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Masterarbeit

Exploring new dimensions: How to facilitate the acceptance of visualization technology in organizations

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Preface

I chose the topic of this study for my master's thesis for several reasons. With my background in engineering I had found it difficult at first, when I started my degree in business, to come to terms with the concept of qualitative research and qualitative data as actual research. After four semesters, whilst I still believe in the power of quantitative methods and numbers, I have come to accept and appreciate how good qualitative work can bring great insights. In order to force this realization onto more engineers, I chose to deal with a very technical and usually hard-data driven topic that these people cannot ignore. Secondly, I have been specializing in innovation and knowledge, its generation, its transfer and reasons for its failure throughout my graduate studies. And finally, I just wanted to be able to surround myself with new technology, so why not get credit points for it in the end?

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Abstract

Problems with the acceptance of innovation and new technology are an issue many organizations face and the topic has frequently been researched. This thesis follows existing models and theories on diffusion of innovation and technology acceptance as it examines the acceptance of new visualization technologies across 10 companies in Germany using a case-study approach. It revisits absorptive capacity as a precondition for successful knowledge transfer as well as the influence of knowledge brokers in an organizational context. A new model is derived to incorporate all these factors with determinants not regarded in previous models. This study finds performance expectancy and similarity to past experiences and existing technology to be most influential in the acceptance process. Further, it reveals a difference between perceived and actual absorptive capacity and finds the use of knowledge brokers acting as mediators between the two to be beneficial.

Zusammenfassung

Die Akzeptanz von neuer Technologie und Innovationen stellt für viele Organisationen eine Herausforderung dar und deshalb wurde dieses Thema schon häufig erforscht. Diese Arbeit folgt den existierenden Modellen und Theorien und untersucht 10 deutsche Unternehmen in einer Case Study. Sie beschäftigt sich eingehend mit Absorptive Capacity als Voraussetzung für erfolgreichen Wissenstransfer und betrachtet auch den Einfluss von Knowledge Brokern in Organisationen. Ein neues Model wird eingeführt, das Komponenten beinhaltet, die in vorhergehenden Modellen vernachlässigt wurden. Dabei stellen sich die Leistungserwartungen und die Vergleichbarkeit mit eigenen Kenntnissen und bekannter Technologie als bedeutsamste Kriterien heraus. Des Weiteren zeigt diese Arbeit eine Unterscheidung zwischen wahrgenommener und tatsächlicher Absorptive Capacity auf und zeigt auch, wie Knowledge Broker zwischen den beiden vermitteln können.