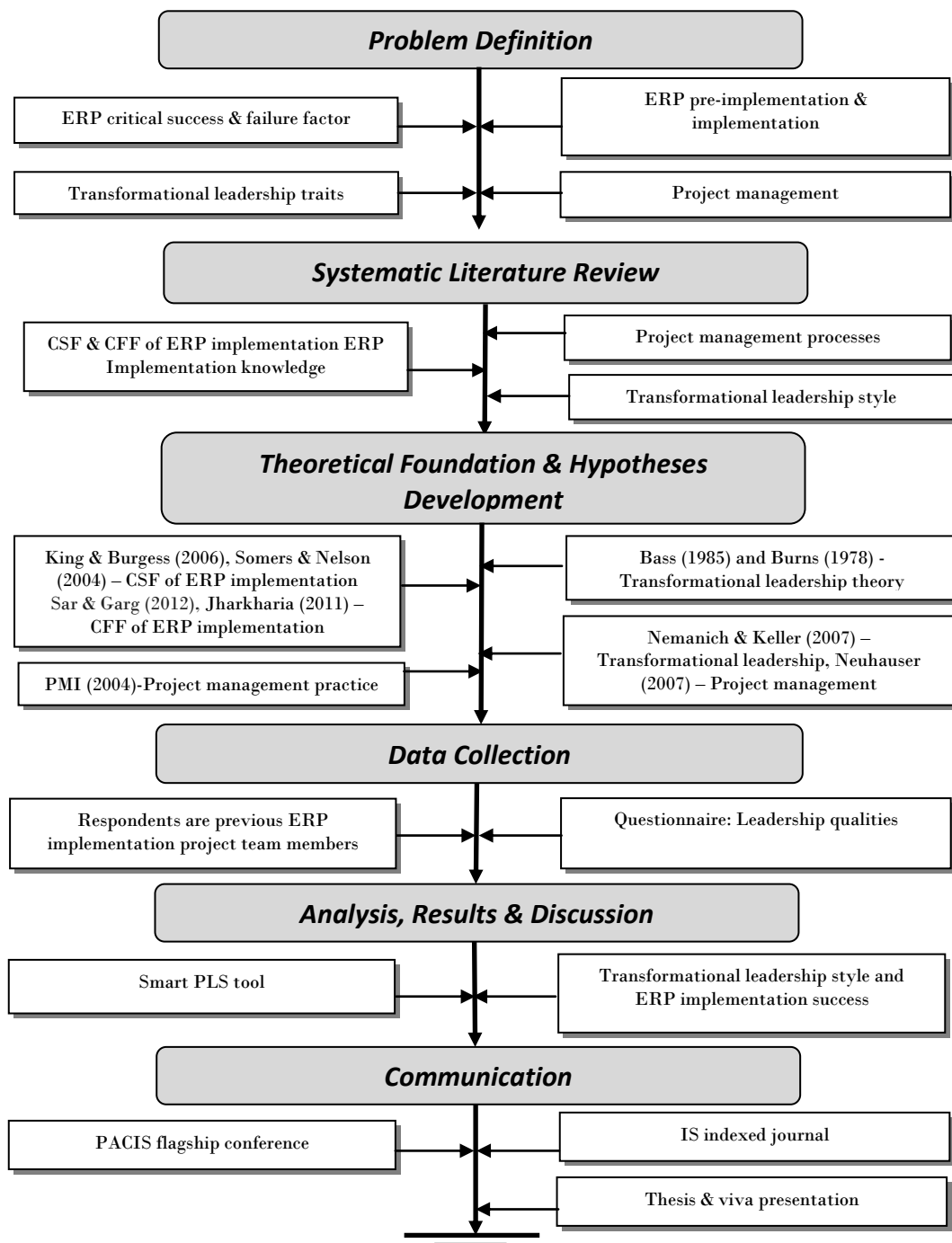


Figure 1.1 Research Strategy Diagram (RSD)

1.7 Chapter Summary

This Chapter 1 started by discussing a brief introduction of enterprise resource planning, project management, and transformational leadership role in an ERP implementation of an organization. It describes an overview of this research by providing introductory information of the background problem, research questions, objectives, scope, and significance of this research. It concluded this chapter by providing a Research Strategy Diagram (RSD) which depicts the strategic flow of activities to be carried out in the course of this study and the involvement of key concepts that constitute each stage. Chapter 2 will provide information about relevant literatures reviewed for this study.

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