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Software Quality Management and Organisational Fit

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Abstract

This paper describes some of the findings, of an ongoing ethnographic study of a computer operations section in an Information Technology Centre. The study finds that after an initial period of staff acceptance of prescribed quality management procedures, certain features of organizational culture, structure and power, work against continued conformance. Procedures will be modified, firstly to resolve any inconsistencies between the prescribed procedures and strongly held beliefs and values about work practices and organization, and secondly to reduce or eliminate perceived threats. The paper argues that software quality management is based on a Unitarian approach to organization, which ignores the plurality of beliefs and work contexts which exist in an organization, and which assumes that organizational features can be managed and changed in predictable ways. This paper suggests that a pluralist approach to organizational analysis helps to reveal the nature and extent of changes required to the quality management system and the requirements for implementing changes.

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