ASSESSMENT OF THE ROLE OF KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER STRATEGIES ON PROJECT SUCCESS. A CASE STUDY OF MYRIGHT- DPOD PROJECT IN RWANDA

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ABSTRACT

T he aim of this study was to examine the relationship between Knowledge transfer strategies and project success. Specifically, the study objectives were to establish the relationship between Job shadowing, to determine the relationship between process documentation on project success, to examine the relationship between mentoring on project success and to investigate the relationship between Information exchanges on project success.
The study adopted a descriptive correlational Design, study population was 48. A census method was used to determine the sample size of the study and the sample size for the study was 48 people. Primary data were collected using questionnaires and key persons interview guide, while Secondary data was collected through MYRIGHT DPOD project report. Data was analysed using both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation and linear regression model while qualitative data was analysed using narrative method. Data presentation of quantitative data were presented in the table form and interpretation of table was provided under each table to help interpret findings and generate conclusions that would help recommendations on the problem under investigation. According to the study findings there is a high correlation between knowledge transfer strategies and project success.
Keywords: Knowledge, transfer, strategy, project success.

1. INTRODUCTION

Knowledge transfer is considered to be more than just a communication problem. If it were merely that, then a memorandum, an e-mail or a meeting would accomplish the knowledge transfer. Knowledge transfer is more complex because 1) knowledge resides in organizational members, tools, tasks, and their subnetworks (Argote & Ingram, 2000) and 2) much knowledge in organizations is tacit or hard to articulate (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). The most successful organizations those able to turn ideas into action recognize effective knowledge transfer as vital to their competitive advantage (Prusak, 2015). Knowledge is central to mission success, Projects are based on the successful interaction of multiple disciplines; the ultimate demand is to access the best solutions and answers from a global and diverse team. If there is no strategy for defining what knowledge is most critical, and what strategies can best be used to share and transfer knowledge, we leave to chance that the best decisions that will be made (Howlett & James, 2010)

1.2 Statement of the problem

The success of an organization today lies more on its intellectual- intangible asset rather than its physical assets. knowledge is the most strategically important resource that firm possess and also a principle source of value creation. Knowledge is of limited value if it is not shared and transferred throughout the organization. When knowledge is transferred, it becomes cumulative and embedded within organization's process, products and services, which eventually contribute to increase organization's competitiveness and customer value. Thus, externalizing knowledge and facilitate its availability throughout a firm for better utilization appears very important in enhancing a firm's competitiveness (Nonaka et. al., 2000).

Knowledge transfer cannot occur without the existence of systems and mechanisms that enable the process. Driving for success transfer of knowledge, firms need to rely not only on external help, but also on its internal capabilities in creating conditions favorable for the transfer. To address this challenge, William and Rothwell (2004), identified strategies an organization should undertake to store and transmit the institutional memory that is often vested in its most experienced performers. suggest strategies to be used, including Job-Shadowing Programs; Communities of Practice; Process Documentation; Critical Incident, Interviews or Questionnaires; Expert Systems; Job Aids; Storyboards; Mentoring Programs; Storytelling; Information Exchanges and Best Practice Studies or Meetings.

However, no research has tried to combine both areas to analyze the relationship between Knowledge transfer strategies and project success. Research on knowledge transfer has focused on inter-firm governance modes as well, including transfers in alliance settings and from acquired units. Others (e.g.Inkpen, 1996, 1997; Khanna et al., 1998) have addressed broad issues in the management of knowledge in alliances.

Doz (1996) and Simonin (1997) examined the impact of collaborative experience as a form of knowledge developed between alliance partners. Hu (1995) investigated the transferability of a firm's competitive advantage across international borders. Dodgson (1996) investigated the impact of trust and inter firm technological linkages on knowledge transfer. Moreover, according to Simonin (1999), researchers have focused on other firm-specific variables that can affect knowledge transfer, such as strategic intent and motives, organizational capabilities, partner selection, and trust.

As a results of the absence of a strategy and a tactical plan for Knowledge transfer at NUDOR, employees take too long to become fully productive, employees learning skills in the wrong priority and the organization lack of connection of knowledge transfer processes to other systems such as operational plans, performance reviews, and compensation. The aim of this research is to assess the relationship between Knowledge Transfer Strategies and Project success through the assessment of the four KTS namely Job-Shadowing Programs, Process Documentation, Communities of Practice and Information Exchanges.

1.3. Objectives of the study

1.3.1. Main objective

The main objective of this research was to assess the relationship between Knowledge Transfer Strategies and project success.

1.3.2. Specific objectives

(1) To assess the relationship between job shadowing on project success.
(2) To determine the relationship between process documentation on project success.
(3) To examine the relationship between mentoring on project success.
(4) To investigate the relationship between Information exchanges on project success.

2. LITTERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical review

Hedlund and Nonaka's Knowledge management model

Knowledge transfer in organizations is not as simple as Nonaka's simple matrix suggests. Knowledge transfer can be very complicated and complex hence, a more elaborated version of Nonaka's model was developed to describe the four levels of carriers or agents of knowledge in organizations. This four levels of' carriers' perspective assumes that knowledge is categorized into the individual, the group, the organization and the inter-organizational domains. In this aspect, the interoganizational domain includes important customers, suppliers, competitors and others. Even though, this model is supportive as it relates the carriers to the types of knowledge, it is complicated as the carriers are segregated and related with the limited types of knowledge, which is consistent with Nonaka's externalization and combition knowledge management process (McAdam&McCreedy,1999). Indeed, Hedlund and Nonaka (1993) argue that knowledge management characteristics can have serious implications for the various types of activities such as innovation and strategies and this can affect organizations' success or failures. Hence, this suggests that the essence of organizaions' survival and success can depend on how they create, transfer and exploit their knowledge resources.

A Dyadic Model of Knowledge Transfer

This model overtly separates knowledge applications into directives and routines. Directives and

routines represent applications of knowledge, and are idiosyncratic methods by which knowledge is transferred within an organization (Alavi & Leidner, 2001). A second critical component of our model is the integration of the SECI spiral (Gourlay, Conceptualizing knowledge creation: A critique of Nonaka's theory, 2006), which is elegant, dynamic, and rich in theory but impractical (Gourlay & Nurse, Challenges and Issues in Knowledge Managemen, 2005). The dynamic interaction evident in the SECI process, is necessary to capture the iterative nature of knowledge, but makes parsimonious representation difficult in group-based models. Dyadic interpretation provides a clear representation of how the use of routines and directives provides alternative paths for knowledge transfer. The placement of the descriptive verbs used in the SECI .

This revised model portrays knowledge creation and transfer as complex processes with simultaneous and reciprocal flows. It submits that tacit knowledge can only be developed through the internalization of

explicit knowledge known by an individual or the observation of, or participation in, routines; and explicit knowledge can only be developed through the externalization of personalized tacit knowledge or through the accumulation of directives. Routines and directives facilitate the transfer of knowledge, and reconcile confusing descriptions of the SECI process by portraying the intermediate processes in knowledge transfer. The model also expand the respective domains of combination and socialization to include the conversion of knowledge to and from routines, and to and from directives. A conventional interpretation of the concept of socialization as originally described by Nonaka, Toyama and Konno and would regard socialization as the embodiment of tacit knowledge without recognizing the empathizing processes required to develop new tacit knowledge from observing others. Similarly, the definition of combination has been expanded to include both distributing and accumulating explicit knowledge through shared rules. The proposed model extends the SECI process and describes how knowledge is acquired, processed, and shared with others. We advocate a social perspective of knowledge transfer that suggests that one person's ability to acquire new knowledge is ultimately tied to another person's desire and ability to share his/her knowledge. This model also position institutionalizing and adhering as processes through which routines and directives are altered by other actors in a network. These relationships are necessary in singular dyadic model to explain that routines and directives may be independently altered in response to the contributions of others within the firm. In a comprehensive network model, institutionalization and adherence would appear as a series of other independent dyadic exchanges. Knowledge transfer is a dynamic and iterative cognitive process where the application of knowledge (i.e., routines and directives) functions as the mechanisms through which knowledge is transferred. Routines and directives do not have to be shared with others, but in contrast to cognitive processes like internalization and externalization knowledge applications occur outside of an individual's mind, and are observable occurrences. Consequently, knowledge may be articulated by an individual without being shared with others or an individual's routines may not be witnessed by others, but the knowledge has still been displayed as information others may interpret. Some information may never be examined by another individual (i.e., a video recording that is never watched or a manuscript that is lost or never shared) and knowledge remains embodied by a routine or directive. Routines and directives are both shared experiences, which multiple individuals can reference. When an individual learns from observing the actions of a specialist, knowledge is conveyed through routines (Nonaka, Toyama, & Konno, 2000).

Strategies for Knowledge Transfer

A job-shadowing program is one strategy by which to transfer knowledge from one person or group to another. A less-experienced performer is paired up with a veteran performer. The veteran is asked to share knowledge (and perhaps hands-on practice) in dealing with the most difficult situations with which he or she has been faced on the job (William & Roth well, 2004).

Process Documentation. Popular as a result of ISO and the quality movement, process documentation involves flowcharting how work is performed. It may include special variations in what performers should do or how they should do it based on special circumstances. Clear process documentation, which may include flowcharts or procedure manuals, can be helpful in storing and transferring knowledge from a more experienced to a less experienced person (William & Roth well, 2004).

Information Exchanges. The same basic approach can be turned to information exchanges. When this strategy is used, veteran performers sit at booths and dispense wisdom to less-experienced performers who visit them (William & Roth well, 2004).

Knowledge transfer mentoring: Employees must have a certain set of skills in order to accomplish the tasks at hand. Mentoring is a great approach to help employees get organized, and give them access to an expert that can give feedback, and help answer questions that they may not know where to find answers to. Mentorship provides critical benefits to individuals as well as organizations. Although the importance of mentorship to an individual's career advancement is virtually universal, in the United States it historically has been most apparent in relation to the advancement of women and minorities in the workplace because, until recent decades, American men in dominant ethnic groups had reaped the benefits of mentorship without consciously identifying it as an advancement strategy in the modern sense. American women and minorities, in contrast, more pointedly identified and pursued mentorship in the second half of the twentieth century as they sought to achieve the professional success they had long been denied *(Laird and Pamela Walker, 2006).*

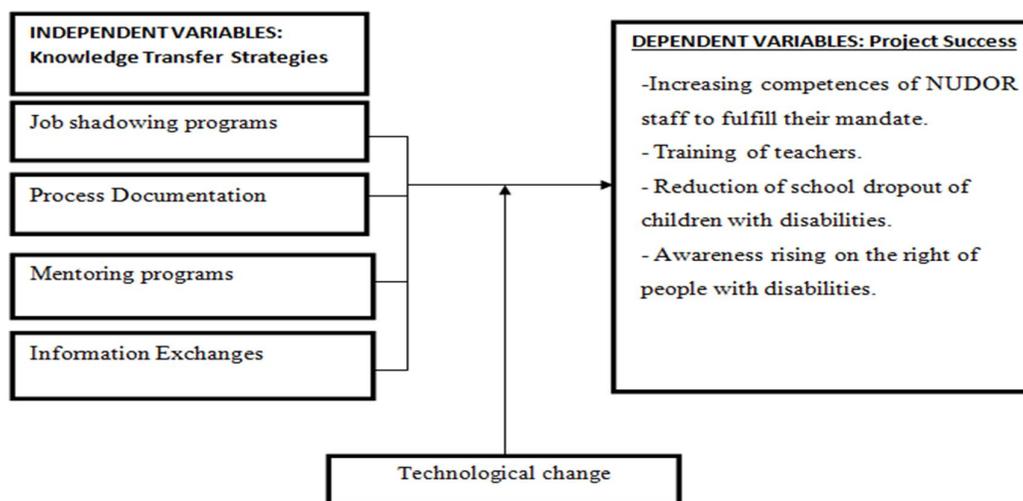**Framework for the role of Knowledge Transfer strategies on Project success.**

Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework for Knowledge Transfer strategies on Project success

(Source: Researchers Conceptualisation, 2016)

2.3 Critique of existing Literature relevant to the study

Research on knowledge transfer has developed out of studies focused on how firms could best accomplish international technology transfers to facilitate pursuit of Vernon's (1966) product life cycle. Early studies found that transfer costs decrease with experience (Mansfield et al., 1979; Teece, 1976, 1977) and examined the speed through which firms are able to first develop and then transfer innovations to subsidiaries (Mansfield and Romeo, 1980; Davidson, 1980). Early conceptual work focused on the role of administrative structures on knowledge flows to and from the rest of the corporation (Bartlett and Ghoshal, 1986). Birkinshaw and Morrison (1995) found that firms with organizational structures that supported combining activities and sharing resources across subsidiary boundaries were more innovative.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design

The research Design for this study was a Descriptive correlational research design.

3.2 Target population and sample size

The study population was 48, Census method was used to determine the sample size of the study therefore sample size for the study was 48 people.

3.3 Research instrument

The data was collected by using the following tools: Questionnaire, Key person Interview guides and project report.

3.4 Data Processing and Analysis

Two types of analysis were used for this study. First, in order to provide a description of the population from which data was collected, descriptive information on age, gender, and education level was provided. Second, to determine the relationship between knowledge transfer strategies and project success, Pearson correlation and linear regression model have been used.

The purpose of the analysis is to measure how well the dependent variable can be predicted by the independent variable. It can be thought of as an extension of the <u>logistic regression</u> model that applies to <u>dichotomous</u> dependent variables, allowing for more than two (ordered) response categories *(Woodward, 2005).*

Qualitative data were collected using key persons interview guide and were analyzed using narrative method to support the findings provided by quantitative data analysis.

Simple linear regression is a technique in parametric statistics that is commonly used for analysing mean response of a variable Y which changes according to the magnitude of an intervention variable X. It forms the basis of one of the more important forms of inferential statistical analysis. Where the line of means cuts the Y axis; we get the intercepts. The intercepts is the value of Y corresponding to X = 0. The line has a slope. The slope is the measure of change in the value of Y corresponding to the unit change in the value of X . In this study, the simple linear regression model for relating a dependent variable (Y_1) to independent variables (X_1) is:

$Y_1 = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1$ With the following assumption:
$E(\varepsilon_1) = 0; Var(\varepsilon_1) = \delta^2$ Where δ is constant and ε_1 is independent identified distribution
β_0, β_1 Are unknown population coefficients
ε_1 Value of the unobservable random disturbance term (Random errors)
The parameter β_0, is the constant term, or Y-intercept, and measure the mean value of Y_1 when all the independent variables are set to 0. The parameter β_1 measures the changes in the mean value of Y_1 corresponding to 1-unit increase in the value of X_1, when all the other independent.

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the study findings and describes them in sections according to the study objectives. The first section presents the bio-data characteristics of the respondents, the second section represents The relationship between knowledge transfer strategies on project management.

4.2. Relationship between job shadowing programs on project success

The respondents were asked to highlight the relationship between job shadowing programs and project success by examining the relationship between job shadowing program and the indicators of project success such are increasing competences of NUDOR staff to full their mandates; training of teacher; reduction of school dropout of children with disabilities and awareness rising on the right of people with disabilities.

Table 1: Correlation between job shadowing and Project success

Job Shadowing	Pearson Correlation	1	.812**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.013
	N	48	48
Project success	Pearson Correlation	.812**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.013	
	N	48	48

According to the information from Table 1, the result of correlation of job shadowing and project success was at the rate of 0.812 meaning that the job shadowing is influencing success of project at the level of 81.2%. Therefore job shadowing plays a significant role on project success.

Table 2: Estimate parameters between job shadowing and project success

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for B	
	B			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Constant (β_0)	2.216		.000	1.852	2.580
Job shadowing (X)	.108		0.013	-.388	.172

Dependent Variable (Y): project success

According to the information from table 2, if: Y= Project success and X= job shadowing, project success will change in function of job shadowing, Thus, if job shadowing is equal to one unite and constant (β_0) is zero (0), project success will increase 0.108 times job shadowing. Hence, Y=2.216+0.108X. There is a significance relationship between job shadowing and project success because their p-value (0.013) is statistically significant at 5% level of significance with lower bound of -0.388 and upper bound of 0.172.

4.4. Relationship between process documentation and project success

This part describes the relationship between process documentation and project success by examining the relationship between process documentation and the indicators of project success such are increasing competences of NUDOR staff to full their mandates; training of teacher; reduction of school dropout of children with disabilities and awareness rising on the right of people with disabilities.

4.4.5. Correlation between process documentation and project success

This section describes the correlation between process documentation and project success.

Table 3: Correlation between process documentation and project success

process documentation	Pearson Correlation	1	.791[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.014
	N	48	48
Project success	Pearson Correlation	.791[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.014	
	N	48	48

Table 3 revealed that, the result of Correlation of process documentation and project success was 0.791 meaning that the process documentation is influencing success of project at the level of 79.1% and remaining 20.9% other activities. This proves a high correlation between process documentation and project success.

Table 4: Estimate parameters between process documentation and project success

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for B	
	B			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Constant (β_0)	2.190		.000	1.771	2.610
Process documentation (X)	.095		.014	-.453	.262

a. Dependent Variable: Project success

According to the information from Table 4, if: Y= Project success and X= process documentation, project success will change in function of process documentation, Thus, if process documentation is equal to one unite and constant (β_0) is zero (0), project success will increase 0.095 time process documentation. Hence

$Y=2.190+0.095X$. There is a significance relationship between process documentation and project success because their p-value (0.014) is statistically significant at 5% level of significance with lower bound of -0.453 and upper bound of 0.262.

4.5. Relationship between mentoring programs and project success

The respondents were asked to highlight the relationship between mentoring programs and project success by examining the relationship between mentoring programs and the indicators of project success such are increasing competences of NUDOR staff to full their mandates; training of teacher; reduction of school dropout of children with disabilities and awareness rising on the right of people with disabilities.

Table 5: Correlation between mentoring program and project success

Mentoring program	Pearson Correlation	1	$.901^{**}$
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.003
	N	48	48
Project success	Pearson Correlation	$.901^{**}$	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	
	N	48	48

Results from the above Table 5, the result of Correlation of mentoring program and project success was 0.901 meaning that the mentoring is influencing success of project at the level of 90.1% and remaining 9.9% of other activities. Hence a significant correlation between mentoring program and project success.

Table 6: Estimate parameters between mentoring program and project success

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for B	
	B			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	1.976		.000	1.557	2.395
Mentoring program	.095		.003	-.262	.453

Dependent Variable: Project success

According to the information from Table 6 , if: Y= Project success and X= mentoring program, project success will change in function of process documentation, Thus, if mentoring program is equal to one unite and   constant (β_0) is zero (0), project success will increase 0.108 time mentoring program. Hence, $Y=1.976+0.095X$. There is a significance relationship between mentoring program and project success because their p-value (0.003) is statistically significant at   of 5% level of significance with lower bound of -0.262 and upper bound of 0.453.

4.6. Relationship between information exchanges and project success

This section describes the relationship between information exchanges and project success by examining the relationship between information exchanges and the indicators of project success such are increasing competences of NUDOR staff to full their mandates; training of teacher; reduction of school dropout of children with disabilities and awareness rising on the right of people with disabilities.

Table 7: Correlation between information exchanges and project success

Information exchange	Pearson Correlation	1	.812[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.006
	N	48	48
Project success	Pearson Correlation	.812[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006	
	N	48	48

According to information from Table 7 the result of correlation of information exchange and project success was 0.812 meaning that the information exchange is influencing success of project at the level of 81.2% and while other activities were influencing project success at a rate of 1.88%.

Table 8: Estimate parameters between information exchange and project success

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for B Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	2.043	.000	1.663	2.422
Information exchange	.034	.006	-.270	.338

a. Dependent Variable: project success

According to the information from Table 8, if: Y= Project success and X= information exchange, project success will change in function of process documentation, Thus, if information exchange is equal to one unite and   constant (β_0) is zero (0), project success will increase 0.108 time information exchange. Hence, Y=2.043+0.034X. There is a significance relationship between information exchange and project success because their p-value (0.006) is statistically significant at 5% level of significance with lower bound of - 0.270 and upper bound of 0.338.

5. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The present study aimed at investigating the knowledge transfer strategies on project success, taking selected MYLIGHT-DPOD Project as the unit of analysis. The specific objectives to this study were to assess the relationship between job shadowing on project success, to determine the relationship between process documentation on project success, to examine the relationship between mentoring on project success, to investigate the relationship between Information exchanges on project success.

Major findings of the study are summarized in the following subsections organized according to the specific objectives of the study are:

There is a significance relationship between job shadowing and project success because the Pearson correlation was 0.812 and their p-value (0.013) which is statistically significant at 5% level of significance. The estimate parameters between job shadowing and project success according to findings revealed by the simple linear regression model were Y=2.216+0.108X and their p-value (0.013) is statistically significant at 5% level of significance with lower bound of   -0.388 and upper bound of 0.172. According to the findings of this study, there is a significance relationship between process documentation and project success because the Pearson correlation was 0.791 and their p-value (0.014) is statistically significant at 5% level of significance. Furthermore, the simple linear regression revealed , that the estimate parameters between process documentation and project success were Y=2.190+0.095X. where their p-value (0.014) is statistically significant at 5% level of significance with lower bound of -0.453 and upper bound of 0.262. Hence a high relationship between process documentation and project success.

According to the findings, a significant relationship between mentoring program and project success was proved by the Pearson correlation of 0.901 and their p-value (0.03) which is statistically significant at 5% level of significance. Given the results of the simple linear regression model, there is a high relationship between mentoring program and project success because the estimate parameters between mentoring program and project success were Y=1.976+0.095X with lower bound of -0.262 and upper bound of 0.453. Considering the level of significance which is 0.05, there is a significant relationship between information exchange and project success because the Pearson correlation was 0.812 and their p-value(0.06) is statistically significant at 5% level of significance. furthermore, by considering
the findings revealed by the simple linear regression in Table 8, the estimate parameters between information exchange and project success were Y=2.043+0.034X with lower bound of -0.270 and upper bound of 0.338. Hence a high relationship between information exchange and project success.

5.2. Conclusions

The collected and analyzed data during the course of this study showed that the effect of the variables like job shadowing program, documentation process, mentoring program, exchange information are important to the project success. Job shadowing program strategy is important in project daily activities given that the Pearson Correlation between Job shadowing program and project success was 0.812 and the P-value (0.013) and this P-value is statistically significant. Process documentation is also important to the project success because the Pearson Correlation of Process documentation and project success was 0.791and the P-value (0.014) which prove the higher contribution of process documentation on project success. Mentoring program is important in project daily activities as shown in this study: the Pearson correlation of Mentoring programs and project success was 0.901and the P-value (0.003) hence a high contribution of mentoring programs on project success. Information exchange also plays a major role on the success of project success where the Pearson correlation of Information exchange and project success was 0.812and the P-value (0.006) which proved the higher contribution of information exchange on project success.

5.4 Recommendation

As the findings show a positive and a very high strong correlation between monitoring program and project success ([0.75<0.901<-1.00[means a positive and very high correlation, the researcher recommend to the project team to increase the number of mentors per school in order to eradicate the school drop out of children with disabilities. Secondary, According to the study findings there is a positive and high correlation between job shadowing and project success ([0.75<0.901<-1.00[means a positive and very high correlation), the researcher recommend that the project manager and stakeholders of NUDOR to elaborate a strategy l plan for Knowledge transfer at so that employees do not in the wrong priority and the organization lack of connection of knowledge transfer processes to other systems such as operational plans, performance reviews.

Due to the positive and high correlation between the process documentation and project success ([0.75<0.812<-1.00[ ), the researcher recommend to the project team to strengthen or support the process documentation in order to facilitate employees especially new employees to learn from the previous intervention which were successful, by showing them the flowcharting of how work is performed. It may include special variations in what performers should do or how they should do it based on special circumstances. Clear process documentation, which may include flowcharts or procedure manuals, can be helpful in storing and transferring knowledge from a more experienced to a less experienced person. Basing on the study findings, there is a positive and a very high strong correlation between information and project success ([0.75<0.812<-1.00[), the researcher recommend to the project team to increase the number of campaigns on the right and dignity of people with disabilities in order to the public awareness. The researcher also recommend to the project team to consider the most popular social networks while conducting awareness rising campaigns.

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