Sesnemaking and Sensegiving:

An Alternative Perspective for Understanding IS Success

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Introduction

Management Information Systems has been showing a considerable failure in the market (Cecez- Kecmanovic, Kautz, & Abrahall, 2014; Davis, 1989; DeLone & McLean, 1992; Taylor & Todd, 1995; Wang & Scheepers, 2012). Literature establishes that only 35% of projects were identified as successful, and this failure rate was noted as not changed over past 30+ years (Cecez- Kecmanovic et al., 2014). This was noted as the most pressing problem in IT industry (Standing, Guilfoyle, Lin, & Love, 2006). A considerable portion of IS research agenda has been devoted to explain same through rationalist perspective (Taylor & Todd, 1995; Wang & Scheepers, 2012). Yet, such rationalist explanation was mainly based on the Theory of Reasoned Action and were attempting to explain IS failure through Perception-Intention-Usage (PIU) of individuals. It was critiqued that PIU theories has reached their limits to explain IS failure. It was noted that PIU theories has only explained 70 percent perception and 50 percent intention (Venkatesh, Morris, Davis, & Davis, 2003). On the other hand, DeLone& McLean model, which was built by combining multiple theories as well was critiqued for not considering people aspect into explaining (Schwarz & Chin, 2007). Thus, there exists a lacuna in explaining IS failure. Relying on incommensurable aspect of research, inquiring into IS success through an alternative perspective would be a timely initiative. This paper proposes same.

Literature Review

Literature argues that IS adaption should be explained as a holistic experience of people (Schwarz & Chin, 2007). Sense making perspective is an appropriate perspective for same. Sense making perspective attempt to explain how people make meaning and select their actions in a change situation (Weick, 1995). Change instances including IS change, were noted as equivocal and multiplausible (Henfridsson, 1999). Among the seven characteristics of sense making, due consideration has been given to being a social phenomenon, depending on cues, and ongoing nature which make the perspective so suitable to explain (Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005) a wholistic experience. Thus, this paper argues that sense making has the potential to explain IS change. Sense making was theorized through the theory of enactment, which elaborates the process of sense making as actor's (enactment) reciprocal interaction with the change and retaining a meaning after selection, prior to acceptance of the change (Weick et al., 2005). Thus, this paper accepts the theory of enactment as a viable theoretical lens to explain IS acceptance.

Managerial role under sense making was noted as sense giving, where the manager expected to understand uncertain and ambiguous situation (Lüscher & Lewis, 2008), and provide information to followers (Lüscher & Lewis, 2008), when followers look up to the manager to reduce their uncertainty. IS change indeed is a situation that causes uncertainty and ambiguity. Sense giving was noted as what managers exercise in uncertain situations (Webb & Weick, 1979). Leadership scholars as well agrees on same and proposes the leadership enactments a social action that leaders peruse in making change (Gupta, MacMillan, & Surie, 2004). Leadership literature elaborates that leadership enactment is accomplished by Cast enactment and Transformational enactment simultaneously (Gupta et al., 2004). Task enactment was noted as leader building a cast of followers who could take the firm through the change, and Transformational enactment was noted as leader identifying the opportunities in the emerging transaction set and exploiting them. This paper treats sense giving as managerial intervention in an IS change.

Research Question

Proposed research attempt to build a new model to explain IS success by inquiring into IS change and will attempt to identify (1) how manager involved in sense giving (2) how employee sense make in an IS change and (3) if IS success depends on manager sense giving and employee sense making in an IS change.

This paper subscribes to methodological individualism, which advocates that organizational phenomenon can be explained through the actions of individuals, thus, will be inquiring to the IS adaption by individual, in order to explain IS Success. Further justification may be drawn from IS success literature as follows. De Lone and Mc Leam (1992) has established that IS success as the impact on the organization by introducing IS. Innovation literature suggests that an event of the nature of introducing an IS to an organization, to be considered as an "innovation", which will bring "changes" to many individuals role in a firm. Thus, it can be argued that IS Change is brought to the individual by IS introduction (innovation) at the organization level. De Lone and MacLean (1992), further supports same, and argues that IS adaption at individual level as adaption of demanded behavior by the individual, which is treated as IS success at individual level. Even further, IS success literature explains IS adaption as use that change the behavior of the individual by voluntary or discretionary use of IS (De Lone & McLean, 1992). Individual's use was noted as General use, which implies using the IS as it was planned, and specific use which user identified different uses for the user's specific requirements and extend the use of IS (Schewe, 1976). Thus, consequent research will study IS adaption by individual, within IS Change in order to explain IS success.

Conceptualization

This paper makes following propositions; (1) Leader's understanding of future transaction set of the IS innovation will influence leader's transformational enactment, (2a) Transformational enactment and cast enactment are components of leader sense giving, (2b) Transformational enactment and cast enactment are interdependent within leader sense giving, (3) Leader sense giving will influence follower sense making, (4) Follower's sense making will contribute towards creating a shared meaning between the meaning

carried by the followers and the leader, (5) Achieving of shared meaning (double interact) between manager and follower may lead to IS Adaption. Concept indicator model for the proposed research is indicated in the diagram below.

Concept Indicator Model
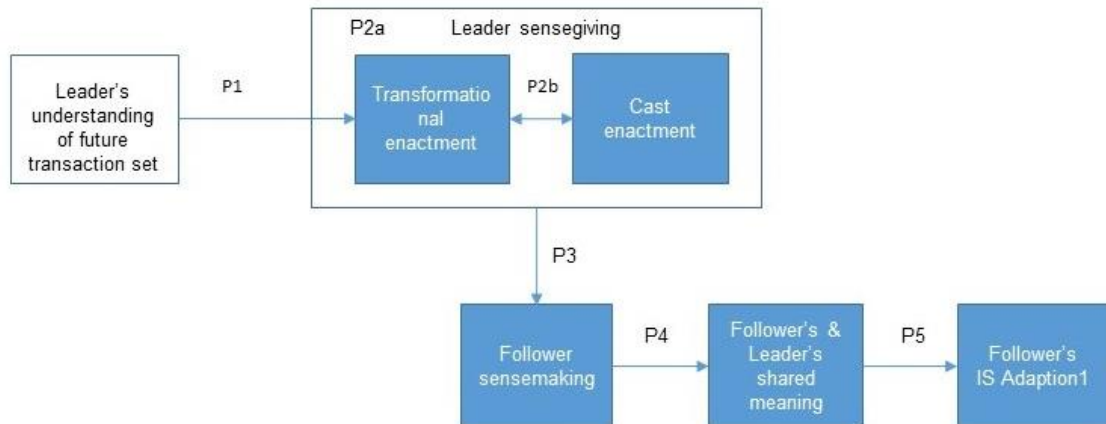
Proposed research will be empirically tested with a mix method, with a dominant qualitative component. Concept indicator model will be used to qualitatively inquire into IS change, using case study method in order to find answer to first two research questions. Emergent model from the qualitative phase will be tested with the quantitative method, in order to find answer to the third research question.

Significance

Consequent research will establish new model for IS adaption under the sense making perspective based on theory of enactment. New model will be an alternative, complementing explanation to rationalist explanations which has reached its limits.

Keywords: IS Adaption; Leadership Enactment; Sense giving; Sense making; Enactment.

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