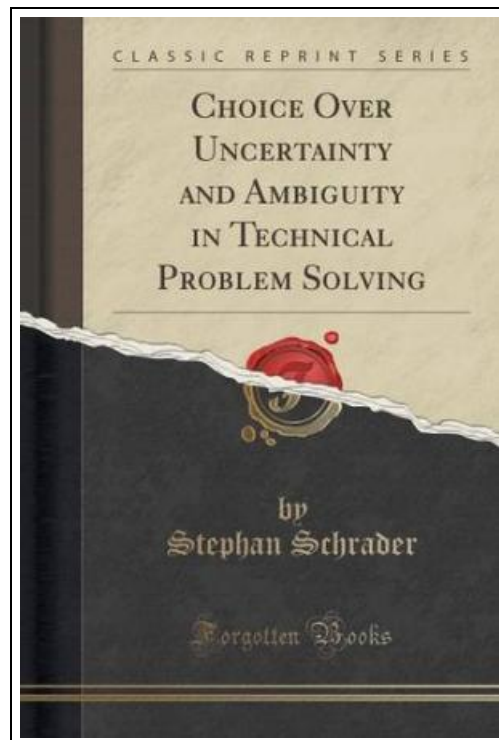


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CHOICE OVER UNCERTAINTY AND AMBIGUITY IN TECHNICAL PROBLEM SOLVING (CLASSIC REPRINT)



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Forgotten Books, United States, 2015. Paperback. Book Condition: New. 229 x 152 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book ***** Print on Demand *****.Excerpt from Choice Over Uncertainty and Ambiguity in Technical Problem Solving Technical problems are solved under uncertainty and ambiguity. Most empirical research in technical problem solving has two characteristics in common: no differentiation between uncertainty and ambiguity is made, and the degree of uncertainty or ambiguity is considered exogenous to the problem-solving process. This paper argues, first, that uncertainty and ambiguity are dissimilar concepts, thereby following ideas proposed by the recent literature. Problem solving under ambiguity involves fundamentally different tasks than problem solving under uncertainty. Consequently, different organizational structures are appropriate and different types of resources needed. Second, it is argued that levels of uncertainty and ambiguity are not exogenously given but rather are determined in the problem-framing process. In this process, problem solvers select explicitly or implicitly specific levels of uncertainty and ambiguity. This choice is contingent on context characteristics such as prior problem-solving experiences, organizational context, and available resources. It is proposed that the efficiency of the problem-solving process and the outcome of the process depends on the fit between the levels of uncertainty and ambiguity chosen and the context characteristics. Implications of the proposed framework for research on communication gatekeepers and on the role of top managers in technical change are discussed. Keywords: Problem solving, problem framing, technology management, uncertainty, ambiguity Introduction Research on problem solving, especially on technical problem solving, has addressed the effects of ambiguity and/or uncertainty on the problem-solving process (Marples 1961; Sutherland 1977), the interplay between uncertainty/ambiguity and organization structure (Marquis and Straight 1965; Lawrence and Lorsch 1969; Larson and Gobeli 1988), and the need for different communication channels under different uncertainty/ambiguity conditions (Tushman 1978; Tushman and Nadler 1980; Allen...



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