Chapter 12

Organizational Actions, Computer Attitudes, and End-User Satisfaction in Public Organizations:
An Empirical Study

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This paper reports the results of a field study that investigated the relationship among organizational actions (management advocacy and internal computing support), computer attitudes, and end-user satisfaction in public organizations. The results show that computer attitudes have a positive direct influence on end-user satisfaction. The findings also reveal that management advocacy has positive direct effects on computer attitudes and end-users’ satisfaction. Internal computing support, however, failed to show a significant effect on both computer attitudes and end-user satisfaction. We discuss these results and suggest directions for practice and future research.

INTRODUCTION

Information systems (IS) scholars have examined various issues related to the role of information technology (IT) in the public sector (e.g., Aggarwal and Mirani, 1999; Bozeman and Bretschneider, 1986; Bretschneider and Wittmer, 1993; Byrd and Marshall, 1997; Jain, 1997; Nidumolu, Goodman, Vogel, and Danowitz, 1996; Otten, 1989; Seneviratne, 1999; Ugbah and Umeh, 1993). Most of this research discusses organizational-level issues of computing in public organizations.

Past IT research reveals that limited attention has been paid to end-user computing (EUC) in public administrations. Thus, if public managers are to keep pace with the challenges of their jobs, more effort must be made to understand individual-level computing issues in government.

User satisfaction is, undoubtedly, the most widely used surrogate of computing success (Gelderman, 1998). DeLone and McLean (1992) numerated three reasons for this popularity. First, user satisfaction has high face validity. Second, the available instruments used to measure other success dimensions (e.g., quality) are so poor that nobody will employ them. Finally, many instruments exist to measure user satisfaction. Doll and Torkzadeh (1988), after reviewing the information satisfaction literature, conceptualized the end-user satisfaction construct and developed a twelve-item instrument to measure it. The authors used responses from six hundred and eighteen end users to test the instrument. Later, Doll and Weidong (1997) cross-validated the twelve-item instrument using confirmatory factor analysis, and they showed that the instrument is robust. We will adopt the end-users satisfaction construct and the instrument developed by Doll and Torkzadeh (1988) for the purpose of our study.

Since our study is exploratory in nature and represents an early attempt to examine end-user satisfaction in the public sector, we developed a basic model of the factors affecting satisfaction at the individual level. Lacking a priori reasons for why these factors will differ from those factors affecting satisfaction of individuals in the private sector, we chose to study three highly significant determinants of end-user satisfaction, i.e., computer attitudes, management advocacy, and internal computing support. Previous research in private organizations has identified computer attitude as a very important predictor of end-user satisfaction (e.g., Amoroso and Cheney, 1991; Hiltz and Johnson, 1990; Igbaria and Toraskar, 1994; Rivard and Huff, 1988). Further, a number of empirical investigations have noted the importance of such organizational action variables as management advocacy and internal computing support for creating favorable attitudes towards computers and user computing success (e.g., Abdul-Gader, 1990; Amoroso and Cheney, 1991; Govindarajulu, 1998; Igbaria and Chakrabarti, 1990; Lucas, 1978; Mahmood and Swanberg, 1999; Mirani and King, 1994).

The main purpose of this paper is to examine empirically some of the factors affecting end-user satisfaction in the context of public organizations. More specifically, we will try to answer the following two broad questions: (1) What is the impact of computer attitudes on end-user satisfaction? and (2) What is the impact of organizational action variables (management advocacy and internal computing support) on computer attitudes and end-user satisfaction?
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