

The Silent Treatment in IT Projects: Gender Differences in Inclinations to Communicate Project Status Information

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Abstract

Incomplete and inaccurate information in Information Technology project status reporting results in a project becoming vulnerable to unexpected problems and potentially blindsiding stakeholders to impending project failure. The research presented in this study extends current knowledge of project status reporting by focusing on the inclination of project team members to communicate key project status information to members of upper management. A sample of 222 individuals currently working on IT projects were surveyed and both individual and work climate variables were tested in a simple direct effects model to predict inclination to report project status information to upper management (IRPI). To investigate potential individual differences based on gender the model was also run for the sample of male worker and female workers. Results show that there are differences in the relationships in the model based on gender. For males the factors that significantly predict IRPI include a sense of responsibility for the project, over optimism of project success, and potential negative consequences for reporting status information (NC). For females the factors that significantly predicted IRPI were the project development phase and NC. Although NC predicted IRPI for both genders, the effect was stronger for men than women. Implications for practice research are discussed.

Keywords: Project Management, Whistleblowing, Project Status Reporting, Software Development