

Analyze the Reasons for the Lack of Practice of the Classical Project Management Perspective

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Abstract: As the traditional project management is criticized by more and more people, it is necessary to critically analyze the reasons. This article first affirms the classical views of project management, and then critically analyzes these views and proposes some effective measures to improve project management to cope with the challenges in terms of these problems in practice.

Keywords: Classical views of project management; Effective measures

1. Background

Nowadays, the rapid development of project management is recognized worldwide, and project managers have become an emerging profession, which is favored by the majority of employers. Since the late 1980s, an increasing number of researchers has become more interested in project management research. Furthermore, it is certain that project management has developed into a mature discipline and has improved theoretical basis and has applied in related project's fields. Nevertheless, different people have different views on project management. Many researchers believe that the classical view of project management has always existed in projects and gives guidance to the project implementation, which is reasonable. However, the classical view of project management has been increasingly criticized in practice due to its inability to deal with complex and uncertain environments.

2. Definition of Concept

In order to better understand this article, the relevant key terms of the classical view of project management should be defined before summarizing this article. Firstly, from a classical point of view, project management is highly centralization, which is defined as: the high-level organizations plan and control project tasks and divide into various work parts mechanistically to project team members, which can be form a framework of planning, execution and control (Saynisch, 2010; Garel, 2013). The classical view of project management is classic because of the clear assignment of tasks and clarify responsibilities of each project members. Furthermore, senior project managers can comprehensively control the implementation of the project, which can ensure that projects are delivered on time. It is undeniable that this classical view is reasonable and feasible to a certain extent. In addition, when formulating strategies, project managers also pay attention to the overall planning and guidance of the project and avoid unnecessary losses through risk management (Ansari et al., 2015).

3. Analysis

With the development of information and the impact of the complex economic and social environments, the classical view of project management has been criticized and challenged. Firstly, Saynisch (2010) points out that highly centralized project management has been questioned in practice because of its single and mechanical characteristics, which failed to solve the problems in uncertain and complex environments in a timely manner. Svejvig and Andersen (2015) also find that the initial expected results will not remain origin over time, because the environment is constantly changing, so project managers cannot take risks of the operating the failure of projects. Additionally, Lechler et al. (2012) state that as the classical view cannot distinguish between risk and uncertainty, which lead to misunderstanding. The consequence of this is the project and the enterprise give

up value opportunities. It is worth noting that uncertainty does not necessarily have negative consequences compared to risk, but uncertainty is a prerequisite for opportunities (Lechler et al., 2012). Therefore, Lechler et al. (2012) also claim that even if the senior management carried out risk management during project formulation, both the potential opportunities and potential stakeholders brought by uncertainty have also been lost.

Secondly, Saynisch (2010) and Cullen (2019) mention that the classical viewpoint of project management, which is rigorous hierarchical organization has given senior project managers the power to achieve their goals and the ability to monitor, but managers cannot fully reflect the reality in project practice when formulating strategies. Svejvig and Andersen (2015) also believe that project managers only make plan guidelines literally. When project managers cannot determine whether the selection and implementation of certain projects match the business strategy, the problem of project operations will deteriorate (Ansari et al., 2015). Ansari et al. (2015) explain that because many researchers believe that the consistency of strategy and project implementation is one of the criteria for project success, it is important to handle the relationship between the business strategy and project selection and implementation.

Thirdly, Buchan and Simpson (2020) believe that the classical view of project management is highly centralization in project practice, so project managers cannot cope with the gap between the constantly increasing knowledge required to project practice in new and complicated contexts, and the experience of project practitioners in organizational management. According to Buchan and Simpson (2020) and Svejvig and Andersen (2015), they explain that the traditional project management is regarded as a technocratic viewpoint, which means it only focuses on models, charts and mechanized procedures. Svejvig and Andersen (2015) also state that leadership needs to develop through several practice and it also is a social process. Therefore, the classical view of project management neglects the relationship between practice and theory (Buchan & Simpson, 2020; Svejvig & Andersen, 2015).

4. Potential improvements

According to the challenges encountered in the classical view of project management in practice, researchers have discovered some potential improvements to help project management develop. Firstly, Svejvig and Andersen (2015) propose that it is necessary that project managers may make much efforts to confirm and manage significant resources of uncertainty, which can have a positive impact on projects' success. Furthermore, changing the way of thinking of project management is the key point of improving the classical view of PM. This means that senior project managers can change their power of project management to project participators and also can establish and maintain the role of participating collaborators throughout the project life cycle to influence team members rather than controlling them (Svejvig & Andersen, 2015; Cullen, 2019; Lechler et al., 2012). Moreover, Lechler et al (2012) also point out that companies should support and encourage the rights of managers, provide project education such as professional training related to project management, so project managers will learn how to identify value-added opportunities and develop potential opportunities. In addition, Henriksen & Pedersen (2017) indicate that it is important to understand the needs of customers during the operation of the project, and to receive customer feedback in a timely manner to improve the process of organization.

Secondly, Ansari et al. (2015) believe that when project managers formulate a project strategy, they should determine the priority of the project and should maintain the harmony between projects. This can ensure consistency in relation to projects and the business strategy which can help the company pay attention to the project and achieve the strategic business objectives of projects (Ansari et al., 2015). Furthermore, Svejvig and Andersen (2015) indicate that project managers should also focus on that the strategy that must be constantly adjusted to meet the requirements of changing environment and markets.

Finally, in order to cope with the challenges between the knowledge growth in project practice and the experience of project practitioners, Buchan and Simpson (2020) state that participating in team meetings regularly may make the project team members adapt to the organizational direction, understand the project's cultural and social background, and determine the guideline of practice. Moreover, Svejvig and Andersen (2015) also suggest that providing education and practice for project team members, such as give opportunities for the project practitioners to learn the content of the project, can have huge positive influence on improving the ability of project practice. It is necessary to pay attention to the role of social learning in project management, because if the project team members develop social learning habits, then they will learn from the experience of their predecessors and continue to improve their abilities (Svejvig & Andersen, 2015).

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, project management has already become an independent discipline in terms of increasingly research and

practice. Many universities provide some subjects and the discipline of project management, so the development of project management has received more attention by the public. However, with the continuous development and innovation of the times, project management need to face many challenges, and the classical view of project management cannot cope with these challenges to a certain extent, so it has been questioned. Furthermore, one of the classical views of project management is the highly centralization, which has been criticized because of its simplicity and mechanical characteristics. In project practice, senior project managers cannot address with the risks and uncertainties brought about by complex and chaotic environments, they also cannot match the relationship between the growing practical knowledge of project management and the experience of project practitioners in organization and management. Therefore, although based on these challenges, researchers have put forward some improving measures, the classical view of project management will also need to be adjusted upgrade and improved in the future.

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