

“ICT based training for Organizations working on Public-Private-Partnership model”

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Abstract

The ability of organizations in developing countries to increase citizen access to quality services and infrastructural facilities largely depends on constant fortification of organizational and human capacity. Public-private-partnership (PPP) model is helping countries across the globe build their countries and the possibilities still remain unexplored. PPP has been considered by project managers as being highly controversial due to with high amount of uncertainties, types of risks involved, cost-over-runs etc.

With a large number of economies of the world turning to PPP to fund critical infrastructure projects, the need for research on implications this type of financing in various sectors and through various functional dimensions, is being increasingly felt.

Human Resource Management has long been considered as a core process of project oriented organizations, which has impact on all processes and functionalities. Most of the past research on human resource management is based on the premise that issues relating to human resource and their development can only be framed in terms of large, stable organizations. While other organization types such as those which are having a matrix structure, still find practices related to human resource management, learning and development to be largely grey areas, which they deal with hit-and-trial method.

The authors argue that the specific nature of a PPP based company, temporary nature of the work design, dynamic environmental factors, present a typical set of challenges for HR managers. This paper is an attempt to present an overview of the HRD issues in context of PPP with regard to options available for workforce capacity enhancement, for organizations running on PPP model.

Keywords: Public-Private-Partnership, Human Resource Development, ICT, skill enhancement

Introduction

Infrastructure is the base of development of any economy in the world. Infrastructural strength acts as a catalyst and serves as an important catalyst for inclusive economic growth, promotion to trade, poverty alleviation. Public-Private Partnership has proven to be a novel funding option particularly Low Income Countries (LICs) who sometimes witness stalling of critical infrastructural projects for paucity of funds. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) projected five years back that the aggregate requirement of fund to complete global infrastructural projects till the year 2030 would amount to USD 11 trillion. The global demand for investments in infrastructure was estimated around US\$ 3.7 trillion annually, keeping in view the progressive increase in global population. Governments and the world banking system struggle with filling the gap in the demand and supply of

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funds for infrastructural funds. Governments around the world are looking towards the private sector as an additional source of funding.

Public Private Partnership (PPP)

Public-private partnerships are about collaborative agreement between a government agency and private-sector companies that can be used to finance, build, and operate projects, such as public transportation networks, parks, and convention centers. Financing a project through a public-private partnership can allow a project to be completed sooner or make it a possibility in the first place. PPP or is a model of long-term contractual agreement between public authority and private partner in general, with the aim of carrying out infrastructure projects or providing public services. It differs from conventional public procurement in several respects and is considered as more complex but at the same time bearing significant public benefits. The need for well-structured PPPs is becoming greater in many countries facing the continually growing demand for public services and simultaneously meeting with the issues about the availability of finance and budget constraints. There is an acknowledgement that the private sector has a part to play in the construction or reconstruction, including management and operation of public assets that will be essential for their economic growth. By developing partnerships with private sector entities, governments can maintain quality services despite budget limitations and offer to the citizens more works and services in a faster and more efficient manner.

For developing and developed countries alike, PPPs can offer significant value and serve as a solution for overcoming shortages of upfront capital and skills or human capital needed to expedite the development of efficient infrastructure projects.

Reasons for adoption of PPP as a project funding option

Every country has a specific set of objectives for using PPP, and in LICs (Low Income Countries) these objectives typically involve reducing cost constraints on the public sector, lowering tariffs and expediting project delivery. Another principal benefit of implementing projects under PPP arrangements is the ability to allocate risks to the party that can best mitigate them.

Once it is decided that a country is able to implement a project using the PPP method, it is critical that all phases of the PPP cycle are completed in a proper and transparent way. Each stage of the cycle requires specific institutional capacity and when are carried out appropriately and implemented well, PPPs can bolster economic growth, unlock revenue potential and enhance innovation and operational efficiency in the provision of public services irrespective of the sector.

Public private partnership (ppp) project performance

According to Goran Mladenovic et al (2013), performance of a PPP project gets influenced by a number of controllable and uncontrollable environmental factors and how their dynamism during the project life cycle. Therefore, a well-defined performance criteria and objectives combined all stakeholder was needed in order to develop a systematic performance management system. Thus, it is widely suggested that accurate analysis of performance could be attained only after the KPIs were determined and monitored. Key Performance Indicator of a project are (KPI) defined as a tool of attribute to assess effectiveness and examine performance. As a basis of the study, [26] Critical Success Factors (CSFs) could be the pillar to achieve PPP project objectives. CSFs defined as “those few key areas of activity in which favorable results are absolutely necessary for a particular manager to reach their goals”. [27] agreed that it was significantly important to assist organization in identifying critical success element to be emphasized to reach a successful project. A research study

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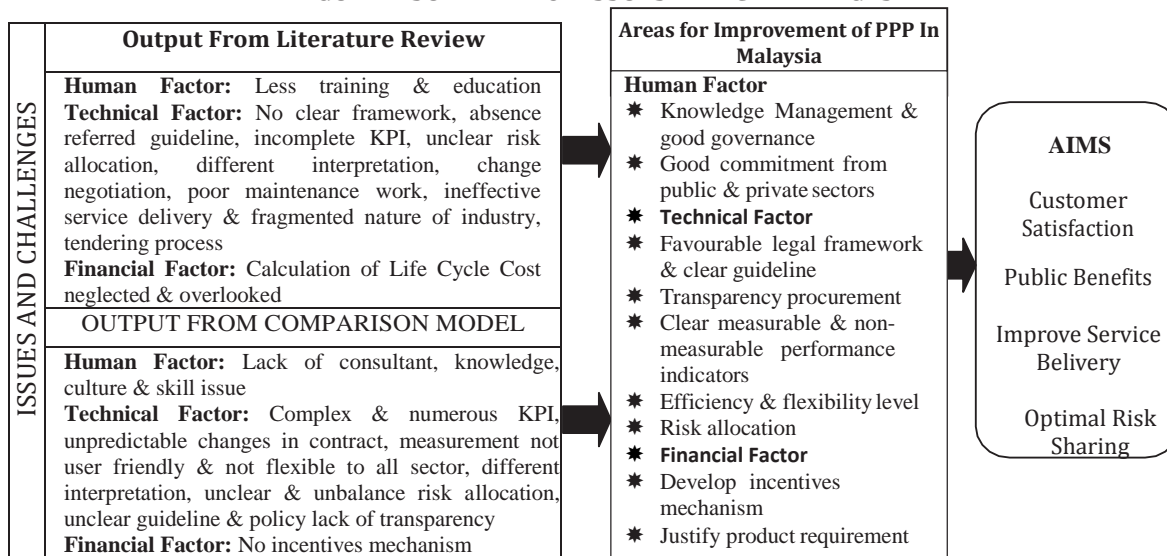
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conducted in various countries revealed critical success factors. For instance the CSF for overall PPP projects in Malaysia was:

- * Favorable legal framework
- * Competent governance
- * Good commitment from public and private sectors, and
- * Availability of financial market and sound economic policy.

This paper is based on literature review of publications related to PPP project performance, with the perspective of identifying the most pressing issues and challenges faced by such projects and finding the most viable solutions for the same. The paper is an attempt to explore the solutions Information, communication can offer for these problems. This paper is further exploration of the factors identified in the paper “Review of issues and challenges for public private partnership (PPP) project performance in Malaysia”, H. Hashim, A. I. Che-Ani, and K. Ismail Four worldwide framework models were selected to reviews theoretically performance measurement assessment models for PPP . Two models where applied (1) UK & Australia (by country) and (2) hospital & transport infrastructure (by sector) to carry out gap analysis. The outcomes were tabulated into summary of findings diagram.

FIGURE 1 SUMMARY OF ISSUES AND CHALLENGES



Human Resource Development in PPP based projects/organizations-

Research studies have identified the factors related to HRM in project-based organizations that pose a challenging situation. There arises an immediate need to adapt conventional HRM system to the context of project based organizations. Project based models have a typical flat and decentralized system and the factors of the operational level become all the more complicated due to the presence of two revenue models involved in public-private-partnerships. Given the typical of project based organizations, the adaptation in HRM systems at the operational level is particularly relevant. Studies throw up the lack of consultant knowledge and required skill as major impediment and challenging situation in such organizations. Some of the areas where gaps were identified and training need was felt are:

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- * Improvement of Communication and presentation skills needed for the trainers role in domain of PPP;
- * How to design training program and materials for various target groups;
- * How to prepare group assignments;
- * How to chose the optimal methodology to deliver specific content;
- * Understanding PPPs principles, pros and contra PPPs;
- * EU PP and PPP policy requirements from prospective of EU accession countries;
- * The importance of the strategic planning from the perspective of the public sector in line with EU requirements;
- * Main steps in PPP Projects Cycle;
- * Where to find available literature and how to prepare the most economic list of it;
- * Improvement of personal communication and presentation skills – short individual exercise

The managers at the helm of affairs in PPP based firms use various methods for knowledge dissemination such as classroom training, formal training classes, e-learning, one-on-one training, and technical project training. A need has since been felt to cater to the training needs by keeping the time, cost and productivity lost variable in control. ICT enabled methodology is offering customized options for them. Managers all over the world are looking at electronically enabled training to provide solution to their training need.

Training Tools

E-training tools covers a varied set of mix-match medium, applications and processes such as web-based learning, virtual classrooms, and digital collaboration and includes the delivery of content via Internet, intranet (LAN/WAN), audio and videotape, satellite broadcast, interactive TV and CD-ROM. There are a series of activities involved in the successful implementation of E-learning programmes which can together be termed as E-learning programme process. E-learning has various options as methodology which can be used for employee training. The most prominent can be listed as follows:

1. Computer based training
2. Web-based training
3. EPSS -electronic performance support system
4. Interactive multi-media user interface
5. Mobile enabled learning or m-learning

1. Computer Based Training (CBT)

Computer Based training is called so because of extensive use of computers and multimedia technology for training. It includes any type of training methodology that involves a trainee/learner interacts with a computer interface during the learning process. CBT is flexible and easily accessible to the learner when compared to the traditional training methodology which requires a trainer, a room, training materials and learner group large enough to make the training worth the investment, in terms of cost, time and productivity loss involved. Most Computer Based Training programs facilitate customization of training program enabling that a particular learner's need are met.

2. Web Based Training (WBT)

Web based training or WBT is learning in which training content is imparted through the medium of World Wide Web, the Internet, and dedicated private intranet. Web-based training presents a live

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content, in a format which allows the trainee the option of learning at his own pace on the area of his need and interest. Technological advances in computer network technology and the increasing size of bandwidth has brought unlimited multi-media options for delivery of training content to the learner.

1. EPSS-Electronic Performance Support System

E-learning systems are often supported by a system, which enhances the learning process and also gives a basis for increased self-learning. This can be delivered through Electronic and Performance Support System (EPSS). It provides task specific information, training, coaching and monitoring to enhance job performance. An EPSS can be in the form of help files, glossary items, and task tools available on the internet, intranet or print. It facilitates high level of job performance with a minimum of human support. EPSS is different from web-based training in that learners decide when and with how much level of detail learning will take place (just in time and just enough). It is an integral part of the organizational development because it seeks to solve two of the most significant problem facing business—individual job performance and competitiveness. The EPSSs introduced in 1991 with Gloria Gery's book , *Electronic Performance Support Systems: How and Why to Remake the Workplace Through the Strategic Application of Technology* (Galagan, 1994) Since then, EPSS has assisted in organizational development, human resources, performance technology, and training development professionals.

2. Interactive Multimedia

Multimedia means literally involves using more than one type of media-usually text; graphics, animation and sound to produce an object. This new technology offer access to materials in different forms. However, the term multimedia is used in Web terminology to refer to the inclusion of audio, video and/or animation in a web page. Interactive multimedia has also been called as “hybrid Technology”. It combines the storage and retrieval capabilities of computer database technology with advanced tools for viewing and manipulating these materials. Through the condensed storage capabilities of computers, multimedia can deliver large amount of information in ways that make it manageable, approachable, and useful. And by making it possible to access illustrations and photographs, sounds and video, as well as large amount of text, interactive multimedia programs present learning information in new engaging and meaningful ways.

Interactive multimedia has the capacity to deliver large amount of materials in multiple forms, and to deliver them in an integrated environment that allows users to control the reading and viewing experience. Interactive multimedia programme enable the user to manipulate material through a wide variety of powerful linking, sorting and searching activities. This new technology offers access to material like never before.

3. M-Learning

Many organizations' are using mobile or cell-phone, tablet enabled as a vital approach to their employee development strategy. This methodology of training though multi-device training, learner employees are now being given freedom to access information anytime, anywhere on the device of their choice. Mobile Learning is about offering learner-centricity ensuring self-paced learning and how would the employee like to consume it.

This approach is being considered as an innovative approach towards formal, structured training as well as for performance support intervention. There is an increased adaption of m-learning methodology by companies as it is found to “provide high learner engagement, establish better completion rates and higher retention, encourage social or collaborative learning, facilitate learning as a continuum, and acclimatize well to both Formal Training as well as Performance Support.”

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Conclusion

Global organizations are realizing the potential of ICT enabled training and are resorting to the same for their HRD solutions. Organizations like World Bank and United Nations ESCAP (Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific) have in fact developed PPP online training materials for self-study and are tailored to provide a basic minimum knowledge of various issues those policy-makers and executors dealing with PPPs have to be aware of. The level of content ranges from being general in nature to being specifically designed for the infrastructure sectors, in particular the transport sector.

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