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# IDENTIFYING AND EVALUATING THE IMPORTANCE OF MULTIPLE STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVE IN MEASURING ES-SUCCESS

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## Abstract

*The respondents' 'Perspective on measurement' is an important design consideration in contemporary Information System (IS) evaluations. An Enterprise System (ES), unlike a traditional Information System, entails many stakeholders ranging from top executives to data entry operators. These stakeholders typically have multiple and often conflicting objectives and priorities and rarely agree on a set of common aims. The importance of analyzing ES-success at multiple levels within organizations has been discussed among academics for several decades with no clear consensus with the employment cohorts. There is no universal agreement on what employment cohorts should be canvassed. This paper seeks to identify the salient stakeholders of ES and illustrate the importance of assessing ES-success from multiple perspectives. The two-phased study analyses data of 310 respondents and examines 81 IS-success studies. The study identifies three key employment cohorts in the context of ES and highlights the importance of measuring ES-success from a multi-stakeholder view point.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The importance of gathering perceptions of success at multiple levels in organizations has been discussed among academics for several decades (e.g. Cameron and Whetten 1983; Leidner and Elam 1994; Tallon, Kraemer et al. 2000; Sedera 2004). An Enterprise System, unlike a traditional Information System, entails many 'users' ranging from top executives to data entry operators. These stakeholders (henceforth referred to as the *employment cohorts due to the intra-organizational focus*) typically have multiple and often conflicting objectives and priorities and rarely agree on a set of common aims (e.g. Cameron and Whetten 1983; Quinn and Rohrbaugh 1983; Yoon 1995). However, there is no universal agreement on what employment cohorts should be canvassed (i.e. which are the distinctive employment cohorts?). Contemporary IS-success studies have used various employment cohorts making it difficult to generalize the findings and impossible to make comparisons.

In an attempt to minimize the perplexity related to employment cohorts employed in IS-success evaluations, this paper empirically identifies the key employment cohorts that are appropriate when evaluating success. Additionally, the paper seeks answers to the following questions: (1) whether the employment cohorts have different views on ES-success, (2) on which ES-success dimensions they differ?, (3) The importance of gathering perceptions from multiple cohorts?, (4) or whether all ES employment cohorts are sufficiently informed to comment on various aspects of ES-success. The paper begins with a historical perspective on the relevance of employment cohorts in prior research with insights from studies of management science, information systems and enterprise systems. Next, the summary results of the content analysis are provided. The research context of the empirical data collection is then provided, followed by the results of the data analysis.

## 2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research is conducted in two autonomously-associated phases: a content analysis and a statistical analysis – each serving a specific purpose mentioned above.

**The content analysis:** This research employs the *text content analysis*<sup>1</sup> as opposed to the other types of content analyses<sup>2</sup> reported by (Krippendorff 1980). The main steps in the content analysis include: 1) identification of the IS-success studies from 1990-2005 in six leading academic journals<sup>3</sup> and two International conferences<sup>4</sup>, 2) distillation of employment cohorts and 3) mapping of those employment cohorts into the five types of employment cohorts identified in the literature review. The content analysis identified eighty-one (81) IS-success studies that had used at least one employment cohort.

**Empirical Statistical Analysis:** In the second phase of the study, data was gathered from 310 respondents representing 27 organizations in Queensland, Australia that had implemented SAP R/3 (the market leading ES) in the second half of the 1990s. The data was collected using the ES-success measurement model and the related survey instrument. Detailed discussions on the validity of the ES-Success model and instrument appeared in (Gable, Sedera et al. 2003; Sedera and Gable 2004). The ES-success measurement model is the most comprehensive and complete measure of contemporary IS-success reported in academic literature to-date.

## 3 LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this literature review is to understand prior studies that had helped to identify the employment cohorts used in the IS-success studies. As expected, it was noted that the discussions of the employment cohorts are deep-rooted in management literature, than in the IS literature. The employment cohorts identified in the literature below, together with their descriptions, were used in the content analysis and the empirical statistical data analysis.

Anthony (1965) provided the main foundations for employment cohort classification in management science. He referred to three levels of employment in an organization; (1) *Strategic*, (2) *Management* and (3) *Operational*. The Strategic level focuses on deciding organizational-wide objectives and allocates necessary resources to achieve the objectives. The Strategic level is involved in complex, irregular decision making and focuses on providing policies to govern the entire organization. At the Strategic level, information requirements are ad-hoc in nature and there is reliance on predictive information for long term organizational goals. At the management level, information requirements are focused on assuring that the resources, both human and financial, are used effectively and efficiently to accomplish goals stated at the Strategic level. The characteristics of information required by the management level are different to those required at the Strategic level. The management level deals with rhythmic (but not repetitive) and prescribed procedures. Managers tend to prefer integrated, procedural information that is for a precise task. Furthermore, managers tend to prefer ‘goal congruent’ information systems. At the Operational level, employees are involved in highly structured and specific tasks that are routine and transactional. Tasks carried out at the Operational level are precise and are governed by the organizational rules and procedures. The Operational level tends to deal with real time data focused on individual events with little or no emphasis on key organizational performance indicators. The three levels of employment introduced by (Anthony 1965) tend to be

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<sup>1</sup> The advantages of the text content analysis 1) the method is unobtrusive or not made obvious, 2) it is context sensitive and able to process symbolic forms, 3) it can cope with large volumes of data and the data generated by content analyses can quickly exceed what a single analyst can do Krippendorff, K. (1980).

<sup>2</sup> Other alternatives for text analysis were considered for this study, including 1) grounded theory (Glass, 1998) and 2) narrative analysis (Manning, and Cullum-Swan 1994). Grounded theory does not fit as a theoretical framework already exists and narrative analysis was not adopted, as the structure of documents to be analyzed is not in the form of stories or metaphors as required by the method.

<sup>3</sup> MIS Quarterly, IS Research, Journal of MIS, Management Science, Communications of the ACM, Journal of AIS.

<sup>4</sup> The International Conference on IS and the Americas Conference on IS

hierarchical on several dimensions: (1) time span of decisions (i.e. long, medium and short term), (2) importance of a single action (i.e. critical, important and common) and (3) the level of judgment (i.e. strong, moderate and modest). Table 1 adopted from Anthony (1965) summarizes the key characteristics of these employment cohorts.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Strategic</b>	<b>Management</b>	<b>Operational</b>
<i>Focus of Plans</i>	Futuristic, One aspect at a time	Whole organization	Single task / transaction
<i>Complexity</i>	Many variables	Less complex	Simple, rule based
<i>Degree of Structure</i>	Unstructured, irregular	Rhythmic, procedural	Structured
<i>Nature of Information</i>	Tailor made, more external and predictive	Integrated, internal but holistic	Task specific, real time
<i>Time Horizon</i>	Long term	Long, medium to short	Short

*Table 1: Employment Cohorts and Related Tasks*

(Singleton, Mclean et al. 1988) used the employment classification of Anthony (1965) and concluded that contemporary organizations need a ‘shared vision’ across the ranks of employment. Furthermore, they emphasized the importance of gathering information from all employment levels to evaluate a portfolio of Information Systems. (Alloway and Quillard 1983) reported that 79% of frequently used management support systems relied heavily on underlying transaction processing systems. (Cheney and Dickson 1982) found differences in levels of satisfaction across the employment cohorts. (Vlahos and Ferratt 1995) studied perceived value, use of information systems and satisfaction levels across employment cohorts. They found that the ‘line employees’ (similar to Operational level of Anthony, 1965) have a higher satisfaction levels compared to the management and Strategic levels. Furthermore, the Vlahos and Farret (1995) study found higher satisfaction levels among Technical support staff.

In the Enterprise Systems implementation success literature, (Bancroft, Seip et al. 1998) identified, (1) effective communication across the employees of the organization, (2) selecting a balanced implementation team, and (3) providing adequate training for employees at all level of the organization as important success factors, emphasizing the importance of full representativeness across the employment cohorts. (Wu, Wang et al. 2002) examined satisfaction levels of Enterprise System users in Taiwan. They identified two main classes of stakeholders in Enterprise Systems implementations: an internal project team and an external contractor. Their research was conducted within the internal implementation team focusing on top managers, key users, end users and the MIS staff. Wu et al. (2002) found that in several areas, key users and end users have relatively low levels of satisfaction. Singletary et al. (2003) analyzed qualitative data to illustrate the importance of gathering views on ES-success at different levels in organizations. The three Enterprise Systems employment cohorts they established were (1) managers, (2) IT professionals and (3) end users. (Shang and Seddon 2000; Shang and Seddon 2002) introduced one of few existing Enterprise Systems benefits frameworks after completing in-depth case studies of four Australian utility companies. The Shang and Seddon framework classifies potential Enterprise Systems benefits into 21 lower level measures organized around 5 main categories: Operational benefits, managerial benefits, strategic benefits, IT infrastructure benefits and organizational benefits. The strategic benefits in the Shang and Seddon (2000) ERP benefits framework relate to the Strategic level of Anthony’s (1965) classification, while the operational and managerial benefits are related to the Operational and Management levels. The identification of the IT infrastructure benefits is an important contribution of the Shang and Seddon ERP benefits framework, highlighting the IT benefits that Enterprise Systems generate to an organization. Shang and Seddon (2000; 2002) and (Singletary, Pawlowski et al. 2003) identify Technical staff as a distinct and important employment cohort in Enterprise Systems evaluations. Furthermore, literature suggests that the management level employees as the most appropriate cohort from which to gather perceptions of Enterprise Systems benefits. To the contrary, (Tallon, Kraemer et

al. 2000) highlighted the importance of capturing intangible benefits of Enterprise System, proposing Strategic managers as the most appropriate single employment cohort.

In summary, the review of related literature identified four employment cohorts applicable to IS: (1) Strategic, (2) Management, (3) Operational and (4) Technical. The review strongly advocated gathering data from all employment cohorts in IS-success. Moreover, the literature review provided characteristics of each employment cohort and helped to derive guidelines for identifying them in a large multi-respondent data analysis. Using 81 IS-success studies reported 1990-2005, the content analysis attempts to identify the perspectives of past IS-success studies. The analysis implicitly evaluates the goodness of the employment cohort classification guidelines developed in the literature review.

#### 4 CONTENT ANALYSIS

The content analysis was conducted using: (1) the type of the employment cohort, (2) type of IS applications, (3) type of organizations, and (4) the number of responses gathered for each employment cohort<sup>5</sup>. Table 2 depicts the studies identified from 1990-2005 with the corresponding employment cohorts marked with 'X'. Using the study data depicted in table 2, it is revealed that only five studies have gathered data from all employment cohorts in a single IS-success study. Furthermore, it is observed that the most commonly assessed employment cohort is the Management cohort and the least number of studies have gathered data from the Strategic employment cohort. In addition to identifying the usage of employment cohorts, the results of the content analysis help to improve our understanding of the changes in employment cohorts in relation to the evolution of IS. Using the data reported in table 2, figure 1 is derived to demonstrate the evolution of IS and the corresponding shift in emphasis of the employment cohorts. It is noted that the studies focussing on the Operational Staff has plummeted in recent years, while the studies focussed on the Strategic employment cohorts continue to increase. The focus on *managerial* and *technical staff* plateau in IS-success studies. It is further noted, that the focus on *External Stakeholders* continues to be a main emphasis of the IS-success studies.

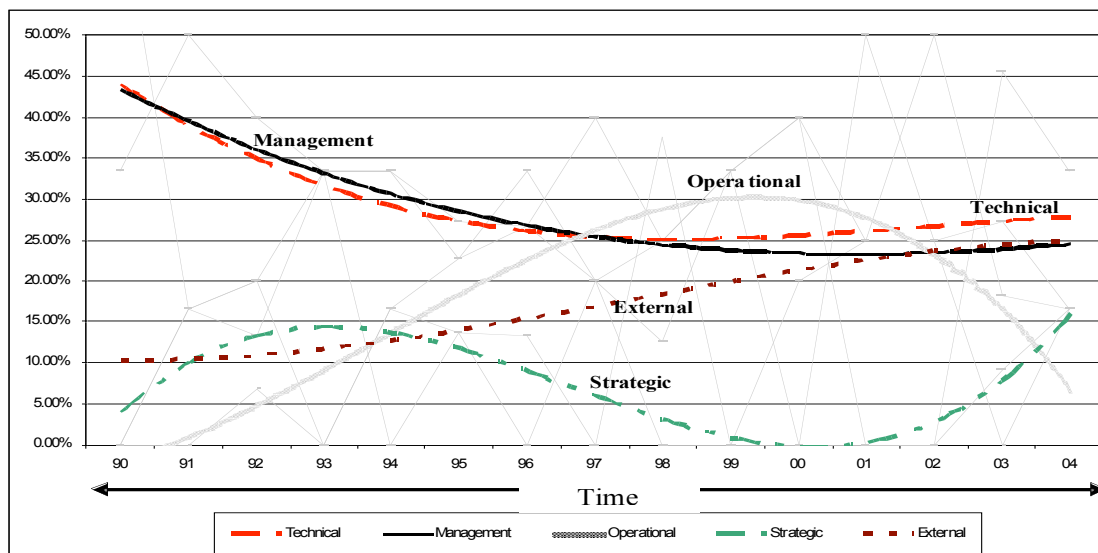


Figure 1: Changes in stakeholder foci in relation to the IS evolutions

<sup>5</sup> Due to space limitations, only summarized details are reported. A detailed analysis can be obtained from the contact author.

No	Study	Existing Employment Cohorts					No	Study	Existing Employment Cohorts (Cont.)				
		Stra.	Man.	Tech.	Ope.	Ext.			Stra.	Man.	Tech.	Ope.	Ext.
1	(Igbaria 1990)		X	X			42	(Livari 1997)			X		
2	(Conrath 1990)			X			43	(Lu 1997)			X		
3	(Nabili 1991)		X				44	(Ang 1997)	X	X	X	X	
4	(Guimaraes 1991)		X	X			45	(Koh 1998)			X		X
5	(Higby 1991)	X	X			X	46	(Segars 1998)	X	X			
6	(Watson 1991)	X	X	X		X	47	(Essex 1998)				X	
7	(Joshi 1992)	X	X	X		X	48	(Yuthas 1998)					X
8	(Pearson 1992)	X	X	X	X		49	(Gelderman 1998)		X	X	X	X
9	(Udo 1992)		X				50	(Raghunathan 1999)			X		
10	(Raymond 1992)		X				51	(Doolin 1999)				X	
11	(King 1992)	X	X			X	52	(Sethi 1999)				X	
12	(Lee 1992)		X	X			53	(Jiang 1999)		X			
13	(Adams 1992)	X	X				54	(Burn 2000)		X	X		
14	(Lawrence 1993)	X	X				55	(Venkatesh 2000)				X	
15	(Szajna 1993)					X	56	(Rawstome 2000)				X	
16	(Oz 1993)					X	57	(van der Heijden 2000)			X		
17	(Miller 1993)		X	X			58	(Pawlowski 2000)			X		
18	(Seddon 1994)				X		59	(Forgionne 2000)					X
19	(Gatian 1994)		X	X			60	(Ravichandran 2000)	X				
20	(Premkumar 1994)	X	X	X			61	(Skok 2001)		X		X	X
21	(Doll 1995)		X	X	X		62	(Fok 2001)		X			
22	(Palvia 1995)		X	X	X		63	(Wixom 2001)	X	X		X	
23	(Yoon 1995)		X	X	X	X	64	(Rai 2002)				X	
24	(Young 1995)	X	X	X	X	X	65	(Xiao 2002)					X
25	(Yoon 1995)	X	X	X	X	X	66	(Torkzadeh 2002)					X
26	(Nord 1995)	X	X				67	(Gelderman 2002)		X			
27	(Jones 1995)	X		X			68	(Umble 2002)		X			
28	(Rainer 1995)			X	X	X	69	(Jiang 2002)	X	X			
29	(Amoli 1996)		X	X	X	X	70	(Crowston 2003)			X		
30	(Saarinen 1996)			X			71	(Byrd 2003)		X	X		X
31	(Guimaraes 1996)		X	X	X		72	(Hung 2003)	X	X	X		
32	(Vandenbosch 1996)		X				73	(Nevo 2003)			X		
33	(Leidner 1996)		X				74	(Bhatt 2003)			X		
34	(Dennis 1996)				X	X	75	(Negash 2003)					X
35	(Choe 1996)			X	X		76	(Sedera 2004)	X	X	X	X	
36	(Thong 1996)		X				77	(Bharati 2004)					X
37	(Walstrom 1997)	X					78	(Subramani 2004)		X			
38	(Harrison 1997)	X	X	X	X		79	(Ong 2004)			X		
39	(Igbaria 1997)	X	X		X		80	(Barua 2004)		X			
40	(Dekleva 1997)			X			81	(Tanriverdi 2005)	X	X		X	
41	(Li 1997)		X	X	X								

Table 2: The Content Analysis of Employment Cohorts<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Stra. = Strategic, Man. = Management, Ope. = Operational, Tech. = Technical, Ext. = External

## 5 EMPIRICAL STUDY CONTEXT

The empirical data collection was conducted across 27 Queensland Government agencies running live SAP systems. Queensland is the first Australian state to implement common financial management software state-wide namely; The Queensland Government Financial Management System (QGFMS). In 1995 the state Government of Queensland commenced implementation of SAP Financials across all state Government agencies (later followed by Controlling, Materials Management and in some agencies Human Resources) and Queensland Government is one of the largest SAP installations in Australia. The Queensland Government approach was very much focused on using the Enterprise System as a common reporting and financial management tool (Queensland Treasury 2000; Queensland Treasury 2000). The objectives of the new QGFMS were to provide a financial management system to Queensland Government agencies that would: (1) support the ‘Managing for Outcomes’ (MFO) framework and financial management improvement activities, (2) encourage best practice resource management across Queensland Government, (3) facilitate the consolidation of Queensland Government financial information, (4) meet the business needs of agencies and (5) achieve economies of scale in main operations.

## 6 THE SURVEY

A survey instrument was designed to operationalize 27 measures of ES-success depicted in table 3 (See details in Sedera and Gable 2004, Gable Sedera Chan 2003). All items were scored on a seven-point Likert scale with the end values (1) ‘Strongly disagree’ and (7) ‘Strongly Agree’, and the middle value (4) ‘Neutral’. The draft survey instrument was pilot tested with a selected sample of staff of the Queensland Government Treasury Department. Feedback from the pilot round respondents resulted in minor modifications to survey items. The survey gathered additional demographic details on respondents’ employment title (e.g. Director, Business Analyst, ABAP consultant). Furthermore, the respondents were asked to provide a brief description of their involvement with the SAP system. Supplementary information on the organizational structure, characteristics of the SAP system and the number of users was gathered from more objective sources.

In addition to the 27 items of table 3, the questionnaire included two criterion items aimed at gauging the respondent’s perception of overall ES-success: (1) ‘overall...the impact of SAP on the agency has been positive’ and (2) ‘overall... the impact of SAP on me has been positive’.

	System Quality		Information Quality		Individual Impact		Organisational Impact
SQ1	Ease of use	IQ1	Availability	II1	Learning	OI1	Organisational costs
SQ2	Ease of learning	IQ2	Usability	II2	Awareness / Recall	OI2	Staff requirements
SQ3	User requirements	IQ3	Understandability	II3	Decision effectiveness	OI3	Cost reduction
SQ4	System features	IQ4	Relevance	II4	Individual productivity	OI4	Overall productivity
SQ5	System accuracy	IQ5	Format			OI5	Improved outcomes/outputs
SQ6	Flexibility	IQ6	Conciseness			OI6	Increased capacity
SQ7	Sophistication					OI7	e-government
SQ8	Integration					OI8	Business Process Change
SQ9	Customisation						

Table 3: The measures of the ES-success Model

## 7 RESPONDENT CLASSIFICATION

The survey received a total of 319 responses representing the 27 organizations. Nine responses were removed from the data analysis due to perceived frivolity. Using the characteristics identified in the literature review, respondents were classified into four employment cohorts (i.e. Strategic,

Management, Operational and Technical) based on their employment title and the survey information provided pertaining to their involvement with the SAP system. In order to minimize individual errors of judgment, three academics and two senior business analysts from surveyed organizations, participated in the classification of respondents into cohorts. Participants individually mapped a sample of respondents into the four employment cohorts and compared results. Guidelines were designed to increase the systemisation, repeatability and the validity of the process<sup>7</sup>. Comparison of the individual classifications revealed an average inter-coder agreement of 80%<sup>8</sup>. The classification exercise revealed (See table 4) 11% of respondents were from the Strategic level, 39% from Management level, 35% were from the Operational levels and 15% represented Technical staff. All indications suggest that this distribution is representative of users of the SAP system in Queensland Government (Sedera, Gable et al. 2002).

## 8 THE ANALYSIS

Using statistical analyses, this section addresses the following objectives: (1) to establish the employment cohorts of ES-success, (2) to assess whether the employment cohorts have different views on success dimensions, (3) to assess whether all employment cohorts have sufficient knowledge to assess all ES-success dimensions, and (4) to determine whether some employment cohorts place a greater emphasis on certain ES-success dimensions when evaluating ES-success.

	#	%
Strategic	35	11%
Management	122	39%
Operational Staff	108	35%
Technical Staff	45	15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Table 4: Classification of Respondents*

Of the four employment cohorts, the strategic management reported the lowest mean score amongst all the employment cohorts. Furthermore, the mean values reported by the strategic cohort for each ES-success dimension is below the scale-median of 4 (SQ= 3.53, IQ=3.63, II=3.88 and OI=3.36). On the other hand, the technical staff reports the highest mean scores for all the ES-success dimensions (SQ= 4.34, IQ=4.32, II=5.26 and OI=4.27).

In order to assess whether the employment cohorts demonstrate different views on the ES-success dimensions paired t-test for the four employment cohorts across the four dimensions of ES-success was conducted (See results in table 5). In the comparative analysis reported below, it is noted that the management and operational employment cohorts do not demonstrate differences in opinions for the ES-success dimensions and measures. It is therefore suggested to combine the management and operational cohorts into a single employment cohort for managerial and reporting purposes. The authors suggest the term 'USER' for the combined employment cohorts. The answer to the question on the adequacy of knowledge of each employment cohort in assessing the ES-success, two types of tests is conducted. First, a correlation analysis between the employment cohorts and the dimensions is calculated to demonstrate the 'relative emphasis' placed by each cohort on the dimensions of ES-success.

Table 6 depicts the correlations of the ES-success dimensions with the dimension averages for the three employment cohorts. At the outset, it is observed that three employment cohorts display reasonable correlations between the dimensions of ES-success, evidencing the reasonable emphasis that all employment cohorts place on the success dimensions in evaluating ES-success.

<sup>7</sup> Classification guidelines and samples are available upon request

<sup>8</sup> Krippendorf (1980) recommends inter-coder reliability of at least 70% and suggests that any significant discrepancies should be discussed until consensus on the mappings is reached.



	(A) System Quality			(B) Information Quality			(C) Individual Impact			(D) Organizational Impacts		
	t value	df	Sig (2-tailed)	t value	df	Sig (2-tailed)	t value	Df	Sig (2-tailed)	t value	df	Sig (2-tailed)
St	1.65	155.00	0.10	1.55	155.00	0.12	2.33	155.00	0.02	2.91	155.00	0.00
Mgmt												
St	1.33	74.00	0.19	0.92	141.00	0.36	3.04	141.00	0.00	3.11	141.00	0.00
Ope												
St	-3.65	78.00	0.00	-2.77	78.00	0.01	-4.59	78.00	0.00	-3.42	61.78	0.00
Tec												
Mgmt	0.47	228.00	0.64	0.78	228.00	0.43	-1.52	228.00	0.13	-0.26	228.00	0.80
Ope												
Mgmt	-2.36	165.00	0.02	-1.31	165.00	0.19	-3.49	165.00	0.00	-1.30	165.00	0.10
Tec												
Ope	-2.77	107.50	0.01	-2.17	121.32	0.03	-2.00	151.00	0.05	-1.11	151.00	0.27
Tec												

Table 5: T-test of Employment Cohorts

	SQ	IQ	OI	II
Technical	0.86	0.74	0.69	0.49
Strategic	0.75	0.78	0.80	0.64
User	0.84	0.73	0.78	0.77

Table 6: Correlation Analysis

More importantly, it is apparent that some employment cohorts display *stronger* correlations with certain dimensions than the others. In example, the technical staff demonstrates the strongest correlation with the System Quality dimension while the strategic employment cohort forms the highest correlation with Organizational Impacts (See highlighted areas in table 6). The results of the stronger correlations by the Technical and Strategic cohorts, combined with the results of the t-tests demonstrate the relative importance/knowledge that those respective cohorts place on System Quality and Organizational Impacts respectively. Therefore, we argue that the Technical staff places a greater emphasis on ‘System Quality’ in evaluating ES-success than the other employment cohorts. Similarly, the Strategic level employees place greater emphasis on holistic Organizational Impacts. The high correlations, we believe, are due to the respective employment cohort’s ‘proximity’ to each of the success dimensions.

The newly created USER cohort has a strong and consistent correlation across all the ES-success dimensions. Analyzing the mean scores it is revealed that the USER cohort demonstrates similar mean values to the aggregate means of Strategic and Technical levels (see table 7). Combined with the earlier results of the correlation analysis (table 6), these findings illustrate some evidence of the ability of ‘middle managers’ to have a balanced view of all dimensions of ES-success. The findings support Shang and Seddon’s (2002) claims of the appropriateness of gathering data only from middle management in Enterprise Systems evaluations.

	SQ	IQ	II	OI
(a)St	3.533	3.633	3.886	3.360
(b)Tec	4.340	4.322	5.261	4.269
(c)User	3.848	3.959	4.605	4.039
(a+b)	3.937	3.978	4.573	3.815

Table 7: Mean Values

Though the importance of gathering data from all cohorts is evident, given organizational constraints, one could make useful observations by gathering data only from the ‘user’ cohort. It is forewarned that the ‘user’ cohort in this study differ from the ‘management’ cohort of Shang and Seddon. The ‘user’

cohort of this study encompasses both the ‘operational’ and ‘management’ staff, where as in Shang and Seddon the focus is solely on the ‘management’. Gable et al. (2003) adequately discussed the importance of additivity of measures and respondents in assessing Enterprise Systems comprehensively. Though it is far from conclusive from the evidence presented herein, combining the views and respondents to gauge an overarching score of ES-success would be beneficial to both academia and to the practice.

## 9 CONCLUSION

This paper addressed several key questions pertaining to stakeholder perspective (referred in this study as ‘employment cohorts’) of IS-success evaluations. The respondents’ ‘Perspective on measurement’ is an important design consideration in IS evaluation, especially, when the reach of contemporary Information System is not limited to one employment cohort. It is also possible that the perplexing results of IS-success studies may have been introduced by the mis/un-specified employment cohorts. With the main objective of identifying the salient and distinct employment cohorts of Enterprise Systems, the study analysed data from 310 respondents, using the ES-success measurement model of Gable et al., 2003. The analysis was preceded by a comprehensive content analysis, which analysed 81 IS-success studies.

The following observations were made on ES-employment cohorts. The employment cohorts possess different views on ES-success. These differences in views on success are clearly evident in (1) Management – Strategic, (2) Management – Technical, (3) Operational – Strategic, (4) Operational – Technical and (5) Technical – Strategic employment cohort pairs. Out of the four cohorts, Technical staff displayed significant differences with all other employment cohorts. However, only negligible differences were observed between Management and Operational employment cohorts. These similar views held by the Management and Operational cohorts led to the creation of a new employment cohort (named ‘User’) for analysis purposes. All employment cohorts (Strategic, User and Technical) are sufficiently informed to respond to questions on all success dimensions. However, some employment cohorts are in a position to provide better insights due to their proximity to certain ES-success dimensions. These views on ES-success held by the employment cohorts can be aggregated to gain further useful insights into ES-success. The newly created ‘User’ cohort (Management + Operational) has the best overall knowledge of ES-success in all dimensions. Therefore, user cohort is the best surrogate employment cohort to gather perceptions, if the organization decides to collect views from only one employment cohort.

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