

Top management support and the performance of MIS implementation process

Jinjoo Lee *

Kun-soo Suh **

ABSTRACT

Though many authors have long stressed the importance of top manager's role in the successful implementation of information systems, we have no knowledge on how much does top management support affects the performance of MIS implementation process because there is so little research in this subject. Moreover, as no researchers studied the contingency effects of top management support on the performance MIS implementation, we have no specific knowledge on when or in what situation is the top management support more in need of.

In this regard, this paper analyzes the relationship between top management support and the performance of MIS implementation process under the various contingency factors. The performance of MIS implementation process is defined as the degree to which system analysts and user are successful in resolving implementation issues and measured using Kolb/Frohman's change model. For contingency factors, such variables as firm size, utilization of executive steering committee, age of MIS department, task structuredness, project size, system initiator are considered.

Seven hypotheses were drawn from literature review and testified them through field survey. Data were collected from Korean business firms by stratified sampling method and we finally got the usable data from 64 firms (and thus 64 systems). The major result of this study is that top management support is a strong impetus for increasing the performance of MIS implementation process especially in the earlier and later stages of implementation process. This in turn show that top management support is more required in unfreezing and refreezing organizational conditions for implementation than in resolving technical issues.

But the general conviction that more support from top management always leads to more desirable results was not validated in this study. The relationship between top management support and the performance of MIS implementation process was found to be substantially influenced by several contingency factors : specifically, more strong relationship was found in those firms with smaller size, which utilize executive steering committee, and implementing for less structured tasks, larger project, non-user initiated systems. Based on the results of contingency effect, our conclusion is that top management support is more requisite when implementing organizationally more complex system and implementing under the organizationally less favorable conditions. Several implications and limitations of this study are also discussed .

* Jinjoo Lee is a professor of Management Science at the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology(KAIST), P. O. Box 131, Chongryang-ri, Seoul, Korea. (Tel. 966-1931, ext. 3813)

** Kun-soo Suh is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Management Science at the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology.