

Chapter 3

Creation of the People as Technology Theoretical Concept

ABSTRACT

Technology and people are central to the success of modern organizations. This chapter explains the creation of the people as technology (PT) concept by providing a synopsis of the case from which the concept originated. Enhancements for the PT concept are discussed along with ways that education and training of employees increases organizational opportunities for success. The chapter also provides details of ways that the COVID-19 pandemic impact forced changes in organizational policies and procedures and emphasized the need for better people and technology interactions.

INTRODUCTION

Technology for many individuals has become synonymous with computer technology. The personal computer and now smart phones brought computer technology into the homes and hands of billions of people, worldwide. The evolution of mobile and other digital and smart technologies has expanded the way individuals think about computer and other technologies. Technology extends well-beyond computers and is not limited to computer technology in this book. This book targets human resource development (HRD), human resource management (HRM), computer technology, technology development,

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-5321-6.ch003

and information technology (IT) professionals, practitioners, and scholars; business and industry managers and leaders; and corporate executives herein after referred to as stakeholders. Technology appears to be valued more than people, and there is a perceived need for more technology and less people in some US and global organizations (Heinrich & Witko, 2021; Rajecki, 2022; Spring et al., 2022). Therefore, stakeholders should better understand the interactions between people and technology in organizations (Murray et al., 2021) and the ethical implications. Decisions that are made regarding both people and technology have ethical implications associated with location, use, maintenance, modification, and time values.

BACKGROUND

In capitalist societies money is central to practically all interactions when goods and services are involved. Without a monetary value, goods and services are deemed to be less valuable. Despite the end of slavery in civilized societies, people and their capabilities are still monetized. Although slaves were never paid, they were sold and exchanged for their knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) to perform work needed by their owners. While not equating workers to slaves, the construct still exists in workplaces today. Employees' and technology's value are measured by their KSAs. Hoskisson et al. (2008) stated that value was being "measure[d] by a product's performance characteristics and by its attributes for which customers are willing to pay" (p. 101). Can we then say that people performance is based upon their personal characteristics and their attributes that the organization is willing to pay for (Hughes, 2012)?

Value is often equated with money in organizations, but what truly is money? The monetary value of things has been continuously debated (Friedman, 1994; Marx, 1906). The exchange value or purchasing power of money is foundational within a capitalist society. How is value of people and technology relative to the competitive advantage of an organization? People value is more difficult to define and describe than some technology value in the workplace; yet the workplace is inefficient without both values. AI and other emerging technologies became prominent during Industry 4.0 (Klingenberg et al., 2022). AI and machine learning have become difficult technologies to define and describe so explainable AI (Arrieta et al., 2020) has become an area of study for researchers. It seems that the more computer programmers seek to make technology that relates to people functionality,

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