

Global Project Management: Achieving Sustainability in Diverse Multinational Organizational Development Initiatives

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INTRODUCTION

Project management (PM) is a growing field of study that applies a combination of analytical techniques, interpersonal skills, complex problem solving, and advanced leadership skills to address internal and external challenges to complete project objectives. With the advances of technology and the extensive use of resources to complete project objectives, effective and efficient project management provides value to organizations by using appropriate methods and skilled professionals to achieve organizational objectives, with the aim of stewardship for sustainability initiatives.

According to the Project Management Institute (2017), “project management is the application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to project activities to meet project requirements” (p. 86). In the PM framework, practitioners accomplish project objectives through five processes: initiating, planning, executing, monitoring and controlling, and closing. The PM framework is a widely accepted management study used throughout the world to achieve project objectives in numerous industries. Some individuals demonstrate proficiency in PM by taking a project management professional certification exam.

Obtaining certification as a project management professional (PMP) is not an easy task, as demonstrated by the number of certified practitioners. According to the Project Management Institute (PMI), there are currently 932,720 active certified Project Management Professionals (PMP) and 300 chartered chapters across different countries worldwide (PMI, 2019). Fewer than 10,000 hold additional certifications in the subclasses of risk, program management, risk management, and professional scheduling. Despite the use of PM foundations and applications in a vast number of international industries, 95% of all certified individuals are located in the United States.

Organizations that use project management professionals and a project management framework provide exceptional value. Doing so aligns organizational objectives and uses efficient strategic management to solve challenges in managing the project. Used properly, PM provides better efficiency in service delivery, improved customer satisfaction, and effectiveness in service delivery. The PM framework helps an organization attain a higher standing and a competitive edge.

Project management focuses on quality and risk management, which are useful in eliminating excessive waste found during the execution of production. Attention to detail in these areas improves quality outcomes, as teams are dedicated to ensuring that quality measures are followed while meeting the core

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objectives of the deliverables. Detailed attention concerning risk provides cash value savings that could be reinvested back into the organization for additional projects, wages, or capital improvements.

The demand for those who hold advanced PM knowledge is high and projected to stay in demand, in contrast to the limited numbers individuals in the field and academics that hold PM certifications. According to a 2009 estimate by the Project Management Institute, the demand for project management services from 2010 to 2020 was projected to be 11 million jobs in multiple industries, with a projected global revenue stream of \$6.61 trillion. The number of certified personnel will not meet that demand. This deficiency creates significant concern for those heavily involved in project management operations, as risks and cost overruns could increase over time.

The purpose of this research proposal is to examine project management in the global context, i.e., within multinational organizations. We seek to explore the theoretical framework of organizational development. This includes exploring gaps in applications of project management principles, understanding diversity in multinational corporations, and arguing for continuing discussion of project management in global organizations.

BACKGROUND

Project Management in Global Organizations

Many industries are becoming globalized, with significant advances in technology and distribution channels that maintain efficiency benchmarks and support continued, efficient production. The concept of globalization derives from a firm's ability to extend its market reach abroad (Abyad, 2017). Including manufacturing, sales, and a variety of services, globalization has increased competition and revenue. Increased globalization has intensified international competition as well. Globalization provides more opportunities for applying project management principles, both in the United States and abroad. Despite these opportunities, however, projects encounter more challenges due to environmental enterprise factors that are not as common in domestic projects. Furthermore, international projects are more complicated; social, economic, political, and cultural factors may affect the project environment negatively (Abyad, 2017).

International projects must consider cross-cultural management concepts. With a significant number of certified PMPs located in the US, the lack of certified practitioners abroad may not impede the desired results in global markets, affecting the triple bottom line (Martens & Carvahlo, 2017). Cultural differences may also affect the discipline and desire to complete projects efficiently and methodically.

Integration and scope management may differ across cultural boundaries (Abyad, 2017). For example, Asian cultures tend to abstain from confrontations and risks when possible, whereas competing stakeholder voices are not uncommon in domestic interactions. Communication management could encounter difficulty due to the different methods by which diverse cultures express themselves (e.g., body language). A lack of understanding could make integration more difficult, thus threatening the chances of successful projects.

Kostaloya, Libena, and Patak (2017) presented research on the European Union with four objectives: analyze and assess PM familiarity in the Czech Republic; analyze dependence between project organizers' scope familiarity and PM effectiveness; analyze dependencies of the degree of application of PM methods, and recommend approaches to increase utilization of public resources. The researchers evaluated applications of several PM methods to determine their effectiveness and appropriate uses.

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