Can ERP adoptions change organisational culture in developing countries in Asia? An empirical investigation

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Abstract

Little research has been conducted to investigate a possible transformation of organizational culture through western-developed Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems in developing countries in Asia. A case study carried out in Sri Lanka found that ERP adoptions along with other appropriate mechanisms can be a catalyst for the transformation of organizational culture. A little over 10 years after going live, the organizational culture that has inhibited the achievement of benefits from the western-developed ERP system is slowly changing at the case organization. Cultural transformation (user-behavior pattern change) in the case company occurred by accepting three out of four user-behavior patterns assumed by the western-developed ERP systems to a noticeable extent. Furthermore, case organization used several mechanisms such as company-wide education programs, phased-out implementation approach, recruiting an increasing number of young professionals to facilitate the transformation process taking place through the ERP adoption. Additionally, from this evidence, it can be deduced that organizational culture may not be static; over time they may be changed through various mechanisms.

1. Introduction

Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems are packaged business application software suites that allow the seamless integration of business processes across functional areas of a company [5]. Having observed widespread adoption of ERP systems in developed countries, large organizations in developing countries —often relatively small organizations by US standards—have also begun to adopt ERP solutions [16], [18].

It is argued (e.g., [2]) that ERP must be utilized to its full potential in order for significant benefits to emerge. However, achieving the level of use needed to reap benefits is not an easy task. User’s superficial understanding of the system’s functionality, or non-use of the majority of functionality, can lead to lack of benefits from ERP systems. On the other hand, more extensive use of the system with good understanding of the system’s functionality can produce more benefits from ERP systems. Researchers [2], [25] argue that effective use of ERP systems can be achieved if users have comprehensive knowledge of their ERP package. Nevertheless, gaining ERP knowledge is not an easy task because ERP packages are large and complex software products that cannot be learned in a simple class room setting. Once the theoretical knowledge is gained through formal training programs, individuals have to be involved in lengthy and committed self-learning processes to be experts on ERP systems. Thus, staff members have to spend additional hours in the ERP learning process in order to be effective users of their ERP system [1], [2]. Furthermore, because ERP systems impose their own logic on a company’s strategy, culture, and organization [5], they demand a high degree of acceptance of change by staff members. If staff members are not ready to accept new methods of processing data introduced by the ERP system they would try to use various workarounds to imitate their old processing methods. Such practices will not favor effective use because users will not be able to use appropriate capabilities of the system in the relevant business activities of the organization. Acceptance of the change imposed by ERP systems, and working additional hours to acquire ERP knowledge are required behavior of the user community.

Cultural studies (e.g., [22],[19],[10],[15]) support the view that individual behavior patterns are based on the value systems of the societies to which an individual belongs. Culture can be identified at three levels: a national level, an organizational level and an individual level. National culture can be broadly identified as the value system of a country. Similarly, organizational culture can be identified as the value system of the organization. Finally, cultural values at both the national and organizational levels are
transmitted to members of the organization. Invariably, the national culture could have a major influence on the organizational culture because the value system of employees is a subset of the national culture. Thus, the culture of organizations in a country may have varying levels of differences to the national culture. As a result, behavior patterns of staff members that are based on organizational culture can also be different from organization to organization. ERP systems demand certain types of user behavior patterns as discussed above. Such behavioral patterns may or may not be the behavior of staff members of an organization that adopts an ERP system. Such differences in user-behavior patterns may lead to user-behavior pattern transformation towards the user behavior demanded by ERP systems. Therefore cultural transformations can influence the way new IT technologies are adopted and used by individuals in organizations.

Several researchers have identified cultural issues as one of the reasons for ERP adoption failure in developing countries in Asia [6], [9], [16], [18], [20], [23], [24], [27]. If that is the case, the small percentage of successful ERP adoptions in developing countries in Asia either should not have the cultural issues mentioned in the literature, or the ERP adoptions themselves may have helped to minimize or eradicating such cultural issues. If the latter scenario is true, it implies that ERP systems can be a catalyst for organizational culture change as a result, changed organizational culture among other factors could make ERP adoptions a success.

Few researchers argue for the possibility of cultural transformation through technology [8]. In general, such transformations can take place through a technology transfer process. The technology-transfer process can be defined broadly as 'transferring technology from one organizational setting to another' [3]. Thus, it involves two players - the designers of the technology and the recipients of the technology. The process can occur between organizations in the same country, as well as between organizations in different countries. When technology-transfer occurs across countries, the recipient may face additional problems due to contextual differences between designer and recipient (especially from a developed country to a developing country). The broad conceptual framework of [8] for the development of social systems illustrates a model of the evolution in social systems through dialectic interactions between economic and cultural-institutional variables. The major impediment to "technology borrowing" is the lack of fit between economic and cultural-institutional factors [8]. Over time technology transfer succeeds via becoming cultural and other factors compatible with the borrowed technology.

The above discussion is on technology in general. Now turning to IT, although IS research in both national and organizational cultures believe that culture is stable and difficult to change, few researchers find that IT has a role in cultural transformation [15]. Nevertheless, in regards to ERP technology, no research can be found that focuses on cultural transformation through ERP adoptions. The main ERP products (e.g., SAP, Oracle, PeopleSoft, BaaN and IFS) can be considered to be global technologies developed by the West. Therefore, ERP adoptions in developing countries can be considered to be processes of technology transfer from the West.

Furthermore, researchers [28] argue that there is a causal relationship between culture and economic development. Since developing countries are already in the path to economic development if western-developed ERP systems could transform culture in developing countries, ERP systems can be an accelerator for economic development. Therefore, ERP system as an enabler for organizational culture change is an important issue for research. This paper explores a research area which has not been much investigated previously. The research question asked in this paper is: HOW do western-developed ERP adoptions change organizational culture in developing countries in Asia?

To answer this question, a case study was conducted in a company that has used western-developed ERP systems for the last 10 years in Sri Lanka which is a developing country in Asia. The paper is structured as follows. In section 2, the ensemble view of technology is described with a view to providing a broader description of ERP systems which includes the culture of the user community assumed by the ERP systems. Such conceptualization of ERP systems is necessary to argue that ERP systems demand certain types of user behavior patterns. Next, key behavioral patterns assumed by ERP systems are articulated from the extant literature. Then in section 4, the national culture of Sri Lanka is briefly discussed in order to illustrate how value system is connected to behavioral patterns of members of the Sri Lankan society. This brief analysis of Sri Lankan culture helps to compare and contrast behavior patterns assumed by the developers of western ERP systems with those that exist in Sri Lanka at the national level. Section 5 describes the research method. Section 6 provides the case description. Following that, case study findings are presented. Section 8 discusses the findings. Finally, the findings are analyzed in relation to the research question.
2. Ensemble view of Technology

Prior to the 1980’s, technology was viewed mainly as an engineered artifact, expected to do what its designers intended [21]. During the 1980s, several IS researchers such as [11] and [17] attempted to overcome this narrow view of technology in the IS field. They offered alternative conceptualizations of what technology is, and how and why it is implicated in social change. Having studied 188 research articles on the conceptualization of IT published from 1990 to 1999 in the Information Systems Research (ISR) journal [21] identifies five main categories of conceptualizations, namely the tool view, the proxy view, the ensemble view, the computational view and the nominal view. Out of these five views the ensemble view provides the most comprehensive view of technology. The ensemble view focuses on the dynamic interactions between people and the technology during its construction, implementation and use in organizations. These interactions at usage level include commitments, additional resources such as training, skilled staff, the types of behavior required by users, and support services and the development of organizational arrangements, policies, and incentives to enable the effective management and use of the new technology. On the other hand these are built into the technology by developers during its construction. Thus, among other things the ensemble view of technology encapsulates the expected behavior patterns of users of the technology into the technology. As a result, the technology expects its users to be compatible with its required behavior patterns.

In terms of ERP as a technology, they are designed, constructed and used by people. The ERP concept that covers seamless integration of business processes across functional areas original emerged from the Western world. Moreover, as discussed above, they are shaped by the interests, values, and assumptions of a wide variety of communities of developers, investors, and other stakeholders. The next section attempts to identify user behavior patterns expected by western-developed ERP systems from the extant literature.

3. User-behavior patterns assumed by western-developed ERP systems

It is sometimes argued (e.g., [25]) that ERP systems demand organizational discipline and strict adherence to standardized processes. Employees must record all transactions in the system as they happen. Moreover, they must understand that any shortcuts they may take (e.g., shipping goods without recording the transaction) may have undesirable implications for people in other parts of the organization. For example, SAP R/3 assumes that cross-functional organizational processes can be integrated by asking individuals executing steps in a process to enter the details of transactions in real time, which enables it to track movements of resources in the real world. Failure to enter these transactions in real time means that people executing subsequent steps in a process cannot rely on the state of affairs depicted in the ERP system. This implies that ERP users should practice process discipline. In other words, ERP systems assume the user behaviour pattern termed *process discipline*.

A ‘modern’ management system is compatible with the philosophy underpinning an ERP system, which enables decentralized decision making by bringing information relevant for decision making to the operational level [5], [24], [27]. Therefore, ERP systems assume *timely decision making* by all levels of staff of a user organization.

In many respects, ERP systems impose their own logic on a company’s strategy, culture, and organization [5]. Moreover, ERP systems are complex IT artifacts. As a result, employees have to start working with the new processes in their revised jobs. Adoption of such technologies, demands that staff members of ERP user organizations accept a high level of changes to their work patterns. Thus, ERP system designers assume their users are ready to accept changes (termed *acceptance of change*).

Western-developed ERP systems are complex software systems. Therefore, understanding and using such systems in the most appropriate way demands lot of training and education. Often, staff members have to train and educate themselves on their ERP system while still attending to normal duties. Such training can be formal or informal [2]. In general, informal training includes self-learning and updating peers. Especially for informal training activities people have to use additional time after finishing their daily work. Hence, staff members have to spend additional hours during the learning process [1], especially due to the high level of complexity of ERP systems. Furthermore, users have to complete their daily transactions before leaving the office in order for ERP system to reflect the current state of business. Thus, users may not be able to finish their work during normal office hours on days they have heavy transaction loads. Therefore, ERP users should undertake additional work commitments. In other words, ERP systems necessitate their users to take up
additional hours to learn and use the system (termed additional work commitments).

In summary, four behavior patterns underpin the proper use of ERP systems, namely, process discipline of users, timely decision-making by users, acceptance of change by users, and additional work commitments of users. Even though the above four behavior patterns were frequently identified in many research papers it is not argued that these four behavior patterns are the only behavior patterns related to ERP systems. Some of these behaviors are interrelated. Process discipline includes completing one’s daily routine transaction entries on the same day. If the number of transactions is large, in some days one has to work additional hours. Thus, to have the process discipline one has to practice additional work commitments.

In some cultures these behaviour patterns may not be the norm. This is where cultural transformation could take place. For example, some behaviour patterns supported by ERP systems are not the norm in developing countries such as Sri Lanka [19], China [4], India [13], [26] and Thailand [12], [28] that have cultural values such as dependence, lack of self-confidence, family as the centre of the society, work as means, respect for authority, lack of system and perfection, low structuring of activities, and lack of sensitivity to time. The next section provides a brief analysis of Sri Lankan culture with a view to comparing and contrasting behaviour patterns assumed by the developers of western ERP systems with those that exist in Sri Lanka.

4. Sri Lankan culture

In Sri Lankan society the family is the center of the social structure. This includes one’s extended family, which can be very large. For many Sri Lankans, looking after one’s children, parents, and extended family is more important than advancing their own career.

A study of Sri Lankan culture by [19] identifies seven cultural values, which he argues, work against adoption of Western management practices. The study [19] argues that these cultural norms and behaviours, which are inculcated and reinforced in individuals in Sri Lanka through the influence of family and school, make adoption of some Western management practices difficult. Table 1 shows these values, which are interrelated.

The above study [19] says that several behavior patterns emerge from these cultural values, such as reluctance to accept responsibilities, lack of discipline, doing the minimum in order to survive, lack of change, and lack of decision making.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Value</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dependence</td>
<td>The decision-making system in the family is hierarchical, in which major decisions are made by the father or the mother or by both. As the desire to be independent is curtailed since childhood, the individual develops a tendency to look for approval from the hierarchy. Young members are not allowed to take a personalistic approach to problems. Conformity as opposed to diversity is promoted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of self confidence</td>
<td>The impact of the collectivity and hierarchy on the individual is such that he/she hardly gets an opportunity to assess his strengths and weaknesses realistically.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepting the status quo</td>
<td>The family cultivates a system of order among things and relations that should be accepted without challenge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work as means</td>
<td>Attitude to work is that the individual must work in order to earn a living. This is in contrast to the value of work itself as an end, which seems to be a dominant attitude toward work in the west. The attitude is work to live rather than live to work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect for authority</td>
<td>Family hierarchy demands obedience and respect for authority. A maturity is thus developed to make one believe that authority is positional, and it grows with wisdom and experience (which build up with age).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of system and perfection</td>
<td>The pattern of influence that the family has on the personality and the behaviour of the individual as described above do not demand that the young develop the habit of scheduling day-to-day work or be systematic. ‘When’ things occur is not important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude toward opposite sex</td>
<td>The family set-up contributes to the view that males and females have different roles to play in society.</td>
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Similarly, another study [7] found seven main socio-cultural patterns influencing behavior patterns
in Sri Lanka: dependence, lack of self-confidence, accepting the status quo, work is for livelihood, resistance to change, kinship, and respect for authority. However, even though culture might be one significant reason for such behavior patterns, it might not be the only reason. Other socio-economic reasons might underpin such behavior patterns.

To people brought up in other cultures, some of the values that underpin Sri Lankan society will be hard to understand. But Sri Lankans experience the same sense of bewilderment when faced by certain demands of Western culture. Nonetheless, by no means can these values be generalized to the entire Sri Lankan society. Importantly, in making this observation, the author is not passing any value judgment.

5. Methodology

The case-study method enables the examination of the organization’s human behavior, in relation to the use of the ERP system, and against the backdrop of the larger social context within which the organization is embedded [29]. The case-study method is particularly suited for studies such as this, which seek to provide a deeper understanding of the nature of relationships between complex constructs such as culture [30]. Data was collected using the following strategies: a) semi-structured interviews and informal interactions with key actors involved in the ERP adoption process, b) examination of related documents such as project plans, budget data, and c) observations. An interview guideline for these semi-structured interviews was derived from aspects pertaining to the culturally based behaviours discussed in [19] and user-behaviour patterns assumed by western-developed ERP systems. Selected statements from these interviews are presented in the findings section as quotes or near quotes. Some of the quotes have been translated into English. Data collection took place during several visits to the case organization from June 2004 to the end 2009. The ERP solution was implemented in early 1999 and went live in late 1999. Return visits gave an opportunity to observe changes taking place over the duration of the study.

6. Case Description

A brief summary of the case organization is given below. The case organization was established in 1962 as a family-owned business for producing rubber products. It is located in the largest city of southern Sri Lanka. It has around 1150 employees. The company embraced traditional family values, particularly those of the south of the island that are enshrined in the culture. The senior management’s relationship with its employees was that of a parent to a child. The second generation of owners gradually took over the business in the 1970's. Presently, the company is transferring the management to the third generation.

Because this is a family environment and most of the staff are from the same area, the company has minimal staff turnover. Most senior managers began their careers at junior levels while very young and were promoted gradually. As a result, most senior managers are above 50 years of age. Most who have retired had only one or two jobs up to retirement. At the same time, the top management is not IT savvy, even though the Managing Director is a true believer in IT technology. The company also has fairly relaxed working conditions. The staff enjoyed high job security and did not appear stressed with work pressures. They also enjoyed various perks such as free breakfasts.

The education qualifications of the average office-worker were either a secondary school certificate or a diploma-level certificate. They had very few office workers who were graduates or who were professionals such as certified accountants. For example, the company had only two certified accountants and only one IT graduate. This problem was mainly due to the company’s location. Though it is not situated at a remote location, it is still difficult to attract qualified people outside the capital province.

The company implemented its first software application package in 1987. It was a western-developed accounting package. It included finance and distribution modules. However, the modules were not integrated. The computer operation was run as a back-office process. The computer department was responsible for all the data entry and for producing relevant reports to operational staff as well as for senior management. However, the data entry operators were from different departments such as finance, sales, and purchasing. IT literacy was concentrated mainly within this group. These were the people involved with the implementation process of the ERP system over a year. Thus, the end users were not involved directly. Even the Managing Director didn’t use a computer.

In 1993 the accounting package was upgraded, along with hardware. In the late 1990s, this accounting package started experiencing problems due to data volume and new user requirements. Because the accounting package was not a Y2K compliant product, the company was forced to
change the software. The Managing Director explained that they wanted to pursue an integrated system like an ERP and use this opportunity to support their business growth. With the implementation of ERP in early 1999, the hardware also changed. To protect the anonymity of the case-study organization, the name of the ERP vendor is not disclosed.

7. Findings

Having embarked on their ERP project, the Managing Director (MD) and a few senior managers understood the problems relating to culture.

“When you want to introduce an ERP package, there is a lot of homework to be done. You can’t go and change a manual system to an ERP solution. There are lots of homework and upgrading to be done in the existing system to accept an ERP solution. If you just land it companies will definitely mess it up. The whole structure has to be modified and changed to accept an ERP package, there are many under-developed countries that do not have such environments. We have a formal conventional system of management which will definitely not work with ERP. Culture has to be changed, working environment has to be changed, and so many changes have to be made before even thinking of ERP.” [Managing Director]

Examples of user-behavior patterns assumed by Western-developed ERP systems are process discipline, timely decision making, acceptance of change, and additional work commitments. The behavior patterns – lack of process discipline and lack of timely decision making are related to the cultural values of dependence and lack of system and perfection [19]. Lack of additional work commitments and lack of acceptance of change are related to the cultural values work as means and accepting status quo. The case findings confirm that the national level behavior patterns do exist at the organizational level with regard to the case study company. The following section provides empirical evidence from case study to show that such behaviors have affected the project and how such behaviors are changing slowly towards aligning with user-behavior patterns assumed by Western-developed ERP systems with time. It also describes what actions are taken by the case company to facilitate this cultural transformation.

The IT Manager said that it was difficult to make people follow certain specific procedures. As such, most of the time the ERP system did not reflect the current state of business and they were doing post mortems.

“When you transfer goods from one location to another, they don’t send the system-generated transfer note. Instead they transfer the goods and later the transfer note is generated. These kinds of practices by staff make both integration and online processing meaningless. This is a discipline problem and it affects us everywhere.” [IT Manager]

Lack of timely decision making was also visible. For example, at the time of creating a purchase order, the company’s Suppliers Section has to decide and enter relevant tax codes and duty codes. Sometimes they are unable to enter these codes in the purchase order because they are waiting for a senior manager to decide on the code. Clerical staff did not want to make that decision. As a result, when the supplier’s invoice later arrived at the Accounts department, the staff would find price differences between the purchase order and the supplier’s invoice.

As explained by the company’s senior accountant, it is difficult to motivate people to learn new systems.

“Culturally, we want to limit our job scope, have fewer responsibilities, no additional work and so on. Initially the staff were very reluctant to touch the system, they see this as additional work. They knew that they had to work hard to absorb the system. So it is a new task for them and they were very, very reluctant. We had to convince them that in time to come they would benefit and in the long run their workload would be reduced. We took a long time to convince them. Initially we had a very tough time with them. For example, during that time our annual audit had to be postponed for nine months. The staff was not very helpful. They were making many complaints about the system.”[Senior Accountant]

Some staff members were reluctant to change (lack of acceptance of change) current work practices. Hence, they did not use ERP-provided reports as described by the Managing Director:

“There was a big resistance to the change..... People had got used to certain
types of formats and it was very difficult to change that concept.” [Managing Director]

According to the senior accountant and IT manager over the years the company has managed to change the user-behavior to a noticeable extent. The senior accountant commented as follows:

“I know now people work overtime till 6.30 or 7.00 and finish their work, especially in the accounts, IT, HR and supplies departments. Overall around at least 25% of the staff work late to complete their daily routine work.” [Senior Accountant]

Thus, over the years the company managed to persuade staff members to accept additional work commitments. The senior accountant also commented on improvements taking place in the area process discipline.

“Process discipline among staff is now better than in the past. Coordination among departments also improved a lot. Now even staff are used to check their own work before passing to the next processing step. Actually as a result now team work also improved” [Senior Accountant]

The IT manager said that acceptance of change has been improved to some extent because now people rarely use workarounds. He further mentioned that timely decision making is still not the norm of the company though it has been improved a little due to recruitment of young professional staff in the recent past. Being a family owned company located in a geographical area with strong cultural values such as dependence puts unparalleled pressure on decision making practices at junior level. Therefore, practice of timely decision making among junior staff to a noticeable level might take more time.

In the last 10 years since this initial implementation, they let the ERP system evolve, slowly activating further modules and functionality. For example, they started with 10 user licenses and today they have 60 licenses. Every year the company has added 10 or 12 user licenses. They incrementally activated modules and functionality over time as cultural constraints diminished to some degree. The initial selection of modules was based on a limited set of functionality corresponding to the status quo of the former in-house software support. In tandem with evolution in organizational learning and culture over time, more modules and functionality were activated. The company has decided to integrate a manufacturing module last, because the production area has more culturally based behavior issues than any other department. The production foremen were people with long service histories and rigid work practices.

The management tried to accelerate the cultural transformation taking place through ERP adoption via company-wide education programs and by recruiting increasing numbers of graduates and professionals in the place of retirees. However, they were faced some difficulties in attracting good people due to the geographic location of the business. In general, most qualified people prefer to work in Colombo, the capital.

In summary, the following actions were taken to support the transformation of the organizational culture:

- Company-wide education programs to enhance ERP awareness
- Continuous top management commitment
- Recruiting an increasing number of graduates and professionals in the place of retirees
- Phased-out implementation approach

8. Discussion

From the above findings one can argue that certain behavior patterns of the users are changing at the case company as a result of ERP adoption. The ERP adoption has initiated the cultural transformation taking place currently at the case organization through allowing the management to realize that ERP systems demand certain types of user behavior patterns namely, process discipline of users, timely decision-making by users, acceptance of change by users, and additional work commitments of users. Initially, the case organization lacked such behavior patterns. Over time, as commented by the managing director the company has realized the necessity of a cultural change to achieve such user behavior patterns. However, as the above findings reveal, a cultural transformation may not take place by mere adoption of ERP systems rather organizations required to nourish the necessary environment. The case company has implemented several initiatives parallel to the ERP adoption knowingly or unknowingly to support cultural transformation. The case organization has fulfilled such environmental requirements by introducing following actions:

- Company-wide education programs to enhance ERP awareness
- Continuous top management commitment
Recruiting an increasing number of graduates and professionals in the place of retirees
Phased-out implementation approach

It was observed that new recruits were quick to embrace the behavior patterns assumed by the ERP system. As a result they became “change agents” of the cultural transformation. After 10 years of use, it may be argued that the use of western-developed ERP system along with other appropriate mechanisms is slowly changing user-behavior patterns at the case organization towards the user-behavior patterns assumed by the ERP systems.

It is important to consider the broader applicability of the findings of this study to the area of the impact of organizational culture on ERP systems in a global Asian context. Generalizability refers to the validity of a theory in a setting different from the one where it was empirically tested and confirmed [14]. Generalization is termed as external validity in [30]. The author [30] argues that case study results can be used to develop some broader theories beyond the immediate case study. He illustrates “generalizing to theory” from case studies using Jane Jacobs’s (1961) book which developed theory of urban planning based on experiences from New York City that still stands as a significant contribution to the field of urban planning. However, the article [30] says that generalization is not automatic and needs empirical testing. Therefore, whether the findings of this study can be generalized to other organizations in Sri Lanka, to organizations in other developing countries in Asia is ultimately is an empirical question. Hence, more studies are needed to carry out in Sri Lanka as well as in the developing countries in Asia to generalize these findings to the Asian region. Thus the findings of this study only lay a foundation for further research.

9. Conclusion

This paper sets out to investigate how the western-developed ERP systems can make a cultural transformation at organizational level in developing countries in Asia. The research question posed was:

*HOW do western-developed ERP adoptions change organizational culture in developing countries in Asia?*

To answer this question, a case study was conducted in a company that has used western-developed ERP systems for last 10 years in Sri Lanka. Over 10 years after going live, cultural transformation (user-behavior pattern change) in the case company occurred by accepting three out of four user-behavior patterns assumed by the western-developed ERP systems to a noticeable extent, the exception being timely decision making. The case company’s phased-out implementation approach with other initiatives allowed required changes in user behavior to take place at a slow and steady pace. This in turn, helps drive further change. Thus, the ERP adoption has made the cultural transformation by imposing user-behavior patterns assumed by the western-developed ERP system on the case organization.

It is vital to observe that an ERP adoption alone is not responsible for such change. The case company has implemented several initiatives parallel to the ERP adoption knowingly or unknowingly to support cultural transformation. Here, it may be argued that the use of technology along with other appropriate mechanisms is slowly changing people’s attitudes and work patterns. Additionally, from this evidence, it can be deduced that culturally based behavior patterns are not necessarily static; they may be changed through various mechanisms.

10. References


