

Chapter VII

An Investigation of GISM Issues for Successful Management of the Globalization Process

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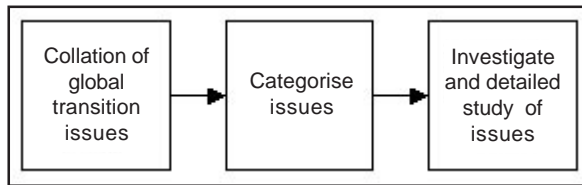
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ABSTRACT

This chapter investigates issues related to the global transition of an enterprise through the application of information technology and information systems. It starts with the discussion of the issues that are critical to the successful transition of an enterprise to transborder business operations using information systems. The expected outcome of such transition would be a globalized organization that would not be limited by geographical and time zone barriers, nor restricted by cultural differences. The global transition issues are further classified into five categories embracing business information systems management, information technology management, people management, end user management, and culture. It is then followed by a comprehensive examination of individual issues that is vital in understanding their impact on the transition and how to alleviate that impact. The chapter concludes by indicating a future research direction that might augment the development of this emerging field.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid growth of information technology (IT) is one of the key drivers forcing organizations toward globalization. The meaning of “globalization” to an organization seems no longer to be a business vision but a crucial strategy as the global market becomes a single

Figure 1. Research framework

entity. Nevertheless, to be capable of successful in the global transition process and sustain in the global competitive environment, the organizations require more than just applying information technology. Without a clear understanding of the issues in relation to the management of global information systems, organizations are most likely to fail in this transition.

The key objective of this chapter is to investigate the global transition issues through the collation and categorization of global IT management literature from the past decade. It intends to provide readers a comprehensive view of the problems faced in the organization's IT globalization process. The research framework used is illustrated in Figure 1.

BACKGROUND

During the global transition, organizations often face many tacit as well as explicit factors that could delay or, in worst cases, even destroy the globalization process. In order to eliminate these unnecessary incidents, enterprises need to identify the possible issues that will impede the process of globalization before it takes place.

In the past decade, researchers have put in significant efforts in identifying the global information systems management (GISM) issues. Most notable are Senn's six key information technology issues (Senn, 1992), and the eight multinational categories of global information technology issues by Palvia and Saraswat (1992). In addition, a number of issues have been identified in various areas, including culture (Burn et al., 1993; Ein-Dor et al., 1993; Sauter, 1992; Yellen, 1997), human resource management (Agocs and Suttie, 1994; Boudreau et al., 1994; Harrison and Deans, 1994; Niederman, 1994; O'Connell, 1997; Pucik and Katz, 1986), individual country and region (Palvia et al., 1992; Watson et al., 1997), business strategic planning (Cheung and Burn, 1994; Ives et al., 1993; Gibson and McGuire, 1997; Kesner and Palmisano, 1996; Minor and Larkin, 1994; Neo, 1991; Sethi and Olson, 1992; Unhelkar, 1999), practical issues (Edberg et al., 2001), and technology (Klein, 1999; Passino and Severance, 1990; Sankar and Prabhakar, 1992; Waples and Norris, 1992).

Based on the implication of issues on the process of globalization, five categories are identified to facilitate classification and collation of the GISM issues. The core concept of categorization intends to provide the organizations an abstract overview of concerns in relation to the transition to globalization. These categories are labeled as:

1. Information technology management
2. Business information systems management
3. People management
4. End user management
5. Culture

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