Chapter VI
Developing Success Measure for Staff Portal Implementation

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ABSTRACT

The last decade has seen the proliferation of business-to-employee (B2E) portals as integrated, efficient, and user-friendly technology platform to assist employees to increase their productivity, as well as for organizations to reduce their operating costs. To date, very few studies have focused on determining the extent to which the portal implementations have been successful. Such a study is crucial, considering that organizations have committed large investments to implementing the portals and they would certainly like to see the return on their investments. Our study aims to develop a scale for measuring user satisfaction with B2E portals. The four steps of scale development: conceptual model development, item generation, content validation, and an exploratory study, are reported in this chapter. Evidence about reliability, content validity, criterion-related validity, convergent validity, and discriminant validity is presented.

MOTIVATION FOR DEVELOPING MEASUREMENT

Business-to-employee (B2E) portals have been widely implemented across industries in the past decade (Cedar Crestone Survey, 2007). This system, more commonly known as staff portal, integrates a number of applications such as e-mail, reporting tools, employee self service (ESS) and manager self service (MSS), and presents them in a customized and personalized interface to the users. More importantly, users can access
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the portal at any time and anywhere from their desktops, notebooks, or even personal digital assistants (PDAs) through the Internet connection. The flexibility offered by the portals allows them to be the desktop medium through which employees can perform their work-related and personal-related tasks. B2E portals have also met with the approval of a number of organizations such as IBM, Toshiba, HP, General Motors, and Ford, to name a few. This is attributed to their perceived potential benefits, namely, improved corporate communication, increased competitive advantage, increased employee productivity, and reduced organizational costs (Sugianto & Tojib, 2006). In particular, the self-service model introduced by the portal is very attractive, providing convenience for the employees, and cost savings for the organizations.

Despite these substantial benefits, there are still some drawbacks associated with portal implementation, particularly when B2E portals promote a new way of working and communication among employees, which can directly influence employees’ work practices. For instance, the automation of business processes may discourage employees who are used to a paper-based culture to use the portal, as they will have less time for meeting and socially interacting with their colleagues in person. Moreover, the ability to access the portal at any time anywhere may imply that a stronger work commitment is demanded of the employees. All these concerns may inhibit the portal usage within the workplace, which in turn will influence the success of portal implementation. Thus, an accurate success measure is required to assist organizations in assessing the value of such portal implementation.

There have been a number of approaches for measuring the success of Information Systems (IS) such as system quality (Srinivasan, 1985), information quality (Mahmood & Medewitz, 1985), system use (Igbaria, Pavri & Huff, 1989), individual impact (Bergeron, 1986), organizational impact (Jenster, 1987), and user satisfaction (Baroudi & Orlikowsky, 1988). Having reviewed these different methods of measuring IS success, the two most frequently used are user satisfaction and system use (Galletta & Lederer, 1989). However, since the use of B2E portal is usually not mandatory, measuring B2E portal success through system use may be of limited value. Hence, in our study, we adopted the user satisfaction concept when developing a perceptual measure of B2E portal success.

Extensive research has been done in the past on the measurement of user satisfaction. Since the 1980s, considerable conceptual and empirical studies have been devoted to establishing a standard user satisfaction scale. The scales of Bailey and Pearson (1983) and Doll and Torkzadeh (1988) are those most frequently adopted or adapted when measuring user satisfaction with IS applications (Wang, Tang & Tang, 2001). The former was initially developed to measure general user information satisfaction for the traditional data processing (TDP) environment, while the latter was developed to measure user satisfaction with specific application for the end user computing (EUC) environment. Apart from these scales, previous researchers have developed user satisfaction scales for different types of applications such as enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems (Calisir & Calisir, 2004), knowledge management systems (Ong & Lai, 2004), and asynchronous electronic learning systems (Wang, 2003).

Our review of the literature that addresses user satisfaction measurement showed that studies which specifically examine user satisfaction with the B2E portal are virtually non-existent. The existing user satisfaction scales in the IS field are not entirely appropriate for measuring user satisfaction with the B2E portal. Firstly, both the Bailey and Pearson (1983) and Ives et al. (1983) scales were designed to measure general user satisfaction in the TDP environment. These scales tend to overlook environments in which end users have less direct interaction with the IS.
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