

Soft Skills in International Project Management

Approved
Academic Council
Bachelor's Programme
"Management"
September 02.19

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ECTS credits	3
Classhours (h.)	34
Self-study (h.)	80
Course, programme	4th year, 2nd module, Management
Delivery format	Without an online course

1. Goals, outcomes and prerequisites

The Course "Soft Skills in International Project Management" develops students' aggregate thinking by providing a socio-psychological framework underpinning project performance in international environment. It's a one-module course delivered in English for the fourth-year students at the School of Business Administration. The Mission of the Course resides in the improvement of innovative project team's resilience by means of popularizing the rules of the thumb and scientific research results. On one hand an innovator striving for efficacy should be able to manage projects with Tough Schedule or Limited Budget. On the other hand, progressive innovator should be able to understand his team members, organize effective communication and resolve conflicts. The influence of project manager's skills in team management on the performance of employees is particularly acute if the team's product is the result of combining the individual efforts of all participants in the collaborative work. The course is elective. Students are required to have good command in Management.

The purpose of the course is to make students ready to apply innovative socio-psychological tools in their further studies and managerial practice. Specifically, the course aims at:

1. enabling students to participate in business games;
2. discussing how classic and innovative tools and techniques could be applied in international project management;
3. enabling students to conduct theoretical research in the field of the socio-psychological factors, underpinning project management processes;
4. motivating students to develop their own learning interests and critical thinking;
5. enabling students to present their research results in the class;
6. motivating students to value and appreciate the effects of the international environment.

Brief introduction. The history of studying managers' soft skills influencing the employee performance dates back to Coch and French's seminal work which built on long-running studies of organizational and social settings by Kurt Lewin in the 1930s and 1940s. Lewin's work provided the basis for the organizational development movements which would dominate the debate for more than 60 years. Lewin's theoretical framework was his field theory, which included both individual and group behavior and described the organizational background as a complex system that surrounds individuals and forms a force field in a life space. If this field changes, changes in behavior follow suit - either by a decrease in the power of restraining forces or in an increase in the power of driving forces.

Change readiness ranks, together with the theory on dispositional resistance, among the youngest theories and builds on a large body of literature that identifies personal characteristics as the reason for failed change initiatives. Every employee assesses the balance between costs and benefits of maintaining or changing behavior. The course concentrates not only on the change readiness in one specific situation (as outlined in most case studies), but provides a deep-rooted understanding of employees' behavior.

The role of management and how the changes have been communicated surely constitute a major issue. Still, the adequacy of a management style can only be properly assessed against the background of the employees and their psychological disposition and group dynamics.

On the other hand, employers often show the tendency to understand their employees as a consistent social group with common objectives. The course demonstrates that the presence of different subgroups requires a much more nuanced approach in order to achieve readiness to change. Previous research has shown that identities are not fixed, but can undergo changes through career advancements or new interpretations of work. For some employees, however, no such support would really make a difference. Hence, the course warrants a closer look at the type of candidates which an enterprise attracts, and at the human resource department's ability to source and identify candidates suited to the company's culture.

The course also examines innovative socio-psychological theories applicable in international project management (team resilience, team evolutionary paradigm, organizational mindfulness etc.) as well as the seminal works focusing on the factors underpinning the innovation processes.

2. Course content

Brief course description:

Topic 1. International Project Management Tools and Techniques

Program (Project) Evaluation and Review Technique. Work breakdown structure (WBS). Organizational breakdown structure (OBS). Matrix of responsibility. Earned Value Technique. Activity on Node – Precedence Diagramming Method. Network Diagram. Critical chain and Critical path methods. Risk Impact/Probability Chart

Sensitivity analysis. Scenario analysis. Decision tree analysis. Simulation. Ishikawa diagram. Pareto chart. ABC-analysis Shewhart control charts. Team Roles.

Topic 2. Employee Relations within the International Environment

Diversity. HEXACO model. Big5 model. MBTI model. The ego-state (Parent-Adult-Child) model. Socio-Psychological Experiments. The influence of organizational culture and trust on company's innovativeness. Teal Evolutionary organizational paradigm. Holacracy – an innovative organizational culture. Assessing the company's readiness for evolution to the teal level.

Topic 3. Dealing with Change and Risks: Overcoming Resistance to Innovations and Collective Mindfulness

Lewin's field of forces analysis and stages for bringing about change. Generalized disposition to resist change. Openness to change. Readiness to organizational change. Commitment to Organizational change. Socio-psychological tools and techniques addressing the resistance to change. Preoccupation with failures. Reluctance to simplify. Sensitivity to operations. Commitment to resilience. Deference to expertise. Socio-psychological tools promoting the collective mindfulness.

Topic 4. Team Work and Team Resilience within the International Environment

Factors, influencing team performance. Forming-Storming-Norming-Performing. Aggregated elements of the collective resilience structure. Adaptive innovation: imagining and creating. Performance optimization: improving and exploiting. Preventive control: monitoring and complying. Mindful action: noticing and responding. Socio-psychological tools promoting the collective resilience.

The number of hours assigned for each topic:

Topics	Class & online hours	Learning Outcomes	Formsoftesting
	lect ¹		
	sem ²		
	self-study		
Topic 1. International Project Management Tools and Techniques	4	1. Allocate roles and responsibilities within the international environment 2. Select adequate tools to manage the project issues within the international environment	1. Cases, illustrating issues related to different International Project Management processes 2. Cases, illustrating issues related to different International Project
	6		
	20		

¹Lectures
²Seminars

			Management processes, Exam
Topic 2. Employee Relations within the International Environment	8	3. Apply classic and innovative analytical models to address Human Resource challenges within the International Project Management 4. Organize effective communications	3. Exam 4. Participation, Presentation
	4		
	20		
Topic 3. Dealing with Change and Risks: Overcoming Resistance to Innovations and Collective Mindfulness	2	1. Allocate roles and responsibilities within the international environment 3. Apply classic and innovative analytical models to address HR challenges within the International Project Management 5. Explain and justify theoretical research results in a report and in oral presentation 4. Organize effective communications 6. Conduct a theoretical interdisciplinary research	1. Cases, illustrating the socio-psychological issues within the international PM 3. Cases, illustrating the socio-psychological issues within the International Project Management, Exam 5. Presentation, Paper 4. Participation, Presentation 6. Paper
	4		
	20		
Topic 4. Team Work and Team Resilience within the International Environment	2	1. Allocate roles and responsibilities within the international environment 3. Apply classic and innovative analytical models to address HR challenges within the International Project Management 5. Explain and justify theoretical research results in a report and in oral presentation 4. Organize effective communications 6. Conduct a theoretical interdisciplinary research	1. Cases, illustrating the socio-psychological issues within the International Project Management 3. Cases, illustrating the socio-psychological issues within the International Project Management, Exam 5. Presentation, Paper 4. Participation, Presentation 6. Paper
	4		
	20		
Face-to-face and self-study hours:	16		
	18		
	80		

3. Evaluation

The following methods and forms of study and control are used in the course:

- Participation (Lectures). Attendance at lectures is strongly recommended. Lectures offer a verbal presentation of the essential material to be mastered.
- Participation, Cases, illustrating the socio-psychological issues within the International Project Management and Cases, illustrating issues related to different International Project Management processes (Seminars). Seminars with flipped classroom approach requires a great deal of preparatory work from students.
- Teachers' consultations. Unresolved questions on the lecture material can be addressed with tutors on appointment during their consultation times (office hours).
- Self-study. Before consulting a tutor, however, students are expected to make a serious attempt to solve the problem.
- Paper and Presentation. The topic of the paper and the presentation is chosen by the student (should be approved by the tutor) or offered by the tutor. The tutor encourages students to work together in order to discuss the information and knowledge acquired during lectures and seminars. Student can provide or receive "consulting" help from their fellow students. However, such cooperation in no way implies plagiarizing another student's work or any part of it whether in the form of an e-mail, e-mail attachment, computer floppy disk or printed text on paper. In the case of plagiarizing or "cheating" both students receive the failing grade ("0") for that task. For violation of the rules of the University student can receive a failing grade for the entire course in the discipline, as well as incur other disciplinary action.
- Exam (Written). *This is the only blocking form of testing within the course.* During the exam, each student performs the task independently. During the exam any talk or discussion, comparison of assignments, "cheating" or any other interaction with the other students is prohibited. Violation of these rules leads to failure in the exam and for the entire course, as well as to other disciplinary actions.

In assessing students' papers and presentations the tutor is guided by the following criteria:

1. the material is specific and relevant;
2. citing is justified;
3. the material is well-balanced and within the scope of the discipline;
4. clarity and consistency;
5. depth of the situation analysis, conclusions;
6. theoretical research is on the basis of at least 5/7/10³ sources indexed in Scopus / Web of Science, recent years (not earlier than 2015);
7. deadline.

³See the table below

ECTS Grades		10-points scale	Grading Criteria
A+	Excellent	10	All criteria are met, student is citing not less than 10 sources indexed in Scopus / Web of Science.
A	Verygood	9	All criteria are met, student is citing not less than 7 sources indexed in Scopus / Web of Science.
A-	Verygood	8	All criteria are met, student is citing not less than 5 sources indexed in Scopus / Web of Science.
B+	Good	7	6 out of 7 criteria are met.
B-	Good	6	5 out of 7 criteria are met.
C+	Satisfactory	5	4 out of 7 criteria are met.
C-	Satisfactory	4	3 out of 7 criteria are met.
F	Fail	3	The work does not meet the requirements for most of the criteria
F	Fail	2	
F	Fail	1	
F	Fail	0	The work is not provided or the work is plagiarized. Author's contribution to the work is less than 80%

Different forms of testing are of a varying degree of difficulty and are allocated a different weighting:

Learning Outcomes	Case (PM) 10%	Case (S-P) 10%	Partic. 10%	Present. 20%	Paper 20%	Exam 30%
Successful students are expected to be able to: 1. Allocate roles and responsibilities within the international environment	5%	5%				
2. Select adequate tools to manage the project issues in the international environment	5%					15%
3. Apply classic and innovative analytical models to address HR challenges within the international PM		5%				15%
4. Organize effective communications			10%	10%		
5. Explain and justify theoretical research results in a report and in oral presentation				10%		
6. Conduct a theoretical interdisciplinary research					20%	

The course does not provide for examination exemption for students.

4. Sample Evaluation Questions

- 1.** At which stage of employee's affective responding to the process of change implementation one can expect an employee to provide his colleagues and/or management his own design of implementing change?
 - 1) Anger
 - 2) Bargaining
 - 3) Acceptance
 - 4) Denial

- 2.** What stands for a "Context" in Holt's framework of readiness for organization change?
 - 1) Attributes of employees where initiative is implemented
 - 2) Attributes of environment where initiative is implemented
 - 3) Attributes of the initiative being implemented
 - 4) Steps taken to implement the initiative

- 3.** Which of the following sentences is **NOT** associated with an effective team according to D.McGregor's "The human side of enterprise"?
 - 1) Each member of the team knows what people in the team think about each other
 - 2) There is no judgment within team members, there is no fear to express your own opinion, all team members are attentive and patient
 - 3) Clear assignments are made and accepted when tasks are performed
 - 4) Teamwork is based on the principle of agile methodology, each member knows his role in the team

- 4.** In a Commitment to Change Model to which dimension does "sense of obligation to support change" apply?
 - 1) Affective
 - 2) Normative
 - 3) Continuance
 - 4) Descriptive

- 5.** What type of leadership corresponds to the statement "Leader provides support with resources and advice if needed, but otherwise don't get involved" in K. Lewin's leadership theory?
 - 1) Democratic Leadership
 - 2) Autocratic Leadership
 - 3) Paternalistic Leadership
 - 4) Laissez-Faire Leadership

- 6.** Social Resilience does **NOT** include...
 - 1) Alignment

- 2) Negative coping strategies
- 3) Accumulation of communication resources
- 4) Bounceback

7. Groupthink may appear within a team...

- 1) If monitoring and control of ideas occurs on a regular basis
- 2) If there is a knowledge sharing and deference to expertise
- 3) If the composition of a team has not changed over time
- 4) If the final decisions are made by a third-party expert

8. What type of employee implies behavior that has a negative impact on other team members and overall performance of a group due to personal qualities of a person?

- 1) Bad pear
- 2) Bad apple
- 3) Bad orange
- 4) Bad guy

9. Which one is an implicit element of Holacracy in organization?

- 1) Strict discipline of the personnel
- 2) Self-management of the personnel in organizations
- 3) Bureaucracy and strict hierarchy
- 4) Defined deadlines

10. Which of the following sentences is **NOT** associated with the teal paradigm?

- 1) Autocratic leadership style
- 2) Strengthen relationships within the organization
- 3) Flexibility and adaptability
- 4) Transparency and honesty of the remuneration system

11. Project goals should be...

- 1) rather of general than of specific type
- 2) formulated without regard to the resource limitations imposed
- 3) realistic and achievable
- 4) by and large complex

12. What limitation is typical for sensitivity analysis, scenarios analysis, decision-tree analysis and modeling?

- 1) single-factor type of model
- 2) dependence on presumptions embedded into the model
- 3) dependence on risks discreteness
- 4) limited amount of scenarios to be subject to consideration

13. What is the correct name for a model in which the project is represented as a set of interrelated works?

- 1) Network diagram
- 2) Pareto model
- 3) Causal model
- 4) Graphic model of ABC-analysis

14. Which one is the correct way to calculate the efficiency of the budget execution (Cost Performance Index)?

- 1) Earned Value / Planned Value
- 2) $(\text{Budget at Completion} - \text{Earned Value}) / (\text{Earned Value} / \text{Actual Cost of Work Performed})$
- 3) Earned Value / Actual Cost of Work Performed
- 4) Estimate to Completion + Actual Cost of Work Performed

15. Which one of the sequences listed below describes the correct order of the contract execution?

- 1) requirements generation; formalization (formal application); execution; job delivering
- 2) formalization (formal application); requirements generation; execution; job delivering
- 3) requirements generation; formalization (formal application); job delivering; execution
- 4) formalization (formal application); requirements generation; job delivering; execution

16. Which country's experience served as the basis for P2M standard in project management?

- 1) United States of America
- 2) Japan
- 3) Great Britain
- 4) France

17. Within which stage the decisions determining the overall project value are made? Choose the correct statement.

- 1) Within the pre-investment phase. The closer we come up to project completion so much the less impact we have on its value
- 2) Within the investment phase. Preliminary estimates of the project are generated exactly in this phase
- 3) Within the project implementation phase. It is possible to estimate variations on costs within this phase
- 4) Within the project implementation phase. The possibility of value management increases according to project completion

18. Which of the following International Project Management tools is **NOT** associated with the quality management?

- 1) ABC-analysis
- 2) Pareto chart
- 3) Scenarios analysis
- 4) Control charts

19. Which of the actions listed below one may **NOT** execute if the project resources are severely restricted?

- 1) Changing the project milestones
- 2) Product substitution
- 3) Intensification of works
- 4) Changing the product quality requirements

20. The pointer located between two squares on the precedence diagram is associated with...

- 1) the operation
- 2) the sequence order
- 3) the event
- 4) the critical path

21. At the meeting it was found that the 250 000 USD project has negative deviation from time-table (20 000 USD, 12% of work scheduled to be performed at this time). Based on these data the project manager may conclude that...

- 1) the project will be delivered later
- 2) critical path has changed dramatically
- 3) no additional conclusions can be made at this stage
- 4) the budget overrun occurred

22. State the correct sequence of steps within the scope of preparation of businesses and organizations for certification against international standard ISO 9001 requirements:

- A**–Skilful cross-functional teams perform analyses of business processes “as is” (processes execution in real life)
- B**–Filing application to certification authority for performance of audit against international standard ISO 9001. Making of contract.
- C**–Development of policy and quality objectives, drafting of quality manual, definition of quality management system area, i.e. activity area of the company subject to certification
- D**–Business modeling, i.e.
- identification of business processes (identification of list of processes undergoing description through modeling);
 - description of business processes;
 - design of business processes network;
 - recording of business processing

Place for answer recording: _____
Sample of answer recording (ABCDE)

23. Within the project risk and quality management different tools and techniques could be applied. Set up a correspondence:

Risks management

Tool

1. Tool, associated primarily with the quality management

- A. Scenarios analysis
- B. Shewhart control charts
- C. Decision-tree analysis

2. Tool, associated primarily with the risk identification

- D. Earned value technique
- E. Transaction analysis
- F. Sensitivity analysis

Place for answer recording: _____

Sample of answer recording(1A2B)

24. Which of the following International Project Management tools is associated with the scheduling function?

- 1) Ishikawadiagram
- 2) Make-or-Buy Analysis
- 3) CPM-COST
- 4) Controlcharts

5. Resources

The following resources are available for students to support their learning:

1. •Lectures slides,
2. •Essential reading

5.1. Recommended Reading list

Nº	Source
1	Project Management Institute. (2017). A guide to the project management body of knowledge (PMBOK guide). NewtownSquare, Pa: ProjectManagementInstitute.
2	De Mascia, S. (2012). Project psychology: using psychological models and techniques to create a successful project, Gower.
3	Cinite, I., & Duxbury, L. E. (2018). Measuring the Behavioral Properties of Commitment and Resistance to Organizational Change. <i>TheJournalofAppliedBehavioralScience</i> , 54(2):113–139
4	Sutcliffe K., Vogus T., Dane E. (2016). Mindfulness in Organizations: A Cross-Level Review. <i>Annu. Rev. Organ, Psychol. Organ. Behav.</i> 3:55–81.
5	McEwen, K., Boyd, C. (2018). A Measure of Team Resilience: Developing the Resilience at Work Team Scale. <i>Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine</i> , 60(3), 258–272.
6	Ndubisi, N., Al-Shuridah, O. (2019). Organizational mindfulness, mindful organizing, and environmental and resource sustainability. <i>Business Strategy and the Environment</i> , 28(3):436-446.
7	Sharma S, Sharma S. (2016). Team resilience: scale development and validation. <i>Vision</i> , 20:37–53.
8	Burtăverde, V., de Raad, B., Zanfirescu, A. (2018). An emic-etic approach to personality assessment in predicting social adaptation, risky social behaviors, status striving and social affirmation. <i>Journal of Research in Personality</i> , 76:113–123
9	Sundie, J., Cialdini, R., Griskevicius, V., Kenrick, D. (2012). The world's (truly)

	oldest profession: Social influence in evolutionary perspective. <i>Social Influence</i> , 7(3):134-153
10	Milosevic, D., Patanakul, P. & Srivannaboon, S. (2010). <i>Case Studies in Project, Program and Organizational Project Management</i> , John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Additional sources may be chosen by the student (should be approved by the tutor) or offered by the tutor.

5.2. Software

№	Name	Access
1	Microsoft Windows 7 Professional RUS Microsoft Windows 10 Microsoft Windows 8.1 Professional RUS	<i>University license (local)</i>
2	Microsoft Office Professional Plus 2010	<i>University license (local)</i>
3	SPSS Statistics 23 (or later version)	<i>University license (local)</i>

5.3. Electronic Resources

№	Name	Access
1	Scopus Citation Index	<i>University subscription (on-campus access)</i>
2	Journal databases (APA, Elsevier, Springer, Wiley, etc.)	<i>University subscription (on-campus access)</i>

5.4. Equipment

Teaching rooms equipped for lectures with demonstration of PowerPoint slides (computers connected to the Internet, sound equipment, remote-controlled projector, screen). Teaching rooms for practical sessions should include computers with Internet connection and access to the HSE software and on-campus electronic resources.