

ABSTRACT

With phenomenal improvements in Information Technology, scholars believed that increased investment in IT would lead to increased productivity and efficiency. However, huge variations in the expected outcomes have been observed across organizations. The most critical question managers are facing is how to best use the available IT infrastructure and related resources. One of the major barriers to achieving expected outcomes from the organizational investments in IT is Technostress. Technostress has been defined as the stress individuals experience during and due to their use of information systems and technologies. When end users experience stress while working with an IT application, they normally start resisting the use of the same. This results in failure to realize the expected benefits on part of the organization. The organizational use of IT by an employee is embedded in the concerned task and technology environment of the user. Thus, the user experience of IT becomes a function of the interplay between the three primary entities: Task, Technology and the Individual. These entities are situated in an organizational context and are hence influenced by the concerned organizational IT management policies and practices. The peers and supervisors form the local context for the end user which is again influenced by the global organizational context. The thesis explores the interactions between the three entities to identify the stressors and the resultant strain on end users. It is further observed that end user perceptions are moderated by the formal/informal management mechanisms adopted by the organization to manage the concerned end user computing environment. The resultant strain, in turn, impacts an individual's inclination to innovate, with IT.

The omnipresent nature of IT devices and applications in organizations, with active Internet connections, has enabled employees to become the end users of the system. This has resulted in a dynamic end user computing environment in the organization. Hence it has become imperative that organizations manage the end user computing environment explicitly and in an effective manner. The organizational exercise of managing end user computing environment is an important step towards managing the end user perceptions of their IT environment thus leading to desirable IT related outcomes. The highest level of end user engagement happens when the user starts to innovate with the system as it reflects user's confidence in the system and in their own capability to experiment with their system use. The intellectual nature of IT lends itself open to significant end user led innovations.

The findings of the study have resulted in a theoretical framework explaining the phenomenon of Technostress and the end user inclination to innovate with IT. It proposes that individual's interaction with task and technology create an intrinsic inclination or Drive within the user to innovate with IT. The interaction between the task and technology gives rise to Scope in the task for innovation with IT. It is only in the presence of both the Drive and the Scope that innovation can prosper. Organizational context plays a key role in determining whether the combination of Drive (or lack of it) and Scope (or lack of it) is perceived as an opportunity or a threat by the end user. It further influences how the Drive-Scope combination will lead to user perceptions ranging on a continuum, from high positive motivation to extreme frustration. In addition, the different levels of strain can be altered in certain cases through appropriate management mechanisms. The outcome can be examined through

the individual's inclination to innovate as witnessed through the various past experiences and examples of the end users and their (dis)/satisfaction with the current IT.

The study employs an Interpretive Case study method to examine the relationships between the three constructs, viz; Drive, Scope and organizational Pressures to Innovate, and to develop a theoretical framework to enhance the understanding of Technostress and its impact on employee innovativeness. A large private sector bank and 2 Indian state government finance departments acted as case sites for collection of data. The data was collected through in-depth interviews each lasting for an hour on the average. A detailed literature review was conducted in the fields of Stress, Occupational Stress, Technostress, IT Innovation and End User Computing Management Mechanism.

The main contribution of the thesis lies in the following areas, one, it expands the understanding of the phenomenon of Technostress by taking into account the key aspects contributing to the phenomenon, i.e. task, technology and individual. Two, it differentiates in a significantly enhanced refine manner, between the different shades of strain that an individual experience. Three, it also extends the understanding of positive strain. Four, the impact of end user computing management mechanisms on end user strain has been explained to provide managers with actionable levers to handle employee strain and even turn it into productive motivation. Finally, the framework emphasizes the need for end user led IT innovations to deploy the organizational IT resources, in a significant manner.