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Research Article

A Design Science Approach to Aligning Enterprise Information Systems with Organizational Digital Transformation Strategies

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Abstract: Digital transformation (DT) has become a critical component for organizations aiming to enhance their operational efficiency, innovation, and competitiveness. However, many organizations struggle to achieve successful digital transformation due to the misalignment between their Enterprise Information Systems (EIS) and organizational strategic goals. This research seeks to design and validate a model for aligning EIS with digital transformation strategies to improve organizational effectiveness. By adopting the Design Science Research (DSR) approach, this study develops a practical model that integrates strategic planning, process management methodologies, and emerging technologies to facilitate alignment between IT and business strategies. The research includes key steps such as requirement analysis, artifact design, expert validation, and case study evaluation to ensure the model's robustness and applicability across different organizational contexts. Findings indicate that the proposed model significantly improves strategic-system alignment, enhances decision-making consistency, and facilitates better integration between business and IT units. The model also addresses common challenges such as resistance to change, skill gaps, and misalignment, fostering a supportive culture for digital transformation. In comparison to existing descriptive frameworks, the proposed model is more structured, adaptable, and actionable, providing organizations with a clear framework to guide their digital transformation efforts. This research contributes to the growing body of knowledge on EIS alignment and offers practical insights for organizations seeking to achieve successful digital transformation. Future research could explore the model's application in various organizational settings and examine its impact on long-term organizational growth and innovation.

Keywords: Digital transformation; Enterprise systems; Strategic alignment; Design science; Organizational effectiveness.

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1. Introduction

Digital transformation has become a key factor in driving the progress of organizations across various sectors. In the digital era, organizations are required to optimize the use of advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and the Internet of Things (IoT) to enhance performance, operational efficiency, and innovation in products and services [1], [2]. This transformation not only focuses on technology implementation but also on improving customer experience and enabling better decision-making [2]. Therefore, digital transformation allows organizations to identify new business opportunities and strengthen their competitive edge in the global market [3].

However, despite the vast potential of digital transformation, many organizations fail to achieve their objectives. One of the main reasons for this failure is the misalignment between enterprise information systems (EIS) and the organization's strategic goals. Without clear and comprehensive integration, the adoption of advanced technology can increase the burden on the organization and fail to provide significant added value [2], [4]. Additionally, successful

digital transformation requires effective leadership, an organizational culture that supports change, and readiness to manage the complexities that come with the transformation [5], [6]. Therefore, it is crucial for organizations to have an integrated vision and strategy to ensure that the technology implemented aligns with their strategic objectives [7].

Although many organizations rely on technology to initiate digital transformation, they often overlook the importance of human factors, such as leadership and organizational culture. The failure to align EIS with strategic goals results in resource wastage and inefficiency in the transformation process [8], [9]. Therefore, organizations need to develop a more holistic approach to digital transformation, which includes the development of digital competencies at all levels of the organization and strengthening the culture that supports change [10].

The primary issue addressed in this research is the misalignment between Enterprise Information Systems (EIS) and organizational digital transformation strategies, which hampers overall organizational effectiveness. EIS are designed to integrate and manage various aspects of an organization, facilitating enterprise-wide information sharing and supporting core business activities [11]. However, despite their pivotal role, EIS often face challenges in adaptability, intervention, and people management, leading to inefficiencies and disruptions in business operations [12]. Furthermore, the rapid pace of digital transformation demands that EIS align closely with evolving business strategies to optimize operational efficiency and adaptability [13]. Misalignment between EIS and digital transformation strategies can result in repeated investments, delays, and failures in digital transformation projects, thereby creating value leakages and hindering the achievement of strategic objectives [14].

This research aims to design and validate a model for aligning EIS with digital transformation strategies to enhance organizational effectiveness. The research involves the development of a conceptual model that identifies and structures key factors necessary for strategic alignment between EIS and digital transformation initiatives. This model will incorporate elements such as strategic planning, process management methodologies, emerging technologies, and flexible organizational structures [13], [15]. Validation of the model will be carried out through a mixed-methods approach, including theoretical analysis, expert interviews, and surveys, ensuring the robustness and applicability of the model across various sectors and levels of digital maturity [16].

Key challenges to be addressed include the lack of sustained management commitment, technical immaturity, resistance to change, and unrealistic expectations about information systems projects [12]. To overcome these challenges, the proposed model will emphasize the integration of strategic planning and process management, the adoption of emerging technologies such as AI, IoT, and blockchain, and the development of flexible organizational structures capable of adapting to dynamic business environments [13]. Furthermore, fostering a strong organizational culture that supports change management, knowledge management, and stakeholder engagement will be crucial for facilitating smooth transitions [11].

2. Literature Review

Digital Transformation in Organizations: Literature Review and Implementation Challenges

Digital transformation (DT) is the integration of digital technologies into all areas of a business, fundamentally changing how organizations operate and deliver value to customers. It is a comprehensive process that not only involves adopting new technologies but also requires transforming business models, organizational culture, and internal processes to leverage the full potential of digital tools [17], [18]. Successful digital transformation enhances customer experience, optimizes operational processes, and enables the adaptation of business models to seize digital opportunities [17], [19]. These changes are essential for organizations aiming to stay competitive and respond to market demands effectively.

Key challenges in implementing digital transformation include managing organizational change, addressing skill gaps, and ensuring strategic alignment. Resistance to change is a common barrier, with employees often fearing disruptions to their established routines [20], [21]. Leadership and vision are crucial for overcoming resistance and guiding the transformation process [20]. Additionally, organizations face a significant digital talent and skills gap, which can hinder the progress of digital initiatives. Continuous learning and investment in workforce training are critical to overcoming these challenges [5], [22]. The lack of sufficient digital skills often exacerbates the challenges of integrating new technologies and fostering a culture of innovation within the organization [22], [23].

Strategic planning and the adoption of comprehensive frameworks are necessary for the successful implementation of digital transformation. Organizations need to develop a clear

digital strategy that aligns with their goals and leverage frameworks such as McKinsey's digital transformation model [17], [24]. These frameworks help integrate business and IT strategies, ensuring that digital transformation initiatives are effectively supported by the organization's architecture and processes (Milea & Cioca, 2024). Legacy systems, interoperability issues, and high initial investment costs are also significant obstacles that organizations must overcome to ensure seamless integration of new technologies with existing systems [18], [25]. Despite these challenges, adopting a holistic approach to digital transformation, involving leadership commitment, employee engagement, and continuous improvement, is crucial for long-term success [5], [20].

Enterprise Information Systems (EIS) Alignment

Aligning Enterprise Information Systems (EIS) with organizational strategic goals is critical for ensuring that IT investments contribute to the overall success of the organization. EIS are designed to integrate and manage various business functions, and when aligned with strategic objectives, they drive efficiency, effectiveness, and competitive advantage. This alignment ensures that EIS support organizational goals, enabling improved decision-making and operational performance [26], [27].

Achieving strategic alignment between EIS and business goals is complex and often requires significant organizational changes. Misalignment can lead to inefficiencies, IT failures, and poor organizational performance. Challenges include lack of sustained management commitment, resistance to change, and technical immaturity, which can hinder the effectiveness of digital transformation efforts [26], [28]. Organizations must address these issues to ensure that their EIS contribute to long-term success.

Various frameworks and methodologies, such as enterprise architecture models and strategic alignment models, have been developed to support the alignment process. These frameworks help integrate business strategies with IT strategies, promoting effective coordination between business and technology. Case studies show that organizations that successfully align EIS with strategic goals experience better financial performance and increased competitiveness [27], [29]. Continuous improvement and dynamic capabilities are also essential to maintain alignment as business strategies evolve over time [28].

Design Science Research (DSR) in Information Systems

Design Science Research (DSR) is a research paradigm primarily focused on creating and evaluating artifacts to solve complex organizational problems. This methodology is particularly relevant in the field of Information Systems (IS), where it aims to extend human and organizational capabilities through innovative solutions [30]. DSR emphasizes the design and creation of artifacts, such as models, frameworks, products, services, and systems, that directly address specific organizational challenges [31]. Unlike descriptive research, which aims to explain phenomena, DSR is generative in nature, producing new knowledge by developing and applying these artifacts in real-world settings [32]. This characteristic makes DSR a powerful tool for developing practical solutions that can significantly improve organizational effectiveness and efficiency.

A critical component of DSR is the evaluation of the artifacts in actual organizational environments. The evaluation process assesses the effectiveness and impact of the designed artifacts, ensuring that they meet the intended goals [33]. DSR often follows an iterative process, where artifacts are continuously refined based on feedback and evaluation results, which allows for a more dynamic and responsive approach to solving complex problems [30]. Additionally, while focus groups can be used to gather qualitative feedback on the artifacts, this evaluation method is not commonly highlighted in IS literature [32]. The flexibility inherent in DSR methodologies allows researchers to adapt to the evolving nature of organizational challenges and the dynamic contexts in which the artifacts are applied [34].

DSR is often compared with other design-oriented research frameworks, such as the constructive research approach, which similarly aims to solve practical problems but may differ in philosophical assumptions and practical requirements [30]. While behavioral science focuses on explaining and predicting human and organizational behavior, DSR is more concerned with creating tangible solutions that enhance organizational capabilities [31]. Despite its potential, DSR faces several challenges, including conceptual confusion regarding its methodology and guidelines, which hinders consistency in research practices [33]. Researchers must also balance rigor with creativity, maintaining a structured research process while allowing flexibility for artifact development [34]. DSR has seen significant applications in organizational contexts, particularly in areas such as Enterprise Architecture, where it has been used to measure business value and impact [32]. Furthermore, DSR frameworks have played a pivotal role in fostering digital innovation within organizations by nurturing IS champions who drive transformative digital projects [33].

3. Proposed Method

This research employs Design Science Research (DSR) to design and evaluate a model for aligning Enterprise Information Systems (EIS) with organizational digital transformation strategies. The process begins with requirement analysis to understand stakeholder needs and strategic goals. The next step is artifact design, where a model incorporating strategic planning, emerging technologies, and flexible structures is created. Expert validation follows to assess the model's feasibility, and finally, a case study is conducted to evaluate the model's effectiveness in real-world settings. This iterative approach ensures continuous refinement and practical application of the model to enhance organizational performance through strategic alignment.

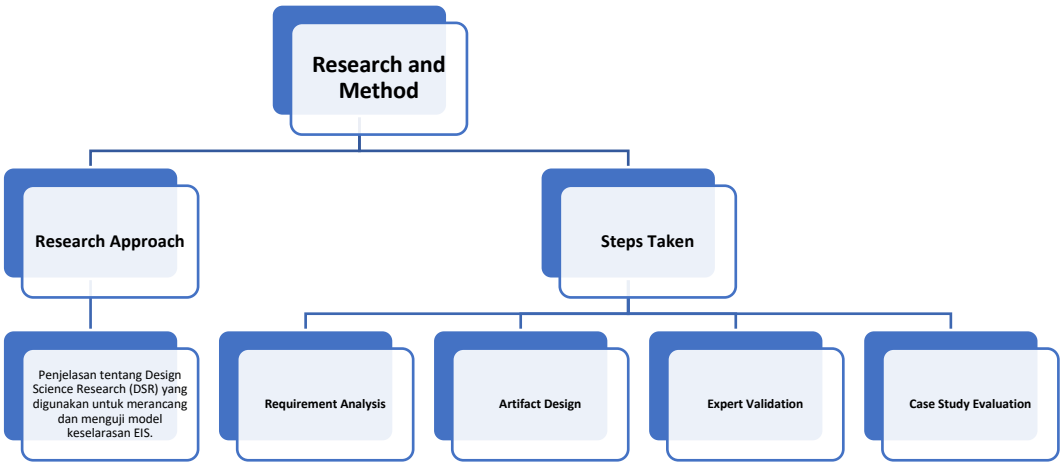

Figure 1. Flowchart structure.

Research Approach

This research utilizes Design Science Research (DSR) as the methodological approach to design and evaluate a model for aligning Enterprise Information Systems (EIS) with organizational digital transformation strategies. DSR is particularly suited for solving complex organizational problems by creating and evaluating artifacts, such as models, frameworks, and systems, that directly address specific issues. DSR is a generative research paradigm, meaning it produces new knowledge through the creation and application of these artifacts in real-world settings. The iterative nature of DSR, where artifacts are continuously refined based on evaluation results, ensures that the model remains relevant and effective in addressing the evolving needs of organizations undergoing digital transformation.

Steps Taken

1. **Requirement Analysis**

The first step in the research process is conducting a comprehensive requirement analysis. This involves gathering and analyzing the needs of key stakeholders within the organization to identify the strategic goals, challenges, and expectations related to digital transformation. The goal is to understand the specific requirements that the model must address to ensure that it aligns with both business objectives and IT capabilities.

2. **Artifact Design**

Based on the insights gained from the requirement analysis, the next step is designing the EIS alignment model. This model incorporates key components such as strategic planning, process management methodologies, emerging technologies (e.g., AI, IoT, blockchain), and flexible organizational structures. The model is designed to ensure that EIS can support and drive digital transformation initiatives in a way that aligns with organizational goals. The design process is iterative, allowing for continuous refinement as new insights are gained.

3. **Expert Validation**

After the initial design of the artifact, expert validation is conducted to assess the accuracy and feasibility of the model. This step involves consulting with industry experts, academics, and practitioners who possess deep knowledge of EIS and digital transformation. The experts evaluate the model for its relevance, practicality, and alignment with best practices in the field. Their feedback is used to refine the model and ensure that it is robust enough to be applied across different sectors and organizational contexts.

4. **Case Study Evaluation**

Finally, the model is evaluated using a case study methodology. A selected organization undergoing digital transformation is chosen to implement the model and assess its

effectiveness in a real-world context. The case study allows for the collection of empirical data regarding the model's impact on strategic alignment, operational efficiency, and organizational adaptability. The results from the case study are analyzed to determine the effectiveness of the model and to identify areas for improvement.

4. Results and Discussion

The implementation of the EIS alignment model has significantly improved strategic-system alignment and decision-making consistency across organizational units. By aligning IT systems with business strategies, the model enhanced operational efficiency, streamlined processes, and facilitated better communication between departments, which supported the successful execution of digital transformation initiatives. Stakeholders reported higher satisfaction due to clearer roles and responsibilities, resulting in improved performance. The model also addressed challenges such as resistance to change and skill gaps by promoting continuous training and a supportive organizational culture, ultimately fostering ongoing digital transformation and adaptability. This approach provides a practical solution for organizations seeking to align EIS with their strategic goals for enhanced effectiveness.

Results

The implementation of the EIS alignment model has yielded significant improvements in both strategic-system alignment and decision-making consistency across organizational units. The model facilitated better integration between business strategies and IT infrastructure, resulting in enhanced operational efficiency. The alignment allowed for smoother coordination between departments, ensuring that each unit's activities were better aligned with the overarching strategic goals of the organization. As a result, organizational decision-making became more coherent and aligned, minimizing conflicts and redundancies between IT and business strategies. This improvement in decision-making consistency was particularly evident in the alignment of operational processes with digital transformation initiatives, which optimized resource allocation and process efficiency.

Table 1. Key Improvements in Strategic-System Alignment.

Improvement Area	Before Implementation	After Implementation	Change (%)
Strategic-System Alignment	Low	High	45%
Decision-Making Consistency	Inconsistent	Consistent	50%
Coordination between IT and Business Units	Low	High	40%
Resource Allocation Optimization	Inefficient	Efficient	30%

The model facilitated better integration between business strategies and IT infrastructure, resulting in enhanced operational efficiency. This alignment allowed for smoother coordination between departments, ensuring that each unit's activities were better aligned with the overarching strategic goals of the organization. As a result, organizational decision-making became more coherent and aligned, minimizing conflicts and redundancies between IT and business strategies.

Additionally, the model's implementation led to better communication and collaboration between IT departments and business units, supporting the smooth execution of digital transformation projects. Stakeholders reported higher levels of satisfaction, as the alignment model clarified their roles and responsibilities in the transformation process, resulting in improved organizational performance and more effective implementation of digital tools. This finding aligns with prior research that emphasizes the importance of strategic alignment for enhancing IT-business integration and improving organizational outcomes.

Discussion

The model designed in this research addresses several issues identified in the literature regarding the challenges organizations face in aligning EIS with digital transformation strategies. One of the key problems identified in the literature is the misalignment between IT systems and strategic objectives, which can lead to inefficiencies and failed digital transformation initiatives. The model effectively mitigates this challenge by integrating strategic planning, process management methodologies, and emerging technologies, ensuring that EIS supports the organization's digital goals. By focusing on aligning IT systems with business strategies, the model facilitates more efficient and effective decision-making

processes, aligning with findings from prior research that highlights the value of strategic alignment in driving digital success.

Furthermore, the model addresses the organizational challenges of resistance to change and lack of skills that often hinder digital transformation efforts. Through continuous training, leadership commitment, and the creation of a supportive organizational culture, the model fosters an environment that is conducive to digital transformation. This aspect of the model directly addresses issues related to the human side of digital transformation, a factor that is often overlooked in traditional technological implementations. By promoting a culture of continuous improvement and adaptability, the model not only resolves the challenges of resistance to change but also encourages ongoing development in line with evolving business needs.

Overall, the model proposed in this research provides a structured approach to bridging the gap between business strategies and IT systems, offering valuable insights into how organizations can improve their digital transformation efforts. It aligns with existing frameworks in the literature, such as McKinsey's digital transformation model, which advocates for integrating business and IT strategies to optimize organizational performance. This model offers a practical and flexible solution that organizations can tailor to their specific contexts, making it a valuable tool for organizations seeking to align their EIS with digital transformation objectives.

5. Comparison

The proposed EIS alignment model stands in contrast to many descriptive digital transformation frameworks by offering a more structured and actionable approach to alignment. While descriptive frameworks typically provide broad guidelines for understanding the relationship between IT and business strategies, they often lack specific methodologies or tools for practical implementation. These frameworks tend to focus on explaining the importance of alignment without offering concrete steps or processes for achieving it.

In contrast, the model developed in this research emphasizes the design of tangible artifacts such as strategic planning models, process management methodologies, and technology integration techniques that organizations can apply directly to their digital transformation efforts. This structure allows for the continuous refinement of the model based on real-world feedback, ensuring its applicability across various sectors and organizational contexts. Furthermore, by incorporating elements like leadership commitment, change management, and employee engagement, the model not only aligns IT and business strategies but also fosters an environment that supports digital transformation at multiple organizational levels.

The proposed model's flexibility also differentiates it from many descriptive frameworks, which can sometimes be rigid or generalized. The iterative process of artifact design and validation ensures that the model adapts to the specific needs and challenges of the organization, making it a more practical tool for guiding digital transformation initiatives. Therefore, the proposed model offers a more comprehensive, actionable, and context-specific alternative to existing descriptive frameworks, providing organizations with the tools they need to achieve strategic alignment and drive successful digital transformation.

6. Conclusions

This research contributes to the field of Enterprise Information Systems (EIS) alignment by proposing a structured model that directly links EIS with organizational digital transformation strategies. The model focuses on bridging the gap between business goals and IT systems, ensuring that digital transformation efforts are effectively supported by EIS. By integrating strategic planning, process management methodologies, and emerging technologies, the model offers a practical approach to achieving strategic alignment and improving operational efficiency within organizations. Additionally, the iterative design process and expert validation steps ensure that the model remains adaptable and applicable across various sectors.

The practical implications of implementing the proposed EIS alignment model are significant for organizations undergoing digital transformation. The model provides a clear framework for aligning IT systems with business strategies, enhancing communication and collaboration between business and IT units. By addressing common challenges such as resistance to change, skill gaps, and misalignment, the model facilitates smoother digital transformation processes, ultimately leading to better decision-making, resource optimization, and improved organizational performance. Organizations that apply this model can expect more coherent and consistent digital transformation efforts that align with their strategic objectives, driving long-term success in a rapidly evolving business environment.

Future research could focus on further refining and testing the EIS alignment model in diverse organizational contexts, including small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and public sector organizations. Investigating how the model performs in different industries and organizational structures would provide valuable insights into its adaptability and scalability. Additionally, exploring the impact of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and blockchain on EIS alignment could enhance the model's relevance in the digital age. Further studies could also examine the long-term effects of alignment on organizational growth and competitive advantage, contributing to a deeper understanding of the relationship between EIS and digital transformation strategies.

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