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TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING?
THE IMPACTS OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT OFFICE (PMO) CHARACTERISTICS,
SOCIAL CAPITAL & CULTURE ON PMO PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

Companies continue to invest in project management approaches as they increase the likelihood of project success, help advance firm strategies and value, thereby increasing competitive advantage. Increasingly, mature organizations are investing in Project Management Offices (PMOs) to streamline managing of projects, and to avoid pitfalls and failures in project management. However, if PMOs are touted as the solution to the project failure problem, then why are the overall project results still so dismal? To address this research problem, this dissertation evaluated PMO performance using social capital theory, by theorizing and testing the impacts of social capital from *both* linear and non-linear perspectives. Further, antecedent constructs namely PMO role, locus of control and PMO structure were hypothesized to have differential impacts on PMO social capital. Finally, this study utilized organizational culture theory to hypothesize that organizational culture will have a moderating influence on the relationship between social capital and PMO performance. The study was empirically validated using 209 completed surveys of active PMO participants. Structural equation modeling using Partial Least Squares (PLS) was used to test the hypothesis.

The study findings reveal that social capital has *both* a linear and an inverted curvilinear effect on PMO performance. The afore-mentioned antecedents contribute to the creation of social capital, and the evaluation of social capital's distinct dimensions provides valuable insight into the impact on PMO performance. Additionally, the study findings also show that culture negatively moderates the effect of social capital on PMO performance.

These findings inform the extant literature on PMOs by shifting focus from the decision choices and boundary conditions of the PMO to its value proposition. This dissertation empirically validates that there exists an optimum level of social capital in driving PMO performance, providing a divergent perspective to the typical positive linear effects associated with social capital. The study also offers an alternative perspective on organizational culture and its impact on performance. Findings from this dissertation also have implications for practitioners, as it highlights the importance of PMO structure, control, and social capital in achieving superior PMO performance.

Keywords: Project Management Office, PMO, social capital, relational social capital, cognitive social capital, structural social capital, PMO performance.