Results-Based Project Follow-Up: A Method for Ongoing and Completed Projects

Gideon Mekonnen Jonathan, Stockholm University, Stockholm, Sweden

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6360-7641>

ABSTRACT

Results-based management (RBM) has become the choice of many governmental and non-governmental organisations, and not-for-profit agencies engaged in development projects. Despite its widespread adoption, tools and methods are still being developed to complement the framework. One of such methods sought by practitioners, according to the extant literature, is a method for project follow-up. Employing design science methodology, the study aimed to develop a new method that can be used to evaluate the gap between design and actual outcome of development projects. The research has resulted in a new method which proposed ten steps to perform project follow-up. The high-level requirements were evaluated using informed arguments. To warranty validity and impartiality of the evaluation of the method, the internal and external properties were evaluated by 37 qualified experts. The research has identified and suggested other methods that can be used to complement the designed method. The contribution of the study and potential future research directions are presented.

KEYWORDS

Completed Projects, Development Projects, Ongoing Projects, Project Appraisal, Project Assessment, Project Evaluation, Project Follow-Up, Project Management, Results-Based Management

INTRODUCTION

Successful organisations have recognised projects to be a better way to go about meeting the challenges they face over the last three decades (Munns and Bjeremi, 1996). Traditional management methods are being abandoned as they fell short in delivering when put to the test in executing and handling complex business activities. This has brought about a scenario where organisations' successes in accomplishing their objectives depend on how well their projects do. Project management has also gained the attention of scholars and business practitioners in the course of the last two decades (Bender, 2010). This is no surprise as more than ever before, projects are increasingly being used to accomplish major tasks across organisations both for commercial and public endeavours. Long list of sectors including infrastructure, education, and information technology have substantially adopted projects to organise their works. Projects are creating synergy and helping businesses meet objectives by bringing people to work together to achieve strategic goals. The project management discipline is rapidly growing as a research area to respond to the large number of industries that are adopting projects (Crawford et al., 2006). The size and scope of projects have also changed through time.

DOI: 10.4018/IJIDE.2020040102

Copyright © 2020, IGI Global. Copying or distributing in print or electronic forms without written permission of IGI Global is prohibited.

Governments, multinational companies and regional alliances spend a huge amount of resources in projects that have broad implication for countries and regions at large. Building dams, roads, chemical plants, mines and vast industrial plantations, and social development programmes are executed in the form of projects (Gellert and Lynch, 2003).

Different projects call for different tools and practices than the traditional project appraisal methods, which are based on traditional project definition with a clear emphasis to series of activities in a project lifecycle. This approach presumes that economic benefit is the ultimate goal of projects (Arnold, 2006). On the other hand, the available methods are not insufficient to be applied to development projects, for instance, projects with a target of bringing about intangible social impacts. To address the challenges of managing and measuring the success of such development projects, results-based management (RBM) approach has been proposed as a logical framework in the public sector and development initiatives (Medhekeni, 2012). The wide acceptance of outcome and impact assessment in project management is also attributed to the adoption of RBM. At the same time, studies acknowledge both organisational barriers and technical difficulties among those introducing the RBM framework (Hatton and Schroeder, 2007; Madhekeni, 2012; Mayne, 2007; Try and Radnor, 2007). Organisational challenges relate to the organisational structure and culture. Lack of expertise and solutions to measure and report specifically performance, i.e. outcome and impact measurement, falls under the category of technical challenges.

This research aims to develop a new method that would be used to perform project follow-up on ongoing and completed development projects. The following research question and sub-questions are derived to help in designing and creating the artefact. How can a project follow-up be operationalised within the RBM framework, and which existing methods can be used to complement the method (artefact)? Before embarking on the design of the artefact, the study attempts to answer the question, what constitutes a reasonable definition of follow-up within the scope of RBM framework?

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows. The literature review in the second part presents the theoretical concepts and frameworks that are helpful to further our understanding of the project management practice. The third part discusses the research methodology, which will be followed by the section dedicated to presenting the result of the problem explication and the proposed artefact. Finally, the conclusion presents a discussion on the results and contribution of the study, summarises the overall research and concludes with a suggestion for possible future studies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Project Management

Organisations have the choice of performing their work following the path of operations that are ongoing and repetitive tasks to accomplish tasks, or projects. According to Samset (2010), both processes and projects as modes of work may overlap at times, but he argues that organisations are increasingly acknowledging the importance of projects to organise important tasks.

The Project Management Institute (PMI), a reputable organisation in the field, publishes many standards that are widely recognised (Lock, 2007). The project management body of knowledge guide (PMBOK Guide) is one of the most popular guides used by many project managers across industries. The 2000 edition of this book defines a project as “a temporary endeavour undertaken to create a unique result, product or service” (PMI, 2000, p. 4). Project management calls for selecting appropriate techniques and tools to achieve projects’ objectives to the satisfaction of stakeholders (Munn and Bjeirmi, 1996). Though the importance of projects is shared by many scholars, there is a debate on how to manage them efficiently. One source of concern is that great emphasis has been given to project analysis and project planning in the 1950s (Jugdev, 2004). Recently, however, assessment of project risks and standard, project organisation, and cost control have been widely introduced into project management practices (Crawford et al.,

15 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the product's webpage:

www.igi-global.com/article/results-based-project-follow-up/247463?camid=4v1

This title is available in InfoSci-Journals, InfoSci-Journal Disciplines Business, Administration, and Management, InfoSci-Journal Disciplines Communications and Social Science, InfoSci-Journal Disciplines Computer Science, Security, and Information Technology. Recommend this product to your librarian:

www.igi-global.com/e-resources/library-recommendation/?id=2

Related Content

Digital Natives and H1N1: How Adversity Can Drive Change

Peter Woodhead and David M. Kennedy (2012). *E-Adoption and Technologies for Empowering Developing Countries: Global Advances* (pp. 1-14).

www.igi-global.com/chapter/digital-natives-h1n1/62001?camid=4v1a

The Mediating of Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use: The Case of Mobile Banking in Yemen

Ahmed Mohammed Mutahar, Norzaidi Mohd Daud, Ramayah Thurasamy, Osama Isaac and Rasheed Abdulsalam (2018). *International Journal of Technology Diffusion* (pp. 21-40).

www.igi-global.com/article/the-mediating-of-perceived-usefulness-and-perceived-ease-of-use/201084?camid=4v1a

Gender and National Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Policies in Africa

Stella E. Igun (2010). *International Journal of ICT Research and Development in Africa* (pp. 46-58).

www.igi-global.com/article/gender-national-information-communication-technology/53356?camid=4v1a

An Analysis of the Value of Data Ecosystem Tools for Industry 4.0

Tom Page (2019). *International Journal of Innovation in the Digital Economy* (pp. 18-32).

www.igi-global.com/article/an-analysis-of-the-value-of-data-ecosystem-tools-for-industry-40/233566?camid=4v1a