Sharing Knowledge in Projects

Zinga Novais
ISEG, Universidade de Lisboa, Portugal

Jorge Vareda Gomes
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0656-9284
Universidade Lusófona, Lisboa, Portugal

Mario Romão
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4564-1883
ISEG, Universidade de Lisboa, Portugal

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Projects have been increasingly used in the implementation of organizations' business operations. Knowledge sharing has been considered essential in the project environment; therefore, the integration of knowledge management within project management becomes crucial for project success. The objective of this research is to study how knowledge sharing is integrated within the context of a project, and what is the perception of project team members about it. A case study was carried out in a company within the financial sector, focused on a project team of the entity. The results revealed that project managers, other professionals in project management, and the organization itself are very much aware of the importance of knowledge sharing. The results also emphasized that, regardless of the lack of incentives by top management, project team members consider that knowledge sharing highly contributes to a successful execution of projects.

INTRODUCTION

An increasing number of organizations have implemented their business operations through projects (Todorović, et al., 2015). Projects can be defined as temporary effort to create a specific product or service (PMI, 2017). Temporarily, in the sense that a project has a defined beginning and end, and is unique, in the sense that the product/service is different in some way and is distinct from other products/ services (Owen & Burstein, 2005; PMI, 2017). Projects are collective endeavors, with goals based on the

development of common understandings, which generate personal and group knowledge that contribute to their success (Sankarasubramanian, 2009).

For many organizations, knowledge is the most important asset and its survival depends on the organization's ability to effectively use existing knowledge and to effectively create, develop, and use new knowledge (Pascoe & More, 2005). Proper knowledge is a basic prerequisite for effective project management (Gasik, 2011) and knowledge management is a vital factor for successfully undertaking projects (Sokhanvar, 2014). According to Koskinen and Pihlanto (2008), projects are often dependent on knowledge that is not in their possession. Within this context, the integration of knowledge management in project management is necessary to share information and knowledge to solve problems effectively and efficiently (Yeong & Lim, 2010). Knowledge is defined by Gao et al. (2018) as the practical and theoretical understanding of a subject, and it is considered to be an essential organizational resource (Buvik & Tvedt, 2017; Hanisch et al., 2009) and its management is considered to be a fundamental tool for the success of projects (Romani, 2017).

Generically, knowledge management represents the set of processes and practices carried out in organizations to increase the intellectual potential and of improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the management of organizational knowledge resources (Heisig, 2009; Andreeva and Kianto, 2012). The basic purpose of knowledge management is to create and share knowledge within organizations (Chen et al., 2018). Knowledge sharing is especially important in a project environment and contributes significantly to the performance of organizations (Buvik & Tvedt, 2017) and their ability to understand the best way to share knowledge between teams and between members of a project (Fernie et., 2003). Furthermore, Al Ahbabi et al. (2019) conclude that the dimensions of knowledge management have a positive impact on the innovation, quality, and operational performance of employees. Gürlek & Çemberci (2020) show that firms led by knowledge-oriented leaders have a high level of knowledge management capacity, innovation performance, and firm performance. In turn, owing to the temporary nature of projects, knowledge management in project-based organizations is not similar to functional companies (Kasvi, Vartiainen, & Hailikari, 2003). In addition, project team members split up or leave after project completion and this poses several challenges to projects and project-based organizations (Ajmal, Helo, & Kekale, 2010).

Through a case study approach, this research proves that team members use different knowledge-sharing practices and recognize their importance for the successful management of their projects.

BACKGROUND

Knowledge

"Knowledge is seen as an intangible asset, which is valuable, distinctive, path-dependent, causally ambiguous and hard to substitute or replicate" (Fang et al., 2013, p. 945). Knowledge is considered to be an essential strategic resource that allows organizations to maintain a competitive advantage in a dynamic market environment (Rashed, 2016).

There is no single definition of knowledge, it has different understandings which depend on the context in which it is defined (Ekambaram et al., 2018). For example, knowledge can be defined as the following: the practical and theoretical understanding of a subject (Gao et al., 2018); the ability to make judgments (Fernie et al., 2003); is based on reflection and human experience (De Long & Fahey,

Related Content

Biological Image Analysis via Matrix Approximation

Jieping Ye, Ravi Janardanand Sudhir Kumar (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition (pp. 166-170).*

www.irma-international.org/chapter/biological-image-analysis-via-matrix/10815

Data Mining and the Text Categorization Framework

Paola Cerchiello (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition (pp. 394-399).*

www.irma-international.org/chapter/data-mining-text-categorization-framework/10850

Discovering an Effective Measure in Data Mining

Takao Ito (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition (pp. 654-662).*

www.irma-international.org/chapter/discovering-effective-measure-data-mining/10890

Mining Generalized Web Data for Discovering Usage Patterns

Doru Tanasa (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition (pp. 1275-1281).*

www.irma-international.org/chapter/mining-generalized-web-data-discovering/10986

Enhancing Web Search through Web Structure Mining

Ji-Rong Wen (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition (pp. 764-769).*

www.irma-international.org/chapter/enhancing-web-search-through-web/10906