

Executive Summary

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Title of the thesis work: *“Here is my competenCV” – Employing generalist and specialist project managers in the ICT sector*

Aims

My study aimed to explore and analyze the qualifications and competencies of project managers working in the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sector, and the expectations from them. For that, one of my goals was to compile a personal competency model from the academic literature.

Structure

The first part of my thesis was the theoretical background which I divided into 6 chapters. In the first one, I collected and summarized the most important, general definitions and key concepts, and the main implications about them – project management and managers, projects, project success, project management competency as a success factor. Then, I looked at the development of competencies throughout the last century and showed the different schools of leadership theories. In the third chapter, I introduced project management competencies and my competency model specified for the ICT sector. This was followed by the introduction of the two project manager types, specialists and generalists, and the main differences between them. In the last two chapters, I revealed the characteristics of the ICT sector and the different project management approaches. Following the literature overview, I defined the problem and its environment I aimed to analyze, and overviewed my research questions. The next part deeply introduced the methodologies I used and their characteristics. In the last two parts, I analyzed the results of my assessment sheet and the expert interviews, and drawing on the lessons learned, I concluded and summarized the most important competencies for ICT project managers and other findings of my thesis, the limitations and the possibilities for future researches.

Methodology

I aimed my thesis to be problem-oriented exploratory research which I can test on a small sample size first. I did not aim to generalize its findings and conclusions, as instead, it may serve as a

starting point for future research with a much larger sample number. Based on the case example of Delta Group, I analyzed the competencies of ICT project managers through an interview-based qualitative research method. But as the first step of my research, I created my own competency model specified for the ICT sector based on the academic literature. I included competencies that either the academic literature found or I expected to be relevant and important for project managers in the sector. Then, I handed my model in the form of an assessment sheet to the project managers, through which I could find the most important and required competencies of ICT project managers, and the level at which they had mastered those capabilities. The second step was expert selection, through which I successfully conducted semi-structured expert interviews with 3 generalist and 3 specialist project managers out of the 8 of the company. Besides their educational background and different mindsets, I chose project managers with the most international experience and those who have been working in the field for the longest. I conducted the interviews with a set of prepared open-ended questions.

Results

Based on the information I gained through my research, I can conclude that project managers can be grouped into generalist and specialist types based on their educational background. Generalists possess good business, financial, and people skills, and understand the realizable benefits for a company through projects. Specialists possess the domain knowledge of the field and strong technical skills, they understand the processes of a project and can help solve arising technical issues. Hence, employing both types can benefit ICT companies. If the different managers can put together their experiences and knowledge and complement each other's work, it can save a lot of time and money for organizations. Based on the results of the assessment sheet, the most important and required competencies of ICT project managers are the "Ability to learn/lifelong learning", "Communication", "Leadership", "Usage of Project Management tools", "Ability to bridge (culturally) diverse teams", "Team player", "Attention to detail", "Resources management", "Change management", "Time, cost, budget estimation and management", "Planning skills/Planning the future", "Negotiation", "Consensus seeking/Customer focus", and "Flexibility". Interviewees added "Strategic thinking", "Theoretical knowledge", "Risk and opportunity management", "Analytical skills", "Project design", "Vision-oriented/Ability to articulate business problems", "Team player/Cooperation", "Creating an effective project working environment".