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Comparing communication style within project teams of three project-oriented organizations in Iran

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Abstract

If we consider project as a temporary organization, based on the Organizational theory we can also consider it as a human community. In this regard and with attention to major sociologists' confirmation, communication plays very important role in any human community and with the same importance in projects with multicultural context. In this framework and using descriptive-analytical method, this research tries to analyze and compare communication style in two project teams from any three selected project-oriented organizations in Iran. Thus after some interviews, in order to determine team members' communication styles a questionnaire was designed and distributed between two project team members that one of them had been known as high performance team and another as a low performance from CEO point of view, based on performance indexes that previously generated by corporates. Then achieved data analyzed by Excel and SPSS. The main result indicates that probably there is a correlation between communication style arrangement of team members and project team performance. Teams that had been formed by all kind of communication style peoples, with suitable arrangement commonly had better performance than other teams that had been formed by same communication style peoples. In another word in first kind of teams, team member complete each other and create better communication network than second one. However this result needs more empirical and theoretical study. It is believed that this study can prepare context for future research in order to improve communication among project teams to obtain high performance.

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1. Introduction

In modern disturbed world, Communication has been considered as a heart of project management (Kerzner, 2009). This reality was emphasized when project had been considered as a temporary organization. It's because as majority of sociologists have addressed, communication plays very important role in coordination and integration of any society such as organizational society. In level of program and portfolio we can see the footmark of communication as a one of the most important element, for example in level of portfolio, effective communication is a vital function in order to management of risk, resource and stakeholders (PMI, 2013). Chaster Bernard in his interesting book, (The Function of the Executive) emphasized that communication is the primary task of any executive, and communication with employees regarding their concerns, problems, ideas, and suggestions about the organization is the critical skill of managing. Also he believed that in the exhaustive theory of organization, communication would occupy a central place, because the structure, extensiveness, and scope of organization are almost entirely determined by communication techniques (Henderson, 2004). Also John Naisbitt believed that "future competition will be managerial competition, and the focus of competition among organization will be effective communication among the member of the organization and with external organizations" (Tai, Wang, & Anumba, 2008). From another perspective, In new word that organization and team members from different cultural background work together, partnering has been presented as one of the most suitable approach for dominate the new practical shortcoming (Floricel, Bonneau, Aubry, & Sergi, 2014), thus communication can plays very important role, because without effective communication we can't achieve effective partnering (Tam, Shen, Yau, & Tam, 2006; Tai, Wang, & Anumba, 2008; EL-Saboni, Aouad, & Sabuni, 2005; Adnan, Shamsuddin, Supardi, & Ahmad, 2012).

In next sections we review previous research about important of communication in different area of project management especially in multicultural condition of Iran society, after that we provide some explain about communication style model and our approach in this research to this special concept, we also provide research methodology and some information about selected cases, then using descriptive-analytical approach, we try to analyze communication style arrangement of two project teams from any three selected project-oriented organization in Iran, that one of them has been known as high performance and another as a low performance team from CEO point of view and performance indexes that previously generated by corporates, and in final we discuss about results and provide some area of research for further studies in the future.

2. Importance of communication in different area of project management

Accomplished researches show that different area of project management is widely affected by the communication framework. For example in area of human resource management (HRM) Peter Drucker considered Human Relations and communication to be important parts of a foundation for future development of the basic principles for managing work and workers (Bredin & Soderlund, 2011). Also in area of Knowledge management, there is interdependence between shared knowledge within transnational project on the one hand, and communication and coordination on the other. Research showed in most complex word, failures to create shared knowledge in the initial phase of transnational project had consequences on the effectiveness of communication and coordination in transnational project. Also when communication and interaction were not encouraged and required, coordination for shared knowledge was not developed over time within the project team (Adenfelt, 2009). communication also plays very important role, but with some difference in virtual teams, when we pay close attention to virtual project team we confront with two kind of communication problem: inadequate communication and technological problem hindering communication, the first appears to be a key risk on project of both type (virtual and non-virtual projects) but the second one does not appear to be a key risk for either type of project. kind of communication that happen in virtual team often have been seen insufficient, because of its inability to transfer certain type of implicit knowledge or expertise successfully via electronic communication method or in another word without face-to-face communication (Reed & Knight, 2009; Adenfelt, 2009). Frequency of communication has a great influence on trust and interdependence among team member, and we know that improving in these two factors finally lead to achieve high level performance team in different dimensions, especially in area of knowledge transfer (Park & Lee, 2013). In area of leadership, the chosen style of communication base on the various factors will differ from leader to leader and from project to project, but communication with people remains an intrinsic part of