

Conference on ENTERprise Information Systems / International Conference on Project
MANagement / Conference on Health and Social Care Information Systems and Technologies,
CENTERIS / ProjMAN / HCist 2015 October 7-9, 2015

A conceptual model for exploring the relationship between sustainability and project success

A.J.Gilbert Silvius^{ab*}, Ron Schipper^b

^aLOI University of Applied Sciences, Leiderdorp, the Netherlands

^bVan Aetsveld, Amersfoort, the Netherlands

Abstract

Sustainability is one of the most important challenges of our time. How can we develop prosperity, without compromising the life of future generations? Companies are integrating sustainability in their marketing, communication and their actions. Sustainability has more recently also been linked to project management. The logic behind this link is that sustainability needs change and projects are realizing change. Several studies explored how the concept of sustainability impact project management. The research project reported in this paper elaborates on these works by studying how sustainability affects the perception of project success. Project managers, logically, strive for project success and considering sustainability may influence the perception of success. Despite studies that show a positive business case of considering sustainability in business strategy, paying attention to sustainability aspects in projects is generally still perceived as ‘costing time or money’ and therefore as not supportive to project success. The conceptual model developed in this paper provides a more detailed understanding of how considering different dimensions of sustainability may affect the individual criteria of project success. The empirical part of the study is still in progress. This paper reports the literature review and the development of the conceptual model.

© 2015 The Authors. Published by Elsevier B.V. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

Peer-review under responsibility of SciKA - Association for Promotion and Dissemination of Scientific Knowledge

Keywords: Sustainability; triple bottom line; project management; project management success.

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +31 6 50618051.

E-mail address: mail@gilbertsilvius.nl

1. Introduction

In the last 10 to 15 years, the concept of sustainability has grown in recognition and importance²⁷. How can we develop prosperity without compromising the future? Industry leaders realize that ‘greenwashing’ of current business practices is not a solution. The 2012 BSR/Globe Scan study⁶ concludes that “The most important leadership challenge facing business today is the integration of sustainability into core business functions.”. One of these business functions is project management, and ‘green’ or ‘sustainable’ project management’ is identified as one of the most important global project management trends today¹.

Also in academic research, the relationship between project management and sustainability is explored^{11, 5, 26} as one of the (future) developments in project management. The growing number of publications on the integration of sustainability into project management²⁶ indicate that the topic is “... picking up momentum”²⁸. Based on a structured review of 164 books, articles, papers and book chapters, Silvius and Schipper²⁶ identify several ‘impact areas’ that provide leverage points for the consideration of sustainability in projects. One of these impact areas is project success. It is this aspect of the relationship between sustainability and project success, that the study reported in this paper explores. Integrating sustainability considerations in the project may be expected to, for example, enhance stakeholder satisfaction of the project. However, paying attention to sustainability aspects in projects is generally perceived to ‘cost time or money’ and therefore as not supportive to the time and budget criteria of project success, despite experiences that show a positive business case of considering sustainability in business strategy.

The research question of the study is formulated as *How does the explicit consideration of sustainability in projects, affect the perception of project success?* The rationale behind this question is that project managers, logically, strive for project success and that considering sustainability may have an influence on the perception of success.

The study is still in progress. This paper reports the literature review and the development of the conceptual model. The empirical phase of the study is planned for the second half of 2015.

2. Literature review

This section reports the review of earlier publications on the main variables of our research question: project success and sustainability. Based on the conceptualizations of these variables found in literature, we will construct the conceptual model of the study.

2.1. Project success

The concept, or criteria of, project success has been a variable in numerous studies. Few people would disagree with the statement that project success is interpretable in many ways. It is, simply put, a rather “elusive concept”²⁴. Most early research on project success seems to emphasize the three traditional dimensions: (within) time, (within) budget and (within) specification, also known as the iron triangle, “despite the fact that this method is currently subject to widespread criticism”⁴. However, starting around the early 80s of last century, other factors are emerging in literature, such as “measuring success after delivery” that “involves looking at the benefits or effectiveness of the project from the perspective of the stakeholder”¹⁶. In one of the most cited publications from that period that took an extended look on project success, Pinto and Slevin emphasized the importance to consider project success “over time”²³. The development of the perception of project success over time has also been pointed out by Shenhar et al.²⁵.

In our analysis of studies on project success, we found 27 different ‘measures’ of project success. Table 1 presents these measures and their sources. From this overview, it shows that project success is a multidimensional concept and that many factors are identified that go beyond the traditional ‘iron triangle’ criteria. Table 1 also demonstrates that there is no consensus about a universal (set of) measures for project success.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/489466>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/489466>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)