

Factors critical to a successful ERP implementation: evidence from an emerging economy

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Abstract. *This research aims to assess factors critical to successful implementation of enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems in emerging economies. Method: An exploratory case study design using semi-structured interviews as a data collection technique was employed. Results: This study offers valuable findings for the Albanian ERP market using a qualitative research design. ERP initiatives receive significant investment to improve the overall company's performance. Implementing ERP systems has the potential to provide benefits such: as reduced inventory costs, improved data sharing process among departmental units, real-time data reporting in a single source of information. Therefore, it is critical to assess past, present, and future performance to determine whether these investments are beneficial or not for the company. Despite the benefits of ERP system implementation, organizations may experience serious challenges during the process, and the risk of project partial failure is high. Originality: This research has implications as it provides a set of critical success factors (CSFs) that are applicable in Albania to companies wishing to implement ERP, but at the same time also for traders and consultants. Recognizing these factors will result in a more seamless implementation path.*

Keywords: ERP systems, CSF, construction industry, emerging economies

JEL classification: M11, L61, O14, O33

1. Introduction

Organizations and companies continuously and systematically deal with competition on a worldwide scale (Staehr et al., 2004; Zach et al., 2012; Hysa et al., 2020; Kruja, 2020). To achieve success, every business while developing new products and services needs to discover methods to increase cost-effectiveness and enhance flexibility (Staehr et al., 2004; Kruja, 2013; Manta et al., 2021). An organization's information systems and processes are its foundational elements and must evolve and improve for the company to maximize output and stay ahead of the competition (Zach et al., 2012; Kruja & Kamberi, 2020; Ahmetaj et al., 2023).

Well-known software packages that have arisen lately are enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems (Seng Woo, 2007). These systems have become fundamental tools for enterprises, providing consolidated solutions for managing different operations such as supply chain, finance, customer relations, human resources, and are turning to establish strong capabilities, boost performance, make better decisions, and gain a competitive edge (Al-Mudimigh et al., 2001; Kruja et al., 2019; Kruja & Kamberi, 2020; Koka et al., 2021; Kruja & Berisha, 2021).

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The emphasis on ERP software has acquired a vital place in today's organizations. ERP systems software initiatives have received significant investment to improve the overall company's performance. Implementing ERP systems has the potential to provide benefits such: as reduced inventory costs, improved data sharing process among departmental units, real-time data reporting in a single source of information (Al-Fawaz et al., 2010; Shkrepa & Kruja, 2021), thus, it is critical to assess past, present, and future performance to determine whether these investments are beneficial or not for the company (Finney & Corbett, 2007).

With the advancements in artificial intelligence, opportunities have arisen for ERP systems with the development of iERP, which support industry with "fast processing of complex unstructured data with innovative ways and actionable insights" (Kenge & Khan, 2020, p. 36). iERP systems offer opportunities of simpler workflows, less mistakes, more efficiency (Ruhi, 2016). Moreover, the evolution of cloud computing has supported companies to cut costs and further go for hybrid type ERP systems especially for digital companies (Kenge & Khan, 2020).

However, beside the ERP system, companies may also utilize lean manufacturing (LM), an alternative system strategically important which provides manufacturing enterprises a competitive advantage in the global market (Jituri et al., 2018). Implementation of a LM system equips them with the advantage of added value to customers by utilising less resources to produce the same output (Dora et al., 2013). Moreover, companies are approaching the LM process aiming for an efficient, productive and cost-effective process (Dora et al., 2013; Cortes et al., 2016). This system of operational excellence commits to enterprises' quality improvement and waste reduction (Jituri et al., 2018), nonetheless it requires too much time and resources to be implemented (Moeuf et al., 2016). In this case supporting the LM system tools with an information technology system like ERP, can facilitate and speed up the whole process (Powell et al., 2013; Riezebos et al., 2009)

Even though the benefits of ERP system adoption are extensively recognized, the path to a successful implementation is filled with threats, especially in emerging economies. In Albania, the emphasis on ERP software has gained a strategic role in today's organizations (Shkurti & Muça, 2014; Shkrepa & Kruja, 2021; Hysa et al., 2022). Even though being an emerging economy, the digitization process has advanced on comparable steps as the developed economies (Hysa & Kruja, 2022). Hence, recognizing the ongoing developments, and the short history of ERP systems in the Albanian economy, it can be distinguished a clear trend toward ERP system implementation. This means that an increasing number of companies want to focus on the benefits that these systems can offer. Consequently, assessing the Critical Success Factors (CSF) that have an impact on a successful ERP implementation process is crucial, as it provides a set of factors that are applicable for the Albanian companies wishing to implement this transformation process. Recognizing these factors will result in a more seamless implementation path (Berisha et al., 2022). Hence, this research aims to investigate CSFs that commit to the successful adoption of ERP systems in an emerging economy by drawing attention to a particular context.

2. Study background

ERPs are adaptable information system packages that combine information and information-based processes inside and beyond an organization's functional sectors (Ehie & Madsen, 2005). Further, recently developed ERP systems have integrated models of reference that purport to encompass to current leading enterprise applications. Since 1969, when it was first introduced by Blumenthal integrating patterns and procedures of enterprise information systems has been crucial (Kumar et al., 2002)

An ERP system is a comprehensive software solution that expands a wide range of the processes of business, allowing organizations to obtain a comprehensive view of the business enterprise (Hasheela-Mufeti & Smolander, 2017; Kruja & Hysi, 2020). Due to increased market competition, enterprises involving multiple departments require up-to-date and accurate information. ERP besides enabling the integration of business functions such as human resources, accounting, operations, finance, sales, customer management, etc., ensures data transfer and progress as well (Koh and Saad, 2006; Ahmeti & Kruja, 2021). Therefore, proper implementation of an ERP system provides substantial long-term advantages, and in certain cases, is critical to organizational performance and survival (Markus et al., 2000; Seng Woo, 2007; Shkrepa & Kruja, 2021).

Considering all the benefits that the implementation of an ERP system can bring to every company, whether large or small, once the implementation decision is made, the company starts to calculate the costs. Implementing an ERP system is expensive, and not all businesses can afford it. The cost to purchase a system is very high and in the case that there is a need for customization, this is an extra cost for the company. To have the maximum benefits from the system, the company should have a detailed analysis regarding the impact that this system would have on the company. This is another cost for the company because this analysis will be prepared by the ERP implementer or by one of the employees of the company. In both cases, the person who will prepare the report will be paid (Khoo & Cheng, 2011).

Implementing an ERP system can take some months to some years. During this time, a lot of tests will take place. The system cannot be directly implemented in the company because it should be tested before the implementation, and the ERP users should be well prepared for the usage of the system so they can benefit from it (Khoo & Cheng, 2011).

Despite the benefits of ERP system implementation, organizations may experience serious challenges during the process, and the risk of project partial failure is high (Al-Fawaz et al., 2010). Connecting every component of a company takes time, therefore neglecting to recognize the challenges of such systems results in a failure of implementation.

However, many organizations that adopted ERPs in the 1990s reported good feedback including savings in the millions of dollars because of inventory reduction, logistics, and materials management; nonetheless, the threats and obstacles with these software's remain significant. ERPs require some months to deploy and are quite expensive (Chaushi et al., 2018). Researchers have identified numerous factors that are important to a successful ERP implementation such as: top management, project management, project team, process change, training, communication, ERP provider etc (Seng Woo, 2007).

Top management must provide strong leadership, dedication, and engagement for successful implementation (Umble et al., 2003). There is little prospect for the ERP project's success if top management does not actively support it (Chaushi et al., 2018). Even though the guidance of decision-makers is required in analyzing as well as redesigning current organizational practices, an "executive management planning committee" is crucial to establish and oversee the integration process (Umble et al., 2003). Top management should lead the changes happening during the implementation process, not only to fund the project (Bingi et al., 1999).

Successful ERP deployment necessitates strong project management on the part of the organization. This includes defining objectives clearly, creating a work plan and a resource plan, and closely monitoring project progress (Umble et al., 2003). In the planning function, a clear project goal must be specified. Also, in the staff function, should be selected a project leader who is likely to be experienced, team members who will be decision-makers and a project champion who will be responsible (Chaushi et al., 2018). While project management is perceived as decisive for proper integration of the ERP process its impact exceeds the added value and project goal accomplishment expectations (Ram et al., 2013). The failure of an ERP system implementation has some factors such as misinterpreting the process, and incompetence in giving instructions, however effective and efficient planning of activities and processes is crucial (Rabaai, 2009).

Researchers claim that the team that will drive the ERP project implementation should be composed of people selected for their specific skills and commitment for the project. Many organizations lack evidencing how critical is selecting the right staff who showcases the potential to apprehend the organisational emergency and direct properly the process (Bingi et al., 1999). To emphasize the cross-functional nature of ERP systems, this team should include the best employees in the business and be cross-functional (Seng Woo, 2007). According to Chaushi et al. (2016), it is emphasized that knowledge, morale, and motivation, as well as the retention of talented team members, have a significant influence on implementation success. Members of the team should be technologically savvy, understand the organization and its operations, and come from departments involved in the ERP system (Seng Woo, 2007).

Many enterprises that use ERP are expected to have processes and structures that are compatible with the structure, tools, and information sources supplied by ERP systems (Seng Woo, 2007). As a result, it is probable that organizations using ERP will need to reengineer, at the very least, their main

processes to support the ERP system's needs (Seng Woo, 2007) To maintain the success of reengineering initiatives, redesigned processes necessitate matching realignment in organizational control. This realignment often affects most functional domains as well as numerous social systems inside the business. The changes that ensue may have a substantial impact on organizational structures, policies, procedures, and workers, therefore its implementation should be driven by business requirements rather than the IT department (Umble et al., 2003). The focus should be to improve the business rather than simply implementing software. Moreover, ERP systems can lead to significant changes in corporate culture. If people are not properly prepared for the impending changes, they will experience denial, resistance, and chaos because of the changes brought about by the implementation. But even so, if proper change management techniques are used, the organization must be prepared to adopt the opportunities provided by the new ERP system—and must be adaptable enough to fully capitalize on these opportunities.

Training refers to developing someone's skills and knowledge (Hasheela-Mufeti & Smolander, 2017). Decision makers tend to undervalue and underrate the importance and role of skilled staff, their education and their preparation for the process. Executives should carry out all the necessary costs in staff training and integrate them as a component of the project budget (Umble et al., 2003). Very often, employees are expected to be able to utilize the system effectively based solely on education and training. Nevertheless, hands-on experience under normal operating conditions accounts for a large portion of the learning process. Regular intervals meetings of system users can help in the identification of system problems and promote the exchange of knowledge gained from experience and continued to increase familiarity with the system. ERP training is essential since ERP is difficult to use, even for highly educated managers with strong IT skills (Seng Woo, 2007). Training at all levels of the organization is one of the most well-known CSF for enabling people to work with the system. According to Seng Woo (2007), it has been found that a lack of appropriate training can upset ERP users, and ongoing training is recommended as a strategy to guarantee success in ERP implementation. This is extremely essential for the firm, both internally and for those affected by ERP outside, because user acceptability is critical, and training may help employees and other users adjust to the change and establish good attitudes about the new system (Seng Woo, 2007). Furthermore, the availability of instructions, handbooks, peer-to-peer guidance, and assistance is crucial to support the application phase of the system (Rabaai, 2009).

Communication is critical for achieving ERP approval as well as widespread understanding and acceptance. Communication ought to start from the beginning, be reliable and steady, incorporating a diagram of the framework, its importance, how it will be integrated into the business, and its benefits (Seng Woo, 2007). Another highlighted CSF is communication among multiple functions/levels, particularly between business and IT employees (Finney & Corbett, 2007). Moreover, an adequate communication stage brings up confidence and knowledge transfer crucial for successfully managing and acquiring the system change (Rabaai, 2009).

3. An overview on Albania and ERP market development

ERP software has an impact on the entire functioning of enterprises. This influence manifests itself in the flexibility and quality of system applications, as well as in the cost-efficiency and output quality that they generate. ERPs have a greater influence on large enterprises than on small and medium-sized businesses. This arises because large organizations place a higher strategic value on ERP investments than small/medium enterprises, which adopt these systems primarily for operational objectives and are often basic users of ERP packages (Shkurti & Manoku, 2021).

In Albania, large organizations with 50 or more employees occupy 1.2% of the total large enterprises in Albania, nevertheless their contribution to employment was increased from 47.8% in 2019 to 48.5% in 2020 (INSTAT, 2021). Compared to 2019, there was an increase by 2.5 % in the registered enterprises with a total of 166,386 active enterprises by the end of 2020 (INSTAT, 2021). The processing industrial sector has the biggest influence on goods production in terms of active firms (7.6 %), workers (20.6 %), and net sales (11.5 %). Nevertheless, just 8% (the lowest proportion among all sectors) of employees in this industry were reported to use computers daily (INSTAT, 2021). In 2020, the percentage of businesses with information technology and communication professionals

increased by 4.8% compared to 2019 (28.2% from 23.4%). Just 30.8 percent of major firm employees use office computers. Employees who utilized computers for work reasons accounted for 27.2 % of total employees in Albanian companies, up from 26.8 % in 2019. In 2020, 35.1 % of firms employed automated information sharing inside of the company (across various functional areas), which is created for planning and enterprise resource management, from 38.5 % in 2019. Cloud services, which refers to services used on the Internet to access apps storage capacity, computers etc., were used by 18.2 % of firms with internet access in 2020, rising from 11.4 percent in 2019 (INSTAT, 2021). Customer relationship management (CRM) software was used by 22.5 % of organizations in 2020, rising from 22.1 % in 2019. Recognizing the global expansion of ERP systems and the short history of ERP systems in the Albanian economy, we can see a clear tendency toward ERP implementation by many more Albanian companies, which, as they grow, choose to focus on the benefits that information systems must provide.

The first Albanian firms implementing ERP systems were founded in the 1990s, and the first products were released to the market by the late 1990s. Albanian ERP solutions are simplistic and are classified as simple ERPs. They are intended for firms with simple functions that are not geographically scattered. Nonetheless, to keep up with the global ERP development trend, Albanian ERP providers offer services such as E-Business, Cloud Computing, and Web applications to domestic and foreign firms operating in Albania (Shkurti & Manoku, 2021). On the other hand, the number of companies utilizing ERP solutions is increasing, and under these conditions, an analysis is required to distinguish the factors that influence their selection of ERP software, as well as to investigate whether the large investments in ERPs have had any economic return (Shkurti & Muça, 2014). To develop, adapt and maintain ERPs, IT systems, cloud services or web solutions, companies can rely on their current workforce (or in case it is needed they can hire some specialists) or quickly be dependent on external service providers. Many companies in Albania are outsourcing the ERP implementation due to its process challenges even though there are many providers in the country such as: Infosoft Systems, Tetra Solutions, OneTech, Alpha Soft Web Solutions, Communication Progress sh.p.k bis sh, k, and Intelligent Systems.

In recent years ERP systems have reached their peak. The need to access business data in real-time has become ever greater. The pandemic made the biggest turnaround. Business owners realized that they needed a system that was accessible from home, in real-time, and without any other hassle. Also, another factor is the mindset of the owners as they realized that the implementation of such a system serves to increase the sales of their business. Increasing sales also bring growth to their business in every aspect of it.

4. Methodology and data

To conduct this study, it is used the qualitative research to understand the experience of the implementation process as well as the experience of the employees during its usage. Through the implementation of qualitative methods, it can be achieved more accurate and comprehensive data, by allowing for the assessment of the situation from different perspectives (Qu & Dumay, 2011; Kruja, 2020).

An exploratory case study design using semi-structured interviews as a data collection technique was employed. This research has implications as it provides a set of CSFs that are applicable in Albania to companies wishing to implement ERP, but at the same time also for vendors and consultants. Even though the ability to generalize findings from a single case study is restricted, literature support and the company's experiences before and after making changes to their ERP implementation add to Albanian ERP knowledge. Alumil Alb., a leading construction equipment manufacturing company operating in Albania is chosen for the study of this research. This company has been selected purposefully for this case study for two main reasons: (i) the sector of construction equipment manufacturing sector is a very important one with high employment rate and huge investments in the economy; (ii) Alumil is one of Europe's leading providers of branded aluminum solutions for architectural use and this experience and system that was transmitted in the Albanian market through this branch.

Semi-structured interviews were used as a tool for the primary source of data collection. The 8 interviews with managers and employees of the company, served as a critical instrument for answering the research question.

5. Research results and comments

The Alumil S.A. company was established in 1988, by the Milonas family. They established an industrial enterprise in the Industrial Area of Kilkis, Northern Greece, for the design, fabrication, and sale of aluminium profiles. During the 1990s, the firm introduced its initial systems, which were manufactured in Italy. Alumil is the biggest private aluminium extrusion organization in South-East Europe in production, distribution network, and range of aluminium profile systems. It is one of Europe's leading providers of branded aluminium solutions for architectural use. All aluminium systems have been created and developed in the R&D Department before being tested and certified by globally recognized certifying agencies. The company employs 1700 people and operates 18 factories, 12 in Greece and 6 internationally. It sells effectively in 45 countries around the world and has 24 subsidiaries in Europe, the Middle East, Russia, and the United States of America.

The official opening of the Albanian branch, Alumil Alb., took place in 2004. Now this branch has 204 employees, and the final products are aluminium products. For the company to control activities performed in Albania, they should implement a system which provides access to control operations related to production and sales. At the end of 2006, the company started working on the designing of ERP systems. The decision for the implementation of the ERP system came from the top management in the parent company. The project was initially planned to be implemented in 2 years (24 months), but this deadline was extended to 3 years. According to the IT manager, this happened for several reasons. In 2006-2007, the implementation of an ERP system was almost unknown and information about it was scarce. The project began to be designed specifically for this company, although later it was implemented in other subsidiaries in Serbia and Greece. Even though the ERP system was created by a software company located in Greece, and the request for it came from the parent company, employees from Albania participated in its design. Following the study of Seng Woo (2007), the identified CFS from the interviews conducted with managers and employees involved in this transformational process too revealed to be the same.

- Top management

The promoter of a costly, conspicuous, or radical enterprise must be someone in a position of authority and high office. The company's branch in Albania was first opened in 2004 and obviously, the opening of a new production plant in a foreign country brings difficulties to control the entire progress of the company. At the beginning, Greek administrators were forced to come to Albania very often. For this reason, the parent company decided to implement a system that would allow them to view the situation of the company in real-time. With the growth of the company in other countries this became even more necessary, so the top management of the company took the decision to implement a system. Top management's participation in designing and later their support in the implementation process did not miss throughout the process.

The design of the system initially involved three people from the company in Albania. These people had constant visits to Greece, as the system would be implemented by a Greek software company. Top management was consistently involved, seeing system implementation as a priority. However, the employees continued their work normally. The managers of the Logistics and Production departments not only participated in the system design but at the same time they did their respective duties and used their existing system. The Logistics and Production departments continue to be the largest departments in the company, along with the Sales department.

According to the interviewed production department manager, a key factor that led to the success of the system was especially the manager of the Production department. He was a person who had worked in this sector since the beginning of the company in Albania and knew the process in detail. The excellent knowledge he had also led to the very valuable and effective design of the Production module. This department is the largest and most important one in the company. During the design of the system, there were constant meetings between department managers, administrators, and IT. The

decisions taken at these meetings were then transmitted from IT to the ERP implementation company. As he says:

"In many cases, the right decisions and in the right time by the management of the ball brought the success of the implementation of the system."

- Project Team

After the system was implemented, access to it was initially given to department managers. They were the ones who entered all the data in the system and at the same time controlled its performance. The users who got the first access received training from the system creator company for about 2 full weeks, 8 hours a day. Other training was the training received in Greece.

Nowadays the training is held online, through platforms like Google Meet or Zoom, but in the beginning, this was not possible. Specialized training has been emphasized as the key to success by all the interviewers. This is because not all system users have an IT background and using an ERP system is not easy. In cases when a new user joins the team then he/she gets the training he/she needs. Several conditions are considered for the duration of the training. In cases where the employee has knowledge of ERP systems then the training time is shorter.

- Project Management

The implementation of the project lasted for 3 years and the lack of information regarding the system brought later delays. For a period of 3 years, company employees had been working simultaneously with 2 systems. Those years, the company had implemented Albanian systems such as Finance 5. The extension of the project and the uploading of data in two different systems certainly had its effects. The waste of time was the main one, but also the loss of energy by the employees were other consequences. However, the delay and other consequences did not affect the objectives that the company had for the implementation of the system.

The challenges faced by Alumil Alb. during the implementation of ERP were numerous, but the biggest challenge encountered during the implementation was the uploading items to the system. Only one aluminium product has several other by-products. At the same time, these products and by-products had their respective codes. The number of codes ranged from 40,000 to 50,000. It was impossible to enter all the codes with their respective prices in the system. The solution they gave to this challenge was grouping by colour and grouping by price. This made it easier to control the products and then sell them.

- Process change

The commitment to the implementation of the system was maximal by all the structures of the company. Representatives of the ERP company have come to Albania several times and their stay in our country lasted up to 2 weeks.

After the implementation of the system, the first positive results of it started to be seen. In the first year, the company started supplying the markets of Kosovo, Montenegro, and Northern Macedonia. Of course, the local market also had its developments. The company experienced an increase of 30-40% in supply in the country. The Production Department was the first department in the organization that benefited from the system. Some benefits of the system were: It was more effective than the existing system; Revenues increased; The company began to expand in each of its sectors; Real-time knowledge of products that were in stock.

- Education and training

Users of the system from its inception were provided with a user manual. But of course, this user-manual was not enough to make users familiar with the Atlantis system in detail. In these moments the need for physical training arose. The next training was from the people who had created the system. Each implemented module had its responsible person, and the training was done by them. The training lasted up to two weeks. These training sessions were attended by top management, department managers, etc.

On-going training continues to be offered even today. Obviously, the ways of training have changed a lot from the beginning ones. After the pandemic, many training sessions took place online. All trainings that are held online are registered in google meet or zoom platforms. These registrations are posted on the Education platform, which is a platform created by the company. The Education platform is accessible to all employees who have the right to use the system, or in cases when a new

user joins, it is given access. The creation of this platform came as a necessity to collect training that is held online, to be all gathered somewhere, to be accessible at any time and by anyone.

Accessing in real-time of the recorded training sessions gives employees the opportunity to watch it every time that it is necessary. In cases that a new user joins the system, he/she receives the necessary training, but not all processes/procedures can be learned by the training. System learning and training follow in parallel, and in this case, the user receives instructions from the department manager or from users who have more experience in using it.

For the company, training sessions are very important and the company finances every necessary training for its employees, whether these are nationals or internationals' ones. Every year a special budget is planned only for training. The employees have not encountered any obstacles to attending these training sessions.

- **Communication**

Knowing the importance of communication, Alumil Alb. has been very transparent with its employees. As mentioned, the design of the system has been supported by the departments' managers. They have been the connecting points with other employees of the company, giving them information on the stages in which the project was going through. The analysis of the system was prepared together with the employees, where each of them gave his opinion about the continuity of project development. The project had its own testing phases and information was provided to employees in real time.

Constant updates are still being made to the system. The request for updates or additions of new modules is initially requested by the end-users of the systems. Second step is the approval by the administrator in the Albanian company and then a final approval is obtained from the parent company in Greece. In cases when the requests receive the necessary approvals, they are sent to ERP companies and then they deal with the most important part.

Any updates regarding the system communication is done via email. The information sent by email is detailed and is sent to all affected units. These updates must be displayed the first time that a user login on the system. If this does not happen, then it means that a problem is occurring. For this reason, a confirmation email regarding the updates is expected from all users.

6. Conclusion

The emphasis on ERP software has acquired a vital place in today's organizations as they enable the planning and management of a company's key activities. ERP software has an impact on the overall performance of businesses in Albania. This effect manifests itself in terms of the flexibility and quality of system applications, as well as the cost-efficiency and quality of the output that they generate. These initiatives have received significant investment with the focus to improve the overall company's competitiveness and performance. However, regardless of the benefits, enterprises may experience serious challenges during the implementation process. Connecting every component of a company takes time, therefore neglecting to recognize the challenges of such systems may result in a failure of implementation. Therefore, it is decisive for the companies and not only, to assess factors that influence the successful implementation of the ERP system. ERPs have a greater impact on large businesses than on small and medium-sized businesses. This occurs because large businesses place a higher strategic value on ERP investments than small/medium businesses, which implement these systems primarily for operational purposes and are typically simple users of ERP packages.

The difficulties encountered by Albanian businesses during the ERP implementation process are a source of concern for the management team but not only, and acknowledging these factors will result in a more seamless transformation path. This study provided important insights into ERP implementation and focused on a major Albanian enterprise's ERP implementation experiences, from initial implementation challenges to actions taken to ensure implementation success. It provides a set of critical success factors for this company based on interviews conducted.

Top management should be determined, committed, and precise in their decision to implement ERP and to support the implementation process with ideas and decisions. On the other side, the project team should be composed of competent people, appropriate consultants and have a cross-functional structure. Moreover, from the perspective of project management, it is crucial to be led by an excellent project manager with control processes, deadlines, milestones, and plans. Process change was

undertaken throughout the system implementation process, and there were no drastic adjustment changes between the organization and the system as it operated in a parallel way by supporting each other. Referring to education and training it is needed to address the requirements of the workforce as well as the needs of the organization, meanwhile communication is crucial to be reachable, structured, and regular.

CSFs, or areas of expertise, have been extensively researched, and the available literature provides a comprehensive list including the involvement of the top management, the project team, project management etc. The information regarding the CSF in the ERP system implementation process has implications for all decision makers of the organizations in Albania. Implementing an ERP system is often considered a complicated process, hence, understanding how to forecast and to manage the possible challenges during the process is a success factor. ERP users can find the study's results beneficial in terms of capturing a general idea on how to make use of the identified critical success factors. The expertise level and knowledge of the study participants can serve as benchmarking to other enterprises. The research findings are valuable for ERP system implementers as they determine the factors critical for successful project employment. Likewise, the study can serve as a benchmark to other companies in terms of respondents' skills and education level.

Furthermore, the results assessed through this study can contribute as an indicator for future research to deepen the investigation also in other industries and provide a more comprehensive insight of the ERP system implementation as well as development of a scale with distinct items for each factor to measure the enterprise readiness on the ERP implementation.

Authors contribution: "Introduction, A.K. and A.B.; Literature review, A.K. and A.B.; Methodology and data, A.K. and A.B.; Research results and comments, A.K. and A.B.; Conclusion, A.K. and A.B."

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