

Beyond The Cloud: Lived Experience of Consultant in Implementing Enterprise Resource Planning System

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ABSTRACT : This phenomenological study explored the lived experiences of Cloudtech's functional consultants during Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system implementation with foreign clients. Through semi-structured interviews, the study identified four key themes: 1) Professionalism and Work Ethic, where consultants consistently expected professionalism and commitment from clients; 2) Personal and Professional Development, highlighting the benefits of cross-cultural projects for skill acquisition and growth; 3) Cultural Differences and Communication Styles, addressing the challenges of language barriers and misinterpretations; and 4) Project Management and Planning, emphasizing the importance of clear scope, realistic timelines, and senior consultant guidance. Based on these findings, an action plan for Cloudtech proposes focusing on: effective communication training, strategic skillset matching, and cultivating a diverse consultant pool. By implementing this plan, Cloudtech can equip its team to navigate cultural complexities, improve client satisfaction, and achieve global competitiveness in ERP implementation.

KEYWORDS: Functional Consultant, Enterprise Resource Planning, Foreign Client, Project Management, Cultural Differences and Communication Styles.

I. INTRODUCTION

Implementing Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) involves replacing isolated systems with a centralized platform that integrates and streamlines core business functions like finance, operations, HR, and marketing. This multi-phased journey starts with analyzing needs, choosing software, configuring workflows, migrating data, and training employees. The result? Increased efficiency, real-time data insights, improved collaboration, and enhanced decision-making, making your business one dynamic, data-driven whole. Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems have been widely adopted by organizations globally, with a focus on understanding the challenges and success factors associated with their implementation. (Mahmood et al., 2019) highlight the ongoing issues and challenges surrounding ERP systems, indicating that despite decades of experience, the success of ERP implementation remains questionable (Mahmood et al., 2019). Furthermore, Alhazmi et al. (2023) stress the vital importance of ERP systems in higher education institutions, shedding light on the motivations, challenges, and success factors associated with their adoption (Alhazmi et al., 2023).

Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) implementation in Asia presents various challenges and opportunities. The successful implementation of ERP systems is crucial for organizations to enhance their overall performance (Orkaido, 2022). However, despite the extensive experience in adopting and implementing ERP systems, their success remains questionable (Mahmood et al., 2019). Additionally, the pharmaceutical sector in Pakistan has seen successful ERP implementation, emphasizing the importance of adaptation and software deployment in achieving success (Aleem, 2021). Furthermore, the challenges of implementing cloud ERP systems in Asia have been categorized, highlighting the need for a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing their implementation (Huang et al., 2022). Enterprise Resource Planning implementation in the Philippines faces both opportunities and challenges according to the available literature. (Roldan et al., n.d.) assesses ERP adoption among Philippine organizations and finds that while ERP systems offer benefits, there are barriers to implementation related to cost, lack of IT expertise, and resistance to change.

Cloudtech ERP offers cloud-based enterprise resource planning (ERP) implementation, aiming to streamline your business with a central platform connecting finance, operations, HR, and marketing. They emphasize global best practices and extensive experience, assisting you through needs analysis, software selection, workflow configuration, data migration, and employee training. Their focus on cloud solutions promises increased efficiency, real-time data insights, improved collaboration, and data-driven decision-making, all while letting you focus on running your business instead of managing IT infrastructure.

Functional consultants at Cloudtech face complex challenges when implementing Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems for foreign clients. These challenges can range from communication barriers due to language and cultural differences to technical limitations, unclear expectations, and stakeholder disengagement. These roadblocks can hinder project success, limit personal and professional growth opportunities for consultants, and ultimately impact Cloudtech's competitive edge in international markets. This study aimed to understand the lived experiences of Cloudtech's functional consultants during ERP implementation with foreign clients. By exploring their perspectives and identifying key themes, the research sought to illuminate the specific challenges and opportunities encountered, ultimately informing and enhancing future project strategies. The goal is to equip Cloudtech with valuable insights to improve communication, collaboration, resource management, and team dynamics, thereby optimizing ERP implementation success and fostering the personal and professional well-being of its consultants.

II. PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

Conceptual Framework : The study was anchored on Integrative Communication Theory of Cross-Cultural Adaptation by Young Yun Kim's (2001) and the concept of Phenomenology. Integrative Communication Theory of Cross-Cultural Adaptation focuses on three key phases. Pre-arrival Phase focuses into consultants' expectations, attitudes, and preparedness shaped by preconceived notions, cultural knowledge, and past experiences. In Culture Shock Phase, this examines the disorientation and discomfort faced during unfamiliar cultural encounters. This analyzes the stages of culture shock, challenges encountered, and coping strategies employed. The Adaptation and Growth explores the adaptive strategies used to bridge cultural gaps, including seeking information, developing intercultural communication skills, adjusting behavior, and building trust-based relationships. Additional areas explored in the theory are Intercultural Competence, Relationship Building, and Reflection and Learning. Intercultural Competence focuses on how consultants develop and apply skills to navigate cultural nuances, communicate effectively, and build relationships in cross-cultural settings. Relationship Building is to examine the process of relationship building between functional consultants and foreign clients. Investigate the strategies used to establish trust, build rapport, and manage expectations in a cross-cultural context, highlighting the importance of empathy, sensitivity, and open-mindedness. Reflection and Learning is to reflect on how consultants reflect, learn, and adapt their approaches based on their experiences, emphasizing self-awareness, reflexivity, and continuous learning.

By integrating these elements, this framework provides a comprehensive understanding of functional consultants' journeys in cross-cultural interactions, uncovering valuable insights for successful international collaborations. Phenomenology, as a philosophical approach, focuses on understanding and interpreting lived experiences. In the context of ERP implementation, this approach can provide valuable insights into the subjective experiences of consultants involved in the process. Phenomenology, as a philosophical concept, emphasizes the analysis of the structure of historicity itself, going beyond a historical understanding of lived experience (Myers, 2021). This perspective is crucial in understanding the temporal and contextual aspects of consultants' experiences in implementing ERP systems. Furthermore, the application of phenomenology in the context of ERP implementation can be informed by the development of guidelines for sustainable ERP systems (Chofreh et al., 2020). Understanding the practical guidelines for ERP implementation can provide a framework for interpreting the lived experiences of consultants within the context of sustainability and long-term impact. Moreover, the impact of ERP implementation on firm performance and organizational behavior is a relevant aspect to consider (Tarigan et al., 2020). This perspective can provide insights into the broader implications of ERP implementation on organizational dynamics, which in turn can influence the lived experiences of consultants involved in the process.

III. RESEARCH PARADIGM

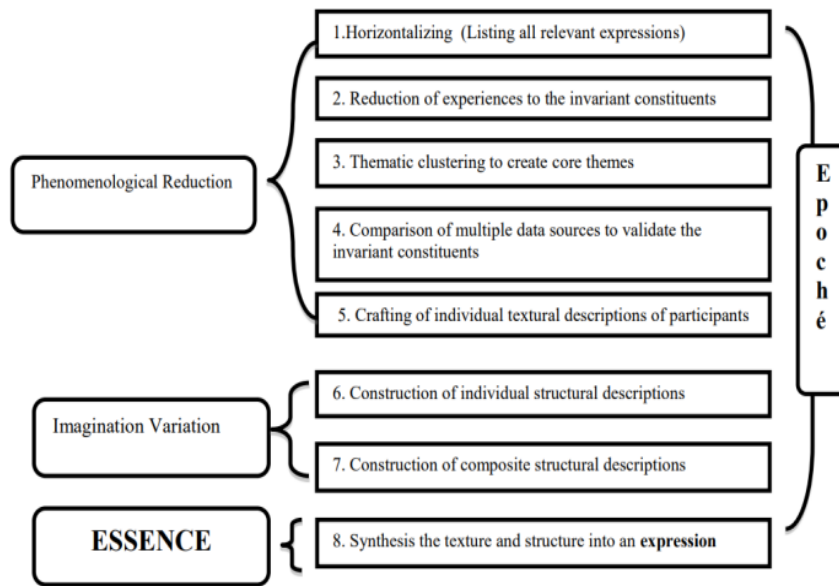


Fig. 1. The steps of data analysis (adopted from Yüksel, P., & Yıldırım, S., 2015)

The researcher adopted Figure 1 as the research paradigm of this study. The process begins with bracketing, a conscious effort to set aside the researcher's own biases and preconceptions (epoché). This establishes a neutral ground for exploring the consultants' perspectives unfiltered. The analysis starts through careful data examination. Horizons, like textural brushstrokes, paint a picture of the phenomenon through participants' verbatim expressions. Irrelevant, repetitive, or extraneous details are pruned, leaving behind the core essence of their experiences. These honed horizons are then clustered into themes, each representing a facet of the phenomenon. Imagine these themes as stepping stones leading closer to the heart of the matter - the "invariant constituents." Validation across multiple data sources ensures the findings' veracity. Interview transcripts, field notes, observations, and other forms of data are cross-referenced, creating a richer tapestry of understanding. Individual textural and structural descriptions emerge, woven from participants' own words and researcher interpretation. These descriptions give flesh and bone to the phenomenon, revealing both the "what" and the "how" of the consultants' journeys.

Finally, synthesis elevates the analysis to a new level. Composite narratives, capturing the essence of the shared experience, paint a universal picture of what it means to implement ERP for foreign clients. This, dear reader, is the crux of the phenomenological approach: to grasp the lived experience in its entirety, revealing not just the facts, but the emotions, challenges, and triumphs that shape these consultants' professional lives. By applying this rigorous framework, researchers can illuminate the hidden depths of consultant experiences, offering valuable insights that can not only improve ERP implementation strategies but also enrich our understanding of cross-cultural interactions in the business world.

Research Questions : The study was designed to gain insights to the lived experience of functional consultants of Cloudtech. The researcher worked out the following central question:

What lived experience do functional consultants of Cloudtech have with the implementation of Enterprise Resource Planning System with foreign clients?

It also answered the following corollary questions:

- ❖ What were the consultants' expectations from the foreign client?
- ❖ How did implementing an Enterprise Resource Planning System to foreign clients contribute to a consultant's personal and professional development?
- ❖ How do the consultants face the demands and challenges of implementing an Enterprise Resource Planning System to a foreign client?

- ❖ What things can be learned from the consultant's experience working with foreign clients?
- ❖ What themes emerged from the testimonies of the consultants?
- ❖ Based on the findings, what strategic action plan may be proposed to enhance the implementation of the Enterprise Resource Planning System in Cloudtech?

1. Assumptions of the Study : The study revolved around the following assumptions, which were the givens of the problems:

- ❖ ERP implementation with foreign clients presents unique challenges
- ❖ Consultants face both difficulties and benefits from this experience.
- ❖ Lessons learned from past experiences can improve future implementation

2. Scope and Limitations : The study aimed at the importance of capturing and describing the lived experience of functional consultants of Cloudtech by focusing on the central problems: What lived experience do functional consultants of Cloudtech have with the implementation of Enterprise Resource Planning System with foreign clients? The participants were composed of five (5) functional consultants in Cloudtech. These individuals were intentionally selected by the researcher by referral and by conducting preliminary interviews so as to make sure that there is accessibility to them during the duration of the study and that they fit the criteria as a participant. The participants consisted of a small sample but provided the basis for further studies where results were generalized to other samples in a similar setting. A self-made non-standardized questionnaire was used as a guide. In-depth interview was conducted to each participant at the convenience of all the individuals involved. Follow-up interview was also conducted when unexpected interruptions occurred, or verification and deepening were needed.

3. Significance of the Study : This study aimed at describing and understanding the lived experience of selected functional consultants of cloudtech. Specifically, this study would benefit the following:

Cloud Tech Top Managers : They can widen their effective communication with different clients which can lead to increased chances of acquiring new clients.

Cloud Tech Project Managers : Through this study, it would help to improve the efficiency and effectiveness in communicating with the clients.

Cloud Tech Functional Lead: Through this study, it would help them to assign employees that will be easier to handle the foreign clients.

Cloud Tech Technical Consultants : The functional consultants will be able to properly instruct the technical consultants regarding the necessary customization needed in the system resulting in more efficient work.

Cloud Tech Functional Consultants : They can be more aware of communication and cultural challenges that the other consultants from the company experienced or encountered in their project implementation with foreign clients.

Through the experiences of others, they can better prepare to avoid and address such challenges and concerns.

Researcher : They can gain knowledge and information on the topic, which will provide them with wisdom in handling foreign clients.

Future Researchers : The study can serve as a basis to conduct more in-depth research for the lived experience of functional consultants in Cloudtech.

Definition of Terms : The following terms to be used in this study are defined operationally:

Bracketing or Epoche. Bracketing or epoche refers to the process of data analysis in which the researcher sets aside, as far as it is humanly possible, all preconceived experiences to best understand the experiences of participants in the study (Moustakas, 1994).

Consultants. Consultants offer advice and expertise to client organizations to help them improve their business performance.

Culture: Culture is customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group.

Communication: Communication is a process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or behavior.

Cloud computing: It is the delivery of computing services—including servers, storage, databases, networking, software, analytics, and intelligence—over the Internet (“the cloud”) to offer faster innovation, flexible resources, and economies of scale.

Employee/ Personnel development : It is a process of improving employees' existing competencies and skills and developing newer ones to support the organization's goals.

Enterprise resource Planning (ERP): ERP refers to a type of software that organizations use to manage day-to-day business activities such as accounting, procurement, project management, risk management and compliance, and supply chain operations.

ERP implementation : It is an eight-step process of “installing your chosen ERP software, moving your business data over to the new system, configuring your user information and customized processes, and training your employees to use the software.”

Multicultural Organization: The one that has a workforce that includes people from diverse backgrounds across all departments, and which offers them equal opportunity for input and advancement within the company.

Review of related literature and Studies : In this chapter, the research describes the facet of the main problem, its current situation and its variables through related literature and studies sourced mainly in books, journals, the internet, and other studies.

1. Conceptual Literature : By integrating the Integrative Communication Theory of Cross-Cultural Adaptation and the concept of Phenomenology, this study aims to provide a holistic understanding of the experiences of functional consultants in cross-cultural interactions and ERP implementation. This approach uncovers valuable insights for successful international collaborations and offers a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of consultants in the context of ERP implementation.

Professionalism and Work Ethics : The expectation of professionalism and work ethics from foreign clients is a common theme identified by participants in the study, particularly in the context of implementing an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system. This expectation encompasses attributes such as being detail-oriented, efficient, and timely. Boer, Huijsman, and Wijngaarden (2021) emphasize the significance of comprehending the rationale behind such expectations to bridge the gap between policymakers' ambitions and clients' expectations, particularly in the co-production of public services. The study sheds light on the expectations of clients with multiple problems, highlighting the importance of understanding and aligning with these expectations. This aligns with the theme identified in the participants' responses, indicating the relevance of the reference by Boer et al. (2021) in providing valuable insights into client expectations, which are crucial in the context of professionalism and work ethics in the implementation of ERP systems.

Personal and professional development : The engagement with foreign clients presents a significant opportunity for personal and professional development. This experience offers individuals a chance to immerse themselves in diverse perspectives and expand their skill set, ultimately enriching their personal and professional journey (Li et al., 2021). By working with foreign clients, individuals gain exposure to different work cultures, industry practices, and technical skills, leading to increased confidence, cultural awareness, and a broader worldview (Florczak, 2021). Moreover, navigating through cultural differences and communication challenges can enhance problem-solving abilities and adaptability, fostering creative thinking and the capacity to adjust to new situations (Vrbanec et al., 2021). Therefore, the interaction with foreign clients not only contributes to individual growth but also opens doors to new possibilities and potential for personal and professional advancement.

Cultural differences and communication styles : Cultural differences and communication styles significantly impact the implementation of Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems, particularly in distributed teams. Khalid, Farooq, and Mahmood (2021) emphasize the relevance of communication challenges in affecting team performance, especially in distributed environments. Their survey in the software industry in Pakistan revealed the hurdles faced in communication, highlighting the significance of their findings to the challenges encountered by consultants during ERP system implementation. The consultants also allude to the challenge of language barriers and misunderstandings arising from cultural differences, which can lead to misinterpretations, delays, and frustration, ultimately impacting the effective implementation of ERP systems. Therefore, the insights from Khalid et al. (2021) align with the experiences shared by the consultants, emphasizing the significance of addressing communication challenges, particularly in the context of diverse and distributed teams involved in ERP implementation.

Project Management and Planning : The successful implementation of Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems is contingent upon meticulous planning and management. Bawack & Kamdjoug (2022) emphasize the significance of strong project management, a clear scope of work, realistic timelines, and effective resource management. They also stress the importance of senior consultant guidance, particularly in the initial stages of the project. Additionally, Dutta & Kumar (2021) underscore the essential role of knowledge creation during ERP implementation and the contribution of external consultants in operationalizing knowledge. Furthermore, Ghayas et al. (2022) emphasize critical success factors in ERP implementation, such as top management support, communication effectiveness, knowledge transfer, and consultant support, particularly in the manufacturing sector. These findings collectively underscore the critical role of effective project management, senior consultant guidance, trust, knowledge creation, and critical success factors in ensuring the successful implementation of ERP systems. Therefore, it is evident that the themes of project management, consultant guidance, trust, knowledge creation, and critical success factors are consistently emphasized across the literature, highlighting their significance in ERP implementation.

Research Literature : The study delves into the lived experiences of functional consultants of Cloudtech in implementing Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems for foreign clients. The central question addressed the experiences of these consultants with foreign ERP implementation, leading to the identification of key themes. The study highlighted the expectations of professionalism and work ethic from foreign clients, emphasizing the need for detail-oriented, efficient, and committed approaches (Bawack & Kamdjoug, 2022). Additionally, the research underscored the value of working with foreign clients for personal and professional development, including the acquisition of new skills and exposure to diverse perspectives (Dutta & Kumar, 2021). Cultural differences and communication styles emerged as significant challenges, impacting project efficiency and emphasizing the need for adapting communication styles and fostering cultural sensitivity (Khalid et al., 2021). Furthermore, the study emphasized the importance of strong project management skills, clear scope of work, realistic timelines, and effective resource allocation for successful ERP implementation, as well as the role of senior consultants in guiding and supporting junior colleagues (Bawack & Kamdjoug, 2022).

The proposed action plan for Cloudtech focused on effective communication, skill set matching, and embracing diversity and adaptability. This plan aimed to bridge cultural gaps and communication barriers through communication training and cultural sensitivity workshops (Chofreh et al., 2020). Furthermore, it emphasized the careful assessment of project requirements and client expectations to match consultants with the right skills and experience, as well as building a diverse consultant pool with expertise in various cultures, languages, and industries (Li et al., 2021). By implementing this action plan, Cloudtech can equip its consultants with the skills and flexibility needed to navigate the complexities of working with foreign clients, ultimately leading to improved client satisfaction, project success, and global competitiveness (Bawack & Kamdjoug, 2022). In conclusion, the study's exploration of Cloudtech consultants' experiences with foreign ERP implementations reveals both challenges and opportunities. While cultural differences and communication gaps can pose obstacles, they also offer pathways for personal and professional growth. To harness these opportunities and thrive in the global market, Cloudtech can adopt the proposed action plan. By prioritizing effective communication, strategic skillset matching, and a diversified consultant pool, Cloudtech can empower its team to navigate cultural nuances, bridge communication gaps, and deliver successful ERP projects for international clients. This strategic shift will not only enhance client satisfaction and project success but also solidify Cloudtech's position as a global leader in ERP implementation. The lived experiences of its consultants serve as a valuable roadmap for navigating the complexities of international projects, ensuring Cloudtech's continued growth and success in the ever-evolving global market.

Synthesis of the Study : The expectation of professionalism and work ethics from foreign clients emerges as a prominent theme, aligning with Boer et al.'s (2021) emphasis on understanding client expectations in co-production endeavors. This expectation drives effective collaboration, as evidenced by the consultants' emphasis on detail-orientedness, efficiency, and commitment. Engaging with foreign clients also fosters personal and professional development, echoing Li et al.'s (2021) and Florczak's (2021) findings on skill acquisition and expanded perspectives. Cultural immersion exposes consultants to diverse work cultures, enhancing their confidence, cultural awareness, and problem-solving abilities.

However, cultural differences and communication styles present challenges, mirroring Khalid et al.'s (2021) observations on communication hurdles in distributed teams. Language barriers and misunderstandings, as acknowledged by the consultants, can lead to delays and impede project efficiency. Addressing these challenges, as highlighted by the literature, requires adapting communication styles and fostering cultural sensitivity. Finally, meticulous planning and management are crucial for successful ERP implementation, as Bawack & Kamdjoug (2022) and Ghayas et al. (2022) emphasize. The study's proposed action plan for Cloudtech, focusing on effective communication, skill set matching, and diversifying the consultant pool, aligns with these findings. By equipping consultants with the necessary skills and flexibility, Cloudtech can navigate cultural complexities, bridge communication gaps, and achieve higher client satisfaction and project success, solidifying its position in the global market.

Research Gap/s : While existing research explores ERP implementation challenges, a significant knowledge gap exists regarding the specific difficulties faced by functional consultants working with foreign clients at Cloudtech. This gap encompasses diverse factors like communication barriers, cultural differences, technical limitations, unclear expectations, and stakeholder disengagement, creating a complex tapestry of challenges not fully addressed in current literature. Investigating these specific challenges and their unique interplay within Cloudtech's context can not only benefit individual consultants and project success but also contribute valuable insights for enhancing Cloudtech's competitive edge in international markets.

Research Methodology : This chapter introduced the research methodology used in this study. It consisted of research design, population, sampling, and sample, research instrument, validity and reliability testing, data collecting method, and data analysis.

Research Design: Phenomenological research is used to understand the essence of human experiences and how individuals make sense of those experiences (Thomas, 2020). This approach is particularly suited for investigating the subjective experiences of individuals in specific contexts, such as the challenges, successes, and emotional responses of functional consultants in implementing ERP systems. In the context of exploring lived experiences, a phenomenological research design is involved in collecting rich, descriptive data through methods such as in-depth, semi-structured interviews. These interviews are designed to capture the nuanced and varied experiences of the participants, allowing them to express their perceptions, emotions, and interpretations of their experiences. The goal is to gather descriptions of experience, rather than opinions or intellectual interpretations, emphasizing the importance of understanding the meaning of the phenomenon from the participants' perspectives.

Furthermore, the use of a phenomenological framework of analysis is crucial in identifying emergent themes and patterns within the lived experiences of the participants. This analytical approach allows for a deep exploration of the participants' narratives, shedding light on the factors that shape their experiences, such as challenges in adjusting to sociocultural changes or the impact of specific roles within the implementation process. In summary, a phenomenological research design is well-suited for the study exploring the lived experiences of functional consultants in implementing ERP systems. By employing in-depth, semi-structured interviews and a phenomenological framework of analysis, researchers can gain rich insights into the subjective experiences of the consultants, providing a deeper understanding of their challenges, successes, and emotional responses within the context of ERP implementation.

Research locale : The locale of the study is Cloudtech Solutions Company (CloudtechERP) in Makati City. CloudTechERP boasts a global presence, serving clients across continents. This diverse clientele exposes their consultants to a wide range of cultural contexts, languages, and business practices, enriching the data with a multicultural perspective. From small startups to multinational corporations, CloudTechERP caters to a spectrum of client sizes and industries.

This variety ensures the data encompasses a broad range of challenges and complexities faced during ERP implementation with foreign clients. CloudTechERP specifically positions itself as a provider of ERP solutions for foreign clients. This focus indicates their consultants possess specialized knowledge and skills in navigating cross-cultural nuances and overcoming language barriers, making them ideal subjects for the study. CloudTechERP often highlights successful projects with foreign clients on their website and marketing materials. These case studies can provide valuable context and initial leads for identifying potential participants in the study.

Participants of the Study : This phenomenological study sought to understand the lived experiences of Filipino functional consultants at CloudTech who have implemented Enterprise Resource Planning Systems (ERP) for foreign clients. Participants were deliberately chosen based on several key criteria: 1) Filipino citizenship, 2) functional consultant role at CloudTech, 3) at least one year of experience as a functional consultant, and 4) direct experience implementing ERP for foreign clients. By focusing on this specific group of individuals, the researcher aims to acquire a profound understanding of the research problem and guarantee the quality and depth of the collected data. The following Table shows the years of experience of the participants working in Cloudtech.

Participant	Length of time worked for Cloudtech
R1	2 Years and 5 months
R2	4 Years and 6 months
R3	2 Years and 1 month
R4	1 Year and 4 months
R5	2 Years and 2 months

Table 1. The length of time the participant worked for the company

The researcher studied five (5) functional consultants who have experiences in implementing Enterprise Resource Planning System to foreign clients in Makati City utilizing purposive sampling strategy through which the researcher intentionally selected the individual and site for study so they could purposely form a deeper understanding of the research problem and the central phenomenon in the study thus providing quality assurance. The researcher also focused on the observation, comments, and expressions of the participants.

Sampling Design : Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique. This allows researchers to intentionally select participants based on specific criteria relevant to their research question. This selection is not random, but rather driven by the desire to gain rich and insightful data about a particular phenomenon. Your chosen methodology perfectly aligns with this approach. The focus of this study is the five (5) functional consultants from Makati City who have implemented ERP systems for foreign clients uses purposive sampling in action. This targeted selection ensures the participants share crucial characteristics directly relevant to the research problem and central phenomenon which is implementing Enterprise Resource Planning systems for foreign clients. This homogeneity allows the researcher to delve deeper into their shared experiences, uncovering nuances and commonalities that might be missed in a more diverse sample.

Instrumentation : The researcher conducted multiple in-depth interviews using a research protocol that is a predesigned form containing the research questions which were general and open-ended considering the guidelines of Moustakas (1994) as reintroduced by Creswell (2013). Since the interview form was self-constructed and not standardized, it was presented to some experts in the field of qualitative research such as the thesis adviser and the thesis committee members to give comments and recommendations for validity.

Long and in-depth interview is important to describe the meaning of a phenomenon for a small number of individuals who have experienced it (McCraken, 1988) in Creswell (2013). Through the interview protocol, the researcher was able to take note of the responses of the participants and was able to organize thoughts on items

such as headings, information about starting the interview, concluding ideas, information on ending the interview, and thanking the respondents.

Validation and Scoring : The instrument consisting of an online semi-structured interview with 10 predesigned questions was subjected to strict validation by the panel of experts. This was done through both personal and online discussion with the panel. This is to ensure that the necessary data will be gathered according to the research question. It undergoes multiple feedback and revision with the panel and researcher to ensure the validity of the questionnaire.

Data Gathering Procedure : The researcher secured a letter of endorsement from the Dean of the Graduate School of University of Cabuyao to conduct the study in his chosen locale. After the validation of the instrument that was utilized in the study, the researcher went through the process of finding the participants, gaining access, and establishing rapport, which were all important to procure good data (Creswell, 2013). The researcher in the proper approach explained to them the relevance of this study, interviewed them individually and applied the validated research instrument that was utilized in the study. To make it happen, the researcher contacted each participant personally and through mobile phone to obtain consent and set up an appointment. He also considered the willingness of the participants before conducting the online interview. Finally the researcher obtained the consent of the participants to take notes and to record their responses. After composing the overall “essence” of the phenomenon under the study, the researcher met again with the participants to verify the verbatim accounts they shared during the interview. He performed it as the last step so that the participants themselves could clarify and rectify their responses, so the validity of the essence was obtained, and thus credibility was established.

Thematic Process : All interviews and field notes were transcribed using the Microsoft word processing program. Through the interview protocol, the researcher reviewed the transcripts repeatedly for significant statements in an attempt to find meaning and understanding through themes. Thematic statements were isolated using van Manen’s selective highlight approach. In this approach, the search for themes or structures of the experience involved selecting and highlighting sentences or sentence clusters that stood out as thematic of the experience. Notes were also made to capture the thematic statements. Following the said process, all phrases, sentence clusters, notes, and textual data were reduced until essential themes emerged. Further, each theme was arranged according to textural and structural themes and will be discussed based on the actual responses of the participants. In addition, both discussions on textural and structural themes were digested to come up with textural and structural descriptions. Overall essence was the final product of the summarized textural and structural description. The final step in this qualitative data analysis is the verification. In this step, the researchers returned to the participants and presented the synthesis of the responses to make sure that they were transcribed, analyzed, and interpreted with accuracy and validity. Corrections and comments of the participants were added in the findings of the study.

Ethical Considerations : The researcher strictly considered formal stages of communication for ethical consideration. First, the researcher informed the Dean of the Graduate School of University of Cabuyao of his purpose in conducting the study. Second, the researcher connected with the participants through a letter of consent to have access and rapport with the vulnerable individuals participating in the study (Anderson & Spencer, 2002). The consent form contained: the right of the participants to voluntarily withdraw from the study at any time; the central purpose of the study and the procedures to be used in the data collection; protection of the confidentiality of the respondents; a statement about known risks associated with the participation of the study; and the signature of the participant as well as the researcher (Creswell, 2013). Finally, the researcher obtained the permission of the participants to obtain their contact details, most especially their mobile number in order to contact them in order to validate their responses. The time of the day has also been considered, making sure that it is not an unholy hour and that the interview does not hinder the participants in the performance of their duties and obligations for the day.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This analysis delves into the insights shared by consultants who have navigated the challenges and triumphs of working with foreign clients. Through their experiences, we gain valuable lessons on navigating cultural differences, adapting to new project landscapes, and ultimately achieving success in international collaborations. By examining their reflections, we can get valuable takeaways for both individual consultants seeking to thrive in international environments and management teams looking to equip their consultants for success and gain a

competitive edge in the global market. This chapter displayed the inquiry with phenomenological reflection on the data taken from interviews conducted utilizing a semi-structured interview guide. This paper is guided by the following central question:

What lived experience do functional consultants of Cloudtech have with the implementation of Enterprise Resource Planning System with foreign clients?

Provided in the tables that follow are the responses to interview questions gathered from five functional consultants from CloudTech implementing Enterprise Resource Planning System to foreign clients. The corollary questions have been answered in the tables provided:

Corollary Question Number 1: What were the consultants' expectations from the foreign client?

Interview Question Number 1: What were your expectations from the client and your team?

Table 2 exemplifies the responses of the participants on their expectations from the client and their team.

Participant	Responses	Researcher's Observation
R1	<p>“So foreign din naman yun so sa expectation ko since its Singapore. They are always known to be work efficient, very timely. They don't procrastinate. I expect na hindi pwedeng delay. Hindi pwedeng late. Always on time and always deliver. Kasi alam ko ganun yung work ethic nila”</p> <p>“I'm excited. Ahh kasi gusto ko napapractice yung communication skills not just in tagalog. We already know that since pagkabata. But speaking in English, there are actually a lot of barriers kasi Singaporean sila. They are not American countries or English countries talaga. Pero they are well verse in English din naman although there are some minor misunderstanding due to terminologies kasi magkaiba nga tayo ng culture and bansa.”</p>	R1 answers the question in a very professional way.
R2	<p>“expectation ko talaga, detailed oriented sila. Masyadong ano... tapos perfectionist ganyan. So parang yun yung expectation sa kanila eh... though not necessary. Hindi lang naman sa kanila. Parang lagi mo naman iisipin na pag may paparating na client medyo mas tumataas lang dahil pag sinabing foreign bukod sa mga local. Parang mas tumataas yung degree ng pagkadetail oriented nila. “</p> <p>“yung mga Singaporean, yung mga user nila matatanda. So nahirapan ako dun sa pag sasalita nila na hindi ganun kstraight yung English. Tapos minsan yung pag sasalita mismo yung kinakain. Hindi mo sya maintindihan masyado ganun. “</p>	R2's response makes it clear that he/she is searching for a far better response when he stutters. His or her response is concise and direct as soon as they share their expectations and experience.
R3	<p>“halos lahat ng tao doon is very talagang,,,ano bang tawag doon,,. Ahh matalino talaga sila hardworking at saka yung papalabasin talaga nila kung ano yung— para kailangan nila ma-maximize kung ano yung binili nila, kung ano yung ito dapat, ito yung para sa kanila</p>	R3 enthusiastically answers the questions and supports it with his/her experiences.

	<p>ayan so very competitive din sila 'yon.'</p> <p>"So, for me yung standard nila is mataas"</p> <p>"So parang expectation ko lang before is okay kailangan marunong ka mag-english I mean maayos ka makipag usap sa kanila 'tas matalino sila gano'n pero ngayon yung working method nila kung ga'no sila kapursigido sa mga bagay yun."</p>	
R4	<p>"Expectation ko since naibigay na sa akin yung feedback kung anong type of client sila...About the client... sinasabi nya sa'kin ni SIr na medyo strict sya sa ganito."</p> <p>"yung ganong personality na mabibilis nga magsalita... ahm... yung parang on point lagi yung mga tanungan nila. So, yun yung expectation ko and everytime naman na nakakausap ko yung mga SG clients na pupuprove naman yung ganong personality para sa'kin na ganon talaga sila."</p>	R4 seems confident and casual sharing his/her expectations and experiences.
R5	<p>"So yung expectation ng deliverables ganon so kung late, forgiving ba o hindi yun yung mga ganon. So yun yung mga naisip ko before that. "</p> <p>"sa ano pala nila pananalita. May ginagamit silang word tapos—ano pala yon mister pala ibig sabihin non parang senior pag mas mataas sayo may ginagamit silang word yun pala yun."</p> <p>"Ahh yung sa expectation ahh...hindi hindi sya na meet particularly dun sa ano ha sa language barrier kasi okay naman sila kapag dating sa communication skills nila."</p>	R5 demonstrates being unsure of his/her responses.

Table 2. Annotated responses on the expectations of participants on the clients and their team.

R1 expects clients to be work-efficient, timely, and detail-oriented. They are also excited about the opportunity to practice their English communication skills. R2 also expects clients to be detail-oriented and perfectionist. They are concerned that the clients may have a higher standard for English proficiency than local clients. R3 believes that the foreign clients are hard-working, competitive, and have high standards. R4 expects the client to be strict. R5 is unsure when answering the question. He/She is concerned about the language barrier and the client's use of unfamiliar words.

R1 and R3 seem to be more enthusiastic about the opportunity to work with foreign clients, while R2 and R5 are more in answering the question. The researcher has noted that some of the participants' responses are concise and direct, while others are more enthusiastic and detailed.

Corollary Question Number 2: How did implementing an Enterprise Resource Planning System to foreign clients contribute to a consultant's personal and professional development?

Interview Question Number 2: What were the benefits or advantages working with foreign clients?

Participant	Responses	Researcher's Observation
R1	<p>“Advantages is they know their identity. It’s very important. Alam nila yung gusto nila alam nila yung direksyon na gusto nilang mangyari and their end goal. Some clients kasi they don’t know that and they expect you to provide advises at all times regarding the direction, eh sila naman yung gagamit nung process and they are the ones who know their industry better. So with that client, Singapore client, siguro because of their work ethic they really know their identity. They really know their direction. It has become easy to identify ano ba talaga yung requirements nila.”</p>	R1 answers the question in a clear and detailed manner.
R2	<p>“Sakin ang pinaka ano experience din talaga. Experience din talaga advantage. Na magkaron ka ng experience na makawork ng foreign na clients. Kasi parang pampaganda sya ng record mo na meron ka na natapos na project na foreign. Kumbaga para sakín na exposure din na“</p>	R2 shows a little bit of excitement when sharing the answer.
R3	<p>“Hmm, of course diba mas mapu-push ka e mapu-push ka do'n sa ito lang yung alam mo,”</p> <p>“ano pala so feeling ko for me mas ano mas.. as F. C. no parang for me mas nakita ko kung saan weakness ko nakita ko kung ano kailangan ko i-improve ”</p> <p>“ sobrang dami kong natutunan sa kanila in terms of being so detailed.”</p>	R3 shows eagerness as he/she shares the experience.
R4	<p>“benefits... (thinking) siguro yung mamemeet mo yung iba't-ibang personalities”</p>	R4 took a moment before responding to the inquiry..
R5	<p>“So sa industry wise matutunan mo yung ano sa ibang bansa like it's an advantage like in a sense na may alam ka dun sa foreign country diba kumbaga...yung process nila. Oo yung process mismo saka practice oo. At saka yung—oo practice at mga ano nila internal processes. “</p> <p>“Yung personal ano more on working culture. Ano yung pwede mong mapick up sa kanila pa’no sila magtrabaho. Ano yung mga ano nila process nila din kumbaga na pwede mong maadapt na way...ethics sa mga ano rin nila kunyare sa documentation kung pa’no sila prepare thingy o time management or whatsoever.”</p>	When asked about their expectations, R5 offered several responses without providing additional details or explanations..

Table 3. Annotated responses on the benefits or advantages working with foreign clients.

The first participant, R1, believes that knowing the client's identity is important because it allows them to better understand the client's needs and goals. R1 also feels that clients, in particular, have a strong work ethics and a clear direction for their projects, which makes it easier to identify their requirements. The second participant, R2, values the experience of working with foreign clients in general. R2 believes that working with clients can be

beneficial for their career development and help them improve their professional skills and experience. The third participant, R3, highlighted the learning opportunities that come from working with clients. R3 feels that they have learned a lot about being detail-oriented and working efficiently from their experience with foreign clients. The fourth participant, R4, seems to be more focused on the personal benefits of working with Singaporean clients. R4 enjoys the opportunity to meet people from different cultures and backgrounds. The fifth participant, R5, provides a more general response, mentioning both the professional and personal advantages of working with clients. R5 believes that working with foreign clients can help them learn about different industry practices and working cultures.

Corollary Question Number 3: How do the consultants face the demands and challenges of implementing an Enterprise Resource Planning System to a foreign client?

Interview Question Number 3: What were the challenges you encountered while working in the project?

Participant	Responses	Researcher's Observation
R1	<p>“Ahh sa technical part, it was resolved din naman with our technical team via work around. Kasi meron limitations yung system natin na nafound out nung client and they ask if we can improve it. So we just raise it a case as an enhancement to netsuite and that's it.”</p> <p>“Pero sa communication part, we notice na there are stakeholders, especially the upper stakeholders, kasi they are not very detailed on the project. They are not very hands on in the project”</p>	R1 shows a high understanding of most of what happens on the project.
R2	<p>“Yung isa...pinaka issue time difference...Parang naging challenge lang kasi kumbaga mas naging mabagal yung communication.”</p> <p>“Siguro isa sa disadvantage pa is yun na nga yung communication...Na kapag wala ka pang exposure masyado, mahirap sila intindihin.”</p> <p>“Yung mga stores nila dun may mga lugar na pangit yung internet.”</p>	R2 is confident in sharing challenges encountered during the project.
R3	<p>“basta parang may—may ano tawag don, pressure. Napressure ka”</p> <p>“So, siguro yung disadvantage is yung level of expectation sa'tin iba ng mga singaporean”</p> <p>“yung culture talaga ng mga tao do'n very hardworking sila pag pinagawa sila lalo na yung mga tao dun... yung mga matatanda talaga sobra grabeng hardworking talaga kahit anong oras sila umuwi kahit sa sabihin pa nga nila weekend”</p>	R3 reflects on his/her experience with foreign client.
R4	<p>“malinaw silang magsalita pero merong kasing..ahh..language barrier talaga at some point sa ibang clients...so yun challenging din sya language barrier. ”</p>	R4 seems to be reminiscing the experiences while answering the inquiry.

	<p>“hindi na sya specific to sa personality nila in general pero yung sa specific person nalang siguro kasi may mga clients din ako na hindi rin nila alam kung ano yung gusto nila.”</p>	
R5	<p>“Kasi foreign talaga depende kung other would say na challenge is time. Tho, satin naman kasi since southeast asian naman tayo. One hour advance lang tayo sa kanila may times na kasi na parang ang tagal nilang mag respond. Hindi ko sya macategorized as para lang sa mga foreign clients pero kasi yung pagiging matagal mag respond I think nangyare naman sya no’ for most ng clients natin so medyo—medyo late kaya yun. Na kung—kasi yun lang yung naexperience ko na ahhm...though nag aano naman sila nag cocommit naman sila medyo matagal lang ganon so yun yung mga challenges. “</p> <p>“minsan kasi nawawala sa isip nila na hindi namin naintindihan initially yung pinagusapan nila like bigla na lang silang mag agree...So miscommunication possible sya don.”</p> <p>“isa rin pala dun sa challenges pala no’ is yun nga kapag wala ka pang alam dun sa process nila...kumbaga hindi ka makapagbigay ng recommendation syempre lahat yon sa kanila mo kukunin”</p>	R5 is confident in sharing the experience.

Table 4. Annotated responses on the challenges working with foreign clients.

R1 encountered limitations in the company's system that needed to be addressed as enhancements. Also, felt that communication with some stakeholders, particularly upper management, could be more detailed and hands-on. R2 highlighted the time difference as a challenge, making communication slower. Mentioned that a lack of exposure to clients can make it harder to understand their expectations. Also pointed out poor internet connectivity in some of their stores. R3 felt pressure to meet the high expectations of clients. Noticed a strong work ethic among foreign clients, especially older individuals, who would work long hours even on weekends. R4 acknowledged the clarity in communication but also the presence of a language barrier at times. He/she also found it challenging to understand the specific personality traits of foreign clients in general. R5 mentioned that time difference can be a challenge. R5 highlighted the possibility of miscommunication due to the client not realizing the other person might not understand what they're saying initially. Also, He/she mentioned the challenge of providing recommendations without full understanding of the client's process.

Corollary Question Number 4: What things can be learned from the consultant’s experience working with foreign clients?

Interview Question Number 4: What lessons can other functional consultants, who are not part of this project, learn from your experience?

Participant	Responses	Researcher’s Observation
R1	<p>“Learn to say no. Learn to say no. Ayun yung natutunan ko talaga for this experience kasi the client’s very good in justifying why their demand should be included even though its not detailed ini our SOW</p>	R1 shows wisdom while sharing responses to the inquiry.

	<p>(Scope of work)”</p> <p>“Siguro know your stakeholder. Balansehin kung sino yung stakeholder of power. Pero etong stakeholder of power ba na ito ay hands on or in power lang sya pero hindi sya detailed kaya wala sya masyadong alam sa project.”</p>	
R2	<p>“Ang pinaka-point, dapat adaptable ka kung ano yung nirequire sayo nung project alam mo kung paano ka mag aadjust.”</p> <p>“Dapat sensitive ka pa din kasi culture nila yun. Tho hindi sya sa work. Yung relationship nyo kasi baka maapektuhan.”</p>	R2 shares experience he/she applied that shows adaptability during the project.
R3	<p>“siguro una prepared talaga”</p> <p>“expect na unexpected”</p> <p>“unang una yung alam mo yung accounting standard. Pangalawa, is masipag kang mag LCS (Website for Netsuite topics) NetSuite ta's pangatlo is pasensyosa ka for me ah I don't know pasensyosa ka”</p> <p>“ Patience is the key”</p>	R3 provided the response with the emotions from the challenging experience.
R4	<p>“so pinakauna lagi talaga natin icoconfirm kay client kung ano talaga gusto nilang mangyare kasi kahit pa iconfirm mo sya ng verbal”</p> <p>“And then number two, para sakín yung prepared ka lagi...So preparation is the key talaga yun”</p> <p>“Dapat everyday pinapractice din nila how to deliver yung...yung slides...Then be lively siguro...and positive”</p>	R4 responded enthusiastically in sharing the lessons for other functional consultants.
R5	<p>“ Siguro una is you learn a little bit about sa culture nila lalo pag foreign clients”</p> <p>“Tapos sa work, so of course industry advantages mga makukuha mo process nila na work ethics total sila magtrabaho ayun. Baka may maadapt ka na...Practices saka skills kung ano man.”</p>	R5 points out necessary lessons. However, struggles to give additional context.

Table 5. Annotated responses on the lessons other functional consultants can learn from experience working with foreign clients.

R1 learned the importance of saying "no" when working with foreign clients, who can be very good at justifying additional requests even if they're not in the original scope of work. R2 emphasizes the importance of being adaptable and understanding the client's specific requirements for each project. They also mention the need to be culturally sensitive, as client relationships can be affected by cultural differences even if they're not directly related to work. R3 highlights the importance of being prepared, expecting the unexpected, and having a strong understanding of accounting standards and NetSuite (a financial management software) when working with foreign clients. They also emphasize the importance of patience. R4 stresses the importance of confirming

expectations with the client early on and being prepared for presentations and meetings. They also suggest that practicing presentations and maintaining a positive and lively attitude can be helpful. R5 focuses on the importance of learning about the client's culture and industry practices. They also mention the potential to gain new skills and practices from working with clients. However, they struggle to provide specific examples or elaborate on their points.

Interview Question Number 5: What takeaways can the management or company (Cloudtech) use from your experience?

Participant	Responses	Researcher's Observation
R1	<p>"Before kasi we are just deploying consultants on projects on their own even though wala pa masyado experience. Ngayon ginagawa na nilang tandem. Siguro it's from my experience...may senior consultant in our first projects. And ayun talaga yung nakatulong samin na to learn configuration nakapag guide samin on how to be a consultant overall in a project. So without that person, which is I'm very thankful with that person malo-lost ako."</p>	R1 exhibits thankful emotion for guidance of the management.
R2	<p>"Ahh dun naman is yung mahalaga din yung nandyan yung support nila...So if need ng additional resources. As much as possible mag deploy."</p> <p>"Mas maganda kasi na dapat magkaron tayo ng foreign client. Dapat sobrang ganda nung ano natin nung service. Ganun din naman din tho kasi dahil foreign sila kumbaga yung ano chance na magkaron pa tayo ng additional client na kung sila yung mag popromote."</p> <p>"Tapos yung isa pa. bukod dun sa support sa project. Tulong din sa preparation"</p>	The response was given by R2 with professionalism.
R3	<p>"Parang for me dapat ginuide nyo din, sinupport nyo din huwag nyo ineexpect na magaling yan...para walang sisihan double check...Sige nga test ko nga muna bago ko paliparin, yung mga ganon."</p>	R3 exhibited heavy emotion in giving the response.
R4	<p>"alot lang talaga attention to the project kapag ka meron ng mga issues palang na maliliit pwedeng kapag ka nagescalate na yung ano FC sa kanila, tutukan sya kasi may potential sya na talagang sumabog yun"</p> <p>"alam mo na appreciate ko yung ginagawa nilang pag brown bag ngayon na lahat ng topics na hindi alam ng mga consultant ineexplain pa nila"</p>	R4 shows caring emotion for the management while giving a response.
R5	<p>"Makukuha...syempre first of all: experience, practice, and processes...kapag nagkaroon ulit ng client or naghanap ng partner si ano Oracle NetSuite. So yung advantage na natin yun na meron tayo na nakahandle tayo ng Indonesia. "</p> <p>"ibigay mong PM mo ganon siguro yung kayang maghandle ng ano yung hindi naggive in sa pressure parang ganon kumbaga kaya nyang manduhin—hindi ko maano yung term e' (chuckles) Siguro yung ano ahhm...ano ba malakas loob...yung ano ba strict din. Strict din sya pag dating sa...deadlines ganyan, yung pagiging aggressive ba. "</p>	R5 exhibited confident emotion when providing a response to the inquiry.

Table 6. Annotated responses on the lessons management or company can learn from experience working with foreign clients.

R1 mentions a positive experience where a senior consultant helped them learn and navigate their initial projects. R2 perceives management as professional and focused on quality. He/She emphasizes the importance of having additional resources readily available to meet the clients' demands and the potential benefits of acquiring foreign clients. R3 suggests that consultants expect thoroughness and double-checking from management. He/ she express the need for guidance and support, suggesting that they may have found Singaporean clients to be meticulous and detail-oriented, requiring careful attention to ensure accuracy. R4 appreciates the management's practice of brown bag sessions to address knowledge gaps and their appreciation for this initiative. R5 mention the advantages of having experience with Oracle NetSuite and the importance of having a project manager who can handle pressure and deadlines effectively.

Corollary Question Number 5: What themes emerged from the testimonies of the consultants?

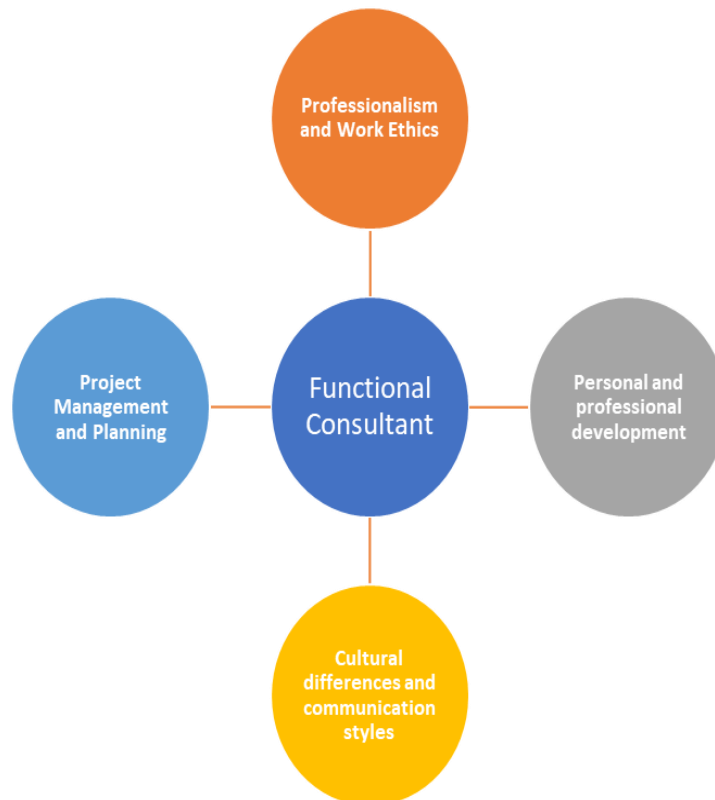


Fig. 2 Emerging Themes

Figure 2 illustrates the emerging themes gathered from the lived experiences of 5 functional consultants purposely selected from Cloudtech as regards to the implementation of Enterprise Resource Planning system to foreign clients. The themes are as follows: Professionalism and Work Ethics, Personal and professional development, Cultural differences and communication styles, Project Management and Planning.

Professionalism and Work Ethics : The participants in the study expressed a common expectation of professionalism and work ethic from the foreign client before implementing an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system. This theme is mentioned by all of the participants, who expect the foreign client to be professional, detail-oriented, efficient, and timely.. Boer, Huijsman, and Wijngaarden (2021) discuss the expectations of clients in the context of co-production of public services. The study emphasizes the importance of understanding the rationale behind these expectations to bridge the gap between policymakers' ambitions and clients' expectations. Therefore, the reference by Boer et al. (2021) provides valuable insights into the expectations of clients, which align with the theme identified in the participants' responses.

Personal and professional development : The core theme emerged when asking the respondents regarding the benefits and advantages of working with foreign clients is Personal and professional development. In essence, working with foreign clients is like stepping into a vibrant tapestry, woven with diverse perspectives and endless

possibilities. Each challenge overcome, each new skill acquired, and each network expanded enriches your personal and professional journey, opening a world of growth and potential. Working with foreign clients provides individuals with the opportunity to learn about different work cultures, industry practices, and technical skills (Li et al., 2021). This exposure not only contributes to increased confidence and cultural awareness but also provides a broader perspective on the world (Florczak, 2021). Navigating cultural differences and communication challenges can also improve problem-solving abilities and adaptability, as individuals learn to think creatively and adapt to new situations (Vrbanec et al., 2021).

Cultural differences and communication styles : The implementation of an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system often presents challenges for consultants, and one prominent theme that emerges is the impact of cultural differences and communication styles. This theme is supported by Khalid, Farooq, and Mahmood (2021), who discuss communication challenges for distributed teams. The authors highlight the significance of communication problems in affecting team performance, particularly in distributed environments. They conducted a survey using a questionnaire in the software industry in Pakistan to understand the hurdles faced in communication, indicating the relevance of their findings to the challenges faced by consultants during ERP system implementation. The mentioned consultants, R1, R2, R4, and R5, allude to the challenge of language barriers and misunderstandings arising from cultural differences. These issues can result in misinterpretations, delays, and frustration, impacting the effective implementation of ERP systems. Therefore, the insights from Khalid et al. (2021) align with the experiences shared by the consultants, emphasizing the significance of addressing communication challenges, particularly in the context of diverse and distributed teams involved in ERP implementation.

Project Management and Planning : The successful implementation of Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems requires meticulous planning and management. Lessons from consultants underscore the importance of strong project management, a clear scope of work, realistic timelines, and effective resource management (Bawack & Kamdjoug, 2022). Additionally, having a senior consultant to guide and support junior consultants is crucial, especially during the initial stages of the project (Bawack & Kamdjoug, 2022). Furthermore, knowledge creation during ERP implementation and the role of external consultants in operationalizing knowledge are essential aspects to consider (Dutta & Kumar, 2021). Critical success factors in ERP implementation, such as top management support, communication effectiveness, knowledge transfer, and consultant support, have been highlighted in the context of the manufacturing sector (Ghayas et al., 2022). These findings collectively underscore the critical role of effective project management, senior consultant guidance, trust, knowledge creation, and critical success factors in ensuring the successful implementation of ERP systems. By synthesizing these references, it is evident that the themes of project management, consultant guidance, trust, knowledge creation, and critical success factors are consistently emphasized across the literature, highlighting their significance in ERP implementation.

Corollary Question Number 6: Based on the findings, what strategic action plan may be proposed to enhance the implementation of the Enterprise Resource Planning System in Cloudtech?

Based on the themes emerged, the researcher came up with the Skills and Experience Matching Action Plan for Cloudtech. This action plan will help the company give its consultants the abilities, know-how, and flexibility they need to overcome the difficulties of working across cultural boundaries. This will improve client satisfaction, project execution, and the firm's ability to compete in the global market. This plan should focus on three key areas. Firstly, effective communication is essential, requiring consultants to possess active listening skills, cultural sensitivity training, and adaptability in communication styles to overcome language barriers and navigate diverse cultural nuances (Sevruk et al., 2021). Pairing senior consultants with strong communication skills with less experienced colleagues provides on-the-job training and fosters an environment of continuous learning. Additionally, investing in language proficiency programs and communication workshops tailored to specific client cultures can further bridge the gap (Sevruk et al., 2021).

Secondly, matching skill sets to project demands is vital, necessitating a careful assessment of project requirements and client expectations to match the right consultants with the right projects (Sevruk et al., 2021). Skill audits, combined with in-depth interviews and cultural awareness evaluations, can provide valuable insights into a consultant's suitability for a specific international undertaking. Leveraging consultants with prior experience in the client's market or industry offers invaluable knowledge and understanding of the cultural landscape and business practices (Sevruk et al., 2021). Lastly, embracing diversity and adaptability is crucial, as

building a diverse consultant pool with a range of cultural backgrounds, linguistic skills, and industry expertise unlocks a wealth of talent and perspectives (Sevruk et al., 2021). This not only caters to the unique needs of different clients but also fosters a dynamic and adaptable team capable of tackling unforeseen challenges and responding effectively to unexpected client dynamics. Continuous training programs in cross-cultural collaboration and project management techniques can further equip consultants with the tools and flexibility needed to thrive in an international environment (Sevruk et al., 2021).

V. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Presented in this chapter are the findings, conclusion, and recommendations of the researcher based on the qualitative data derived from the semi-structured interviews with the functional consultants.

Summary of Findings : The study focused on describing and understanding the lived experiences of functional consultants of Cloudtech in implementing Enterprise Resource Planning system to foreign clients. To solve the main problem, the researcher worked out the central question:

What lived experience do functional consultants of Cloudtech have with the implementation of Enterprise Resource Planning System with foreign clients?

To address the central question, the researcher then worked out the corollary questions which provided the following themes.

These were: Professionalism and Work Ethics, Personal and professional development, Cultural differences and communication styles, Project Management and Planning.

Professionalism and Work Ethics: Consultants consistently expected professionalism and strong work ethics from foreign clients. This included being detail-oriented, efficient, timely, and committed to project success.

Personal and Professional Development: Working with foreign clients was seen as a valuable opportunity for personal and professional growth. Participants highlighted the acquisition of new skills, increased confidence, and exposure to diverse perspectives as key benefits.

Cultural Differences and Communication Styles: Language barriers and cultural misunderstandings were identified as major challenges, impacting communication and project efficiency. The importance of adapting communication styles and fostering cultural sensitivity was emphasized.

Project Management and Planning: Strong project management skills, clear scope of work, realistic timelines, and effective resource allocation were seen as crucial for successful ERP implementation. The role of senior consultants in guiding and supporting junior colleagues was also highlighted.

Based on these findings, the researcher proposed an action plan for Cloudtech, focusing on:

Effective communication: Investing in communication training, cultural sensitivity workshops, and language proficiency programs to bridge cultural gaps and communication barriers. Skill set matching: Carefully assessing project requirements and client expectations to match consultants with the right skills and experience, including prior knowledge of the client's market or industry. Embracing diversity and adaptability: Building a diverse consultant pool with expertise in various cultures, languages, and industries to cater to different client needs and respond effectively to unexpected challenges.

By implementing this action plan, Cloudtech can equip its consultants with the skills and flexibility needed to navigate the complexities of working with foreign clients, ultimately leading to improved client satisfaction, project success, and global competitiveness.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study's exploration of Cloudtech consultants' experiences with foreign ERP implementations reveals both challenges and opportunities. While cultural differences and communication gaps can pose obstacles, they also offer pathways for personal and professional growth. To harness these opportunities and thrive in the global market, Cloudtech can adopt the proposed action plan. By prioritizing effective communication, strategic skillset

matching, and a diversified consultant pool, Cloudtech can empower its team to navigate cultural nuances, bridge communication gaps, and deliver successful ERP projects for international clients. This strategic shift will not only enhance client satisfaction and project success but also solidify Cloudtech's position as a global leader in ERP implementation. The lived experiences of its consultants serve as a valuable roadmap for navigating the complexities of international projects, ensuring Cloudtech's continued growth and success in the ever-evolving global market.

Recommendation : In light of the challenges and opportunities identified in this research, implementing a robust Skills and Experience Matching Action Plan is crucial for consultants seeking success in cross-cultural projects.

This plan should prioritize three key areas: Cultivating Effective Communication: Consultants should be equipped with active listening skills, cultural sensitivity training, and adaptability in communication styles to overcome language barriers and navigate diverse cultural nuances. Pairing senior consultants with strong communication skills with less experienced colleagues provides on-the-job training and fosters an environment of continuous learning. Investing in language proficiency programs and communication workshops tailored to specific client cultures can further bridge the gap.

Matching Skill Sets to Project Demands: Careful assessment of project requirements and client expectations is essential to match the right consultants with the right projects. Skill audits, combined with in-depth interviews and cultural awareness evaluations, can provide valuable insights into a consultant's suitability for a specific international undertaking. Additionally, leveraging consultants with prior experience in the client's market or industry offers invaluable knowledge and understanding of the cultural landscape and business practices. Embracing Diversity and Adaptability: Building a diverse consultant pool with a range of cultural backgrounds, linguistic skills, and industry expertise unlocks a wealth of talent and perspectives. This not only caters to the unique needs of different clients but also fosters a dynamic and adaptable team capable of tackling unforeseen challenges and responding effectively to unexpected client dynamics. Continuous training programs in cross-cultural collaboration and project management techniques can further equip consultants with the tools and flexibility needed to thrive in an international environment. By implementing this action plan, firms can equip their consultants with the necessary skills, knowledge, and adaptability to conquer the challenges of cross-cultural collaboration. This translates to smoother project execution, enhanced client satisfaction, and ultimately, a competitive edge in the global marketplace.

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