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Excerpt List of Abbreviations 1.1 Introduction 1.1.1 Topic Identification 1.2 Course of Investigation 1.3 Research Objective 2 Strategic Information Systems Planning 2.1 Terminology 2.2 Conceptual Framework 2.3 Introduction to Strategic Information Systems Planning 3 Successful Strategic Information Systems Planning 3.1 Importance of Strategic Information Systems Planning 3.2 Success in Strategic Information Systems Planning 3.3 Approaches to Strategic Information Systems Planning Evaluation 4 Measures of Evaluating Success in Strategic Information Systems Planning 4.1 Conceptual Evaluation Approach to Strategic Information Systems Planning 4.2 Operative Evaluation Approach to Strategic Information Systems Planning 4.3 Analysis of Evaluation Measures 5 Summary Reference List List of Abbreviations illustration not visible in this excerpt 1 Introduction 1.1 Topic Identification Throughout the past, Strategic Information Systems Planning (SISP) is repeatedly recognised a top concern of Chief Information Officers (CIOs) (Earl, 1993, p. 1; Philip, 2007). However, most companies lack the ability to implement SISP frameworks (Pant & Hsu, 1995, p. 4), because they do not consider the relation of SISP to their business activities (Reid, 1989, p. 560). Rogerson and Fiedler (1994, p. 13) identify a lack of guidelines to the selection and implementation of SISP frameworks in literature, which accounts for part of the hesitant application of SISP. In research and practice, even less focus is put on universal evaluation concepts for SISP activities (Moynihan, 1990; Lyles, 1979, pp. 12-16). Simply evaluating the implementation of SISP activities is a common way to approximate a benchmark of SISP. Furthermore, Boyd and Reuning-Elliott (1998, p. 182) have addressed the issue of lacking consistency in the operation of strategic planning and its evaluation. According to the authors, this confusion is a result of a common researchers' choice to focus on the examination of classifications of different planning strategies, rather than the implications of strategic planning itself. The authors depict the difficulty to compare different evaluation frameworks, due to inconsistent schemes, misleading presumptions and statistical difficulties to quantify indicators. As a result, the common perception of SISP evaluation in practice does not distinguish between a strategic concept and its respective implementation. Yet, a sound strategic plan can horribly fail in implementation due to different reasons. A judgment of SISP solely based on plan implementation success is therefore not a valid approach. These circumstances raise the question of whether the evaluation of SISP activities within an organisation is needed and, more importantly - provided a need exists, how (by which measures) should such evaluation be undertaken? 1.2 Course of Investigation In order to examine the need for SISP evaluation, an introduction to SISP is given in the second chapter - after the conceptualisation of the theoretic framework underlying this paper and a definition of terminology used. To address the problem of unspecified terminology in SISP research, this paper reduces different terms to a clear and exclusive meaning, which will be explained in detail to facilitate a better understanding. In the further course of investigation, the importance of SISP is outlined and existing frameworks are presented. Thereby, the introduction of three universal SISP dimensions, identified for all relevant SISP frameworks, does not only improve the understanding of SISP, but provides a basis for the later analysis of the evaluation measures (King, 1978). In the course of outlining the importance of SISP, the purpose of its evaluation reveals. Yet, providing reasons for SISP evaluation does not offer clues to its actual execution. Therefore, it is then illustrated, how to define quality in SISP - the basis for measuring SISP success. Finally, methods of SISP evaluation are presented and classified into two groups of approaches. This classification facilitates the then following analysis of SISP evaluation measures. Instead of questing for the identification of a single and generalised set of evaluation measures in terms of a universal evaluation method, the goal of the later analysis is to reflect the concept behind each different measure (with reference to the three universal SISP dimensions (King, 1978)), in order to deduct contributing aspects of each. As generalised approaches to SISP evaluation cannot claim collective applicability, given the boundless variety of organisational structures (and the respective approaches to SISP evaluation), the classification of evaluation measures shall facilitate further research towards a concept of individually modelling SISP evaluation (Lyles, 1979, p. 12). Companies usually have certain planning goals in mind for their SISP, but no guidance exists on how to turn these goals into precise measures (King, 1993, p. 270). As a desired result of this work, evaluation measures become dismantled of their original concept to facilitate the formation of customised SISP evaluation methods, to address companies' customised SISP frameworks, for which no readymade evaluation method exists. 1.3 Research Objective Initially, it was attempted to derive a criteria catalogue for SISP evaluation measures in this paper, to identify their strength and weaknesses as a starter for further research. Such catalogue should then enable decision makers of SISP to integrate adequate evaluation measures directly into a SISP framework. However, given that SISP evaluation in practice is either not applied to a satisfying degree or SISP frameworks are not implemented in accordance with literature (Grover & Segars, 2005, pp. 761-763), it appears more advisable to generate a better understanding of the connection between SISP and its evaluation through bringing the existing success measures down to a common theoretical basis. In this context, the three universal SISP framework dimensions form this common basis and are connected with SISP evaluation measures (King, 1978). Through this approximation of SISP frameworks and SISP evaluation, this paper aims to investigate the validity of the dimensions for SISP measures. The transfer of SISP framework dimensions to SISP evaluation measures provides guidance to the implementation of SISP evaluation measures in existing frameworks in a company, as well as it encourages further research to generate a more sophisticated conceptualisation of SISP evaluation methods. Altogether, the objective of this paper is to identify the need for SISP evaluation measures, present different SISP evaluation methods and to investigate the applicability of universal SISP framework dimensions of King's (1978) analysis. 2.1 Terminology In literature, no unified terminology exists for describing the context of SISP and its evaluation (Boyd & Reuning-Elliott, 1998, p. 182). In order to ease better understanding, certain terms - commonly used and confused across literature, are restricted to a more narrow meaning. These terms are used to explicitly describe certain constructs within this work and shall therefore not be interpreted according to their general and comprehensive meanings. The addressed terms are defined in the following. The term evaluation is used to reflect actual SISP performance. In the context of this paper, evaluation is interpreted as the core benchmarking judgement in order to scale the quality of SISP. It constitutes the highest level of success determination for SISP. However, the focus of this research is not put on the evaluation level, but deals with the underlying level of evaluation measures used to derive such evaluation, which are also explained in this chapter. In the context of SISP evaluation, the idiom approach refers to the actual means to come near a fair judgement of SISP success in terms of a comprising dimension. Altogether, it describes the characteristic of SISP evaluation regarding the question of which references are considered in the evaluation. One method of the operative approach depicted in this paper, for example, considers the adherence to a formal planning framework (in few words). Accordingly, the reference of the evaluation approach is conformity with formal routines. Beneath this universal characteristic, the term method is subsequently directed towards the question of how to consider the selected references and is therefore subordinate to an approach. Regarding the before mentioned example of operative reference, the selection of quantifiable parameters can be considered an evaluation method within the operative approach. Measurement refers to the application of techniques used, to obtain expressive or scalable data for the purpose of evaluating SISP. These techniques are called measures, which refer to the quantifiable parameters in use to derive a quantifiable value statement. Within this paper, the term is used to describe different indicators of SISP performance. In accordance with the earlier example, simply questioning an organisation's employees to rank their perception of adherence to the SISP framework, is considered such measurement. In this case, 'perception' would represent the respective measure. Throughout this paper, the term measurement remains restricted to this definition and must therefore not be confused with the earlier defined methods. The term framework stands for the explicit or implicit implementation of different policies and procedures regarding the execution of SISP activities within a company. Procedure and process are used synonymously and describe formal or informal means of carrying out SISP. This refers to formal practices, policies or corporate habits, which can be defined within an organisation. 2.2 Conceptual Framework Systems theory provides the theoretical foundation of this paper. Henderson and Sifonis (1988, p. 187) have adopted the concepts of system theory from Alexander (1964) and Churchman (1971) to the field of SISP, so that a system can be interpreted as the relationships between objects and performance. According to the authors, SISP is the theory of how a company can achieve desirable performance through sets of planning objectives and relationships in terms of procedural policies; like a house reflects the architect's theory of how people live. Strategic planning is thereby interpreted as a model of abstraction from the complex business environment. Based on the abstraction of a company's present situation, future changes in terms of challenges and chances are predicted. Subsequently, after a careful analysis, recommendations according to what the planners consider a rational reaction to a predicted future situation are derived and documented (Zachman, A Framework for Information Systems Architecture, 1999, pp. 455-467). 2.3 Introduction to Strategic Information Systems Planning In practice and throughout literature, SISP is associated with an organisations attempt to align its information systems with business objectives (Teo & King, 1997). Earlier definitions identify SISP as a process of deciding the objectives for corporate computing and determining supportive applications, which the organisation should implement (Lederer & Sethi, 1988, p. 445; Bergeron & Raymond, 1992). In the context of systems theory, SISP forms part of strategic planning, because of the high potential of Information Systems (IS) to support the accomplishment of business objectives (Henderson & Sifonis, 1988, p. 187; Philip, 2007, p. 248). Despite considering SISP a core success factor of aligning Information Technology (IT) with business needs, many companies do not apply formal SISP evaluation procedures (Pyburn, 1983, pp. 1-4). Over the time, different definitions in literature have developed into different directions, including various planning frameworks and technologies, that are partly considered in the course of this paper (Grover & Segars, 2005, p. 762). In practice, different frameworks are implemented and customisation of existing frameworks is undertaken (Boynton & Zmud, 1987, pp. 62-67; Lederer & Sethi, 1996, p. 37; Venkatraman, 1985, p. 73). According to the broad variation of SISP in practice, the interpretation of SISP in this paper is of a very broad kind. It is intended to illustrate measuring methodologies for SISP, and evaluate these without limitations to any organisational structure or framework. Consequently, little limitations are set to the actual SISP processes in use, as long as basic requirements of SISP are met in terms of the scope of this work, which is also kept on a very broad level. It has been indicated that a model of the business environment needs to be set up, assumptions are made and directions for future (re)action regarding the assumptions are given, following the rules of systems theory assumptions. Hence, the scope of SISP in this paper consists of an analysis of the future development of an enterprise and the environment surrounding the business. Furthermore, an interpretation of this analysis needs to be undertaken (without limitations to the procedure in use), to react to the predicted future development of the business environment with reference to potentials and threats. Finally, a documented set of actions has to be deducted, to plan the companies reaction to the predicted future, which would - at the time of planning, be considered to be best suited for the expected situation (Lederer & Sethi, 1988, p. 446). Consequently, all planning activities are included, which serve the earlier identified aim of SISP to align IS with organisational goals or to facilitate a competitive advantage. The later following characterisation of measures to evaluate SISP further ensures broad reference for interpretation. However, the complaint in the introduction of this paper concerning the confusion of SISP with plan implementation success does not exclude implementation from consideration within SISP evaluation. Contrary, implementation planning forms part of the SISP process and is found to be a decisive determinant of the perceived SISP performance by King (1995, p. 66), yet it is not the only determinant of SISP success. Regardless of the loose definition, all addressed frameworks have to share three basic dimensions, which were discovered by King (1978) to provide a research fundament in the field of SISP. Henderson and Sifonis (1988, pp. 187-194) have transferred King's findings into a system theory's interpretation. These dimensions have been mentioned several times in the introduction. They are widely accepted across literature and consist of external validity, internal consistency and cooperative behaviour. External validity requires a modelled SISP framework to be justified through competitive benchmark with the surrounding business environment to check for validity and redundancy. [...] Quote paper B.Sc. Alexander Küpper (Author), 2007, Measures for Successful Strategic Information Systems Planning, Munich, GRIN Verlag, Read the ebook





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