Knowledge Management in Projects

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ABSTRACT

Knowledge transfer in project-based organizations has been recognized as a productivity and economic growth promoter that is currently not properly managed. Therefore, it is critical to investigate the importance of knowledge regarding its acquisition, use, and transfer across all departments of an organization. The main objective of this work was to evaluate how modern organizations from different business sectors manage and share their knowledge by following the knowledge management and transfer life cycles when developing their projects. Organizational surveys were performed to project managers working in project management within in multiple Portuguese industries (or with representation in Portugal) from multiple business sectors and holding different hierarchical positions. The present study revealed that most companies can identify, capture, and retain the relevant knowledge, and apply it to the development of other projects. Thus, the importance of implementing the knowledge management transfer to other projects is crucial for successful project implementation and management.

KEYWORDS

Knowledge, Knowledge Management, Knowledge Shared, Knowledge Stored, Knowledge Transfer, Project Management, Projects, Transfer

1. INTRODUCTION

Globalization and market competitiveness create the need, in modern organizations, to adapt their internal policies and procedures, to this, new Era called Knowledge Economy. Therefore, organizations are now focused on understanding and managing the knowledge of people so they can increase their competitiveness in the markets. Today, organizations face an overflow of information that, in most cases, they don't know how to integrate or even understand the importance of these knowledge. The concept of knowledge management and knowledge transfer aim to provide a different overview of

such problem. Knowledge management is a concept, which is fundamental to increase the efficiency of an organization decision making ability and is increasingly recognized as a promoter of economic growth and productivity but at present is managed inefficiently (Handzi et al., 2015; PMI, 2015).

Knowledge management can be defined by the process through which organizations generate value from their intellectual and knowledge-based assets (Bhattacharya et al., 2004) and consists of both as a set of practices on different research fields (Bootz et al., 2019). Even though knowledge management is available from outside or internal sources, it generally originates within individuals, teams, or organization processes (Anand et al., 2011).

Knowledge management has been recognized by many authors as a lever for growth and development of organizations, nothing is more competitive than its ability to produce innovation and this innovation component will always relate to the management of intellectual capital (Terzieva, 2014). In this way, knowledge management arises to manage this intellectual capital, which allows creating an organization of people's ideas, transforming tacit knowledge into a tangible asset for the organization. This tacit knowledge is powered by the experience acquired over time that allows an individual to confront new challenges and create several solutions. Fialho et al., (2006) argues that the main purpose of knowledge management is to boost and evaluate the ability of an organization in dealing with the abundant flow of information and the ability to adapt to changes. The main purpose to share the knowledge is to make the knowledge visible and to show the role of the impact of knowledge in organizations and encourage employees to foster behaviors such as knowledge sharing and build the knowledge infrastructure (Merlo, 2016).

Knowledge management strategy is also defined by its life cycle, in the existence of several processes that are assumed, to have a role in organizations. It also can trigger open innovation (Lopes et al., 2017). Different models have been introduced by several authors and have been reviewed (Shongwe, 2016).

Due to the diversity of models created, the latest and referred to as an advanced life cycle model of knowledge management was taken into consideration in the present work. This model reflects an evolution over time presented by the authors Evans, and Dalkir Bidian (2014), involving seven stages: identify, create, store, share, use, learn and improve. Although there are 7 stage mentioned, the author Iskandar et al (2017) mention that, the renowned model of four modes of knowledge creation consisted of socialization, externalization, internalization, and combination. Knowledge management process in its implementation is supported by the pillars of information technology in various ways in different companies.

A fundamental concept in Knowledge Management is the knowledge transfer since is one of the elements of the knowledge management process. Argote and Ingram (2000) have defined knowledge transfer as the process through which a group, department or division is affected by the experience of others. organizational knowledge transfer can be observed through changes in knowledge or in the performance of the receiver. Knowledge occurs at various levels, including between individuals, from individuals to the explicit sources, from individuals to groups, between groups, across groups, and from group to the Organization (Argot, 2000). The adequate protection of company´s own knowledge is crucial for companies although the opening handling of knowledge is required in the internal process (Friedrich et al., 2019).

According to the report of PMI-Pulse of the profession, successful organizations are distinguished by the ability to turn ideas into actions providing the competitive advantage they need, recognizing as main formula and effective knowledge transfer (PMI, 2015). With the experience gained over the years, the most effective organizations in knowledge transfer tended to improve the project results. Organizations wishing to acquire skills and capabilities to create a good knowledge transfer must comply with the following steps of the life cycle of knowledge transfer:

1. **Identifying:** Determine what knowledge needs to be transferred
2. **Capturing:** Accumulate the essential knowledge that needs to be transferred

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