Utilization of Project Management Software in Qatari Government Organizations: A Field-Force Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the critical driving and resisting forces that promote or inhibit the implementation and use of project management (PM) software in Qatari Government Organizations in an attempt to determine whether software-based PM methodologies are being effectively implemented in the public sector organizations or not. Research hypotheses were evaluated using ANOVA and Mann-Whitney test. Findings indicated that forces that promote or inhibit software based PM implementation are significantly affected by the managerial interest and nature of existing (traditional or contemporary) PM practices. More importantly our findings identified some driving forces that promote the implementation of software-based PM methodology (SPMM) in Qatari government organizations and also identified some roadblocks that prohibit such implementations. Finally managerial implications for the successful implementation of SPMM are provided and avenues for further research are suggested.

Keywords: Driving Forces, Field-Force Analysis, Project Management, Qatar, Resisting Forces, Software-Based PM Methodology

INTRODUCTION

The 1950s marked the beginning of the modern project management era and since then, PM has been a hot topic in many sectors. The reason is that organizations invest a lot of money and efforts into projects with the expectation of realizing value, on time and within budget in order to meet their pre-defined objectives. Unfortunately too often these projects fail to deliver on these expectations. Project problems are particularly well known in areas surrounding information technology (IT) investments, and governmental management of IT initiatives (Latendresse & Chen, 2003). There are numerous studies that have quantified project failure rates ranging from 50-70% which is considered to be quite high (PMI, 2004).
However recent studies indicated that there are many critical success factors (CSFs) in the improvement of project success rates. These include improved project management and delivery methodologies, training and recognizing the importance of Project Management Offices (PMO) whose entire mission is to improve project implementation and planned outcome (PMI, 2004; Hillam & Edwards, 2001). Many people would argue that the greatest contributor to this improvement is the Project Management Institute (PMI), which has published a vendor neutral body of knowledge and provides training, certification and a community of best practices for project managers. For the first time, project managers now have a common language, career path and universally recognized certification as professionals in their field. One such tool that creates an element of standardization is PM software. Software systems or functions are set of tools that are utilized to support management of project activities which may include planning, tracking, analysis and output. Some example of popular project management software are Timeline™ (by Symantec), Project™ (by Microsoft), Instaplan™ (by Instaplan), Project Scheduler™ (by Scitor), Mac Project™ (by Clavis) and Project Management™ (by Primavera Systems).

While there is no doubt that the PMI, along with the hundreds of tool and training vendors and thousands of published white papers on PM have all contributed to the improvement in project outcomes, there are a number of barriers and challenges which can impede or limit project success in government organizations. These barriers and challenges come from the complexities and unique characteristics of government projects and the nature of organization structure, culture and behaviors (Abbasi & Maharmeh, 2000; Krauth, 1999).

More importantly the review of the literature reveals that there is a gap that needs to be empirically investigated. No previous empirical study has tried to investigate the critical success factors (CSFs) related to SPMM in a developing country such as Qatar. Accordingly, the main objectives of this research are: (i) to identify the enablers promoting software-based PM implementation, (ii) to determine the inhibitors of software-based PM implementation, and (iii) to suggest recommendations and a suitable framework on how to improve the role of software-based PM in government organizations.

**IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY**

The study offers an added factor to be taken into consideration, particularly when examining the effect of the CSFs for IT PM implementation. The projects that were studied and analyzed as a part of this investigation were largely related to IT. Therefore the set of CSFs evaluated were associated with successful application of PM software to effectively handle IT projects within government organizations.

More importantly, this study offers a theoretical model that can be considered as a step forward in developing an integrated model toward investigating the relationship between enablers and inhibitors and the implementation of project management software. The government sector was chosen as focus of the study because in developing countries (such as Qatar) government takes overall initiative and responsibility for launching and consequently promoting IT ventures and projects. Furthermore the study contributes by comparing the CSFs for PM implementation in the government organizations of developed and developing countries. Finally, this research adds to the body of knowledge by providing new data and empirical insights into the relationship between the CSFs of software-based PM in the Qatari government organizations.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

PM software is becoming an important issue because the need for effective project management is becoming increasingly necessary in the public and private sectors of today. Hence speed, quality, and cost control are taking on increased significance in business, govern-