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 - RESULTS & DISCUSSION**
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A REVIEW ON RECENT RESEARCH LITERATURE ON ERP SYSTEMS

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ABSTRACT

This report is a review of work published in various journals on the topics of Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) between 2005 and 08th November, 2013. A total of 100 articles from various journals were reviewed. This report intends to serve two goals. First, it will be useful to researchers who are interested in understanding and following the recent trends in the area of ERP. businesses or industries; because it seeks to highlight the current unanswered but justified research and development (R&D) questions raised in research papers for research and/or development needs.

KEYWORDS

ERP, Review, Implementation, Adoption, Optimisation, Case studies.

INTRODUCTION

The research activity on ERP systems has shown an impressive development in the last few years, visible through a constant increase of the number of articles, special issues of journals or dedicated sessions in international conferences. A successful ERP can be the backbone of business intelligence for an organization, giving management a unified view of its processes [3].

ERP products—such as those by SAP, Baan, JDE, SSA, JBA, Oracle, and PeopleSoft—conceptually contain a set of functional components, integrated around an enterprise data-warehouse. These components provide automated support in traditional business process areas such as inventory control, material requirements planning, and order processing. With each product suite emerging from a different historical perspective, today's ERP products offer a wide variety of capabilities. People-Soft, for example, began by specializing in back office systems, and then expanded into the front office. Oracle specialized in relational database management systems, branched into data warehousing, and then moved into ERP. SAP started by specializing in manufacturing automation before expanding into other areas. Thus, each product derives its strengths and weaknesses from its history and its company's current business strategies. Some vendors design their products to be flexible in capturing and using customer business processes; others dictate the processes to be used. For example, Oracle's ERP product is among the most flexible; SAP's is among the least flexible[4]. Over the past years, ERP products super specialized for particular industry segments—such as the oil and petroleum, Pharma industry's and many such manufacturing and service industries. These highly complex and highly specialized, ERP systems contain many hardware, software, and people-ware components that can be interconnected in a variety of patterns. ERP packages also allows the organization reuse its existing elements when developing customized variants of systems. Information is said to be the life blood of management but as information is growing its leaps and bounds, it has become very essential to manage the information successfully, and it requires a suitable information system. ERP is the central element of any information system architecture. In today's dynamic and ever changing business environment, organizations have to face tremendous competitions of multinational companies and rising customers expectations. This compels the organization to lower total cost of the product, shorten throughput time, reduce inventories, expand product variety, provide more reliable delivery dates, better customer service, improved quality and many more. In order to achieve this more and more companies are turning to the Enterprise Resource Planning. An ERP is a packaged enterprise-wide information system that integrates all necessary business functions, such as product planning, purchasing, inventory control, sales, finance and human resources into a single system with the shared database[5], that's the reason ERP is becoming popular so rapidly. According to the Global Association of Risk Professionals (GARP) (the only globally recognized leader in financial risk testing and certification programs), ERP from since its inception, have registrations grown 99% year-over-year. ERP Annual Growth in Registration Volume, 2009-2012 is as follows:

FIG. 1

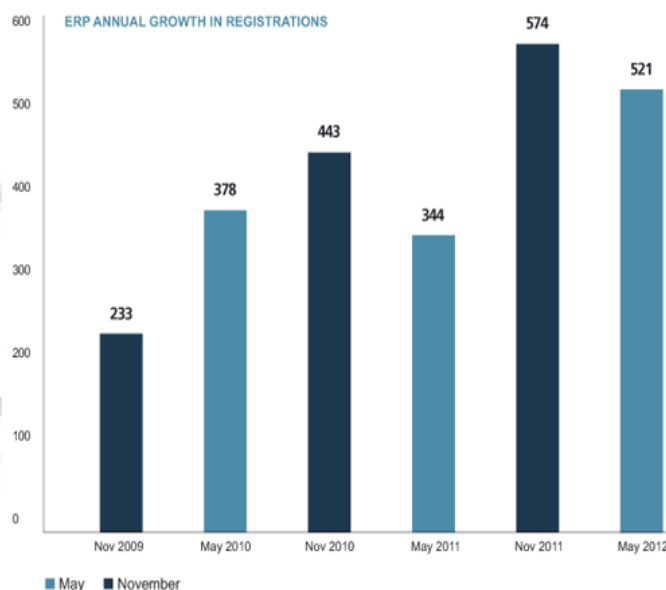


TABLE 1

Sr.No.	Name of Country	% of ERP Certified Professionals
1	US	35
2	UK	11
3	Switzerland	8
4	Canada	7
5	India	7
6	Singapore	7
7	Germany	6

Current Issues in ERP Implementations:

FIVE MAIN IDENTIFIED FACTORS

TABLE 2

Sr.No.	Factors	Cites	Author's
1	Organizational Culture	20	33
2	Organizational Structure	15	21
3	Top Management	30	46
4	User Training	23	44
5	interaction between transferor and transferee	21	44

REVIEW OF THE RELATED WORK

WHY ERP

Through implementation of ERP, many firms are able to achieve an “end-to-end” connectivity, thus, bringing various diverse functions and divisions together.

SYSTEM QUALITY

Ease of use: ERP simplifies the system, it breaks the complex system into simple manageable and understandable modules.

Ease of learning: Since ERP follows one standard format throughout which makes the learning process easy.

User requirements: Every good ERP system satisfies the user requirement at least to 80%

Systems accuracy Flexibility Sophistication Integration and Customization are some of the quality attributes

INFORMATION QUALITY:

ERP provides Concise and relevant information in the desired format, the usability of the information increases as the information is provided as and when required

INDIVIDUAL IMPACT

Because of information quality awareness increases which improves learning and helps an individual to make effective decisions which in turn increases individual productivity.

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPACT

As the business process undergoes a drastic change the overall staff requirements and organizational cost goes down resulting in improved outcomes better E-Commerce thus increasing overall productivity.

Evolution of ERP

Modern Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems have their roots in Materials Requirement Planning (MRP I) systems which came to limelight in 1960s. MRP I systems were computer-based systems which managed and controlled the inventory and schedules. As data from the factory floor, warehouse, or distribution center began to affect more areas of the company, the need to distribute this information across the entire enterprise which gave rise to Manufacturing Resource Planning (MRP II) systems, which have now given way to ERP. MRP II systems could evaluate the entire production environment and create or adjust master schedules based on feedback from current production and purchase conditions. Finally, companies such as SAP, Oracle, and others are reaping the rewards of dramatic growth as companies move away from legacy MRP II systems and begin the process of ERP implementation. Their solutions are more robust than any host-based MRP system to date.

ERP TRENDS AND PERSPECTIVES

Journal articles belonging to this subject mostly provide introductions to ERP definitions and issues of ERP, common Topics include, different perspectives of ERP, survey studies on industry experiences, recent trends in ERP and surveys of the ERP literature. And major reasons of ERP failure and success Business Process Reengineering is emphasized and studied in many articles along with change engineering.

Future Trends and Perspectives

ERP II

(The second generation of Enterprise Resource Planning)

ERP II contains applications which extend supply functionality to external enterprises (generally vendor-affiliated companies or enterprises) to reduce cost, improve supply chain efficiency, and to perform collaborative innovation.

Extends “back office” processing functions and operations into the extended supply chain with a heavy emphasis on supply chain automation, additional efficiency, more cost control, and some vendor collaboration for limited innovation. This area of the application moves into the “last mile” of improvements that can be more expensive to implement and yield lower returns. However, carried out properly with significant supply chain collaboration and joint engineering or development efforts this can provide new / innovative products or services addressing both lagging indicators of cost control and efficiency while exploring leading indicators of new products or services.

SERVICE ORIENTED ARCHITECTURE (SOA)

One of the main market trends is the technology transformation to; Service Oriented Architecture (SOA) which will have the largest effect on redefining the ERP market. As indicated by analysts, SOA will transform software from an inhibitor to an enabler of business change by 2015 [12]. The ‘services’ can be distributed across the world from different geographical area. The SOA provides more flexibility than older technologies with respect to re-using and re-combining the services. This provides agility to meet the ever-changing needs of the plant, business unit, enterprise and the supply chain.[13]

REVIEW OF THE JOURNAL ARTICLES

The five Major topics and sub-topics within the domain of ERP in this report are

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

The congruence between ERP systems and organizational culture is the prerequisite to successful ERP implementation [14] and [15]. The implementation of an integrated system such as ERP requires that the basic business practices embedded in the ERP system be adapted to the organizational processes and culture.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The inability of these companies to realize competitive advantage from ERP implementation is attributable to failure of proper usage of technology to address changes in the design and structure of an organization. Organizations that realize full benefits of a technology are those that make necessary changes in their organizational structure, strategies, and processes [16].

Organizations might not be able to realize full benefits of a technology unless they make the necessary changes in organizational structure, strategies and processes. Many renowned scholars in MIS including Grover, Teng, Segars, Fiedler, Henderson, Venkatraman, Scott-Morton, Lucas and Baroudi have called for changes in business processes, organizational structures and such management related issues in order to take full advantage of the implemented information technologies [17, 18, 19]

TOP MANAGEMENT

ERP is a transformation process in terms of business practices, structure, policy processes and employees, and as detailed above often requires assistance from external consultants. A proactive top management support remains critical in IS implementation even when external consultants are involved. Traditionally, top management support can assist organizations to overcome hurdles such as political resistance and encourage participation throughout the organization; it has further been identified as a crucial factor related to information systems effectiveness. During a successful ERP implementation, top managers need to not only continuously monitor the progress of the project and provide direction to the implementation team, but also champion ERP within the organization and allocate sufficient required resources and. Top management support is consistently identified as one of the most important factors for ERP implementation success [20]

USER TRAINING

Education and training on functionality and configuration gives the project team the needed insight to map the new process design. A sound project management framework acts as a significant condition for achieving overall success with an ERP system. The people intended to use the system and those influenced by it will go through the education and training needed to understand how data flow through the system and how the system is operated at each point in the supply chain. Knowledge gained from the development of these phases served as the groundwork for the success of the system, but since training is the last phase in the ERP implementation activity it is generally cut short if the project runs out of dates.

INTERACTION BETWEEN TRANSFEROR AND TRANSFEREE

This refers to the psychological state of participation in terms of system development and implementation between representatives of target user groups and the trainees. Large systems development requires user input in order to be successful and this is only possible when the interaction between the trainer and trainee. When a company decides to implement a large system such as ERP, users from all affected departments are required to commit to the definition stages of the company ERP systems requirement analysis and ERP project implementation. Although users are often less influential both in ERP systems requirement analysis and implementation, a lack of user support may still hinder successful ERP implementation. Finally, if users are not psychologically ready to change and accept a new ERP system, they are likely to resist working and communicating with Trainers. For these reasons, it is important to have a healthy interaction between trainer and trainee.

SENARIO OF ERP IN INDIA

Small businesses at times can succeed in India without ERP but MNC have to adopt ERP or in other words it is impossible for MNC's to succeed in India without ERP. The literature shows India argues that business needs, competition, market survival, and customer retention are among the main drivers that force SMEs to adopt ERP system [21]. The current research shows that SMEs in India are benefited mainly in reducing the need for support, improving customer services and improving communication.

Based on the literature review certain issues and factors leading to successful ERP implementation have been identified. On the basis of frequency of citations made by authors in ERP implementation issues in context to small scale enterprises of similar developing countries like India 25 issues have been identified.

TABLE 3

1. Issues mentioned in the literature	2. Number of instances cited in the literature
3. Education & training	4. 9
5. Top management support	6. 8
7. Properly defined goals & objectives	8. 5
9. Competent project team	10. 3
11. Project management	12. 2
13. Change management	14. 2
15. Proper package selection	16. 2
17. Effective communication	18. 2
19. Vendor support	20. 1
21. Data accuracy	22. 1
23. User knowledge	24. 1

ANALYSIS

The field of ERP has matured in a relatively short period of time. As Fig. 1 shows, the number of journal articles published from 2005 has steadily increased. Considering the fact that most of the earlier journal articles in the topic area started appearing in late 1990s, this field certainly has gained significant research interests from many researchers in a short period of time.

From the data in Table 1 above a conclusive analysis could be drawn ERP Trends and perspective's – (In a particular sector) like; ERP in SMEs and ERP in developing countries (Africa and parts of Asia) are areas, which are lacking in ERP research and development. Furthermore, ERP Education and Training are another area lacking much research as this can be seen from table 1.

Even though this is true in India ERP is gaining more popularity and is becoming a common buzz word in Small and Medium size Business.

Table 2 shows the common issues faced while implementing ERP in developing countries like India and other similar Asian countries.

CONCLUSION

The concept of ERP is growing and expanding. It will be useful to investigate topics such as how the companies using the ERP system perceive these trends of extension, how they will cope with the changes and challenges that pose ahead, what tools are needed, such as the infrastructures available to them and the kind of skills and expertise required. Methodologies required and the kind of models useful in the expansion efforts or approaches, etc. ERP is truly multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary therefore research is needed from diverse point of view. The field of ERP will certainly continue to mature and even more in the extension period. As more experiences have been gained with the implementation process, different topics such as the importance of using ERP and the assessment of ERP values seem to be becoming of interests to both the researchers, businesses and industrial organizations as they are potential areas for future research.

RESEARCH GAPS; FINDINGS AND CONTRIBUTIONS FOR FUTURE/FURTHER

In this global village, businesses and industrial organizations must be very competitive in order to survive. Thus, Future researches on these ERP topics seem very promising. Some of the areas include the education of ERP; ERP implementation on the large scale among SMEs; ERP implementation in developing countries taking into accounts the fact that these countries are not as rich as the Western countries and hence the ERP systems should be administered more in the form of Software as a Service (SaaS); all of these areas listed according to the findings in this review report are eminent research gaps for business and industrial organizations as well the academia. A large scale, simultaneous survey studies might generate useful insights on these topics.

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