From Theory to Practice: Examining Project Management Best Practices in Project Management Mobile Applications

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ABSTRACT

Given the heavy influence of the PMBOK® on how projects are managed and the abundance of software available to manage projects, it is prudent to evaluate how and why project managers use software to manage their projects. It is also imperative to better understand how well the most common applications support the PMBOK® knowledge areas. This study uses survey methodology to examine the relationship between project management best practices and the project management mobile applications, with potentially beneficial implications for both academia and practice.

KEYWORDS

Project management, mobile applications

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The adoption of software applications to manage projects grew along with the growth of PC usage in organizations. The most prevalent software at the time was various iterations of Microsoft Project®. This expensive, feature-loaded, proprietary software heavily influenced how project managers planned and controlled their projects. More recently, software has exponentially grown in terms of functionality and usability and has become much more affordable than the early programs. Project managers frequently utilize Google Play and the Apple Store to identify the software application that are needed to more easily plan and monitor complex projects. Additionally, most project managers utilize these work-focused applications primarily on a variety of mobile devices, including cell phones, laptops, and tablets. Project management mobile applications have proliferated at the same time as personal mobile applications.

As the use of information technology (IT) to support project work continued to develop, project management as a discipline also began to solidify through the development of formalized project management best practices. The Project Management Institute® published the first Project Management Body of Knowledge in 1987, with the latest version (PMBOK 6E) released in 2017. The PMBOK® contains information about ten key knowledge areas that project managers need to know to manage projects successfully. PMBOK is widely used among project manage professionals and drives the standardized processes that they follow to complete projects.

Given the heavy influence of the PMBOK® on how projects are managed and the abundance of software available to manage projects, it is prudent to evaluate how and why project managers use software to manage their projects. It is also imperative to better understand how well the most common applications support the PMBOK® knowledge areas. This study examines the relationship between project management best practices and the project management mobile applications available to project managers today. We will also examine the relationship to determine if there is a "mutual influencing" factor between the two – where the mobile applications are influencing the practices that are utilized when managing projects. This examination will highlight which knowledge areas are more prone to misalignment with the codified best practices, thus leading to a deeper exploration of why the misalignment is present and its severity.

The methodology that we will employ involve five steps. The first step is to develop a list of widely used project management apps that demonstrate strong, moderate, and weak alignment with the PMBOK. The second step will be to survey certified project managers on their attitude toward and their utilization of the selected apps. The third step will be where we analyze the survey results and produce a series of 'mobile app best practices' that adhere to the PMBOK.

The results of this study have multiple beneficial implications. For academia, the results of this study will add to the body of knowledge in the intersection of information systems and project management. It is vital for research studies

to examine real-world issues from an in-depth, interdisciplinary perspective. For practitioners, the results of this study will aid in the decision-making capabilities of project managers when identifying the appropriate mobile applications to use that will simultaneously ensure the quality of project management through its support of PMBOK principles.