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A taxonomy of project barriers in complex projects

Azadeh Rezvani, Artemis Chang and Anna Wiewiora

Problem background



Sydney Opera House

Project budget exceeded from the original budget by 14 times, costing \$102 million and was delivered 10 years over schedule (Söderlund et al., 2001)



Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro

Project budget increased from the originally estimated 4.6 billion to 16.4 billion dollars (Flyvbjerg, et al., 2016)

Research Method

- **Systematic literature review** (Tranfield, Denyer, & Smart 2003)
 - Planning
 - Conducting
 - Reporting
- **Analysis**
 - Thematic analysis (Ritchie & Lewis, 2010)
 - Synthesizing the main outcomes extracted from the literature
 - Condensing of text into fewer categories of qualitative data (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2010; Neuman, 2011)

Recommendations

- **Organizational barriers**
 - Use of uniform standards and timely access to relevant information (Van Marrewijk et al. 2008; Asad & Pinningtonb, 2014)
 - Clarification of goals and requirements
 - Maintain the principles of transparency and consistency in drafting relevant policies (Remington & Pollack, 2007; Liu et al., 2016)
- **Managerial barriers**
 - Detailed knowledge of customer and business needs
 - Strong risk management techniques based on shared risk and reward arrangements, such as a policy of “sink or swim together”

Discussion and Future research

- We integrate extant literature, propose categories of barriers influencing the successful delivery of complex projects
- By identification of the problems in managing complex projects this research can be a foundation for future research, including the development of new managerial approach for managing complex projects.
- The research findings provide practitioners with a better understanding of common challenges in managing complex projects so that practitioners are aware of these problems and take appropriate measures to address them.