Chapter XIII

Testing a Self-Directed Model of Organizational Learning in an IT Planning Context

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ABSTRACT

This study postulates that an empowered workforce can rally the organization to the objective of achieving IT planning effectiveness within the premises of a planning culture geared to empowerment. The planning culture is a powerful lever to empower knowledge workers and establish a learning environment conducive to planning effectiveness. A sample of 101 IT professionals was used to look at the indirect effects of the planning culture on IT planning effectiveness through the empowerment of knowledge workers. Strong support was garnered for the three hypotheses of the study, namely: (1) empowered knowledge workers make a significant impact on the quality of planning outcomes; (2) planning cultures empower knowledge workers; hence, (3) improving the quality of planning through the motivational path of knowledge workers empowerment. Implications of the findings for organizational learning are discussed at the end.

INTRODUCTION

The information systems literature provides a wide range of models for undertaking IT planning but lacks research into the antecedents of IT planning effectiveness. Most studies have indeed focused on the mechanics of IT planning rather than on its antecedents (Brancheau et al., 1996; Rodgers, 1997; Sahraoui, 2002) and emphasis was put on the strategies, structures, and planning methodologies used to achieve effective planning rather than on the people involved in IT planning (Henderson & Sifonis, 1988). The present study fits within the research stream on the social antecedents of IT planning effectiveness (see Nelson & Cooprider, 1996; Sahraoui, 2002; Subramani et al., 1999) and postulates that an empowered workforce can rally the organization to the objective of achieving IT planning effectiveness within the premises of a planning culture geared to empowerment.

This chapter will assess the catalytic effect of planning cultures on knowledge workers' empowerment in view of achieving planning effectiveness. A literature review on IT planning, knowledge worker empowerment, and corporate cultures will provide the conceptual framework for the research model outlined in *Figure 1*.

The chapter is organized as follows: the first section will review IT planning; the second section will tackle knowledge workers empowerment; the third section will introduce the concept of the planning culture; the fourth section will describe the research design for the empirical component of the study, and unveils the study results; and the final section draws the study implications for managerial practice leading into the conclusion of the study.

IT PLANNING

Boynton & Zmud (1987) defined IT planning as organizational activities directed towards (1) recognizing organizational opportunities for using IT; (2) determining the

Figure 1
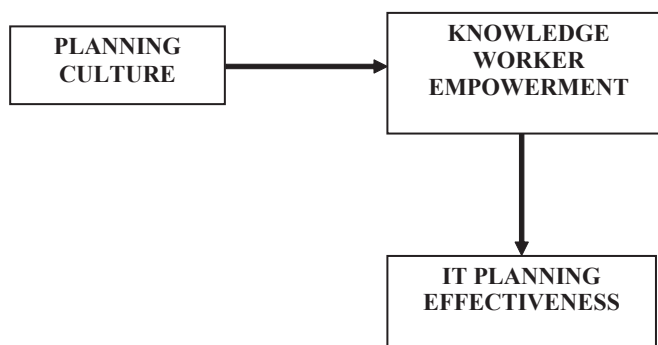
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