COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESSFUL VIRTUAL TEAM PROJECTS IN IT SECTOR

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ABSTRACT

The aims of this research are to establish understanding of virtual teams and its communication technologies in IT organizations, how communication technologies are used to improve virtual team performance, do current communication technologies fully satisfy the key needs of virtual team projects and whether future communication technologies can be used among the virtual teams to facilitate an increase in the productivity of the resources.

The research uses in-depth semi-structured interview, which is a qualitative method. Interviews involved project managers and software engineers from five different IT organizations. The interviews were recorded, transcribed and analysed according to the thematic analysis. This research establishes that advancement in current communication technologies lead virtual teams in IT sector to ensure successful delivery of projects rather than to implement future communication technologies, which experiences unsustainable level of barriers both politically and technologically

The researcher through secondary research, which is supported through primary research, acknowledges the need of two important theories that should be acknowledged by virtual team projects i.e. media richness theory and adaptive structuration theory. Advancement in the present communication technologies such as video conferencing and web-ex has a more profound positive effect in the success and development of virtual team projects..

INTRODUCTION

A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK® Guide) defines Virtual team as group of people, who, with a common goal fulfil their roles with little or no time spent meeting face to face. The availability of successful communication technologies such as Video-conferencing, audio conferencing, social media, web-based meetings have made virtual team projects feasible and successful (PMI, 2013)

There is a significant and substantial quantity of literature available on virtual teams and successful communication technologies for virtual teams. Moreover, several authors have highlighted the importance of communication technology for successful virtual team projects in the IT industry.

Nevertheless, a limited number of studies have been undertaken to evaluate the awareness and attitudes of virtual team projects in the IT industry to ensure project success by assessing the influence the communication technology approaches adopted in practice. The scope of these studies was limited to the IT industries in Ireland, India, USA and Canada.

The research expands on the previous studies by investigating the awareness and perception of communication technology amongst project managers and virtual team members of virtual team projects in the IT industry.
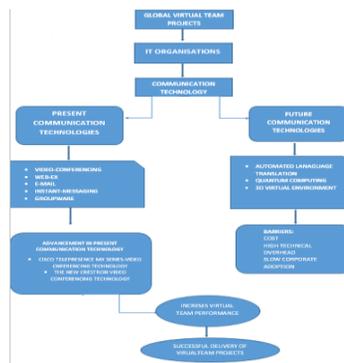
It answers following research questions:
- What are the benefits and problems in virtual team projects due to communication technologies in IT Industry?
- What are the future communication technologies to enhance the productivity of the resources in virtual team projects

To answer the research question, the following research objectives are proposed:
- To identify the theoretical basis and practical implementation of communication technology as recognized in Media richness theory and adaptive structuration theory and previous studies of the virtual teams in IT industry.
- To determine the benefits and problems due to communication technologies and to identify which communication technology fully satisfy the key needs in virtual team projects.
- To compare difference future communication technologies and present communication technologies .

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review found that effective communication technology like video-conferencing is a critical factor in the successful delivery of virtual team projects in IT industry. Communication technology involves three processes, namely identifying virtual team projects members and project manager's interests, assessing communication technology" influence and analysing the relationships amongst project stakeholders. The communication technology model considered in the study is shown below. Previous studies identified the impact of new electronic media, instant messaging, few studies have explicitly compared the way how videoconferencing are used in modern IT organisations. Theories and methods used are multifunctional. Future communication technology involves more political and technological barriers. Thus, Advancement in present communication technologies is considered to be the most effective way for successful delivery of virtual team projects in IT industry.
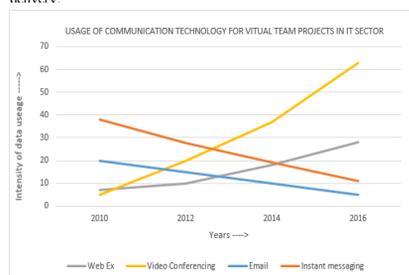

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY IN VIRTUAL TEAM PROJECTS

METHODOLOGY:

The purpose of the primary research is to investigate if the findings of the literature review and in order to assess the respondents perception about communication technology for successful virtual team projects in IT sector, this research used a qualitative research method that is in-depth semi-structured interviews involving staffs (project manager, software engineers) from different IT organizations. The data gathered from the interviews were recorded, transcribed and analyzed according to the thematic analysis

RESULTS

Concerning the data analysis, majority of the respondents (project managers and software engineers) strongly agreed that video-conferencing technology is highly utilised in most of the virtual teams' projects in IT organisation and advancement in video-conferencing communication technology tends to increase the productivity of virtual team resources and reduce cost and travel. As identified in the literature review and from the analysis, it is proven that video-conferencing technology is more effective for increasing the performance and delivery.

Source: (Loyal Mealer,2010)

DISCUSSION

The results of the qualitative data analysis are discussed under the following headings: Do present communication technologies satisfies key needs of virtual team projects, identifying successful communication technologies for success of virtual teams, future communication technologies to increase the productivity of virtual teams resources and advancement in present communication technologies to increase virtual team performance

It is further discussed that whether the results of the In-depth interviews with the respondents are in tandem with the findings made in the literature review. The findings from the interviews show a strong relationship with the literature review.

The main research limitation of the study is that since all of the respondents worked in the IT industry, hence few of them hesitate to reveal information related to implementation of future communication technology in virtual team projects. Therefore, the findings of the study may not be in agreement with the attitudes of project managers and software engineers involved in virtual team projects.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, this research found that project managers and virtual team members who works in virtual team projects in the IT industry generally agreed with the findings from the literature review. Respondents considered the advancement in present communication technologies such as video-conferencing, which is more effective than future communication technologies, since it requires huge investments. In comparison to studies in literature review, the results suggest that development should be made in present communication technologies such as video-conferencing and web-ex to increase the growth and productivity of virtual team for better performance. Furthermore, the respondents strongly advocate the use of a video-conferencing technology as the dominant choice for delivery of successful projects.

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