An Investigation of NASA Affordability Culture and Implications on Engineering Management

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Improving NASA system affordability requires a better understanding of affordability culture.

Method
Affordability culture will be assessed through a combination of surveys and semi-structured interviews.

Survey
NASA employees will be surveyed to determine agreement over factors of affordability and perceptions of the current workplace culture.

Question topics:
1. Factors of Affordability
2. Organizational Goals
3. Organization Structure
4. Organizational Focus

Interviews
A series of semi-structured interviews will expand upon survey responses to further explore promising topics.

Cultural Analysis
Survey and interview results will be used to:
1. characterize cultural typology and strength;
2. gather individual affordability definitions.

What Does “Affordability” Mean to You?
Preliminary interview responses from a concurrent study of affordability in the aerospace industry

- Affordability is exploring the tradespace and finding the best value for the money.
- Affordability is providing the required function at the required reliability at the lowest cost.
- Affordability is closely tied to sustainability and the ability to reduce costs through efficiencies over time.
- Affordability is whatever the market will bare.
- Affordability is providing the best value to the customer.
- Affordability is getting the most performance for the least cost.
- Affordability is whether or not you can afford a system.

Future Work: Cultural Analysis
The Competing Values Framework is a two dimensional model to evaluate (1) perceptions of cultural typology and (2) consensus among workers.

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