

Information Culture in Organizations

Choo, C.W., Furness, C., Paquette, S., van den Berg, H., Detlor, B., Bergeron, P., Heaton, L. (2006). Working with Information: Information Management and Culture in a Professional Services Organization. *Journal of Information Science*, 32(6), 491-510.

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Research Questions

- 1. Is there a way to systematically identify information behaviors and values that can describe the information culture of an organization?**

[Is there such a thing as information culture?]

- 2. Are organizations differentiated by distinctive sets of information behaviors and values that reflect their characteristic information cultures?**

[Do organizations have distinct info cultures?]

- 3. Assuming that we can describe and differentiate information cultures, do the observed information behaviors and values have a significant effect on information use "outcomes"?**

[Do information cultures matter?]

Data Collection and Measurement

Web-based questionnaire survey

Questions adapted from items identified by Marchand et al (2001) in their study on information orientation.

New items developed on information use outcomes.

IBV (Independent Variables)	Definition
<i>Information Sharing</i>	Willingness to provide others with information in an appropriate and collaborative manner
<i>Information Proactiveness</i>	Active concern to obtain and apply new information to respond to changes and to promote innovation
<i>Information Transparency</i>	Openness in reporting information on errors and failures, thus allowing learning from mistakes
<i>Information Integrity</i>	Use of information in a trustful and principled manner at the individual and organizational level
<i>Information Informality</i>	Willingness to use and trust informal sources over institutionalized information
<i>Information Control</i>	Information is presented to people to manage and monitor their performance

IBV (Independent Variables)	Example Items
<i>Information Sharing</i>	<p>I often exchange information with the people with whom I work regularly.</p> <p>I often exchange information with citizens, customers, or clients outside my organization.</p>
<i>Information Proactiveness</i>	<p>I actively seek out relevant information on changes and trends going on outside my organization.</p> <p>I use information to respond to changes and developments going on outside my organization.</p>
<i>Information Transparency</i>	<p>Managers and supervisors of my work unit encourage openness.</p> <p>The people I work with regularly share information on errors or failures openly.</p>
<i>Information Integrity</i>	<p>Among the people I work with regularly, it is common to distribute information to justify decisions already made.</p> <p>Among the people I work with regularly, it is normal to leverage information for personal advantage.</p>
<i>Information Informality</i>	<p>I trust informal sources (e.g. colleagues) more than I trust formal sources (e.g. memos, reports).</p> <p>I use informal sources (e.g. colleagues) extensively even though formal sources (e.g. memos, reports) exist and are credible.</p>
<i>Information Control</i>	<p>I receive information about the performance of my organization.</p> <p>My knowledge of organizational performance influences my work.</p>

Information use outcomes based on work of Taylor (1991), Kirk (2002)

Information Use Outcome (Dependent Variable)	Construction of new knowledge and new meanings; Transformative act of shaping decisions and influencing others; Movement and exchange of information with colleagues	I can quickly recognize the complexities in a situation and find a way of solving problems. I have influence over what happens within my work unit. Sharing information is critical to my being able to do my job.
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Study Sites

Three Canadian organizations

National law firm (L): 405 respondents (23%)

Public health organization (H): 190 (34%)

Engineering company (E): 103 (69%)

Information Culture Profiles

	<i>IBVs Extracted</i>	
L Organization	<i>Sharing</i>	Willingness to provide others with information in an appropriate and collaborative manner
	<i>Proactiveness</i>	Active concern to obtain and apply new information to respond to changes and to promote innovation
	<i>Transparency</i>	Openness in reporting information on errors and failures, thus allowing learning from mistakes
	<i>Integrity</i>	Use of information in a trustful and principled manner at the individual and organizational level
	<i>Informality</i>	Willingness to use and trust informal sources over institutionalized information
H Organization	<i>Sharing</i>	Willingness to provide others with information in an appropriate and collaborative manner
	<i>Proactiveness</i>	Active concern to obtain and apply new information to respond to changes and to promote innovation
	<i>Transparency</i>	Openness in reporting information on errors and failures, thus allowing learning from mistakes
E Organization	<i>Sharing</i>	Willingness to provide others with information in an appropriate and collaborative manner
	<i>Proactiveness</i>	Active concern to obtain and apply new information to respond to changes and to promote innovation
	<i>Integrity</i>	Use of information in a trustful and principled manner at the individual and organizational level

Information Use Outcome Regression Models

<i>Dependent Variable</i>	<i>Independent Variables</i>	<i>Std b</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>Adj.R²</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Info Use Outcome	Sharing	.312	.000	.378	.000
<i>L organization</i>	Transparency	.130	.023	N = 405	
	Proactiveness	.311	.000		
	Informality	.124	.014		
<i>Dependent Variable</i>	<i>Independent Variables</i>	<i>Std b</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>Adj.R²</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Info Use Outcome	Sharing	.314	.000	.292	.000
<i>H organization</i>	Transparency	.260	.000	N = 190	
	Proactiveness	.199	.004		
<i>Dependent Variable</i>	<i>Independent Variables</i>	<i>Std b</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>Adj.R²</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Info Use Outcome	Sharing	.156	.045	.542	.000
<i>E organization</i>	Integrity	.259	.000	N = 103	
	Proactiveness	.545	.000		

Summary

Organizations may be characterized by distinctive information cultures.

It may be possible to systematically describe the information culture of an organization.

The information culture of an organization has a significant impact on information use outcomes.