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# Abstract

This study examined the factors that influence implementation of ICT shared services in multinational organisations with a particular focus on the different strategies employed by centralised and decentralised organisations.

In addition, perceived barriers encountered by organisations in the adoption of ICT shared services and the associated challenges and benefits following implementation were further investigated.

Moreover, the research sought to examine whether implementation of ICT shared services would have strategic benefits, for local business units and ICT functions alike, by enabling local resources to focus on core business functions and consequently help drive their organisation's competitive advantage.

A qualitative research approach underpinned by an interpretivism philosophy was undertaken to explore the factors that influence the implementation of ICT shared services in multinational organisations. An interpretivist philosophy was considered the most suitable for addressing the research question and a multiple case study approach to the research was taken.

Comprising a multiple case study approach, structured interviews were undertaken with 15 centralised and decentralised organisation participants from a range of positions including Technical Consultants, Senior Managers and IT Directors within the ICT function.

The findings indicated that the implementation of ICT shared services presents challenges for local business units in multinational organisations. However a shared services implementation can create a range of significant benefits including decreased costs, improvement in service quality, reduced effort of duplication across the organisation as well as assisting the organisation in achieving a competitive advantage.

Irrespective of the many potentially adaptive outcomes, possible barriers and challenges, including data protection, poor communications, loss of local control, threat to job losses, loss of flexibility and lack of local business knowledge must all be considered prior to implementation of IT functions through a shared services delivery model.

The findings also demonstrated that an organisations' operating model can play a significant role in adopting ICT shared services. In accordance, organisations operating a centralised model had a much higher successful implementation rate in comparison to organisations operating a decentralised model.

This study therefore provides an insight into the factors that influence the implementation of ICT shared services concluding with an innovative approach to assist organisations in selecting an IT function to be delivered as a shared service by using the Murtagh shared service suitability assessment tool.