Chapter 9

Satisfaction as a Function of Perceived Change in Likelihood of Goal Attainment:
A Cross-Cultural Study

Bruce A. Reinig
San Diego State University, USA

Robert O. Briggs
University of Nebraska at Omaha, USA

Gert-Jan de Vreede
University of Nebraska at Omaha, USA

ABSTRACT

E-collaboration users tend to abandon their technology when they feel dissatisfied by their experience, even if they have been productive. It is therefore important to understand the causes of satisfaction so we can design and deploy e-collaboration in ways that make users both productive and satisfied. We advance a theory proposing satisfaction as a function of a perceived change in the likelihood of goal attainment (LGA). We test the theory in two countries (United States and The Netherlands) that differ along Hofstede's (1991) masculinity-femininity cultural dimension. Empirical findings support the theory in both countries among 367 knowledge workers using e-collaboration to address real organizational problems and issues. We discuss the implications for research and practice.

INTRODUCTION

Many global organizations now depend on teams that include members from diverse national cultures to identify, plan, and carry out critical tasks. Yet, cultural differences can impede productivity when norms and expectations differ substantially among team members (Beranek, Broder, Reinig, Romano, & Sump, 2005). Communication processes in teams include social cues and mechanisms that may differ from culture to culture (Massey, Montoya-Weiss, & Hung, 2003).

The meanings people ascribe to words, symbols, and actions; perceptions of time; the goals people hold; and the value people ascribe to those goals may differ from culture to culture.

Hofstede (1991, p. 5) defines culture as "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another." Culture is a learned phenomenon that is shared among people within the same social environment (Hofstede). Hofstede identifies five dimensions that characterize how cultures differ from one another. For example, power distance is defined as "the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally" (p. 28). Researchers have examined the relationship between power distance and various aspects of collaboration and technology (e.g., Lim, Raman, & Wei, 1990; Lu, 2003; Tan, Watson, Wei, Raman, & Kerola, 1993). Another dimension of culture, masculinity and femininity, has received less attention from researchers, but it is of particular importance to e-collaboration. Masculinity and femininity are described as two ends of a continuum whereby masculinity "pertains to societies in which social gender roles are clearly distinct" and femininity "pertains to societies in which social gender roles overlap" (Hofstede, pp. 82-83). In masculine societies, men are typically expected to be more assertive and tough than women, and more focused on material success. In more feminine societies, both men and women are expected to be modest and tender, and focused on quality of life (Hofstede). Differences along the masculinity-femininity dimension, Hofstede asserts, can manifest in workplace meetings.

Hofstede (1991) uses the United States as an archetype of masculine culture and The Netherlands as an archetype of feminine culture. He reports that people in Dutch meetings seem to be more focused on seeking common solutions, while people in U.S. meetings tend to be relatively more focused on asserting themselves and demonstrat-

ing their expertise. Hofstede summarizes these differences by stating that, in masculine cultures, conflicts are resolved by a "good fight," and in feminine cultures, conflicts are more likely to be resolved by "compromise and negotiation." The masculinity-femininity dimension in the context of meetings is therefore of particular interest to e-collaboration research and practice.

Technology-Supported Collaboration

When used effectively, collaboration technologies often provide benefits to groups working together to achieve a common goal. The simultaneous and anonymous communication afforded by a group support system (GSS), for example, may improve efficiency and encourage more open and honest communication (Nunamaker, Dennis, Valacich, Vogel, & George, 1991). Voice and videoconferencing, shared documents, and online workspaces help geographically displaced teams work together over a distance (Nunamaker, Reinig, & Briggs, in press).

Although technology-supported collaboration has been shown to improve team performance in certain instances (Fjermestad & Hiltz, 1998-1999), the affordances of collaboration technology can be interpreted and valued differently across cultures. Studies with executives from the United States, The Netherlands, Germany, Tanzania, Mexico, and South Africa, for example, illustrate differences in the value placed on the anonymity feature of a GSS (Vreede, Jones, & Mgaya, 1999; Vreede, Mgaya, & Qureshi, 2004; Vreede, Vogel, Kolfschoten, & Wien, 2003). Mejias, Shepherd, Vogel, and Lazaneo (1996-1997) report that Mexican participants valued anonymity during brainstorming because it gave them a chance to speak freely to those with more power. Blanning and Reinig (2005) report, however, that Hong Kong executives expressed reluctance to embrace anonymity because they thought it important to know the CEO's position on a given issue. Thus, culture

Related Content

Fault-Based Test Case Prioritization of Regression Testing Using Genetic Algorithm
Priya T.and Prasanna M. (2022). *International Journal of e-Collaboration (pp. 1-16).*
www.irma-international.org/article/fault-based-test-case-prioritization-of-regression-testing-using-genetic-algorithm/304032

Collaborative Enterprise Architecture Design and Development with a Semantic Collaboration Tool
Frank Fuchs-Kittowskiand Daniel Faust (2009). *International Journal of e-Collaboration (pp. 53-66).*
www.irma-international.org/article/collaborative-enterprise-architecture-design-development/37534

Remote Sensing Scene Type Classification Using Multi-Trial Vector-Based Differential Evolution Algorithm and Multi-Support Vector Machine Classifier
Sandeep Kumarand Suresh Lakshmi Narasimha Setty (2022). *International Journal of e-Collaboration (pp. 1-20).*
www.irma-international.org/article/remote-sensing-scene-type-classification-using-multi-trial-vector-based-differential-evolution-algorithm-and-multi-support-vector-machine-classifier/301259

Ecologies of Information and Communication Technology Platform Design for e-Government Service Provision: Actors, Influences, and Fields of Play
Shefali Virkar (2016). *Cultural, Behavioral, and Social Considerations in Electronic Collaboration (pp. 37-68).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/ecologies-of-information-and-communication-technology-platform-design-for-e-government-service-provision/140703

Monitoring Activity in E-Learning: A Quantitative Model Based on Web Tracking and Social Network Analysis
E. Mazzoniand P. Gaffuri (2010). *Monitoring and Assessment in Online Collaborative Environments: Emergent Computational Technologies for E-Learning Support (pp. 111-130).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/monitoring-activity-learning/36846