Abstract

This doctoral dissertation addresses crisis management in project based organizations (PBOs) and mega projects. There has been much research on crisis in organizations but there has been little attention given to crisis management in temporary organization settings and when multiple stakeholders are involved. In other words, research on "how crisis management is adopted by project based organizations and mega projects" are scarce. This study addresses this gap. This study's objective is to identify crises that are caused by the internal and external environment of project based organizations and mega projects and then manage these crises with organizational capabilities and sense making process. The dissertation consists of a compilation of three papers.

This research proposes three studies on different yet interrelated crisis management topics. They are categorized into three research areas: taxonomy among risk, crisis and disaster, crises and capabilities in project based organizations and sense making process of crisis in mega projects. Taxonomy among risk, crisis and disaster is addressed by Chapter 2, which identifies the dimensions from literature and develops taxonomy; it is a first step toward management. The second research area (i.e., crisis and capability in PBOs) has led to the development of Chapter 3 which respectively identities crisis that could impact PBO's performance and investigates PBOs capabilities required for management of crises. It derived a conceptual framework of crises and capabilities that contains internal social, external social, internal technical and external technical crises (independent variables), performance i.e. project performance and stakeholder performance (dependent variables) and project based organizations' capabilities such as strategic, functional and project capabilities (moderating variable). Sense making process is examined in Chapter 4, and it explores and develops a sense making process in mega projects where multiple organizational stakeholders are involved. Sense making/ giving model contains element of information gathering (internal and external sources), crisis interpretation (exogenous/ endogenous, social and technical crisis), report/record (ask for compensation, report crisis to stakeholders or escalate to higher level within organization) and response (reactive and direct/ indirect response). The research reported in the dissertation is based on a multi- method approach of both quantitative i.e. survey of project based organizations and qualitative methods i.e. single-case study of mega project. The survey was conducted in IT, Telecom and

construction companies in Pakistan. The case study has been conducted on new International airport in Islamabad, Pakistan.

To conclude, the dissertation (a) identifies differences and similarities between risk, crisis and disaster, (b) develops taxonomy among risk, crisis and disaster by identifying dimensions (c) identifies crises that could impact project based organizations' performance. For which both short term (project performance) and long term performance (stakeholder performance) are considered, (d) explore capabilities perspective on project-based organizations (strategic, functional, and project capabilities) and develops a conceptual framework that embraces the organizational capability to manage the relation between crises and organizational performance, (e) develops a sense making/ giving model for crises in mega projects when multiple organizational' stakeholders are involved, (f) identifies different sense making and sense giving elements and (g) develop a grounded theory model that contain sense making/ giving elements.

Keywords: risk, crisis, disaster, performance, capabilities, sense making, project based organization, mega project.