



Suggestions for Effective Measures to Improve Cost Management in Shipbuilding and Military Industry Enterprises

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Abstract. The competition between China's manufacturing enterprises is getting bigger and bigger, coupled with the impact of some low-cost small and medium-sized enterprises, it is difficult for traditional military enterprises to stand out in the fierce market competition. Cost not only represents the resource consumption of the product production process, but also represents the competitiveness of the enterprise in a certain sense, which shows that strengthening the cost management of the enterprise is an urgent problem to be solved. This paper expounds the cost management of shipbuilding and military enterprises, analyzes the composition of project cost in shipbuilding and military enterprises, summarizes the problems existing in the cost management of traditional shipbuilding and military enterprises through the study of the current situation of cost management of traditional shipbuilding and military enterprises, and puts forward measures and suggestions suitable for the modernization management of enterprises in view of the existing problems, so as to enhance the competitiveness of shipbuilding and military enterprises and promote the high-quality development of enterprises, and also hopes to provide reference value for the cost management of other enterprises.

Keywords: Shipbuilding and military enterprises; Project costs; Cost management; Suggested measures

1 Introduction

Ship military enterprises mainly serve the military, mainly in the planned economy. However, with the continuous development of military enterprises^[1], the country vigorously promotes "military civilian integration", and private enterprises have gradually participated in the military industry. The advantageous position of military enterprises no longer exists. In this economic environment, although military enterprises have significant advantages in scientific research capabilities and talent reserves, there is still room for further improvement in cost management^[2]. Cost management refers to the process of tracking, controlling, and optimizing the costs incurred by projects during the operation of enterprises, and is an important component of enterprise manage-

ment^[3]. A good cost management model is an effective guarantee for enterprises to save costs and improve economic efficiency.

At present, there are mainly the following studies on cost management. Sun^[4] pointed out that financial management is very important in the development process of small and medium-sized enterprises, and proposed cost control measures that small and medium-sized enterprises need to adopt in the face of competitive incentives. Tamble^[5] has developed a full chain cost control model based on integrated maintenance, quality control, and production scheduling. Enterprises can achieve cost reduction and efficiency improvement by optimizing specific work processes. Luo^[6] combines environmental cost control research models with practical experiments to address the current problems in the coal industry. A comprehensive analysis was conducted on the traditional environmental cost management and operation of coal enterprises, and cost control measures were proposed. Daniel.B^[7] introduced cost control in the industrial industry, effectively controlling infrastructure construction and the resources required by enterprises from the perspective of cost control, and achieving maximum efficiency.

In summary, scholars at home and abroad have relatively mature research on cost management in enterprises, and have provided different cost management theories. However, due to the particularity of the shipbuilding military industry, further research on cost management in the shipbuilding military industry needs to be strengthened. This article adopts literature analysis and comparative analysis methods to systematically analyze the cost composition of shipbuilding military enterprises, analyze the problems existing in the cost management mode of traditional military enterprises, and provide measures and suggestions applicable to modern cost management.

2 Explanation of Concepts Related To Enterprise Cost Management

2.1 Meaning of Cost Management

Definition of Cost. Cost refers to the consumption of available currency that an enterprise sacrifices in the process of completing a project. According to cost collection, it can be divided into direct cost and indirect cost. Direct cost mainly refers to expenses directly related to the product, such as material costs and labor costs. Indirect costs mainly refer to expenses indirectly related to products, including service fees, management fees, etc.

Definition of Cost Management. Cost management refers to the scientific management of project cost budgeting, cost accounting, cost analysis and control, and cost assessment in project production and operation activities based on the project schedule. Cost management can not only provide cost information for projects to assist business leaders in making business decisions, but also achieve pre prevention, in-process control, and post supervision, planning from the source of the project, reducing costs and increasing efficiency, and maximizing enterprise benefits with minimal costs. Shipbuilding and military enterprises implement a full process of demand analysis,

demonstration, design, implementation, testing, and post production support with the participation of all personnel and comprehensive effective management, while ensuring the quality of equipment used, in order to improve profitability and establish a firm foothold in the competitive market.

2.2 Cost Management Content

In project cost management, it mainly includes cost budget management, cost accounting management, cost analysis and control management, and cost assessment management [8], as shown in Figure 1.

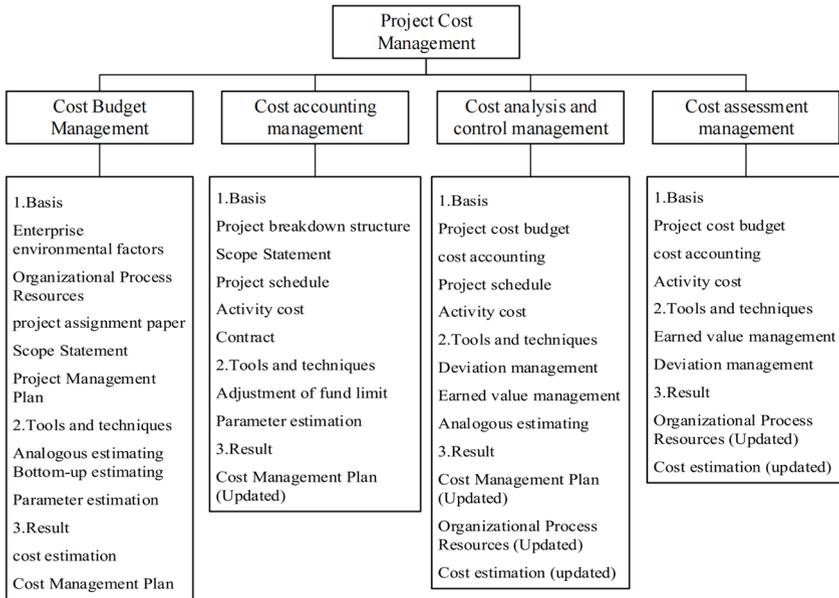


Fig. 1. Composition of Project Cost Management

Cost Budget Management. Cost budgeting is the rational allocation of resources by enterprises under refined management to improve their economic performance and effectively coordinate various production and operation activities within the enterprise[9]. Cost budgeting includes budgeting for research costs, management expenses, financial expenses, one-time special expenses, employee salaries, and outsourcing expenses. The budget for project costs is mainly based on enterprise environmental factors, organizational process resources, project task book, scope statement, and project management plan. The main tools used include analogy estimation, bottom-up estimation, parametric estimation, etc.

Cost Accounting Management. Cost accounting refers to the reasonable collection of costs incurred during project implementation by enterprises based on the characteristics

of different projects and their unique accounting methods, including material costs, management costs, manufacturing costs, special expenses, and labor hours^[10]. Project cost accounting is the core part of project cost management. How to effectively, reasonably, and accurately collect the actual costs incurred is currently the main problem faced by military enterprises. It can not only reflect the gross profit margin of the project, but also verify the accuracy of the cost budget made in advance. Based on the deviation from the cost budget, problems can be identified, analyzed, and solved, providing a basis for future cost budget formulation. The main basis for project cost accounting is the work breakdown structure (WBS), project schedule, and activity costs. The main tools used include parameter estimation and fund limit adjustment.

Cost Analysis and Control Management. Cost analysis refers to comparing and analyzing the cost accounting results of a project with the budgeted costs. If a significant deviation is found between the actual costs incurred and the budgeted costs, the reasons for the maximum deviation should be analyzed, and reasonable suggestions should be proposed in a timely manner to ultimately keep the project within a controllable range^[11]. At the same time, cost control will have real-time updates on the future direction of the project to ensure that cost data remains within budget and reduce cost risks in subsequent processes. The main basis for project cost accounting is project cost budget, cost accounting, project schedule, and activity cost. The main tools used include deviation management, earned value management, and analogy estimation.

Cost Assessment Management. After the project is delivered, the deviation between the actual total cost generated by the project and the project budget made before the project starts can be used as the basis for project cost assessment^[12]. If the actual cost generated by the project is lower than the budget value through rationalization or effective management methods, appropriate incentives can be given to project team members. If the actual cost generated by the project is higher than the budget value, the reasons should be analyzed to provide a basis for cost management of similar projects in the future. The main basis for project cost accounting is project cost budget, cost accounting, and activity cost. The main tools used include earned value management and deviation management.

2.3 Cost Management Theory

Activity-Based Costing. On September 29, 2017, the Ministry of Finance issued guidance on the application of management accounting, which introduced three cost management methods, namely standard cost method, variable cost method, and activity-based cost method^[13]. The activity-based costing method can systematically analyze and collect the cost drivers generated for the implementation of a project based on its actual progress. It not only considers the labor cost of the project, but also various cost drivers, effectively expanding the scope of cost calculation, greatly improving cost management capabilities, and making cost collection more accurate. However, the activity-based costing method has high requirements for enterprise informatization and

needs to be implemented on a certain basis of informatization, which is undoubtedly a huge challenge for shipbuilding and military enterprises.

Lifecycle Cost Management. Life cycle cost (LCC) refers to the total cost incurred during the effective period of a product's economy, from project initiation, development, production to after-sales service. It is a cost management method that requires both cost control and strategic direction prediction^[14]. It requires personnel responsible for lifecycle cost management of projects to have top-level thinking, be able to systematically plan and clarify the various stages of the product lifecycle, the time frame and cost overview of each stage. Shipbuilding and military enterprises need to conduct top-level design during ship research and development, clarify the time for ship demonstration, design, implementation, testing, and later support, and control the costs that may occur at different times.

3 Characteristics and Cost Composition of Shipbuilding and Military Industry Enterprises

3.1 Characteristics of Ship Military Industry Enterprises

Ship military enterprises mainly undertake national scientific research tasks, with the main clients being the military. Their main goal is to ensure the strategic interests of the country, and their political tasks are often higher than economic tasks. In the process of ship design, delivery is one of the important indicators to measure ship military enterprises. Before the delivery of the ship, its related supporting equipment must undergo standardization and testing. Once the equipment is confirmed, the corresponding manufacturer will also determine it, and the technical status of the ship will be determined accordingly. In the subsequent use of ships, due to the overall responsibility of the overall unit, the ship design unit will also be involved in tasks such as grade repairs, annual maintenance, emergency repairs, and retrofitting. This will still greatly affect the planned economy of shipbuilding and military enterprises, and compared to private enterprises, the market competition pressure is significantly smaller, leading to extensive cost management in shipbuilding and military enterprises.

In addition, the scale of shipbuilding and military enterprises mainly depends on the strategic needs of the country and will not change the number of ships developed according to the business status of the enterprise, which puts higher demands on the economic benefits of the enterprise. In the subsequent tasks of ship retrofitting, grade repair, etc., the overall responsibility is mainly to prepare repair technical plans. After the completion of such projects, relevant units will conduct price review in accordance with the State Council Letter [2019] No. 11 on the issuance of the "Military Pricing and Bargaining Rules". The proposal of labor hours as the main economic growth point will have a certain impact on ship military enterprises. It is difficult for shipbuilding and military enterprises, especially research institutes, to effectively support the completed work when writing technical documents, which puts higher demands on reasonable cost control.

3.2 Cost Composition of Shipbuilding and Military Enterprises

The bargaining cost of shipbuilding and military enterprises includes manufacturing costs and period expenses. Manufacturing costs include direct materials, special expenses, direct labor, and manufacturing expenses. Period expenses include management expenses and financial expenses. Shipbuilding and military enterprises generally do not consider direct materials when responsible for ship design.

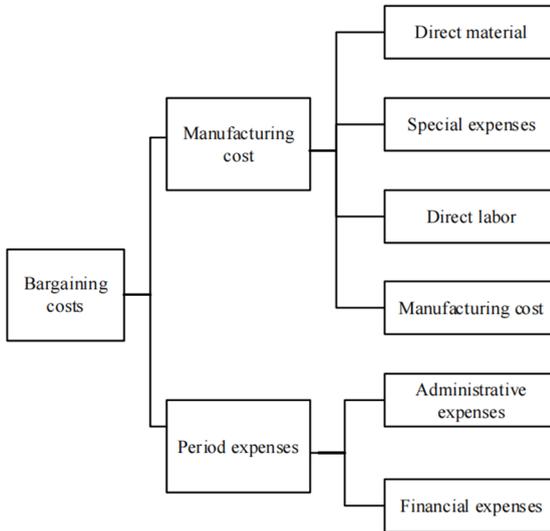


Fig. 2. Cost composition of shipbuilding and military enterprises

Special expenses refer to special consumption expenses that should be included in the manufacturing cost of military products in one or multiple installments based on the characteristics and actual situation of military production. Testing fees, special tooling fees, one-time special fees, after-sales service fees, intellectual property usage fees, travel expenses, conference expenses, etc. should be included in special expenses. Direct labor refers to the salary of employees directly engaged in equipment repair by the maintenance unit. Manufacturing costs refer to the indirect expenses incurred by various production departments (workshops, factories, research laboratories) of the maintenance unit for repairing equipment and providing services, including management personnel and employee salaries, fixed asset depreciation, testing and inspection fees, repair costs, office expenses, fuel and power expenses, travel expenses, transportation expenses, low value consumables losses, machinery and material consumption, labor protection fees, seasonal and repair downtime losses, etc. During the period, expenses include management expenses and financial expenses.

4 Current Problems in Cost Management of Shipbuilding and Military Industry Enterprises

Based on experience working in shipbuilding and military enterprises, it has been found that these enterprises place more emphasis on technology research and development, product quality management, and neglect cost management. To summarize, the following points are the main points.

4.1 Insufficient Emphasis on Cost Management in Corporate Culture

In shipbuilding and military enterprises, there has long been a ideological deviation where most employees believe that cost management is only a matter of finance and project management, and that project benefits are only the responsibility of leadership. This implicit corporate culture thinking will lead to many technical personnel having a weak awareness of cost management, resulting in management and finance personnel not understanding technology when managing costs, while technical personnel do not understand cost management. At the same time, the unit does not attach great importance to cost management from top to bottom, and there is no relevant assessment mechanism for cost management. As the saying goes, management without assessment is difficult to achieve results. Currently, shipbuilding and military enterprises have not perfected modern cost management mechanisms, which cannot effectively motivate the enthusiasm of all employees. The current situation of full participation in cost management is difficult to change.

4.2 Cost Management System Needs Further Improvement

In shipbuilding and military enterprises, certain projects will be evaluated according to the "Rules for Pricing and Bargaining of Military Products" issued in [2019] No. 11, and the pricing will be submitted according to the template provided in Document No. 11, mainly supported by manual labor hours. Artificial working hours refer to the working hours of direct labor or frontline workers. For research institutes, it generally refers to the working hours of personnel directly engaged in scientific research and production. For frontline enterprises, completing a specific task usually has a clear time frame, making it easier to track labor hours. However, for shipbuilding military enterprises, most of their work is technical, mainly engaged in the preparation of technical documents, and there is no clear definition of labor hours in shipbuilding military enterprises. It is difficult to quantify the workload of technical personnel using labor hours, which brings huge challenges to the valuation work after project completion. Therefore, it is necessary for shipbuilding and military enterprises to further improve their cost management system, clarify working hour quotas, and adapt to the current pricing model.

4.3 Cost Collection Methods Lag Behind Market Changes

At present, according to the cost collection method, shipbuilding and military enterprises are still in the traditional cost collection method, as shown in Figure 3. The traditional cost collection method refers to the process of collecting expenses generated during the project process based on different cost items, generally only including direct labor costs. The enterprise then allocates indirect expenses based on direct labor costs, and even divides management expenses, employee welfare benefits, and other expenses into specific projects on an annual basis. This allocation model makes it difficult to constantly control project costs and poses significant challenges to project cost management. Especially for some short-term projects, after the completion of the project in the middle of the year, it is also possible to allocate a certain cost based on direct expenses by the end of the year, resulting in cost management being out of control. Therefore, the current cost management model of shipbuilding and military enterprises is no longer suitable for modern cost collection models, and there is an urgent need to find a new cost collection method.

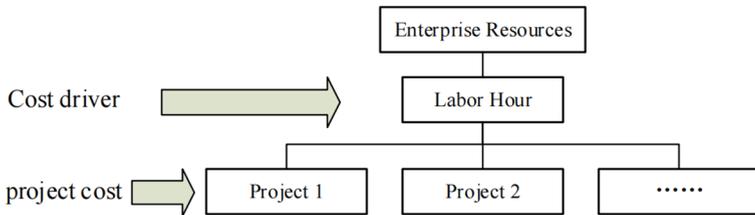


Fig. 3. Traditional Cost Collection Method

4.4 Cost Management Objectives Lack Long-Term Strategies

Due to its unique nature, the most important indicator in the annual assessment of shipbuilding and military enterprises is to ensure that each project node is completed according to the prescribed time. Due to the impact of planned economy, the enterprise only formulates corresponding budgets according to the annual plan, and the budget formulation lacks long-term strategy, failing to form a strategic cost control plan. This is mainly reflected in the fact that during the different stages of new product development, mass delivery, and later ship support, enterprises have not implemented differentiated cost management or full cycle cost management, which makes it difficult to control the cost expenses of ships throughout their entire life cycle. This to some extent hinders the development of strategic planning for enterprises. Therefore, shipbuilding and military enterprises urgently need to develop a comprehensive ship lifecycle management plan.

4.5 Low Level of Informatization Constrains Cost Management

Shipbuilding and military enterprises are generally established earlier. Although they have implemented information management in cost management, they have only sim-

plified paperless office work and are still imitating manual recording. They only input the data from previous manual recording into the system, which still requires manual operation and does not reflect the role of information management. At the same time, there is no reasonable connection between each system, and information sharing between different sections cannot be achieved. Due to the current information system still relying on manual data filling, project cost management lags behind project progress, and top-level leaders are unable to control the project in a timely manner. Therefore, they cannot provide timely data for enterprise leaders to make strategic decisions. It can be seen that shipbuilding military enterprises should continuously strengthen their information management level.

5 Suggestions for Cost Management Measures in Modern Military Industry Enterprises

5.1 Strengthen the Construction of Enterprise Cost Management Culture and Promote the Integration of Business and Finance

Shipbuilding and military enterprises attach great importance to the construction of military culture, but there is still room for further strengthening in the construction of cost management culture. Enterprises should actively promote and implement the concept of cost management, improve employees' awareness of cost management, establish a cultural atmosphere where everyone cares about cost expenses, and truly achieve "all staff cost management". At the same time, cost management should be included in the assessment standards of employees, and the declaration of working hours should be linked to employee performance, truly achieving full attention and participation of all employees, increasing their understanding of cost control, insisting on stimulating employees' intrinsic motivation and combining it with rigid systems. The system should focus on "positive incentives", and truly transform cost management into employees' "endogenous motivation"^[15]. For initiatives such as actively using patented technology and comprehensively utilizing digital means to reduce project costs during the project implementation process, leaders should implement rewards based on the degree of contribution.

5.2 Strengthen Management Concepts and Reshape the Price Management System

In order to adapt to the current pricing model, shipbuilding and military enterprises should carry out quota processing for related projects. Quota is a prescribed amount and established standard. In a broad sense, quota refers to the quantity limit for handling or completing specific things. It is difficult for military enterprises to determine the work hour quota in the process of preparing technical documents. This article is based on ship level repair, as shown in Figure 4. Based on the Work Breakdown Structure (WBS), the ship level repair process is divided into stages and broken down into several processes. The process of preparing technical documents is a major process in the entire

level repair project. For the main processes, they are decomposed layer by layer according to different specialties. Each level of decomposition represents a detailed definition of the work done, until it is decomposed into specific equipment failure solutions. The specific equipment failure solutions are packaged into several work packages.

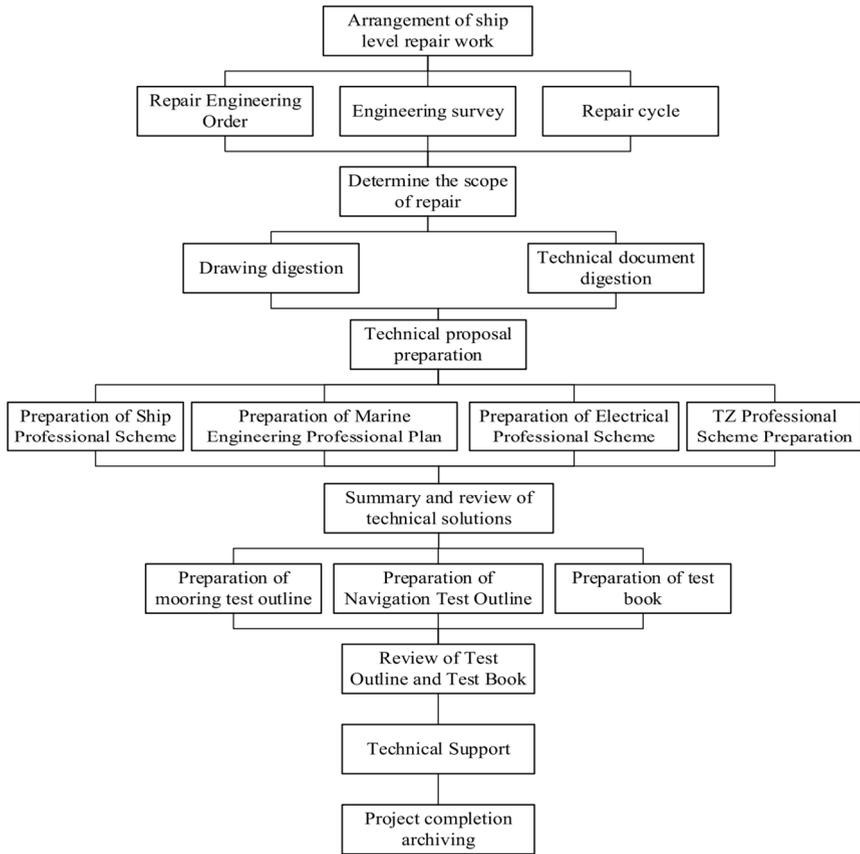


Fig. 4. WBS structure of level repair work

After the WBS structure of the level repair work is generated, relevant experts are organized to review it, estimate it from bottom to top, and obtain the required working hours for each process. The total working hours required for all processes are accumulated to obtain the amount of working hours required for the level repair of the ship. Similar projects can be estimated using analogy estimation method. During the actual implementation of the project, when conducting cost accounting for projects of the same type, comparisons are made with the estimated results to analyze the reasons for deviations, and the estimated results are continuously revised and improved. Through several iterations, the actual cost is continuously brought closer to the estimated cost value, as shown in Figure 5.

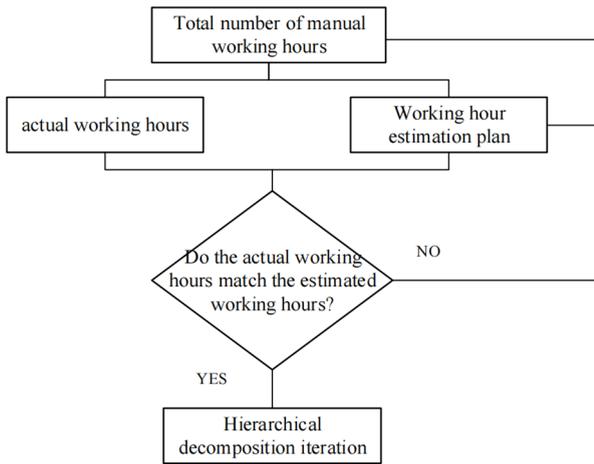


Fig. 5. Project Implementation Cost Analysis Control Chart

5.3 Change the Cost Accounting Method

In order to find a suitable cost collection model for modern times, this article proposes using the activity-based cost collection method to collect and manage project costs in shipbuilding and military enterprises, as shown in Figure 6. When receiving a project, the project itself is equivalent to an assignment, and the process of completing the deliverables is actually the completion of this assignment. During the process of completing assignments, break down the workbook into different task units, allocate several units to individuals, and assign cost management responsibilities to each person. When conducting cost accounting for the project, different responsible persons analyze the cost drivers based on the managed units and reasonably collect costs. Taking the ship level repair task of a certain shipbuilding military enterprise as an example.

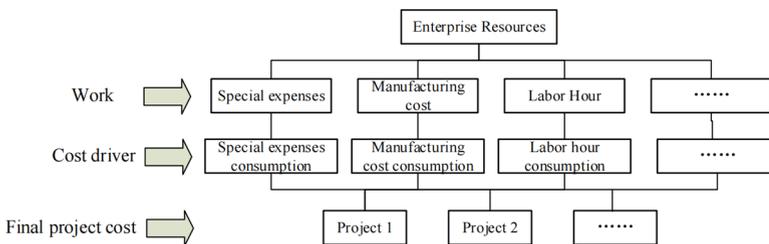


Fig. 6. Collection Diagram of Homework Cost Method

According to the cost structure of shipbuilding military enterprises, if a certain shipbuilding military enterprise completes ship level repair work, it needs to calculate special expenses, direct labor, management fees, research and development expenses, etc. Special expenses generally refer to the actual expenditure costs of a project, which mainly include personnel travel expenses, conference expenses incurred during meetings, etc. Although they are generated as the project progresses, management expenses and development expenses will be allocated according to the labor hours ratio method. Therefore, the cost of a project mainly comes from direct labor, which corresponds to several work units of the project. Relevant technical personnel are responsible for collecting the cost of each project unit. The department responsible for managing expenses and research and development expenses should collect relevant costs on a monthly basis using the man hour ratio method. Through such collection methods, the scope of cost management has been effectively expanded, making cost management not just a matter of finance and project management, but the responsibility of each individual, thereby making project costs more realistic.

5.4 Implement Full Lifecycle Cost Management and Target Price Management

In order to increase the strategic planning and development of enterprises, this article proposes a ship lifecycle cost management model for shipbuilding military enterprises. Through top-level leadership design, the ship lifecycle cost management model is implemented according to the stages of ship analysis, demonstration, design, implementation, testing, and later support, as shown in Figure 7. This not only obtains cost information for the entire life cycle of the ship, but also integrates cost management concepts and awareness into various stages of ship design and later support. The entire lifecycle of a ship is divided into three stages: analysis, demonstration, design, and finalization; Implementation and testing phase; Post guarantee stage.

In the analysis, demonstration, design, and finalization stages, based on the pricing principles of military products, a cost management section is added to the technical solution from the demonstration stage, and cost control is carried out for tasks completed in different stages, achieving layer by layer control and implementation. At the same time, through top-level design, a type of ship is equipped with a model commander, chief designer, maintenance and support chief engineer, and chief economist, who are responsible for overall cost control. The chief designer is responsible for the specific implementation, developing cost guidelines, and assisting the commander-in-chief and chief economist in decomposing the product target stages layer by layer. The chief maintenance and support engineer is responsible for cost management during the ship support period, organizing relevant technical personnel to develop reasonable repair technology plans according to the repair level, and implementing various cost control requirements during the ship support stage. When carrying out the second and third stages, the full cycle budget should be closely integrated, and timely feedback should be provided for areas with significant differences. The cost of the full life cycle budget has been reasonably adjusted, and through repeated positive feedback, the ship's full life cycle can continuously approach reality.

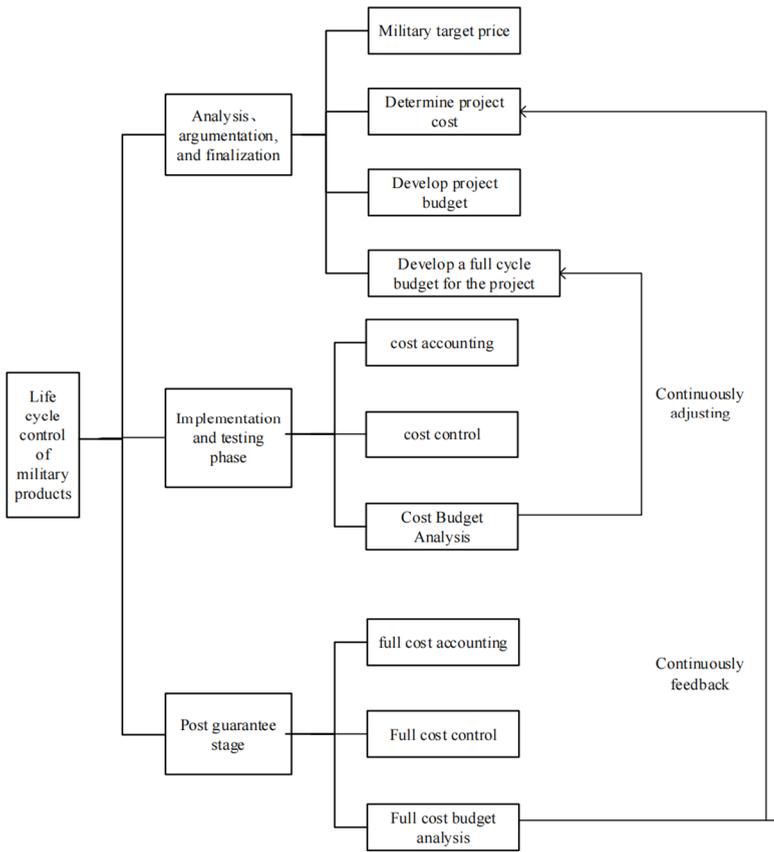


Fig. 7. Life cycle control of military products

5.5 Increase Enterprise Informatization Construction

At present, the informatization foundation for implementing the full life cycle cost management of ships in shipbuilding and military enterprises is not sufficient, and the awareness of informatization management among employees needs to be further strengthened. Therefore, shipbuilding and military enterprises should continuously strengthen the promotion of enterprise informatization to lay the foundation for the implementation of enterprise informatization management^[16]; On the other hand, enterprises should formulate a correct information technology strategy. To increase the construction of enterprise informatization, it is necessary to make leaders and employees fully aware of the importance of informatization. They should realize that informatization management not only helps with cost control of projects, but also promotes innovation and change in management models and organizational structures.

Through informatization construction, management costs can be effectively reduced, technological progress can be accelerated, and the competitiveness of enterprises can be continuously enhanced, thereby improving economic efficiency^[17]. Enterprises should conduct irregular training on information management, so that employees can enhance their awareness of information management from an ideological perspective, and also understand how to improve information management methods in practical operations. At the same time, information technology construction is a particularly complex and massive project, including the construction of information infrastructure, data standardization, system linkage and maintenance, and other aspects. Therefore, enterprises should increase funding and personnel strength, and formulate information technology strategies that are suitable for their own enterprises.

6 Summary

Through extensive literature review, this article found that most enterprises focus on cost management during project implementation. However, for shipbuilding and military enterprises, due to their unique characteristics, the cost management model still remains relatively traditional. In order to better adapt to the national development strategy, improve the level of refined management, and enhance the industry economic competitiveness of military enterprises, this article carefully analyzes the current cost management characteristics of shipbuilding and military enterprises based on their own work experience and analyzes the problems they face in cost management. In response to the existing problems, this article proposes five suggestions, namely strengthening the construction of enterprise cost management culture, strengthening management concepts, reshaping the price management system, changing cost accounting methods, implementing full life cycle cost management and target price management, and increasing enterprise information construction. I hope that this study can provide reference for cost management in shipbuilding and military enterprises, contribute to the high-quality development of the shipbuilding industry, and also provide some ideas for cost management in other enterprises.

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