



CENTERIS 2023 - 15TH EDITION

The Process of Cultural Alignment within a Multicultural Context :
The Case of ERP System Deployment across Europe and Africa

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CULTURAL MISFITS



CONFIDENTIALITY



Vs.

TRANSPARENCY

CULTURAL MISFITS occur when an IT artifact requires ways of operating that contravene organizational norms (Strong and Volkoff, 2010). In this case, values embedded in the technology may contradict organizational values bringing the issue of culture to the surface (Leidner and Kayworh, 2006).



IS PROJECT : CLACH OF CULTURES



❖ CULTURE HAS BEEN REPORTED TO BE AT THE ORIGIN OF IS PROJECT FAILURE.

- Culture is a crucial factor in the acceptance and effective use of information technologies (*Gallivan and Srite, 2005; Kappos and Rivard, 2008; Straub et al., 2002*).
- A lack of cultural fit (or misfit) between information technology (IT) and organization has thus been found to be at the origin of IS project failure (*Leonard-Barton, 1988; Leidner and Kayworth, 2006; Strong and Volkoff, 2010; Krumbholz and Maiden, 2000*).

❖ DURING IS PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION, VARIOUS CULTURAL VALUES COLLIDE.

- An IT artifact can represent a counterculture within the implementing organization.
- The risk of cultural misfits is very high in multinational implementation as each subsidiary may have its proper management style, political factors, labour skills and culture (*Olson et al., 2005; Osnes et al., 2018*) different from values embedded in IT.

❖ CULTURAL ISSUES HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED ACROSS MULTIPLE DOMAINS AT VARIOUS LEVELS.

- Prior research has highlighted a spectrum of cultural misfit domains such as data misfits, functional misfits, output misfits, and values misfits across national, sectoral, organizational, and group levels (*Soh et al, 2000; Strong and Volkoff, 2010; Leidner and Kayworth, 2006*).



RESEARCH GAP, QUESTION AND OBJECTIVE



- ❖ **TO REDUCE THE CULTURE GAP BETWEEN AN ERP SYSTEM AND THE ADOPTING ORGANIZATION, SOME STRATEGIES ARE PROVIDED IN THE MIS LITERATURE** (*Soh et al., 2000; Van Beijsterveld and Van Groenendaal, 2016*) :
 - Reengineer business processes to fit to the embedded structure of the ERP (organizational adaptation),
 - Accept shortfall and assume to keep misfits unresolved in the ERP system,
 - Use workarounds without changing the embedded structure of the system
 - Customize the ERP system to fit the business process (technological customization),

- ❖ **STRATEGIES FOR RESOLVING MISFITS HAVE BEEN LINKED TO THE MISFIT TYPE** (*Soh et al., 2000; Luo and Strong, 2004; Sia and Soh, 2007; Strong and Volkoff, 2010; Van Beijsterveld and Van Groenendaal, 2016*)
 - Voluntary structures provide more leeway to the implementing organization, which has the choice to adapt to the ERP package; whereas imposed misfits are more likely to be solved through ERP customization.

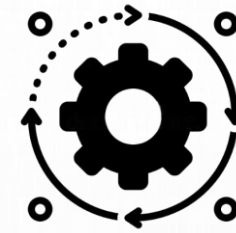
- **RESEARCH GAP** : Scarcity of papers that offer a process view of cultural alignment within a multicultural context.

- **RESEARCH QUESTION**: How does the process of cultural alignment unfold in a multicultural context ?

- **RESEARCH OBJECTIVE**: Uncover the process of cultural alignment from the beginning through IS project implementation.



METHODOLOGY



- **LONGITUDINAL CASE STUDY** : The selected case presents cross-cultural and multi-activity field particularly suitable for the exploration of the cultural alignment process.
 - 4 subsidiaries located in France, Italy, Tunisia and Morocco,
 - Large range of activities (import, export, transport, storage, customs, etc.)
 - IS project implementation (ERP system),

- **DATA COLLECTION** : We used multiple sources of evidence when collecting data (Eisenhardt, 1989).
 - 35 semi-structured interviews (line managers, project managers, top management, final users, etc.)
 - Participants observation (750h)
 - Documentation (project charter, emails, meeting minutes, internal reports, etc.)
 - Field notes,

- **DATA ANALYSIS** : Our data analysis followed the Miles et al. (2020) method of qualitative analysis, including three steps of (1) Data condensation, (2) Data display, and (3) Conclusion drawing and verification.

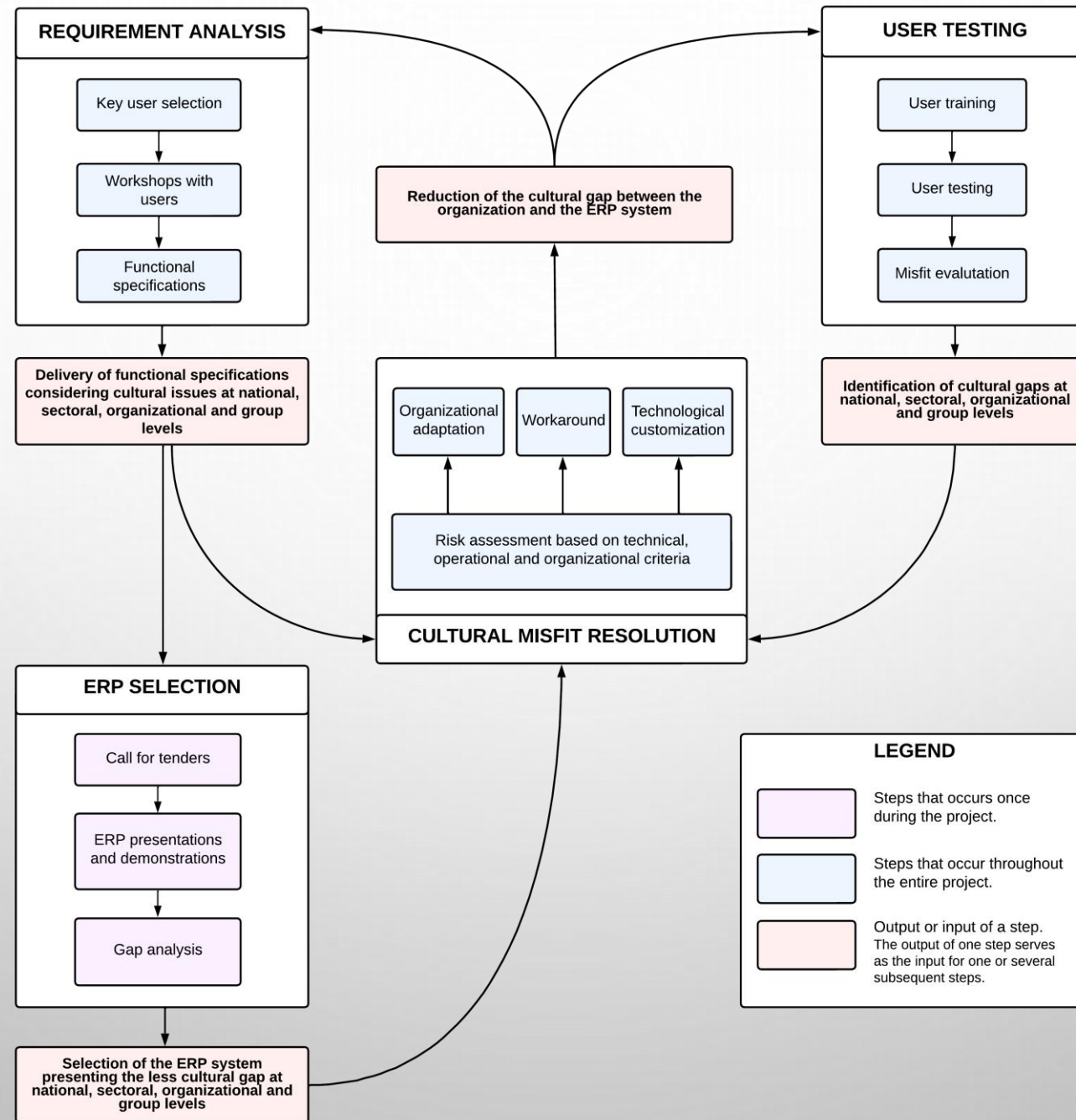


Fig.1. The process of cultural alignment within a multicultural context



CONTRIBUTIONS



THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTION

Contributes to the literature by **providing a process view of how to achieve cultural alignment between an ERP system and its adopting organization** thereby increasing the likelihood of implementation success.

PRACTICAL CONTRIBUTION

Provides the project team with **an overview of the various steps and actions that lead to cultural alignment** while offering insights into how this process is influenced and regulated by both technology and the organization.



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THANKS FOR YOUR ATTENTION,
I'LL BE HAPPY TO TAKE YOUR QUESTIONS ...