

IDENTIFICATION OF CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTOR IN ERP IMPLEMENTATION IN SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES IN UAE

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ABSTRACT:

Small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs) have been given lesser focus from the software vendors than large enterprises (LEs). Enquiries on the implementation of ERP in certain European countries show that the work of implementing an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) is a risky industry for SMEs than for LEs. In this research paper, an agenda has been embraced to cover both the national (UAE based) and the SMEs from prospect to recognize and rank the Critical Success Factors that affect the success of ERP implementation at SMEs based in UAE. A model is established with the help of quantitative survey based method to categorize and rank the eleven critical success factors and then a structure has been projected in terms of recommendations for handling these CSFs. This research paper claims that ERP implementation at the SMEs located in UAE should spread its scope further than the configuration to the process, technology, enterprise, end-user, vendors, output, human resource, value, policy and project related subjects by making an allowance for these eleven critical success factors for the success of ERP implementation at the SMEs based in UAE, that may put SMEs in UAE on the competitive position with the SMEs around the world..

KEYWORDS: Critical Success Factors (CSF), Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), Small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs)

INTRODUCTION:

Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are companies whose number of employees or gross revenue falls below certain threshold defined by the country (Liberto, 2019). Internationally, the SME section has been a cause of change, growth and development in numerous countries, and is

a chief source of employment. It has been acknowledged that some of the world's best working economies, particularly Taiwan and Hong Kong, are very strongly founded on small enterprises (Lee & Adams, 1998). SMEs are anticipated to play an important role in the economic development of UAE, amid the entrepreneurial spirit of the country which has been given a boost in the liberalized setting. The general business environment has become favorable for SMEs to progress not just from small and medium to big, but also from the national to global level.

The performance of the UAE small scale sectors in terms of important economic factors such employment and export during the last period has made the SME sector to change their business policies for survival and growth. Some of the modifications that SMEs are concentrating on include obtaining quality documentations, increasing usage of ICT, generating e-business models and broadening to meet the snowballing competition.

During the recent years, the global economic disaster has cast the limelight on numerous business enterprise of any size. With UAE not being neglected of the influence, big Businesses have tried to handle this crisis in their own methods. SME's are gradually being fetched into focus; reason was their massive growth power and capacity. Many researchers have suggested investigation into the implementation and use of ERP at SMEs (Bendoly & Jacobs, 2004). ERP system is a packed business software system that lets a company to mechanize & integrate the mainstream of its business processes, and share collective data and practices across the whole enterprise.

The success or failure of ERP implementation is closely related to how the companies handle the process. The ERP implementation process could differ in every company. The differences might concern to the implementation goals, the scope, or the available resources. But among all the differences in the every implementation process there are some general points that are important in the process and would strongly result in the success or failure in the implementation. Those important points were identified as critical success factors (Laudon & Laudon, 1998). Critical Success Factors (CSFs) are used to support project managers and management boards to increase and ensure their ERP implementation projects. Understanding the critical success factors in ERP implementation would give some guidelines on what factors that should be given more attention in order to bring the implementation process into success. The critical success factors (CSFs) could either be a risk or opportunities, depends on how the organizations handle them.

The main purpose of this paper is to identify the critical factors influencing success of ERP implementation at SMEs in the UAE and understand the criticality degree of each factor from the viewpoints of three parties (companies, consultants & vendors). Through this, companies can evaluate and allot their resources efficiently to accomplish the success of ERP implementation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The term ERP was derived from the terms material requirements planning (MRP) and manufacturing resource planning (MRP II). An ERP system is a packaged business software system that allows a company to automate & integrate the majority of its business processes, and share common data and practices across the entire enterprise (Shanks, Seddon, & Willcocks, 2003). ERP also produces and accesses information in a real-time environment. Many companies use ERP software to integrate the enterprise-wide information and process for example their financial, human resources, manufacturing, logistics, sales and marketing functions. ERP was designed mainly to provide a total, integrated company's resource to manage the business process efficiently and effectively.

The popularity of ERP software began to rise in the early 1990s and has grown to become one of the most widespread software applications used in managing enterprise-wide business processes (Holland, Light, & Kawalek, Beyond Enterprise Resource Planning Projects: Innovative Strategies for Competitive Advantage, 1999). One of the dominant features of the ERP market is that enthusiasm for ERP systems in the industrial area such as chemicals, IT, electronics, textiles, and even in the public sector (Chang & Gable, 2002). Today's ERP system is an outgrowth of Materials Requirement Planning (MRP) systems. As MRP evolved to MRP II, it began to incorporate financial control and the measurement, master production scheduling, and capacity planning. Now, ERP has been extended not only to capture entire functions in the enterprise but also to be integrated with additional functions such as business intelligence and Decision Support Systems (Mabert, Soni, & Venkataramanan, 2003).

When companies come to ERP implementation, they share the common goals, a quick and smooth implementation that does not disrupt business process with implementation system glitches (Doyle & Wiley, 2000). However, ERP systems can't promise to live up to companies' expectations in all cases. ERP systems were widely recognized as both problematic and likely to overrun time and budget allocations (Parr, Shanks, & Darke, 1999). ERP system delivery and implementation is generally considered to be complex, costly, and highly problematic (Doyle & Wiley, 2000). It can deliver great rewards and opportunities, but the risks embedded are equally great.

Critical success factors (CSFs) are frequently used to recognize and state the main essentials mandatory for the success of a business maneuver (Hossain & Shakir, 2001). Supplementary, on critical success factors can be defined in more specifics as a small number of easily distinguishable operational objectives shaped by the business, the firm, the executive, and the surroundings that guarantees the success of an organization (Laudon & Laudon, 1998). The definition by Laudon and Laudon is parallel with the definition by Scott and Rochart (1984) that points out

that CSFs are the operative goals of a firm and the realization of these goals will reassure the successful operation.

The CSFs outline technique recommended by Rockhart (1982) open that the use and scope of CSFs framework rest on the subjective aptitude, style, and perception of the managers. He further clarified that the win over of CSFs could be understood from four perspectives that were shaped by businesses and the structural changes, by firm functioning strategies, directors perception, and the changes in setting (with regards to technology).

Numerous authors have worked on the success and failure of ERP employment but they only focus only on limited area of scholarship, such as in business strategies, organizational or technology (Hong & Kim, 2002). Some articles that searched for the study gave away some insight about critical success factors in ERP. Meanwhile some of them are mentioning Nah, Lau, & Kuang's (2001) article as their chief source. In this article they acknowledged eleven key critical factors for ERP operational success, aiming to give applied suggestions to the corporations in the process of ERP execution (Nah, Lau, & Kuang, 2001). These factors were listed arbitrarily, from business strategy to technological issues.

Table 1: Critical Success Factors (Nah, Lau, & Kuang, 2001)

1	ERP team work and composition
2	Top management support
3	Business strategy and vision
4	Effective communication
5	Project management
6	Suitable business and legacy systems
7	Project sponsor
8	Transform management program and values
9	Reengineering of business process and minimum customization

10.	Software development, testing and troubleshooting
11.	Monitoring and evaluation of performance

The critical success factors should be grouped under definite criteria, instead of understanding all the factors randomly, the paper came to Pinto and Slevin model (1987), which was later advanced and expanded by Light and Holland (1999)

Some of the additional factors derived from literature that contribute to the success of ERP system include customization, use of external consultants, Supplier relationship management, Change management, Business measures, User training, Management reporting requirements and Technological challenges (Laudon & Laudon, 1998)

It was Pinto and Slevin (1987) who for the first time argued that project executives must be proficient in both strategic and tactical features of ERP project management, to be able to command projects effectively. To simplify that they made an ERP implementation project shape that contained ten critical success factors systematized in strategic and tactical setting. The critical success factors were then divided underneath the strategic (planning) phase and the tactical (action) stage of the implementation project.

Strategic issues identify the requisite for a project task, top management sustenance, and a project timetable outlining individual action footsteps for project implementation. Tactical issues emphasize on communication with all affected groups, staffing of necessary workers for the project team, and procurement the required technology and know-how for the technical action steps. User recognition, monitoring, and response at each stage, and troubleshooting are also ordered as tactical issues (Pinto & Slevin, 1987). Their type of grouping that classifies those CSFs into strategic and tactical would make it smooth to understand and plan the differences.

Holland and Light (1999) further extended the framework founded on the critical success factors (CSFs) of ERP projects and their amalgamation. The CSFs were also assembled under strategic and tactical titles but the factors were stretched further. The framework is shown below.

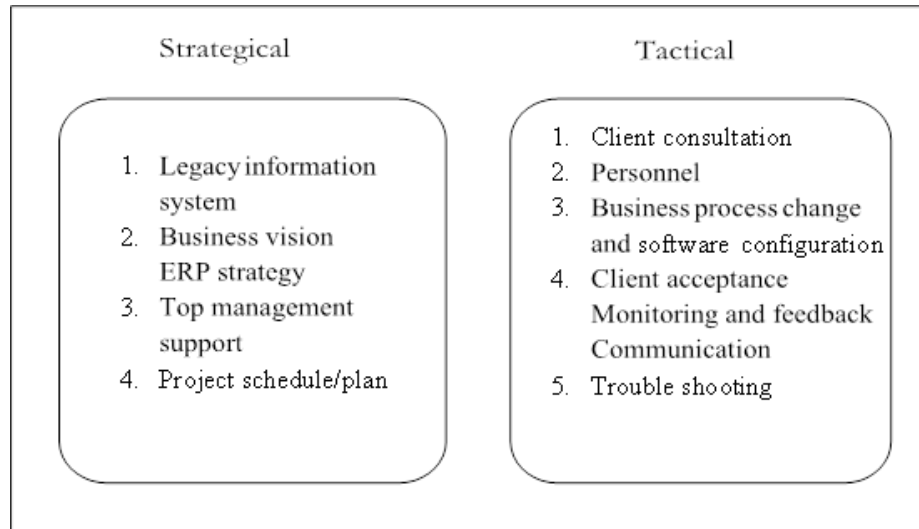


Figure 1:A critical success factors framework for ERP implementation (Holland & Light, 1999)

Light and Holland stressed on the need to line up business processes with the software during the operation. Additionally, they said that naturally, strategies and tactics were not free of each other. Levinson and Benjamin (1993) also acknowledged the need to manage organization, business procedure, and technology alterations in an integrative manner. Strategy should guide tactics in order to completely incorporate the three main management processes (planning, execution and control) (Holland & Light, 1999). However, CSFs will regulate the success and failure of ERP implementation.

METHODOLOGY

This study is exploratory in nature which recognizes eleven critical success factors for the successful of ERP implementation at SMEs in UAE and ranks those CSFs according to their importance and level of criticality. It gives understandings into the concept of CSFs for the success of ERP implementation at the SMEs in UAE. However, it does not go deep into the phenomenon of CSFs and so it cannot be considered as descriptive. Exploratory research has the aim of framing problems more precisely, illuminating the concepts, accumulative explanations, achieving insights, eradicating ideas and articulating hypothesis. Exploratory research here is done by a survey. A quantitative survey as a foundation approach was used.

The ERP consultants from UAE have been selected for the data assembly by means of non-probability sampling method. The primary data was gathered with self- structured close ended questionnaire. A five point Likert scale was designed with each statement having five alternatives to choose from Strongly Agree= 5, Agree= 4, Fairly agree =3 , Disagree= 2 and Strongly disagree= 1 for questionnaire and also asked to determine the tendency to which the critical success factors influence the implementation of ERP in the SMEs in UAE. The process is to gather the huge number of statements that meet two standards:

- (1) Each statement is supposed to be relevant to the attitude which is being studied and
- (2) Each statement is thought to reflecting favorable or unfavorable position on that attitude.

Respondents were supposed to give their opinions about level of influence, no influence at all to the statements. The pilot test was applied for ten respondents. After that the questionnaire were distributed among 50 respondents. Statistically any same size which is 30 or more than 30 are normally considered as the large sample size, in this research paper the sample size was kept 50 in order to sustain the reliability and validity of the survey that is statistically. These respondents belonged from different background and varied genders. The questionnaire consists of 11 questions. The aim of the research and the pattern of the questions were described in detail to the respondents so that the unfairness will be as little as possible. Factor analysis was used to lessen the variables and identify the structure in the connection between variables along with Friedman test to rank the CSFs according to their importance. The analysis of data was done by applying descriptive statistics, factor analysis, and non-parametric test using SPSS V 18.0.

Quantitative survey based technique was applied to search “what are the possible critical success factors” that strongly determine or do not determine the success of ERP implementation at the SMEs situated in UAE. .Once close ended questionnaire were used to assemble the data from the 50 ERP consultants. They were selected because of their extensive experience with ERP implementation in UAE for nearly all types of UAE based industries including SMEs in UAE. Sample was deduced from 5 national and international best known IT sector companies which are involved ERP implementation at global level including the SMEs in UAE. The UAE based ERP consultants were chosen for the data gathering using non probability sampling method. The data gathered were analyzed and examined utilizing statistical techniques such as reliability tests, descriptive statistics, exploratory factor analysis and non-parametric tests. To explore eleven CSFs the close ended questionnaires was modified with the help of literature analyses and expert’s views. Far ahead on it has been standardized for this research with the help of Cronbach’s Alpha reliability and supported by exploratory factor analysis.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The survey instrument constructs are based on preliminary literature review to form the initial items. Construct validity is evaluated by performing factor analysis. High correlations among the critical success factors are considered to indicate construct validity. Estimates greater than .70 are generally considered to meet the criteria for reliability. In the table given below, the composite reliability estimates for the measurement scales are listed. From the table, it is observed that

reliability is above 0.75 which states that sufficient internal consistencies have been judged for the reliable measure and construct validity.

Table 2: The Composite Reliability (Reliability Statistics)

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.75	0.75	11

Table 3 (Part a) presents the means and standard deviations for the questionnaire that is identification of 11 CSFs in order (Strongly Agree =5, Agree =4, Fairly agree =3, Disagree =2, Strongly Disagree = 1). Second part of the descriptive statistics see Table 3(Part II) presents the means for the questionnaire that is ranking of 11 CSFs in order of their importance. The items used in constructing the survey for this study were adapted from several relevant prior research studies of the large enterprise. The data collected on the critical success factors were first perused to check whether the data could be analyzed using factor analysis or not. The results of this analysis indicate that the correlations among the factors were high. The data were hence found suitable to conduct factor analysis. An exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the different measures to purify the instrument and to validate the various dimensions underlying the data set. Factor analysis was also used to identify underlying factors or the dimensional composition of instrument. Table 4 shows the key critical success factors which show the order of importance of the critical success factors.

Table 3 (a): Descriptive Statistics for Questionnaire One and Two

Sno	Item Statistics	Item Statistics		
		Mean	Std. Deviation	N
1	Top management support	4.70	0.463	50
2	ERP Strategy	3.60	0.495	50
3	Business Process Reengineering	4.50	0.505	50
4	Project team & change management	4.30	0.647	50
5	Retain the experienced employee	3.20	0.404	50
6	Consultant and vendor support	3.50	0.505	50
7	Monitoring and evaluation of performance	3.00	0.639	50
8	Problems anticipation (troubleshooting, bugs, etc.)	2.60	0.495	50
9	Organizational culture	3.40	0.495	50
10	Effective communication	4.30	0.463	50

11	Cultural diversity	2.30	0.647	50
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Table 3 (b): Descriptive Statistics for Questionnaire One and Two

Descriptive Statistics			
Sno	Ranking of Critical Success Factors-CSFs According to importance	Mean	N
1	Top management support	4.70	50
2	Business Process Reengineering	4.50	50
3	Project team & change management	4.30	50
4	Effective communication	4.30	50
5	ERP Strategy	3.60	50
6	Consultant and vendor support	6.50	50
7	Organizational culture	3.40	50
8	Retain the experienced employee	3.20	50
9	Monitoring and evaluation of performance	3.00	50
10	Problems anticipation (troubleshooting, bugs, etc.)	2.60	50
11	Cultural diversity	2.30	50

As the questionnaire offered 5 standards (Strongly Agree =5, Agree =4, Fairly agree =3, Disagree =2, Strongly Disagree = 1) the most significant factors will be shown by the highest Mean. And the lower the Means value means the lesser amount of important the factor.

Significant relationships are found between CSFs and the successful implementation of ERP at the SMEs in UAE. The hypothesis that was formulated for study been tested with the help of factor analysis and few more categories, which also identifies the critical success factors that are significantly important for successful ERP implementation at the SMEs located in UAE. Eleven critical success factors were identified with the help of ERP implementation success model along with the Key Critical Success Factors to make successful ERP implementation at UAE SMEs. Study concludes that all these eleven critical success factors influence, the success of ERP implementation at UAE SMEs and they have different priorities (ranking) during ERP implementation at UAE SMEs. The study also makes groups of important factors for the success of ERP implementation at UAE SMEs by identifying KCSFs and factor analysis. Since the grouping of variables are done on basis of data collected from the UAE ERP consultants, the results of the study are also acceptable for UAE ERP vendors and will be acknowledged by the UAE ERP consultants too. The ERP Implementation success model for the success

of ERP implementation at UAE SMEs along with the list of KCSFs can be used during all the phases of ERP implementation at UAE SMEs to make ERP successful because the boundaries between planning, implementation, stabilization and improvements are not rigid. The ERP implementation success model simplifies the functionality of ERP implementation at UAE SMEs. The simplification of system makes easier to understand the ERP requirements. Commonly, a better system is easier to understand, implement and maintain for the users and the implementers. By using this model for small and medium-size companies ERP implementation, especially in UAE SMEs can achieve global business process by implementing ERP systems efficiently.

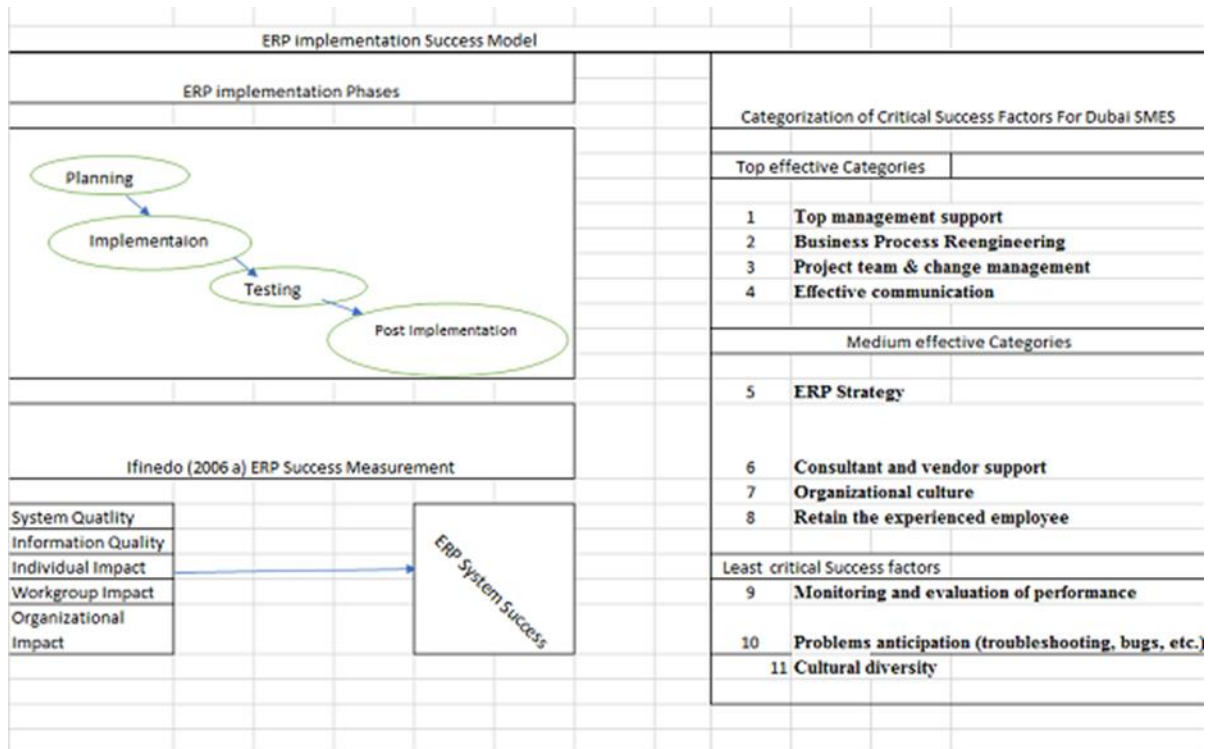


Figure 2: ERP Implementation Success Model for UAE SMEs

We have identified the most effective critical success factor category, medium effective critical success factors and least critical success factor for the implementation of ERP in UAE SMES. We will discuss all of them one by one.

From the concluding score, we can simply find the critical success factors in the implementation of ERP in SMEs in UAE and how important and critical is every individual factor of them.

Conclusion

The study was aimed at two major endeavors, the first being the identification of critical success factors in which we have identified eleven critical success factors that are essential for the successful implementation of ERP in the small and medium size enterprises in

UAE. Firstly, some thirty factors were identified which were later filtered down to eleven. Moreover, those eleven factors were identified by designing a questionnaire that mentioned the factors and asked the respondents by using a Likert scale of five, whether they think that a given factor is critical for the success or not. The respondents were the chosen consultants from different SMES operating in Dubai. When the questionnaires were processed through the SPSS software, the study came up with the eleven most critical factors. The second main purpose of this research paper was to categorize and rank the critical success factors that influence success of ERP implementation at SMEs located in UAE. For this drive, the paper analyses UAE based ERP consultant's views and their ranking for CSFs as a limit. The analysis was done through survey questionnaires. When the analysis was done, the following results are deduced: The uppermost most critical success factor for the successful ERP implementation at SMEs in UAE is a flawless and clear business plan and vision accompanied by topmost management's assurance, commitment and support etc. Working hypothesis are acknowledged with some fresh categories. It shows that businesses, technology, vendors and final-user linked critical success factors of the big enterprise also have association with the successful ERP implementation at the SMEs in UAE. ERP systems acts more than a new information technology. They are extra business-process- oriented than technology-oriented. (Davenport, 1998) says an ERP is not only a project; it is holistic in nature, it is a way of life in enterprises. The research agenda issues raised in this paper are envisioned for scholars and specialists who are involved in looking at the CSFs for the successful ERP implementation in the SMEs grounded in UAE. In UAE SMEs are the supportive of the economy and are today confronted with worldwide competition. Hence, it becomes important to find out means for reacting to the energetic and dynamic markets forces. ERP systems are the most shared and adopted strategy for big companies. SMEs also are gradually moving towards ERP systems implementation in their structures. However, they are required to implement a proactive attitude towards ERP and contemplate it as a business solution rather than a simple IT solution. This research paper discusses that ERP implementation in the SMEs in UAE should lengthen its scope outside the configuration to the tactical, executive, technical and structural issues by considering these 11 critical success factors for successful ERP implementation in the SMEs in UAE that may bring UAE based SMEs on the competitive position. Thus, it can be concluded from the research study that the eleven critical success factors impact success of ERP implementation at the SMEs in UAE with different precedence. It is wished that more research will be carried out in the future in order to further examine the influence of ERP implementation in the UAE based SMEs and empower both practitioners and researchers to find out the preeminent ways to make successful ERP implementation. Thus the hypothesis is approved and the 11 most critical success factors are identified along with its ranking and categorization.

RECOMMENDATION

For the future research, a sum of different methods could be reflected. Single company case studies could be considered to find out some of the critical success factors else then than the exposed eleven CSFs. Inside sector case studies can be made use of particularly to highlight the critical success factors tackled by a specific sector. Cross-sector case studies can also be used to authenticate these assumptions as well as to clarify modifications among sectors. Discrete critical success factors can be acknowledged for each segment of the ERP implementation at the SMEs in UAE. A questionnaire-founded survey could be used to confirm the results of this research with the help of diverse hypothetical a framework and the big sample size for each phase of the ERP implementation. Lastly, an additional characteristic of ERP success that is success in implementation of ERP systems by the SMEs in UAE can also be analyzed by continuation and confirmation of these works. Precise industries or organizational sizes might have diverse organizational features and business necessities for ERP systems and this creates a vigorous research framework and module which may be beneficial for the appreciative understanding of the critical success factors for the success of ERP implementation at the SMEs based here in UAE.

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APPENDIXES

Dear Sir /Madam,

I am conducting a survey to identify and rank critical success factors in ERP implementation in Small and Medium enterprises (SMEs) in UAE. The survey is part of my capstone course for the partial fulfilment of Master of science in IT Management at College of Engineering and Computing, Al Ghurair University Dubai. Your response is highly valuable. I will be obliged if you could take out some time from your busy schedule and fill the questionnaire. The questionnaire will take 10 minutes to complete and all the responses will be strictly used for academic purpose.

Thank you for your help

RESPONDENT INFORMATION (OPTIONAL)

Company	Gender	Age	Position in Company

Please Select the Factors below according to the importance.

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Fairly Agree
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

1	Do you think that top management support determines the successful implementation of ERP in small and medium enterprise in UAE?	Strongly Agree	Agree	Fairly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

2	ERP Strategy factor is an important factor for the successful implementation of ERP in small and medium enterprise in UAE?	Strongly Agree	Agree	Fairly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

3	Is Business Process Reengineering factor important for the successful implementation of ERP in small and medium enterprise in UAE?	Strongly Agree	Agree	Fairly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

4	Do you think Project team & change management determines	Strongly Agree	Agree	Fairly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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	the successful implementation of ERP in small and medium enterprise in UAE?					
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5	Retaining the experienced employee is important for the successful implementation of ERP in small and medium enterprise in UAE?	Strongly Agree	Agree	Fairly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

6	Do you think that Consultant and vendor support determines the successful implementation of ERP in small and medium enterprise in UAE?	Strongly Agree	Agree	Fairly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

7	Do you think Monitoring and evaluation of performance determines the successful implementation of ERP in small and medium enterprise in UAE?	Strongly Agree	Agree	Fairly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

8	Is Problems anticipation (troubleshooting, bugs, etc.) factors effects the successful implementation of ERP in small and medium enterprise in UAE?	Strongly Agree	Agree	Fairly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

9	Is Organizational culture factor Important for the successful implementation of ERP in small and medium enterprise in UAE?	Strongly Agree	Agree	Fairly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

10	Do you think Effective communication factor is important for the successful implementation of ERP in small and medium enterprise in UAE?	Strongly Agree	Agree	Fairly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

11	Is Cultural diversity effects the successful implementation of ERP in small and medium enterprise in UAE?	Strongly Agree	Agree	Fairly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree