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Investigating the roles, responsibilities and practices of project portfolio managers in Australia: A literature review and research outline

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Managers In Australia: A Literature Review And Research Outline

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ABSTRACT

Project Portfolio Management (PPM) is increasingly adopted by organizations in Australia. In order to select, prioritize and monitor simultaneous on-going projects with limited resources, there is a need for PPM to optimize investment by utilising a PPM governance structure to deal with constant change and focus on achievement of organizational strategy. PPM, due to its ambiguity and complexity, brings a great challenge for the project portfolio manager to manage its processes, people and practices. However, literature indicates that PPM practices vary and need to be adapted to organizational situations according to project types, governance types and environmental complexity.

The portfolio decision process encompasses or overlaps a number of decision processes with business, including periodic reviews of the total portfolio of all projects, making go/halt decisions on individual projects on an ongoing basis, and developing a new product strategy for the business, complete with strategic resource allocation decisions. Along with this, the roles, responsibilities of managers in these organizations vary. Thus, the understanding of roles, responsibilities, and practices of managers in project portfolio management is important as organizations operate projects or programs with limited resources and ambitious performance objectives to deliver unique products or services to their clients' specific requirements.

The research on roles, responsibilities and practices of managers in PPM is limited. The majority of past research on portfolio management focuses on which project selection technique is most successful, how return on investment (ROI) decisions are made, or which planning techniques and practices are appropriate (Cooper, Edgett & Kleinschmidt,2001; Killen, Hunt &

Kleinschmidt,2008). The past research shows that high-performing organizations apply project portfolio management processes and tools to address the requirements stemming from the complexity of the organization's environment and the types of project executed (Bloomquist & Muller 2006).

The focus of this research is to investigate the practices for project portfolio management together with the associated roles and responsibilities of project portfolio managers in organizations in Australia. The aim of the research is to investigate the roles, responsibilities and practices of project portfolio managers in services and products development organizations in Australia. It also aims to relate the relationship between project types, governance types and environmental complexity of organization with the practices, roles and responsibilities of Portfolio Manager. Their influences to ensure that the best projects are selected and investments are optimized are the focus of this paper.

The scope of the study is to evaluate the differences in roles, responsibilities, and practices of managers in project portfolio management within organizations in Australia. The unit of analysis in this study is the manager with roles and responsibilities in portfolio related management work. The investigation will focus on organizations from different industries in Australia that practice project portfolio management to identify their differences with regards to roles, responsibilities, and practices.

This research will adopt a sequential mixed-method approach to generalize results to a population (Creswell & Plano, 2007). In stage 1, the research will start with an exploratory

qualitative study to develop a basic understanding of the roles and responsibilities under the governance structures. In stage 2, the objective is to valid the results from the qualitative study, assessment of the correlation between independent variables and dependent variables and modelling the relationship of project portfolio practices, roles and responsibilities. To achieve stage 2, the quantitative methodology will be applied. The quantitative study will be performed to confirm the findings and test the hypotheses.

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