Investigations on Effective Virtual Project Management Carried Out Through Emotional Intelligence, Social Intelligence And Factors Reinforcing Models

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Abstract:

Literature review revealed many methods of project management coupled with business globalization. This issue has taken bigger dimensions because of rapid development of information technology techniques and advancements that support distributed and virtual project teams. Literature further reported that Virtual organizational forms have become popular, and the professional management literature consistently promoted the virtues. The objectives of the present study are to identify the factors contributing to effective virtual project management with respect to behavioural aspects. Thus the research questions are first understood with respect to behavioural challenges of VPM and how they contribute to effective VPM. Role of EI in effective VPM is identified. Further, relationship of SI and leadership style is examined in the context of effective VPM. In the end, relationship of Empowerment Climate with leadership style and customer service is studied with respect to their contribution towards effective VPM. The major contribution of present work is to established the role of EI in effective VPM and to examine the effect of VPM in relation to

leadership management.

Keywords : Project management, Virtual project, Behavioural aspects, Leadership, Management.

1.0 Introduction

The project management paradigm is too rapidly shifting due to business globalization and information technology (IT) advancement that supports distributed and virtual project teams. Virtual organizational forms have become popular, and the professional ku7management literature consistently promotes the virtues of going virtual. Global competition, reengineered product life cycles, mass customization, and the increased need to respond quickly to customers' needs are just some of the more pronounced trends currently driving organizational change [1]. Increasingly, successful organizations are those organized in a dynamic network form that, usingI Tasa primary enabler, can more quickly adapt to ever-changing competitive landscapes and customer requirements. All these dynamic organizations comprise virtual teams [2]. Organizations use virtual teams to make decisions because they have access to larger pools of information than any individual manager, which should lead to more informed decisions and improved performance. Several researchers (Chiesa, As the research is focused around virtual project management (VPM), it is important to understand how the concept of VPM has evolved in the literature[3]. Virtual project management is the system by which virtual teams collaborate for a finite period of time towards a specific goal. Virtual teams are groups of geographically and organizationally dispersed knowledge workers brought together across time and space through information and communication technologies (such as the internet or media channels) in response to specific customer needs or to complete unique projects. A team is virtual team if the

team members are geographically distributed and thus do not engage in face-to-face contact [4]. The problems and challenges faced by VTs. The challenges of leading and managing virtual teams are intensified because of the different cultures, languages, business practices and attitudes relating to hierarchy and power. It is therefore critical that leaders of VTs need to be cognizant of these differences and increase team awareness of these differences [5]. These challenges of VPM with respect to India's IT industry will be observed and analyzed in the first phase of research thesis [6].The present work first focuses what challenges these virtual teams will face in virtual project environment keeping in view the softer aspects of virtual team members. As no study has been earlier conducted on this topic with respect to India's IT industry, this will be the first to identify the challenges that project managers face in virtual projects [7]. In this research thesis, the researcher will initially examine different challenges of virtual project management such as culture and language barriers, communication and information security, information redundancy as a result of multi-channel communication, time zone differences, face to face context, team structure, trust building, conflict resolution and management, motivation and tacit knowledge sharing. Further, a model is proposed to show how these factors contribute to effective virtual project management.

2.0 Literature Review

Alexander etal [1],worked on literature review of important concepts used in the research. A snapshot of various definitions is first introduced; then challenges of VPM are identified and discussed in chapter three. Factors of VPM are theoretically correlated with EI in a project set up in chapter four. Goleman's theory of EI is explored in the perspective of virtual project environment thus covering the second phase of research. In the third

phase, relationships of Social Intelligence and Empowerment Climate with Leadership behaviour are examined and finally the affect of virtuality on their relationship is studied .

Ashkanasy etal [2], defined virtual teams to be: "…groups of workers with unique skills, who often reside in different geographical places and who have to use for co-operation means of information- and communication technology (ICT) in order to span the boundaries of time and space. Cynthia proposes that teams become virtual when any of the three Virtual: The term 'virtual' is derived from computer systems to describe 'virtual memory'- which is computer memory that shifts and varies depending on the situation. The researcher defines virtuality to be the extent to which project members are dispersed geographically and the extent they rely on information and communication technologies for carrying out project goals .

Avolio etal [3], did pioneering work on team management. According to them a team is a collection of individuals who are interdependent in their tasks, who share responsibility for outcomes, who see themselves and who are seen by others as an intact social entity embedded in one or more larger social system, and who manage their relationship across organizational boundaries. define teams as groups of people who come together to develop a shared purpose, define a shared way of working, agree on performance goals, hold themselves accountable for results, and develop complementary skills .

Ammeter etal [4], worked on increased dependence upon virtual teams which have been credited to overall ways to procure expert knowledge and transfer 'best practice" information. By implementing virtual teams, many organizations have become better equipped to capitalize on the distributed pool

of talent, experience, and expertise thereby making the achievement of organization-based objectives "better, faster, cheaper, and smarter". The authors claimed that all of these factors put more emphasis on decision-making at lower levels and increase the need for fast response times. In addition, organizations are becoming "networked rather than hierarchical" (Lipnack & Stamps, 1999,p.14).Virtual teaming indeed has allowed organizations to quickly develop and enlist the aid of geographically and organizationally dispersed human resources to resolve problems in record time .

Armandi etal [5], worked on the use of virtual teams in organizations which offers several benefits to organizations and individuals including the following: people can work from anywhere at anytime and providing flexibility to the individual.

Avolio etal [6], concluded that people can be recruited for their competencies , not just physical location (Hagen, 1999); recruiting expenses. And relocation costs can be reduced or eliminated (Hagen, 1999); organizations increase the ability to develop knowledge sharing networks and become a learning environment; expenses associated with travel, lodging, parking, and leasing or owning a building may be reduced and sometimes eliminated (Townsend et al., 1996); increased individual production (Kimball, 1997); virtual teams allow individuals to develop a diverse skill-set.

Albrecht K etal [7], observed that team members move on and off projects quickly without the delay and expense of relocation. And team members can be brought up to speed quickly by examining electronic team communications and documents . What virtual teams have in common with all teams is that members must communicate and collaborate to get work done. Virtual teams, however, must accomplish this by using technology .

3.0 Scope and objectives of present work

The present work has a number of major objectives and subobjectives. The research starts with understanding the challenges of virtual project management in the IT sector of India. Further, the research examines the role of EI in virtual project management in India's IT sector. To understand the factors that lead to effective project management, the relationship of Social intelligence and Empowerment Climate with leadership behaviour (concern for task and concern for people) was studied in projects. These patterns are compared in two kinds of project teamspartly global and truly global virtual or distributed project teams. Thus, the main objectives of the present research thesis are to find out the: Challenges of VPM ,Significance of EI and leadership in VPM , Significance of empowerment climate and leadership in VPM. The various sub objectives are Analyze the effect of the contributing factors which collectively contribute to effective virtual project management in the IT sector of India. Measure the effect of these factors which consist of culture and language barriers, communication and information security, information redundancy. Ascertain and measure the role of Emotional intelligence using Goleman's model in he effective management of virtual projects. in the IT sector of India. Examine the Leadership Behaviour leading to effective project management. Compare the leadership behaviour in partly global and truly global virtual projects. Study the role of Social intelligence in virtual project management.

4.0 Methodology of present work

The literature suggests that there will be a continuing need for virtual organizations as firms seek to cut costs in order to regain and maintain market shares, profitability, and survival in a globally competitive

marketplace (Echeverri-Carroll, Malnight). Trend analysis indicates that due to increased internationalization of business, demands for virtual organizations may increase substantially. As a result it becomes vital to further understandings of how best to manage within virtual environments and to determine if current practices and processes are effective (Chiesa, Coughlan & Brady, Dalton & Serapio, Medcof, Roebuck & Britt).

Though the concepts of team formation and team performance have been well researched, there is a need for research which focuses on human competencies and skills in projects with varying degree of virtuality. Hoffman also points out that the study of human variables seems to be lacking from rigorous definition and analysis.

These human variables in project environment can well be explored through constructs of Emotional Intelligence, Leadership and Empowerment Climate concepts within the project environment. This implies that a research which compares empowerment climate and leadership style and social intelligence and leadership style among project team members is required. This assumes significance since it is established that EI and leadership in project teams are related to human complexities which affect performance and effective VPM (Nauman et al). Though several research studies on virtual teams were conducted, there is dearth of research on virtual teams which compare partly global and truly global virtual teams from SI, leadership and empowerment perspective. The literature consists of comparative studies of collocated and virtual teams, either from a 'performance' perspective (Sambamurthy et al., Straus & McGrath) or from a team dynamics perspective (Cramton, Jarvenpaa & Leidner, Maznevski & Chudoba). There are only a few articles regarding leadership and virtual teams (Avolio & Kahai, Cascio &

Shurygailo, Zigurs). These studies explain differences between virtual and collocated teams and provide general guidance on how negative issues associated with these differences can be minimized as well as how to use technology to maximize any new opportunities for such teams.

5.0 Results and Discussions

The objectives of present work are divided in to three phases. In the first phase, challenges of virtual project management are identified and a factor reinforcing relationship between various elements is proposed. The second phase of research gives an insight on the overlapping relationship between EI and factors of virtual project management. The objective of the third phase is to examine the role and relationship of SI, Empowerment Climate and Leadership behaviour in partly global and truly global virtual project set-ups. Hence, the research methodology adopted is quantitative in nature. Questionnaires were developed for all the three phases of research. After discussing the research questions, the researcher will state the procedure, participants and content validity of questionnaires for all the three phases of research. The objectives of the present study are to identify the factors contributing to effective virtual project management with respect to behavioural aspects. Thus the research questions are first understood with respect to behavioural challenges of VPM and how they contribute to effective VPM. Role of EI in effective VPM is identified. Further, relationship of SI and leadership style is examined in the context of effective VPM. In the end, relationship of Empowerment Climate with leadership style and customer service is studied with respect to their contribution towards effective VPM.

6.0 Conclusions

The major contribution of present work is to established the role of EI in effective VPM and to examine the effect of VPM in relation to leadership management.

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