

Formulating a research problem management essay



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This section of the report is devoted to delivering a complete account and description of how the whole research was carried out, encapsulating the process involved along the way. Nevertheless, this section is pertinent in order to establish the credibility of the research by revealing the knowledge and mastery of the methodology utilized in the research (Clare and Hamilton 2003). Thus, according to Clare and Hamilton (2003) methodology comprises discussion of the research design, which includes strategies for carrying out the study, the participants engaged, how they were chosen and ethical concerns. Moreover, it contains the information of what data were gathered and how the data were sort out, evaluated and accomplished. Thus, methodology of a study represents how the researcher reports the problem and answers the attendant questions (Taylor and Bodgan 1998).

Nonetheless, the research study adopted here is categorized as a descriptive study as it endeavours to pronounce analytically a condition, problem, occurrences, or make available information about the situation of a community or looks into attitudes towards an issue (Kumar 2011).

However, describing the research process in the following stages allows the systematic unfolding of the study so that judgements could be made as to the credibility of the research.

3. 1 FORMULATING A RESEARCH PROBLEM

Formulating a research problem is the initial and most relevant stage in the research development as it constitutes a possibly problematic work (Kumar 2011). Besides, it does not basically involve selecting a topic, but approaching it purposefully (May 2003). Subsequently, it actually reveals

what is intended to be investigated in a comprehensive and explicit manner since the entire research process is greatly influenced by the approach involved in formulating a research problem. Consequently, this problem can arise in a number of ways such as- by finding an unanswered theoretical problem, by detecting an empirical inconsistency, or by merely looking into how some supposedly understood part of social involvement or organization actually works (May 2003). However, in this present research relevant literatures that dwell upon how change is managed in project-based organization were reviewed as it is evident in the previous section emphasizing particularly on construction organization, which is a key example of a project-based organization (Bresnen 1990). Nevertheless, the rigorous and careful review of these relevant literatures unfolds a common feature amongst themselves which led to the formulating of a research problem represented in the form of a research question, which is “ How can change be managed effectively in a project-based organization to align with its organizational strategy, goals and objectives?”. Moreover, the core function of formulating this research problem is to make a decision on what is to be investigated. Hence, the research problem is assessed taking into consideration the availability of financial resources, time, expertise and possession of knowledge in the field of study (Kumar 2011).

According to Kumar (2011 pp. 47), in the course of selecting a research problem, a list of factors are considered to make sure the study is practicable and motivation maintained throughout the period of the research. These factors include:

Interest: Since a research attempt normally consumes time, consists of difficult task and probably faced with unanticipated issues, a great deal of interest in the research problem is necessary to stay motivated and devote substantial time and energy till the end of the research process.

Magnitude: Reviewing several relevant literature helps in building up the knowledge base about the research process, however in the context of this research, possessing a vast knowledge about how change is managed in project-based organization enables the picturing of process involved in reaching the end of the anticipated study. Subsequently, the research problem is narrowed down to what is practicable, precise and clear. Hence, effective utilization of time and resources is considered when choosing a research problem.

Measurement of Concepts: In formulating the research problem, the concept employed is ensured to be clear about its indicators and measurements.

Nonetheless, in the research, factors such as communication, motivation, managerial support and culture are utilized in describing the concept of how change can be managed in project-based organizations. Thus, this does not hinder the development of other measurement procedure as the study evolves (Kumar 2011). Moreover, information in this research is acquired by the measurement and analysis of the variables; hence they are dependent on the purpose of the study.

Level of expertise: A particular level of expertise is required for the proposed study, though added knowledge could be achieved from other literature sources and in the course of carrying out the investigation itself.

Relevance: The selected research problem is of great significance as it contributes to the present body of knowledge. Hence, it is useful and its relevance keeps the interest of the study focussed.

Availability of data: This is also considered in the formulating of the research problem since the availability of sufficient data from secondary sources enhances the drawing of insights that would be an immense influence in the execution of the research process, thus serving as a guideline for the current study.

Ethical issues: In the quest of carrying out a research the target population may be unfavourably affected by the investigation either directly or indirectly. Nevertheless, how ethical issues affect the sample size and how ethical issues can be overcome is considered in the formulating of the research problem.

3. 2 DESIGNING A RESEARCH STRATEGY

A successful research requires a design in which its constituents function harmoniously together, upholding efficiency and effective working in the course of a research process (Maxwell 2005), thus a faulty or inconsistent design leads to a poor setup or eventually failure. Nonetheless, different conceptions of design is being utilized in several studies, some present the design as a simple sequence of steps or task involved in carrying out a study, while some shares the opinion that a research design should consist of circular and recursive stages (Marshall and Rossman 1999). However, the common features that exist amongst these conceptions of design is that they

all contain the basic sequence of stages from the formulating of a research problem to the conclusion or establishment of theories.

Subsequently, the research design adopted in this current study is reflective in nature and it operates through every phase of the task. Thus, this is typical of a qualitative study where all the activities such data collection and analysis, development and modification of theory, going into detail and changing of the research questions, and detecting and addressing validity threats are generally occurring in a simultaneous pattern, each inducing all of the others (Maxwell 2005). As a result, the design of this research in question is a continuing practice that involves re-examining the different components of the design and assessing their implications on the success of the overall research.

Consequently, in the pursuit to carry out this current research, key components of a qualitative research design according to Maxwell (2005) are considered as follows;

Goals: This study is carried out to develop an improved way of managing change in project-based organizations as new practices are implemented in the organization. Hence, the research looks into the issue of social human and organizational behaviour in project-based organization towards the adoption of new practices and maintenance of the existing ones. However, this research is actually embarked upon to understand the complexity of project-based organization and how its decentralized nature affects the spread of new ideas.

Conceptual Framework: The conceptual framework utilized in the current research is based on the combination of the theoretical foundation of both Kotter's (1995) eight-steps and Aiken and Keller's (2009) nine-insights. Nevertheless, these theoretical foundations were chosen in the sense that it creates analytical viewpoint of the relationship existing among the factors such as communication, motivation, managerial support and culture that have been acknowledged as relevant to the research problem (Sekaran 2003) according to the first chapter of the report. Moreover, the theoretical foundation flows rationally from the documentation of preceding research in the area of the research problem as seen in the literature review section. However, by incorporating personal views based on the insights drawn from other publications or research report, taking into considerations the scope of a construction firm in the context of a project-based organization, a scientific basis is developed for investigating the research problem (Sekaran 2003). Consequently, the theoretical framework as seen in Table 1 deliberates on the interrelationships in the midst of the variables which is seen as factors that is fundamental to the underlying forces of the condition being studied.

Research Questions: The research question in this study is embedded in terms of the conceptual framework to which the theoretical foundation adopted is strongly reinforced (Wengraf 2001). However, in formulating the research question, due consideration is given so as to establish a relationship between the theoretical foundation and the empirical findings it seeks to reveal. Thus, the central research question developed in the quest of this study is “ How can change be managed effectively in a project-based organization to align with its organizational strategy, goals and objectives?”.

As a result, four theory questions are designed to broaden the scope of the central research question, besides, these theory questions are not interview questions, they ‘ govern’ the production of the interview questions, thus formulated in the theory language of the research community, while the interview questions are formulated in the language of the interviewees (Wengraf 2001). A sample of these questions is evident in Appendix 1. Furthermore, these central research, theory and interview questions collectively pose questions that the study is meant to answer.

Methods: The method of research applied in this study is qualitative, which constitutes interview studies utilizing open-ended interview questions to investigate the research problem, thus follow a more deductive approach (May 2003). Nevertheless, the research adopts a structured approach in the sense that all the components of the research process such as the objectives, design, sample, interview questions are predetermined. However, the structured approach is more suitable since it define the extent of the issue or phenomenon (Kumar 2011), which is “ How can change be managed effectively in a project-based organization to align with its organizational strategy, goals and objectives?”.

In the quest to achieve easy access to the prospective interviewees, letters were written to different construction firms in the U. K. Nonetheless, these letters were put forward to them via email and posting. A sample of this letter is seen in Appendix 4. Consequently, after the efforts through the email and posting proved abortive, several phone calls served as an alternative means of contacting the interviewees and confirming the receipt of the despatched letters. Subsequently, a breakthrough was achieved when <https://assignbuster.com/formulating-a-research-problem-management-essay/>

a senior manager of a construction firm agreed to grant the permission for the interview. As a result of the latter, the interview was held via the telephone at different periods due to the busy schedules and availability of the interviewees. However, substantial data were gathered and transcribed as seen in Appendix 2 and 3, thus serving as a source of information utilized in the development of the primary field framework as evident in Table 1 and the analysis of the research outcome in the subsequent chapter.

However, this research being theoretically devoted selected a carefully targeted sample that is well positioned to light up the issue under investigation (May 2003), thus the sampling strategy adopted made available a competent way to get answers to enormous questions utilizing relatively small population. Subsequently, to achieve the practicability of this study a construction firm is chosen as a key example of a project-based organization in the U. K (Bresnen 1990) and described by Lindkvist (2004) as being a “ radical” project-based organization. Nevertheless, the interview is based upon the implementation of Visual planning tool, which is a new project management tool utilized by the construction firm based in the U. K and involved in various construction projects. The senior manager, who is responsible for the implementation of the VP aided in facilitating the interview, hence avoiding the issue of obtaining fabricated answers from the interviewees. In the context of this investigation, a construction firm form the basis from which the sample is drawn (Clark et al 2000).

In the light of the above, this research utilizes a non-probability sampling known as convenience sampling (Clark et al 2000). Moreover, in the context of this research, convenience sampling is not a sample in the sense that the <https://assignbuster.com/formulating-a-research-problem-management-essay/>

selection is done based on the distribution of several characteristic (Clark et al 2000), rather the sample is chosen because they share certain very clearly defined core characteristics as seen in the case of the senior manager and two site managers chosen for the purpose of this research. Thus, the sample is selected based on the variation in significant factors under investigation (May 2003). Consequently, the success of the interview study is highly dependent on the aforementioned assembling of theoretically grounded questions and accessible interview schedules. Thus, the interviewees who offered to contribute intimate information about their lives and time were given a clear, comprehensive and reassuring guide throughout the process of interviewing (May 2003). However, these interview questions were sent to the interviewees via email prior to the main interviewing to serve as a guide during the interview sections.

In the analytic process adopted in this study, the extant conceptual framework developed from the data gathered in the course of qualitative interview, and as evident in Table 1 suggests a set of predetermined categories (Symon and Cassell 1998). Thus, these set of predetermined categories are as follows;

Communication

Motivation

Managerial Support and;

Culture.

However, the extant conceptual framework based upon the theoretical foundation of Kotter's (1995) eight-steps and Aiken and Keller's (2009) nine-insights reveals the emerging factors embedded in the aforementioned categories. Hence, the interrelationship among the variable that are fundamental to the changing aspects of the condition being examined (Sekaran 2003), which entail how change is managed in a construction firm will be discussed in the fourth chapter, where the outcome of the research will be analysed.

Validity: Subsequently, the theoretical framework developed from the data gathered during the qualitative interview conducted could offer a conceptual foundation to proceed with a further research and also gives rise to testable theory that can be developed to examine whether the conclusion reached or theory formulated in this research is valid or not (Sekaran 2003). Thus, a quantitative method based upon the extant theoretical framework is recommended for further research.

3. 3 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Fundamental ethical issues were considered in the course of this research. However, the confidentiality and anonymity of the interviewees highlighted in the letters distributed is carried over into the writing-up of the reports. Thus, the identities of the interviewees are represented in a disguised form, while the information and data gathered is reported anonymously (Clark et al 2000). Nevertheless, the construction firm under investigation point out that the privacy and confidentiality of their business secrets and practices be protected by avoiding the recording of the conversation via the telephone and present them with an evidence of the research findings in a short report, <https://assignbuster.com/formulating-a-research-problem-management-essay/>

thus ascertaining the relevance of the research to the construction firm in question (Symon and Cassell). On the other hand, promises of anonymity such as that present in the letter despatched, permitted the interviewees to express more reality about their view concerning the attendant question put forward to them (Symon and Cassell 1988). Moreover, the interview ends normally as the interviewees complete their responses, besides the interview was conducted at different times due to busy schedules and availability of the interviewees. Hereafter, commendation is put forward to the interviewees for the time and energy contributed to the interview.

In the light of the above, this section reveals how the entire research is carried out and why the methods employed were adopted, thus making sense of the research credibility by demonstrating the understanding of the methodology utilized in the study. Consequently, it highlights the ethical concerns arising from the research and how they were addressed. Hence, lay emphasis on what data were collected and how they were handled, evaluated and accomplished, which will be discussed in the subsequent chapter.