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The Influence of Organizational Communications on IS Users' Perceptions of Change

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Abstract

The ultimate goal of this research is to provide a new and fine-grained understanding of how the IT users' perceptions of a new system are shaped by organizational communication (OC). While OC has been acknowledged as having a key influence in IT projects, researchers have not yet provided a clear understanding of its role vis-à-vis user perceptions. In this research in progress paper, we highlight our initial results, which detail the role of sensemaking and sensegiving practices in shaping user perceptions. As of today, we have conducted a preliminary analysis of 32 interviews and examined organizational documentation. The interviews were conducted with the personnel of a major courier service provider in North America, who were mandated to use a new information system. Using a qualitative approach for analyzing the data, our preliminary results reveal the process through which the organizational internal communications initiate a specific set of sensegiving practices. These practices, in turn, shape the users' sensemaking properties as reflected in their IT-related mental frames of reference, and in turn, in their perceptions. Once completed, the main contributions of this study will be to create a knowledge bridge between organizational communication and IT implementation. In addition to the implications for research and theory, we aim to help managers in tailoring out appropriate organizational communications in times of technological changes and as a result, paving the way for successful and efficient IT implementation and use.

Keywords: Organizational communications, Sensemaking, Sensegiving, Mental frames of reference