Project Manager Assignment and Its Impact on Multiple Project Management Effectiveness: An Empirical Study of IT Projects in the Lebanese Commercial Banks

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ABSTRACT
This article aims at identifying the predictive effect of Project Manager’s assignment on multiple project management effectiveness in the case of information technology projects in the Lebanese banks. The multiple project management effectiveness was measured on 3 different levels: organizational, projects success and project manager. A survey-based analysis was conducted on a random sample of 43 project managers working in 19 different Lebanese commercial banks. The results showed that most of the project manager’s assignment factors influence positively the multiple project effectiveness with some exceptions.

KEYWORDS
Banking Sector, Information Systems, Information Systems Project Management, Multiple Project Management Effectiveness, Project Management, Project Manager Assignment

INTRODUCTION
“Between 2010 and 2020, 15.7 million new project management roles will be created globally across seven project-intensive industries” (PMI, 2013c). The need of the project managers’ workforce is hence increasing substantially to accommodate the fast-growing projects adoption worldwide. The Finance and Insurance industry is considered as one of the seven project-intensive industries mentioned in the report that is always in need of competent project managers to handle its project-oriented work (PMI, 2013b). Technology-oriented projects are more trending within banks specifically as many new products and services such as ATMs, online banking, mobile application are adopted to create a competitive advantage and attract customers (Kamel, 2005). Banks are also relying more on Information Technology (IT) to improve their internal transactions and data sharing in addition to their external transactions and relationships with customers (Marinč, 2013). However, banks are facing a major challenge in implementing and closing these IT projects successfully due to the absence of appropriate project management processes, tools, and techniques (Kamel, 2005; Montequín, Fernández, Fernández, and Balsera, 2016).

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This paper will study the effect of the project manager (PM) assignment on project management effectiveness in a multiple project management (MPM) environment where multiple projects are being managed by one PM at the same time. The focus will be on the management of IT projects in commercial banks operating in Lebanon.

Little or no research has been done previously to study the factors that may influence the MPM effectiveness in IT projects in banks; in particular, the effect of the PM assignment on it. Such research will help Lebanese banks in identifying the main criteria in PM assignment that may help in improving the MPM effectiveness and consequently may enhance the IT projects’ outcomes, help in achieving competitive advantage and increase customer satisfaction with better products.

This study aims to identify the main criteria in PM assignment that can influence MPM effectiveness, whether positively or negatively, in the case of IT projects in Lebanese commercial banks. The study will try to answer the following question:

**What are the main factors that should be considered by Lebanese commercial banks during PM assignment, to achieve improved effectiveness in multiple project management? Which factors have the most influence on MPM?**

The sections will be as follows: At first, previous literature about project management, IT projects and banks, MPM effectiveness and PM assignment will be introduced along with previous researches that were conducted on the topics under study. The main procedures and methodology used in the research will be discussed afterwards and the project variables will be listed. The quantitative results will be presented afterwards and the major findings will be discussed. At last, conclusions will be drawn based on the findings.

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

**Project Management and MPM**

“Fifty-one million is the number of people across the globe engaged in the management of projects,” as per the Project Management Institute’s (PMI) annual report for year 2013 (PMI, 2013b). Companies are relying on projects and effective project management to attain their stated goals (Anantatmula, 2010; Montequin et al., 2016), hence they are focusing more on improving the project managers’ skills and performance on projects as a way to achieve better outcomes on both project and organizations levels. (Chang & Torkzadeh, 2013; Creasy & Anantatmula, 2013).

Project management involves all the activities that a project manager undertakes to achieve clients’ requirements throughout the five different process groups starting from initiating, planning, executing, and controlling up to closing (PMI, 2013a). The project manager role is to successfully manage the project’s multiple tasks and resources to attain the main objectives set by the project stakeholders (PMI, 2013a).

During the project initiating phase, the PM assignment is considered as one of the first and most important steps that an organization should take (Patanakul, Milosevic & Anderson, 2007). Multi-Project Management is defined as managing several projects during the same period of time (Fricke & Shenhar, 2000). In other words, a single project manager is assigned to different independent projects that are being implemented simultaneously. MPM is different than Portfolio management as portfolios consists of a group of projects and programs that aims to achieve particular strategic
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