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Michael Lapke
Christopher Newport University, mike.lapke@gmail.com

Shalyn Lapke
Christopher Newport University, sha.lapke@gmail.com

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SECURITY POLICY IMPLEMENTATION: LEADERSHIP IN DISRUPTIVE CHANGE

Michael Lapke
Christopher Newport University
Mike.lapke@gmail.com

Shalyn Lapke
Christopher Newport University
Sha.lapke@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

A well-crafted information security policy is one of the key ingredients for a ensuring a secure organization (Paananen, et al., 2019). However, implementation of a security policy can result in disruptive organizational change (Lapke & Dhillon, 2008). There is a gap in the literature in examining the relationship between effective leadership and sound security policy implementation. We propose that the examination of leadership through the use of qualitative case study in organizations that have recently implemented new IS security policy can illustrate the effectiveness of good leadership on IS security policy implementation. Methods for data collection will rely on semi structured interview questions based on the theoretical frameworks we will build for leadership and security policy implementation.

KEYWORDS

Transformational Leadership, Information Systems Security, Policy Implementation

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

A well-crafted information security policy is one of the key ingredients for a ensuring a secure organization (Paananen, et al., 2019). However, implementation of a security policy can result in disruptive organizational change (Lapke & Dhillon, 2008). While the information security body of work has acknowledged the importance of organizational power in formulation and implementation of security policies (Kolkowska & Dhillon, 2012), there has been a limited focus on developing a framework for effective leadership during security policy implementation.

In this paper we argue that utilizing effective leadership principles can improve the success during implementation of IS Security policy. We propose that the examination of leadership through the use of qualitative case study in organizations that have recently implemented new IS security policy can illustrate the effectiveness of good leadership on IS security policy implementation. We seek to answer two specific research questions in our study:

1. Can effective leadership positively affect the outcome of complex IS Security Policy implementation in large organizations?
2. Do different leadership styles affect the outcome of IS Security Policy implementation?

Effective leadership is one of the main factors in achieving positive transitions in organizations (Hao & Yazdanifard, 2015). It has been examined through several lenses including transactional (Weber, 1947), transformational (Burns, 1978), situational (Hersey & Blanchard, 1977) and others. Because this study will examine transformational change in an organization, we believe that transformational leadership is the best foundation to examine policy implementation. Transformational leaders are defined as individuals that inspire followers to exceed performance expectations by revamping their outlooks, ideals and perspectives within an organization with the use of charisma (Bass, 1985). These types of leaders encourage their followers through idealized influence (previously called charisma), intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation and individualized consideration (Bass, 1999). These constructs will form the basis for our instrument guiding our interview questions.

How well organizations implement IS security policy is the determinant construct. Like leadership, this construct can be interpreted in several different ways. To a CEO, security effectiveness could mean a statistically evident reduction in security breaches within that organization (Doherty, Neil & Fulford, 2005). A CISO might instead gauge implementation success in the context of policy compliance combined with a successful technical tool rollout. In light of this, our instrument will reflect both perspectives.

Methods for data collection will rely on semi structured interview questions. The instrument for the questions will be based on the theoretical frameworks described above within the domain of transformational leadership and

implementation of IS security policy. The target is organizations that have recently implemented a security policy. We will collect data from security leaders at multiple organizations to get a broad representation of organizational demographics.

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