ERP Skills in the Business Curriculum: Improving Program and Student Outcomes

TREO Talk Paper

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Abstract

Organizations face relentless competitive pressure, requiring them to perform with ever-increasing efficiencies. Enterprise resource planning (ERP) software can improve organizational performance by integrating and automating core business processes across separate functional areas such as accounting, finance, manufacturing, sales, and human resources. As a result, these connected, functional areas provide a cohesive business unit with a holistic view of the organization and faster response times for business concerns and decision-making.

With these potential benefits, it is no surprise the ERP software market continues to grow annually, with an estimated global market value of $82.3 billion in 2016 (Statista 2018). This growth, expected to continue, is partly attributed to growth in the Software as a Service (SaaS) delivery model where small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) can purchase cloud-based applications and data storage from ERP providers such as SAP, Oracle, and Microsoft (Iriberri, Kwon, and Henson 2015). ERP solutions were once an option only for large enterprises that could afford the infrastructure required to implement these complex systems. But SaaS offers scalability and reduces the need for hardware and associated support, making ERP affordable to SMEs.

As the industry-wide demand for ERP resources grows, so does the demand for workers with skills in ERP software. There is evidence that graduates with these skills earn higher salaries upon entering the marketplace (Cronan & Douglas 2012). In response, business schools are increasingly offering ERP education in various forms. One popular delivery system for ERP education is the SAP University Alliance.

As the leader in ERP software service, the company claims 91% of the Forbes Global 2000 as SAP customers. As the demand for ERP services and requisite skills grows, so does the participation in the SAP University Alliance (SAP UA 2018). Reported at over 1,400 educational institutions in 2015 (Alshare, El-Masri, & Lane 2015), SAP states that number has grown to over 3,500 current alliance members (SAP UA 2018). This paper presents observational research describing the implementation of enterprise resource planning principles and development of software skills in a College of Business program.

References


