Chapter IX

Internet User Satisfaction, Job Satisfaction and Internet Background: An Exploratory Study

Claire A. Simmers
St. Joseph’s University, USA

Murugan Anandarajan
Drexel University, USA

The relationships among Internet user satisfaction (IUS), job satisfaction, and user’s Internet background are examined. Internet user satisfaction and job satisfaction are positively correlated. There are significant differences in IUS (but not job satisfaction) based on demographic factors (age, gender, and organizational position). Usage and general Internet experience differentiate levels of IUS and job satisfaction. Self-training is a key variable in both IUS and job satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid growth and increasing importance of the Internet represents a significant development and is prompting a growing interest in understanding and managing Internet usage at work. Realizing the enormous potential of the Internet, many businesses have embraced it as a tool to help them achieve a
competitive edge. Enterprises are using the Internet to link directly to suppliers, factories, distributors, as well as customers. In the US, Internet commerce will account for approximately $17 billion in goods and services in 1998, more than twice the amount in 1997. By 2002, that’s expected to be over $325 billion (Hof, McWilliams, & Saveri, 1998). This business explosion has made Internet usage a significant activity in firms.

User information satisfaction in prior research referred to the extent that users believe the information systems they used met their information needs (Delone & McLean, 1992; Igbaria & Chakrabrati, 1990). Studies on user information satisfaction examined: a) the conceptual support and validity of the construct (Hendrickson, Glorfield, & Cronan, 1994; Kettinger & Lee, 1994), b) UIS as one of the factors influencing information system success (Cheney, Mann, & Amoroso, 1986; DeLone & McLean, 1992; Straub, Limayem, & KarahannaEvaristo, 1995), and c) the relationship of UIS with user involvement (Lawrence & Low, 1993) and job satisfaction (Ang & Soh, 1997). It has been suggested that information success, through user satisfaction, can improve organizational productivity (Schroeder, Anderson, & Scubber, 1986) and enhance managerial decision-making (McLeod & Jones, 1987).

A growing body of empirical evidence suggests that information systems affect the nature of office work, job satisfaction and the quality of work life. Office workers’ interactions with clients, perceived task environment, and well-being were influenced by the type of system interface used (Turner, 1984). Coates (1988) and Kaye and Sutton (1985) found that computerization had affected office work productivity as well as the quality of work life. Millman and Hartwick (1987) discovered that middle managers believe that office automation had given them increased autonomy, more freedom to do their work, and greater ownership of the results. While the majority of studies find positive relationships with information systems and job satisfaction, there have been some contradictory findings of less positive effects on individuals’ work experiences (Attewell & Rule, 1984). These contradictory findings, coupled with the dearth of research on the relationships of Internet usage with cognitive and affective components of work—in particular—job satisfaction suggests a gap in our knowledge, which the present study seeks to address.

Empirical work on the impact of the Internet in the work environment is in the early stages. Most organizations are just beginning to grapple with the complex issues of work-related Internet usage (McWilliams & Stepanek, 1998). A study conducted in a manufacturing firm found that in a typical 8-hour working day, over 250,000 Internet sites were accessed by a workforce of 386 employees. Of particular concern was the discovery that approximately
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