Dr. Cheryl Cottle

Abstract

This study investigates the processes involved in the introduction of computer technology in the workplace. It examines the extent to which the designer considers end users in the design process in integrating computer technology in the workplace. To investigate this phenomenon, 17 participants representing three organizations were interviewed. These respondents were part of teams responsible for the implementation of computer technology.

A case study method was used in which multiple sites were examined to gain insights from those responsible for the adoption of computer technology. Data were gathered using semi-structured interview questions. The researcher conducted the interviews. The interviews were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim for analysis.

Analysis of the data shows that the participants used a variety of approaches to make decisions concerning computer technology adoption in the workplace. The organizations’ structure, culture, and management style, and the wider social and national culture influenced how computer technology was adopted.

While the organizations investigated in this study were highly hierarchical, a flattened organizational structure was present when decisions about computer technology were made. An open, participatory, democratic management style favoring collaboration and teamwork was chiefly used. The management, including upper management and the Information Technology management, and the employees worked together to facilitate the various processes. The utilization of a user-participatory approach to decision making reflected a socio-technical approach to computer technology adoption.

The organizations with a greater network of support approached the adoption and diffusion processes in a formalized way. The culture of the organization also affects the organization structure and the management style used during the acquisition of computer technology. The utilization of a user-participatory approach to decision making improves how the employees feel about the organization, and in turn the culture has an effect on the diffusion of computer technology.

A “Social Interactive Approach to the Implementation of Computer Technology,” is recommended to practitioners in the field of computer technology adoption. This is a holistic and
flexible approach that utilizes both the social architectures of the organization, as well as the wider social framework in which the user and the organization are situated.