

Abstract

Organizations are problem-solving systems. The solving of a problem begins when the decision maker perceives it. This study aims at proposing a general framework of problem perception and examining how organizational members' cognitive styles affect their problem perception. To verify the proposed hypotheses, the researcher conducted an on-site field study. During a period of four months, the researcher played a role of a participant observer and interviewed the company members concerning their problem perception. This study was done in a large construction company in Taiwan. The total number of interviewees were 56, including most of the company's top executives, engineers, and management staffs. The researcher then content analyzed a sample of 192 "problems" and coded them in terms of relevant variables.

The results of this study showed that intuitives are more likely to use "opportunistic" processes of problem perception than their sensing types counterpart. In other words, intuitives tend to transform an initial state to a goal state for future processes of selection. On the other hand, sensing types are more likely to use "problematic" processes of problem perception than their intuitives counterpart. In other words, sensing types tend to compare an initial state to an existing standard to look for congruence between the two.

Keywords: Cognitive Style, Problem Perception, Problem Solving Processes