Chapter VIII

Executive Information Systems Use in Organisational Contexts: An Explanatory User Behaviour Testing

George Ditsa
University of Wollongong, Australia

ABSTRACT

Executive Information Systems (EIS) are designed to enhance the managerial roles of executives, including other senior managers, in organizations. Despite reported growth in the popularity of EIS, there are reports of low usage of these systems that, in part, contributes to their failures in organizations. The majority of prior EIS research has focused on documenting the features, benefits, development methodologies, and implementation of the systems. However, very few research studies address the problem of low EIS usage from a behavioural point of the user. This chapter reports on a research on the use of EIS in organizational settings. The primary focus of the research is to investigate factors that explain users’ behaviour towards using EIS. It is also
aimed at identifying the relative importance of those factors that determine the use of EIS. The research model is based on Triandis’ theoretical framework, a model from organizational behaviour. The research model is used to hypothesis that EIS use (behaviour) is determined by EIS experience and ability to use EIS (habits); subjective norms, roles, values and social situations (social factors); perceived usefulness of EIS (consequences); user satisfaction with EIS information, system, support, and plan (affect); and EIS development processes, management processes and organisational environment (facilitating conditions). Field data obtained by survey questionnaire from CEOs, CFOs and one other executive from 255 organisations using EIS in Australia were used to test and confirm the appropriateness of the behavioural model through correlation and regression analyses. The results of the study have some implications for research and practice.

INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH PROBLEM

The success or failure of information systems (IS) has been the focus of studies by IS researchers in the past decades. Underutilisation of IS has generally been identified in the IS literature as one of the sources of IS failures, and system usage is even often used as a surrogate of IS success. As hardware and software capabilities continue to advance at an alarming rate, the problem of low system usage still remains (e.g., Weiner, 1993; Johansen & Swigart, 1996; Venkatesh & Morris, 2000).

Information is one of the crucial resources to an organisation in the following areas (Choo, 1998): sense-making of the external environment, knowledge creation, and decision-making. Executives’ demand for suitable information systems to support their managerial activities has led to the development and implementation of executive information systems (EIS). These systems are tailored to meet the managerial demands of individual executives. Along with the success stories for these systems, however, there are many examples of EIS failures, some of which are due to the non-use of the systems (Glover, Watson, & Rainer, 1992; Schenk, 1992; McBride, 1997).

Whereas these systems have attracted a growing number of research studies in recent times, a review of the EIS literature reveals that few studies have been done on the real use (that is, the active engagement) of the systems. The majority of the prior EIS research studies have focused on documenting the features, benefits, development, methodologies, and implementation of these systems by using case studies and interviews (e.g., Rainer & Watson, 1995; Nandhakumar & Jones...
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