An Exploratory Analysis of Gender Differences in IT Project Commitment, Continuation, and Escalation

Melinda L. Korzaan
melinda.korzaan@mtsu.edu

Amy H. Harris
amy.harris@mtsu.edu

Nita G. Brooks
nita.brooks@mtsu.edu

Department of Computer Information Systems
Middle Tennessee State University
Murfreesboro, TN USA

Abstract

This study examines the IT project environment with a focus on understanding gender differences that exist in key constructs known to influence project continuation. These constructs were chosen from two key streams of project-based research known to influence intention to continue: commitment and escalation. Commitment is a multi-faceted construct reflecting an individual's need or desire to continue working on a project. Escalation is also multi-faceted construct that generally refers to an individual's inclination to continue working on a project even in the face of negative information. Findings from a web-based survey resulted in 199 usable responses with the sample consisting of 56.7% males and 43.2% females. Data analysis revealed that gender differences existed in both continuance commitment and intention to continue the project. Differences were also found in constructs identified as being related to escalation within IT projects: desire for project success, negative information/status, over optimism, and sunk cost. Implications for these findings as well as directions for additional study are provided.

Keywords: Gender, IT Projects, Project Continuation, Commitment, Escalation.