CITY UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
香港城市大學

The Importance of IT Project Managers' Soft Competence for IT Project Success: An Exploratory Study In Banking and Finance
探討在銀行及金融業中資訊科技項目經理的個人軟實力與項目成功的關係

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by

Wan Sai Chuen
尹世全

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ABSTRACT

The Importance of IT Project Managers' Soft Competence for IT Project Success: An Exploratory Study in Banking and Finance

This dissertation examines the most important soft competencies of IT project managers for IT project success in the banking and financial services industry.

Based on the literature of project management research, the researcher has selected relevant items for both IT project manager's soft competence and IT project success. Industry case studies and expert interviews are used to determine the most important items among the relevant items The research model is then tested through an extensive web survey, which was distributed through the 3 largest professional bodies consisting of more than 13,000 project professional members. The hypotheses (model) were tested using data collected from 333 valid responses from IT project practitioners in the banking and finance sector who were involved in 4 roles, namely IT project managers, the managers of IT project managers, IT systems users and IT project participants.

The empirical results show that the most important soft competencies for IT project managers are "problem solving skills", the ability to "manage expectations" and "presentation skills". These competencies have a strong positive impact on the fulfillment of business/user requirements, team satisfaction and quality success criteria. While for other quantifiable success criteria, such as schedules and budgeting, the "social skill" of an IT project manager can play a more critical role. Therefore, the research hypothesis, "*The soft competencies of IT project managers are positively correlated with IT project success in the banking and financial services industry*", is supported empirically.

The design of this research represents a break-through in the project management research domain. The two-phase approach takes advantage of both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Phase 1 uses a case study to explore new ideas in the contemporary context. Then, in phase 2, these ideas are tested in a pilot survey that is validated by an industry expert group consisting current industry practitioners,

project professional body representatives and university professors. The mass-scale survey is then carried out in the world's main financial centre. This unique mix-method with multi-stakeholder research design significantly improved the reliability, validity, relevance, practicality and coherence of the research findings.

The findings provide solid evidence of the correlation relationships between the most important soft competencies of IT project managers and the specific IT project success criteria. Furthermore, the rankings of the project success criteria and IT project managers' soft competence from the perspective of different stakeholders are presented. These findings represent a new chapter in current project management theory and practice. In addition to filling this gap in the literature, the results of this study could also assist the career development of project management professionals, help business leaders to select effective project managers and enable organizations to better allocate human resources.

Keywords: Project Management, Soft skills, Competence, Information Technology, Project Management Success, Project Success, Information Systems, Multi-stakeholder Research, Mixed Research Methods