

Research Article

Innovative Marketing Approach in Project Management: A Market Orientation Perspective.

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The main objective of this paper is to develop an integrated conceptual framework to achieve consistency and synergy between project management and e-marketing activities within the market orientation that depends on the transaction, database, interactive, and network marketing. The study solicited to apply this model in the development or commercial projects conducted in Jordan. To extend this, the researcher interviewed people with experience who work in various projects such as educational projects or developing information technology systems, infrastructure projects, development projects, and others. The researcher was able to interview 34 experienced managers, and the interview form included a set of open questions related to the four dimensions of marketing orientation. The interview questions included covering how to integrate e-marketing activities into project management, it has directed in such a way as to highlight which marketing trends are most appropriate for the type of project and the duration of its implementation. The researcher identified the most appropriate marketing trends for each project type and suggested which electronic marketing tools are most suitable for project managers and employees to adapt to communicate with individual clients or organizations, or even with other parties who have a direct or indirect relationship with the project such as stakeholders, suppliers, and others. The implication for practitioners in the projects suggested, and recommendations for future research to generalize the proposed conceptual framework are also presented.

KEYWORDS

Innovative marketing, Market orientation, Project Management, Jordan

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I. Introduction

Current project management systems adopt contemporary management practices, for instance, knowledge and information management (Achtenhagen et al., 2013). The organizations also adopt the latest methodologies in marketing and pioneering technologies that

support this function. The evolution of project management has prompted practitioners and researchers to search for various models to adapt to the multiple human needs and requirements of competence and to focus on the critical elements of successful project management (Alpkan et al., 2007; Didonet et al., 2016; Verhees & Meulenberg, 2004; Zott et al., 2011). The

field of project management is considered a fertile discipline for practical and academic interest. Different approaches to project management have been applied in several initiatives such as engineering, construction, facilities management, social sciences, education, information management, and many others (Amit & Zott, 2016; Ennen & Richter, 2010; Ferreira et al., 2013). The need to integrate modern theories in management and marketing has developed to achieve the desired efficiency in project management (Dong et al., 2016). For ensuring success, theoretical foundations must be provided before actual practice to enhance the ability of the project management to capture and track the changes that may face the project and try to detect them to achieve the possible efficiency (Appiah-Adu & Singh, 1998; Doz & Kosonen, 2010). This paper also highlights the interactive relationship between project management and the concept of e-marketing management.

2. Background

Project management concentrates on achieving better project performance (Arend, 2014; Lisboa et al., 2011; Martins et al., 2015), projects use various management methods from different environments (Balboni et al., 2019; Saebi et al., 2017; Gelhard et al., 2016), and also uses emerging practices that focus on the highest standards of efficiency and effectiveness. There is an increasing interest by researchers in the contribution of marketing techniques for improving project management performance. The impact of electronic marketing is a critical function in project management and has drawn the attention of numerous researchers to examine the interactive relationship between e-marketing and project management (George & Bock, 2011). The cornerstone of marketing is to bring in new customers and retain them to achieve sustainable success (Lusch & Nambisan, 2015; Jaworski et al.; 2000; Gerdoçi et al., 2018; Adaleh et al., 2020) (Lusch & Nambisan, 2015; Gerdoçi et al., 2018), plus, marketing plays a critical role in achieving a sustainable competitive advantage as well focusing on cost factors and delivering a high-quality product. When the project built on the idea of customer orientation, this considered to be a guarantee of the best performance, meaning that it focuses on

achieving integration with the client's interest, needs, and desires, and in turn, leads to achieving success, especially for companies that conduct their business through projects (; Menguc, & Auh, 2006) (Battistella et al., 2017; Gibson & Birkinshaw, 2004; Herhausen, 2016).

Several researchers view project marketing as a multifunctional process through which networks and interaction between the seller and the buyer managed (Benner & Tushman, 2003; Hienerth et al., 2011; Holsapple & Oh, 2014), or between the project and business companies (Homburg & Pflesser, 2000), to add value, and this has happened through research, preparation, negotiation (Kulins et al., 2016), bidding, implementation and transfer of the project (Lindgren, 2012). This approach concentrates on the customer, which is the modern trend in marketing, where a marketing plan is prepared based on the actual motives and needs of the client so, the integration between project management and marketing management achieved (Morgan et al., 2009). There is a robust initiative to adopt this approach in project management to enhance project performance (Birkinshaw et al., 2016; Morris et al., 2005). Therefore, it is imperative to focus on the concept of market orientation to develop a framework for considering the application of e-marketing practices based on the marketing orientation in project management (Naidoo, 2010).

From the viewpoint of numerous researchers in marketing, the marketing approach is a synthesis of specific interrelated positions and practices, and it is a multi-dimensional approach that includes several parties related to the project. Various studies have analyzed and measured e-marketing within the market orientation and studied its potential effects, the e-marketing based on the marketing orientation is the starting foundation towards customers, competitors. Marketing orientation includes the relationship between the seller and the buyer, the employee-based, the inter-jobs marketing orientation, long-term orientation (Bock et al., 2012), the environmental orientation, and finally, the performance-based approach. E-marketing focuses on trends that serve and realize the importance of knowing customer

needs, in contrast to the previous models that focused on traditional marketing functions, as was the case in the 1950s and 1960s. Therefore, e-marketing for project management takes into account the relationship of profitability to meet the needs of customers or stakeholders and is keen to organize marketing activities to occupy a prominent position, like the fundamental functions of the project (; Tushman, & O'Reilly, 1996) (Borch & Madsen, 2007; Narver & Slater, 1990; Narver et al., 2004).

Project staff in market-oriented companies plays a prominent role in implementing and achieving the marketing orientation. They apply several market orientation methods like marketing transactions to pull clients. Or marketing the project database to retain existing customers, coordinate and interact with stakeholders to achieve mutual benefits, and finally, interactive marketing to establish and to develop and facilitate cooperative relationships between stakeholders as well as other parties within the project's supply chains to achieve mutual benefit (Chesbrough, & Rosenbloom, 2002;) (Tang & Gudergan, 2018; Adaileh & Elrehail, 2018).

The electronic marketing department is required to monitor the activities and practices of the project workers, whether front-line workers or managers and supervisory professions, through those mentioned approaches, moreover across all stages of the project life cycle. E-marketing for projects is one of the products of the development of theoretical and technological knowledge in the field of marketing, the integration of technology in the marketing of project management systems management is imperative to reach all interested parties, gain new customers, and deliver project goals and objectives very quickly (Osiyevskyy & Dewald, 2015). Marketing generally affects organizational performance, and market orientation is key to achieving success for most companies. E-marketing must be integrated into project management practices to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of project management as it is a fundamental function in the organizational structure of projects (Day & Schoemaker, 2016; Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010).

3. Study design

This study focuses on establishing an integrated framework for e-marketing in project management. This framework aims to highlight the marketing applications involved in project management. The framework has carried on the different marketing approaches that it has identified (Lado et al., 2013) to evaluate marketing practices and market orientation, this framework includes marketing practices and activities followed in many projects, with the main focus on clients and stakeholders whom they have an interest in the project (see Figure. 1).

Based on many researchers, this framework is proper in commercial or development projects and can be suitable for educational projects or developing information technology systems, infrastructure projects, and development projects. This framework includes four main dimensions, which are transaction marketing, database marketing, interactive marketing, and network marketing.

The study approved the methodology of personal interviews for project managers in various domains, such as projects to develop education in universities or projects to develop technological systems and databases in universities, educational institutions, and companies, infrastructure development, and development projects such as road and construction projects. A group of employees who work directly in the companies interviewed. The sample included project managers, project engineers, marketers, and marketing systems developers. This sample also covered executives and marketing managers in project-based companies. The researcher was able to obtain 34 managers. A set of open, unrestricted questions related to each dimension of market orientation for project management was prepared.

Figure. 1 Market orientation dimensions

4. Results and discussion

Concerning marketing transactions, most of the responses stated that maximizing profitability for project management and increasing project efficiency of the significant aspects of marketing transactions. Some had an opinion that project management should

focus on outputs such as products and services. Others believe that the implementation of projects should concentrate on the market in which profit achieved, i.e., the profit direction of project management, so that the project resources, whether financial resources, people, and even time, can be invested in price analysis and project delivery (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Ricciardi et al., 2016). Many interviewees indicated the necessity of communicating with clients through advertisements or other social media or means of communication in the market that contact with the customer during the project life cycle be limited because the client is only interested in the final outputs. Several project managers and project marketing managers insisted that there is a tendency to interact with customers, especially after the project is delivered, as the relationship between the project and the customer is often portrayed as a temporary relationship because most of the implemented projects are dedicated to different customers and buyers.

The second dimension is marketing databases, most of the answers indicated that project management and marketing should focus on customer satisfaction and creating satisfaction and loyalty, this requires that project management focuses on production based on the actual needs of customers. In addition to profit, project management should focus on obtaining information to develop customer databases in the markets in which projects are implemented. To utilize the financial resources, people, and time in establishing customer databases, maintaining and developing this database to improve communication with customers (Payne et al., 2008; Peters et al., 2019; Saebi et al., 2017). Most of the interviewees emphasized the necessity of using various marketing communication channels, social media, advertisements, and other tools for specific sectors of consumers, in this case, the customer contact should be frequent and extremely specific than in the case of marketing transactions. In the case of marketing databases, communication with customers is continuous even after the project is closed, meaning that the relationship with the customer is a current relationship, and contact with them often conducted through e-mail, social media, or

similar media (Randhawa & Scerri, 2015; VELAMURI et al., 2013).

The third dimension is interactive marketing, which focuses on establishing a continuous cooperative relationship with the client, the main goal of electronic marketing is that project management is directed towards developing relationships with the customer and developing the client's relationship with the project. Most of the experts interviewed emphasized the importance of building long-term relationships, so that financial resources, people, and time are invested in initiating, managing, and maintaining relationships with clients. The developed databases should invest in communication and building individual relationships with customers and focus on customizing communication according to their preferences. It requires the use of customer databases to support particular communication with the individual customer or buyer through project personnel. During the project life cycle, personal contact with the customer is through the project manager as well as the project personnel.

In this case, the relationship with the customer becomes personal, as the interaction includes project personnel (Teece, 2018; Randhawa et al., 2017, 2018, 2019; Renko et al., 2009; Schoemaker et al., 2018; Spieth & Schneider, 2016).

The last dimension is network marketing, and in this case, electronic marketing focuses on cooperation with the stakeholders in the project. The interviewees indicated the necessity of directing cooperation activities in the project towards building relationships with suppliers, distributors, and other organizations of interest to the project as well as for future projects and maintaining those relationships. There is a consensus of many managers in companies, projects, and marketing managers that network marketing should focus the target market for project management on establishing a rigid and long relationship with other organizations such as suppliers and distributors, as it has a future impact on projects. Therefore, available financial resources, people, and time should be invested in initiating and maintaining relationships with these organizations and stakeholders as much as possible (Sosna et al., 2010). Collaboration activities in this type of mar-

keting are restricted to project managers and administrative personnel who affiliated with those organizations or other stakeholders who have business relationships or other interests with the project. Network e-marketing activities focus on personal and non-personal means of communication with organizations and stakeholders during the project life cycle, as well as the use of direct and indirect means of communication, or through clients from organizations and other stakeholders with whom the project maintains alliances or relationships of great importance. Finally, communicating with these parties is through project managers, project administrative personnel of suppliers, distributors, and other companies (Reichertz, 2007).

Depending on the results of the interview analysis, the practices and activities of the e-marketing department summarized in many dimensions such as focusing on project management, focus on project outputs, competitive orientation, the purpose of relational exchange, communication style, type of customer contact, the duration of the relational transaction and the time frame (Spieth et al., 2016). The project management focus dimension includes: attracting clients, retaining clients, developing a collaborative relationship, coordinating the stakeholder relationship. The focus variable on project outputs consists of product/service presentation, customer base, individual customers, stakeholder relations (Su & Linderman, 2016; Wilden & Gudergan, 2015). The competitive trend variable focuses on profit-oriented market, information-oriented market, personal relationship, stakeholder relationship. As for the variable purpose of relational exchange, it includes generating a financial return, obtaining customer information, building relationships with individual clients, and establishing a relationship with stakeholders. The communication style variable consists of communications in the mass market, or a specific sector, and includes the collaboration of individual project staff with clients, project managers with other senior management personnel. Several types of customer contact variables, such as impersonal, personal to some extent, and personal proposed. Finally, the variable of the duration of the relational exchange/time frame includes temporary,

occasional, continuous personal contact with the individual or continued personal communication with stakeholders (Sund et al., 2016; Wilden et al., 2019; Wollersheim & Heimeriks, 2016).

One of the significant applications of this study is that the results also showed that there is an apparent difference between commercial or development projects, as the applied marketing practices differ (Teece, 2007). Therefore, an in-depth analysis of the field of project implementation should be performed and taking into account the constraints imposed by the project scope. For example, commercial projects are more oriented towards the approach of transaction marketing than development projects, meaning that these projects are mainly oriented towards temporary contracts with clients, further, many aspects of another marketing approach. It involves intense competition for profit-oriented project contracts, and the project management focus is directed towards achieving efficiency and delivery. This trend is a result imposed by market conditions and high competition between companies. Therefore, the project manager evaluates the project in terms of return, cost, and initial criteria for obtaining the projects (Wollersheim & Heimeriks, 2016).

Network marketing can be appropriate for large companies, as these companies focus on diversifying the projects they hold (Teece, 2014), the status of projects is often a strategy that achieves the company a competitive advantage as well as supports the orientations of stakeholders. These projects use the approach of continuous personal contact with their stakeholders to build permanent collaborative relationships. The use of network marketing helps in providing solutions to customer problems more than focusing only on product delivery. This type of marketing will be the dominant marketing in this type of project. Companies should shift from project orientation in itself to customer-oriented marketing by moving from discontinuous project transactions to building continuous relationships with customers. This trend will lead to more relevant marketing practices. Network marketing can be useful in infrastructure projects. Building strategic collaborative relationships with suppliers

is critical to mitigating the risks facing the project. Many project experts have emphasized the importance of choosing the most appropriate e-marketing practices and tools to enhance project performance. Finally, most of the experts focused on the importance of the functional division of marketing activities to ensure the allocation of project resources, and to achieve operational efficiency, timely implementation of the project, and effectiveness in achieving objectives (Teece, 2018; Wollersheim & Heimeriks, 2016).

Project management can use the interactive marketing approach and the network marketing approach to build long and continuous relationships with clients and stakeholders as well. E-marketing activities focus on personal communication techniques through project managers and administrative staff who follow clients or stakeholders. This trend confirmed by most of the experienced persons interviewed, most of them were directed in capacity development projects, as they indicated the importance of cooperative and personal contacts with clients. Encouraging clients to cooperate during all project phases is crucial for the project's success and achieving satisfactory results (Teece, 2018).

The above results confirmed the possibility of the proposed conceptual framework that defines different marketing practices (Tuominen et al., 2004). This framework is considered a base for practitioners that help them in identifying electronic marketing practices, tools, and activities that are appropriate for their projects to achieve satisfactory performance for stakeholders and customers, and to achieve profitability and competitiveness that support the plans of the organization's future strategy. This framework is also considered as a groundwork for researchers to launch practical research so that the impact of using these marketing trends on the efficiency or effectiveness of projects can be measured. It is possible to measure the extent of these trends on customer satisfaction or loyalty and to measure the success of marketing activities practiced by project management in achieving the objectives of the project.

5. Conclusion

This paper discusses the conceptual framework that illustrates the synergistic relationship between project management and electronic management regarding marketing activities. The study presents the idea of integrating project management and marketing activities and tools, as is the case with marketing orientations for marketing management. The idea of achieving this integration is still under investigation by researchers and practitioners in the field of project management. Moreover, this paper focuses on how to evaluate the current practice of project management within four contemporary marketing directions, which are transaction, database, interactive, and network marketing. Most studies indicated that there is a theoretical gap in project practices and the latest management models in management and information and knowledge management. Both governmental and private sector companies undertake many projects to achieve the goals of stakeholders, customers, or citizens, these organizations use electronic marketing to achieve the objectives of the administration such as enhancing performance and obtaining satisfactory outcomes for stakeholders such clients, suppliers, and other parties. It also uses electronic marketing to integrate with project management to increase project performance. This paper analyzed the responses of a group of experts working in different projects (development projects, capacity development, educational projects, infrastructure projects, information technology development projects, and else) to evaluate and explore the interrelationship between project management and the different marketing trends used in projects. The research paper determined whether there is a marketing trend that is practiced in the project, as well as whether electronic marketing activities are practiced as one of the functional areas of project management.

The results revealed that there are electronic marketing practices that are appropriate for each project individually, and differ in whether the implemented projects are development or commercial. Results also showed that marketing approaches would vary according to the type of project and the field of its implemen-

tation. E-marketing practices are used as one of the tools to enhance project performance. The interviewees noted that the principle of the functional division of marketing activities is critical for the success of the project, as it supports the concentration of resources to perform a specific function, which is reflected in the overall performance of the project management.

This paper assists the practitioners in focusing on significant aspects of e-marketing activities to achieve interconnectedness and integration with project management activities. It also supports researchers in providing a conceptual framework for marketing trends that serve project management that can use for further research and practical discussions. Although this suggested framework is based on the results of interviews with experts in the field of project management, marketing management, and executive departments, it is not considered sufficient to develop an integrated theoretical basis. Researchers expected to conduct more research on how different market trends affect the project outputs, and the different types of organizational performance such as profitability, competitiveness, customer satisfaction, loyalty, interactive relationships with stakeholders, and others. Finally, practitioners focus on how to build relationships with clients, stakeholders, and suppliers to enhance project performance, and determine whether project managers and employees can adopt the appropriate marketing approach that suits the projects they work on, and have the convenient skills and knowledge necessary to achieve high performance, or they communicate depending on their behavioral and individual skills. Finally, the researcher suggests expanding future research to include larger samples of project experts and to diversify the application of the conceptual framework to cover different types of projects, as well as the application of the conceptual framework in multiple countries so that the generalization of the model become much accurate. Since the project management environment and e-marketing differ from one country to another and from one region to another.

Cite as

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LUMINOUS
INSIGHTS

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