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Desperately Seeking IT Support Measures: In Search of Apt Measures to Operationalize IT Support in the Conduct of Contemporary IT Research

In this study, we wish to seek what aspects of IT Support construct we as researchers and practitioners should consider towards its operationalization. This call is in response to the constantly changing nature of the way people perceive IT and computing. Compared to the way we used technology a decade or two ago, the way we use technology today has dramatically shifted and is more pervasive.

There are studies that would recycle the use of the measures of IT Support construct based on how they were used in the past. For example, Lee and Choi (2003), Choi et al. (2010), and De Leoz and Petter (2020) used the following measures in Table 1 to operationalize IT Support for knowledge exchange processes. The measures are worded in the format below, which could be tweaked to fit a specific context, more or less:

Table 1. Measures of IT Support Construct

<i>IT Support (Lee and Choi 2003)</i>	
<i>Item 1</i>	<i>Our team is provided with IT support for collaborative work regardless of time and place.</i>
<i>Item 2</i>	<i>Our team is provided with IT support for communicating among team members.</i>
<i>Item 3</i>	<i>Our team is provided with IT support for searching and accessing necessary information.</i>
<i>Item 4</i>	<i>Our company provides IT support for systematic storing.</i>
<i>Item 5</i>	<i>Our company provides IT support for simulation and prediction.</i>

But do these measures still reflect the characteristics and dimensions of the technology appropriate for theorizing IT-enabled phenomena in contemporary settings? Are these measures still applicable to defining IT Support for that context? Across these studies, albeit their similarities, the results of the hypothesis tests are no longer the same.

In this TREO talk, we wish to share the results of our preliminary search to operationalize the IT Support construct more aptly. We begin by revisiting how IT is viewed two decades ago in accordance to the seminal paper of Orlikowski and Iacono (2001): (1) Tool View of Technology, (2) Proxy View of Technology, (3) Ensemble View of Technology, (4) Computational View of Technology, and (5) Nominal View of Technology.

Many of our day-to-day tasks today are more reliant on IT use, not only for the workplace, but in the home and virtually everywhere. IT today is unquestionably deeply embedded in the very fabric of our social lives. Indeed, the ubiquitous nature of technology is perceived differently in the past beyond the mere perceptions of developing systems, and making them available, useful and easy to use. As such, our conduct for theorizing phenomena that involve IT Support should also shift and adapt to the changed times. To do so as researchers, we may need to be more mindful of the nuances of the nomological net of IT Support specific to the context and timeliness of the situation an IT-enabled phenomenon manifested. As practitioners, we may need to add more appropriate views of technology beyond the list provided by Orlikowski and Iacono (2001).

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