

# **PMO TYPOLOGY IN UAE AND ITS INTEGRATION**

## **A Comparison Amongst Worldwide PMO Typologies and its Applicability in the United Arab Emirates**

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### **PURPOSE**

This extended abstract is provided as a contribution to the BUiD Doctoral Research Conference held in the United Arab Emirates to investigate Project Management Offices' (PMOs') typologies in the region as a bid to facilitate their integration with the organization, and dampen any instability in their structure.

The Project Management Office (PMO) constitutes a complex organizational structure characterized by instability in organization, difficulty in operation and complexity in integration with the parent organization. The existence of a PMO in an organization creates an organization within an organization which could be viewed as a loosely coupled function.

Plenty of scholars explored the organizational context of PMOs and the flexibility they provide to the organization in a realm of inflexible standardization of rules. A study, and an overall understanding of the characterization of PMOs and their structure, along with understanding of their typologies, could well facilitate the integration process for those PMOs within the organization.

In light of the above, this study aims to match international knowledge of PMO structures and typologies with those of the UAE. This abstract proposes to conduct a qualitative research on at least 20 PMOs which operate within the UAE, using a case study analysis. The research intends to break those case studied PMOs down into their constituent organizational structures, scope and other characteristics which govern the market and the region. It is envisaged that each matching couple or more from the resultants of the analysis would constitute a typology.

PMO typology is an important study which helps in categorizing PMOs to facilitate further analysis, study and exploration and hence integration and absorption from the community of practitioners.

### **DESIGN/ METHODOLOGY/ APPROACH**

It is intended to conduct this study at a minimum of two phases starting with a qualitative case study type of analysis (this intended research), followed by an inspection of generalizability via a deductive quantitative approach (future proposed research). The methodology proposed falls within a post-positivist approach, which approach falls between positivism (objectivity) and phenomenology which votes subjectivism.

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The reason of selecting this approach is twofold: firstly to account for the complexity inherited in organizations, and secondly to account for perception built-up by interviewees or respondents to the intended questions or survey.

The intended objectives of this research would be as follows:

- understand the organizational structure of PMOs and their resourcing requirements;
- explore what typologies could constitute PMOs and their structure in the UAE along with the factors which mostly influence these typologies;
- study and understand the factors which impose difficulty for integrating PMOs with the organization, and the organizational factors which result in and influence reorganizing and restructuring of the PMO;
- discuss the theory of evolution and co-evolution and their applicability to PMOs and how they could impose changes on PMOs in the UAE.

## **FINDINGS**

The findings of this research are expected to be in line with international research on typologies unless the analysis of the results proves otherwise.

Some of the research carried out and conducted in Canada and the United States revealed few of the variables the PMO possess to form its typologies. Those variables are governed by the maturity of the organization, the availability of project managers employed as full timers in the PMO, the level of authority of the PMO and the organizational design.

It is expected from the research findings that we will be able to tie in the PMO typologies with the factors that influence changes in organizations, and hence facilitate PMO integration.

## **RESEARCH LIMITATIONS/IMPLICATIONS**

The research may have some limitations summed up by the perception of those interviewees on the factors which impose organizational changes. The size of the sample may also contribute to these limitations.

A longitudinal study could be proposed for future research to eliminate some of these limitations. Such a study takes into account a cross-section of interviewees' responses and perceptions in two different points in time which could be as long as 2 years.

## **PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS**

The research outcomes are expected to benefit practitioners who work in project-based organizations with PMO set-ups. The outcomes of this research, represented by categories, typologies and factors that influence changes in PMOs and organizations, are expected to be applied in practice to dampen the effect of those changes and enhance integration of the PMO within project-based organizations.

## **ORIGINALITY/VALUE**

The research studies a known subject - PMO typologies - which is applied to a new geographical location. The research intends to combine the complex subject of organization integration with the PMO typology to facilitate and lay the foundation for integration. The subject of integration is not anew as well, it has been discussed in many research and academic articles, but was never been linked (as far as the researcher knows) to PMO typology to achieve the intended objectives of this research.