Chapter 88
The Project Knowledge Management Success over the Project's Lifecycle

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ABSTRACT

The current research aims to investigate the relationship knowledge management (KM) practices play in the success of project knowledge management over the project life cycle i.e. at the beginning of the project, during the project and after the project. Results demonstrate that among the three phases of the project, KM practices during the project phase have a greater impact on the success of project knowledge management. This research has implications for HR and project professionals as our findings indicate that the training of project members, evaluations by external consultants, regular meetings with project leaders and reviewing lessons learnt are the most significant factors for the success of project knowledge management in the context of projects being undertaken in Pakistan.

INTRODUCTION

The research presented in this paper primarily extends the work of (Hanisch et al., 2009) by studying the relationship of knowledge management (KM) practices during the life cycle of a project and the success of project knowledge management in Pakistan's project environment. (Hanisch, Lindner, Mueller, & Wald, 2009) used qualitative approach to identify the role of KM practices in success of projects over the project life cycle whereas this research employed a quantitative approach to validate the theoretical framework proposed by (Hanisch et al., 2009).

In today's evolving knowledge environment, KM plays a significant role in the success of the project. Lack of project knowledge management is one of the leading causes for project failure (Desouza &

Evaristo, 2004). Knowing what factors of KM contribute to the success of the project is pivotal. It would lead to those essential KM practices that would assist in improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the projects, thus contributing to organization's benefits. If we know the most critical KM practices and how to effectively manage these practices, we may have more chances of the project success (Hanisch et al., 2009).

The areas of knowledge management and project management have been researched to a greater extent independently. However, little research has tried to combine both fields of research and analyze the relationship between them (Love, Fong, & Irani, 2005; Brookes, Morton, Dainty, & Burns 2006).

The current research investigates how KM practices during the different phases of the project life cycle affect the success of project knowledge management. These practices are spanned over the lifecycle of project i.e. at the beginning of the project, during the project and after the completion of the project. Therefore, it is imperative to comprehend their role in success of project knowledge management. Till to date, no research has been carried out in Pakistan in order to determine the pattern of knowledge management practices over the life cycle of project.

THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

The literature review below describes the theoretical justification for the linkages shown in the proposed framework (see Figure 1). We first discuss project knowledge management and project knowledge management success. Moreover, how KM practices affects the success of project knowledge management during its different phases. Next we present the methods used for data analysis. This is followed by a discussion of the implications for research and practice, and finally recommendations are suggested based on research findings.

Knowledge Management and Project Knowledge Management

Knowledge Management entails all practices of an organization to store, create, share and use knowledge to enhance organizational performance (Probst, Bu¨chel, & Raub, 1998; Iandoli & Zollo, 2007). Knowledge Management is used by organizations to increase innovativeness and responsiveness (Hackbarth, 1998). Effective exploration and exploitation of knowledge has been recognized as a key to competitive organizational performance (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). That is why organizations are implementing different KM practices to enhance their ability to exploit knowledge and eventually to improve firm's performance (Nonaka, 1994).

Project knowledge management encompasses the knowledge management in temporary project scenarios. Project knowledge management includes the knowledge within projects as well as from projects (Schindler & Eppler, 2003). The knowledge transfer process always includes the individual irrespective of level of organizations. The transfer of knowledge from and between the projects can be said as expert knowledge, procedural knowledge, methodological knowledge and experience knowledge. This knowledge transfer contributes to the organizational knowledge base (Hanisch et al., 2009; Linder & Wald, 2011).

An organizational integrated systems and priority in company's information systems is needed for successful implementation and good performance of knowledge management (Amalia & Nugoro, 2011). Wilkesmann (2011) deliberates on the use of innovative ways like e- learning and electronic databases of KM. The critical factors which provide chances to obtain and provide knowledge are the organizational

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