

The impact of organizational commitment, senior management involvement, and team involvement on strategic information systems planning

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Abstract

Organizational commitment, senior management involvement, and team involvement are typically expected to have a positive impact on the achievement of strategic information systems planning (SISP) objectives. That is, more commitment and involvement should produce greater success. However, they might also have a quadratic impact, specifically an inverted-U relationship such that after they reach an optimum, the achievement of the objectives diminishes.

A postal survey about planning practices and objectives produced usable data from 105 corporate information systems planners. Senior management involvement predicted the achievement of the objectives in a positive manner whereas organizational commitment predicted it in an inverted-U relationship. Future research should look more closely at these relationships. Planners should be more aware of the possibly detrimental effects of excessive planning. © 2002 Elsevier Science B.V. All rights reserved.

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1. Introduction

Strategic information systems planning (SISP) is an important management function. It can help an organization use information technology (IT) more

competitively, identify new, higher payback IT applications, and better forecast IT resource requirements.

On the other hand, the failure to perform SISP well can cause opportunities to be missed and efforts to be duplicated. It can result in incompatible systems and wasted resources. In fact, today's highly competitive environment, with its rapidly changing IT, may aggravate the dangers of ineffective SISP more than ever before [24,64].

Hence, it is no surprise that both corporate general managers and information systems executives have viewed improved SISP as a key issue for sometime [8–10,15,51]. It is perhaps likewise no surprise that

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chief executives have identified SISP as their top information systems concern [9,47].

As a result, researchers and other observers have been interested in successful SISP [4,69]. They have offered conceptual and empirical work suggesting that SISP success is a function of many variables. Among them are three organizational factors: (1) organizational commitment; (2) senior management involvement and (3) team involvement [12,14,20,27]. However, the studies of those variables have assumed a positive impact of them on SISP success. In other words, they have assumed that more of the predictor variables produce more of the predicted success.

The purpose of this paper is to test the relationships between the three predictor variables and SISP success by investigating not only the favorable effects of SISP, but also the potentially detrimental effect of excessive SISP. In other words, perhaps too much of a predictor variable can produce less success [49].

The paper begins with an overview of SISP, the description of relevant variables, and hypotheses. After the methodology section, data analysis and discussion follow. Implications for research and practice conclude the paper.

2. Overview of SISP

SISP is the process whereby an organization determines a portfolio of computer-based applications to help it achieve its business objectives [42]. It includes formulating IS objectives, defining strategies and policies to achieve them, and developing detailed plans to effect the strategies and policies [75]. A future analysis to predict changes over the expected life of the portfolio is used to set a reliable forecasting horizon where the organization can cope with a possible range of requirements at a permissible cost [41]. The forecasting horizon is then used to set a planning horizon for funds, human services, technical expertise, and the hardware and software capabilities needed to take advantage of any opportunities that may arise. If the planning horizon exceeds the forecasting horizon, changed requirements will probably render the plan irrelevant or even dysfunctional [41].

The SISP process is characterized by large-scale, comprehensive studies or by ongoing, smaller-scale ones [64]. An organization follows one of many

similar, well-defined and documented methodologies or it customizes its own. It forms committees of users and information systems specialists. It often uses the methodology's vendor for training and guidance. It defines or revises a portfolio of applications, their priorities, databases, data elements, and the infrastructure to support them. SISP also provides a schedule for implementation.

More comprehensive studies are challenged by the necessity to complete the SISP quickly and inexpensively so as to maintain management interest and to implement plans before requirements change [41,64]. Less comprehensive studies are challenged by the necessity to provide sufficient detail to facilitate plan implementation and to furnish enough alternatives to cope with possible changing requirements in the future [61,62].

Thus, both excessive and insufficient study can be viewed as detrimental to the success of SISP. Planners must hence weigh carefully the comprehensiveness in their SISP studies so as to pay neither excessive nor insufficient attention to detail. In other words, observers have suggested that SISP be comprehensive enough to ensure that it provides a plan that can guide the organization, but that it also not be so excessive as to discourage management interest and hence be ignored [64].

3. Independent and dependent variables

Research has suggested that many variables predict SISP success. The independent variables in this study represent three organizationally oriented SISP ones. They are organizational commitment, senior management involvement, and team involvement.

3.1. Organizational commitment

Organizational commitment means company support for SISP [12]. Such commitment is indicated by the presence of sufficient resources for it [5,28,57]. For example, key people stay on the SISP study from its start to finish to maintain continuity [50]. Organizational commitment is evident when management controls SISP closely enough to resolve conflict among different organizational subunits [20,50], and when management's expectations for the results of

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