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Project Management Success Factors

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Abstract

Project management success is extremely interesting topic from scientific, as well as practical point of view. Namely, different models of project management success emerged through history, indicating the level of thoughts considering management of project successful. This article differs project management from project success, gives definitions of project management success, aims to review different models of project management success, differs success of managing public and private projects and gives a special accent on present situation in context of project management in Croatia. Comprehensive literature review is given, analysis and synthesis of most interesting material is made, and applicable practical guidelines are defined.

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1. Introduction

Maybe the most beloved word of any project practitioner is “success” [1]. There are two main success concepts when talking about projects: project success and project management success. There are similarities, as well as differences, between these two project success dimensions [2-5]. The main difference concerns with linking project success with result of evaluation of overall project goals achievement, while project management success relates to traditional measurements of time, cost and quality performance [2, 3, 6, 7]. However, due to existence of many different models of both project and project management success, it is hard to make a strong differentiation between them, mostly because of their mutual relationships.

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Nomenclature

EU	European Union
WWTP	Wastewater treatment plant
GIS	Geographic information system
PM	Project management
WBS	Work breakdown structure
OBS	Organizational breakdown structure
SWOT	Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
PDM	Precedence diagram method
EVM	Earned value management

Although there is no consensus definition of what project success consists of [7- 10], authors are agreed that project success can be achieved through good actions of project manager [11-13].

This article deals with project management success with an aim to contribute to today's knowledge and practices existing on the area of construction management in particular. Construction projects success is namely fundamental question for most governments, users and communities [12], so it is very important never to stop looking for new ways of contribution to improvement of construction management success.

This aim will be achieved through four parts. In the first part, comprehensive literature review is given, defining different meanings and models of project management success through time. In the second part, project management success factors are given in a breakdown structure. The structure consists of three parts: project management competence, organizational elements and project management tools, methods, methodologies and techniques. This breakdown structure is explained through management of public, EU co-financed water projects in the third part. Finally, recommendations for future development are given in the fourth part.

2. Project management success

Project management is planning, organization, monitoring and control of all aspects of project, with motivation of all included to achieve project goals on safe manner, within agreed schedule, budget and performance criteria [14]. It can be seen from the definition of project management, that it is focused on project performance, regarding short-term dimensions of project success – adherence to criteria of time, cost and quality. The “iron triangle” model itself was the very first model of project management success [2], which has later proven to be only a part of overall project success. From this point of view, it is clear to see how it is possible to have a successful project with unsuccessful project management, and vice versa. Namely, project can be successful despite unsuccessful project management because it has achieved higher and long-term goals. In the moment when management of project stops, short-term orientation can be unsuccessful, but long-term outcome can be successful, because wider set of goals are satisfied, instead of narrow subset which project management consists of [15].

Besides the “iron triangle”, and taking into account considerations of project management success, it is possible to find many different approaches [16]. Project manager is not responsible only for time, cost and quality management, but also integration, scope, human resource, communication, risk and procurement management [17], so he or she is the most responsible person for project success.

With this in mind, it is surely possible to broaden “iron triangle” model on models that anticipate management of stakeholders' satisfaction [18, 19], benefits to organization that owns the project [16, 18, 20] and long-term impacts on project environment [21].

How to measure if project management is successful? Project management success can be evaluated through already mentioned criteria of time, cost, quality, scope, resource and activity [22], but also through models of measuring success like PMPA – *Project Management Performance Assessment* [23] or maturity models of management within organization like *Project Excellence Model*[®] [24]. It is hard to answer the question of project management success evaluation precisely, because project management creates both tangible and intangible benefits [25].

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