SHOULD WE ISOLATE INNOVATIVE PROJECTS?

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Purpose: The research aims to explore whether innovative projects should be isolated within organisations. The motivation behind this research stems from previous findings indicating a divide between popular project management methodologies and strategic innovation management literature regarding the isolation of innovative projects.

Design/methodology/approach: The primary research method is a survey-based study, in which questionnaires were distributed to project managers. The surveys collected data on innovative projects, focusing on such aspects as project isolation, project outcomes (short-term efficiency and long-term preparation), and organisational culture. Statistical methods are used to analyse the relationship between project isolation and the success metrics.

Findings: Projects that were not isolated from the rest of the organisation tended to achieve greater short-term success. These projects were more likely to meet deadlines, stay within the budget and fulfil the project scope. Regular communication and collaboration with the broader organisation helped to access resources, improve decision-making and ensure project alignment with organisational objectives. The results did not strongly support the hypothesis that isolating projects leads to the development of new norms and values that prepare the organisation for future challenges.

Research limitations/implications: The study focuses primarily on organisations with conservative, process-driven business models where innovation is not the core activity. This limits the generalisability of the findings to more innovation-focused organisations such as tech startups or R&D-heavy companies. The research relies on self-reported data from project managers, which may introduce biases.

Practical implications: The practical implications of the paper suggest that organisations should tailor their management of innovative projects by deciding when to isolate project teams to foster creativity and learning and when to integrate them with the rest of the organisation to enhance short-term efficiency.

Originality/value: The paper provides new empirical data on the relationship between project isolation and both short-term and long-term success metrics. The paper critically examines the role of project isolation considering popular project management standards. It also highlights how project isolation affects the development of new norms and values, which may be crucial for the organisation's future flexibility and competitiveness.

Keywords: innovative project, strategic innovation, project management.

Category of the paper: research paper.

1. Introduction

BCG's 2023 study on building resilience and competitive advantage involved top executives from companies around the world (BCG, 2023). These companies belonged to a variety of industries and included technology, industrial, medical and financial companies. They varied in size and geographical coverage. As a result, it was found that 79% of the companies worldwide regard innovation as one of their top three priorities and 66% plan to increase spending on innovative projects. From the projects listed in the document, it is expected that they will influence a change in the way organisations are managed. In particular, executives plan to strengthen the resilience of their organisations, increase the focus on sustainability, accelerate digital transformation and introduce new operating models that better address global challenges and uncertainties. These changes aim to increase the flexibility and adaptability of companies in the face of a rapidly changing business environment. In other words, innovative projects are to be the source of new management models.

This signalling of the importance of innovative projects by the respondents draws attention to the challenges that must be faced in their implementation. For, if the innovativeness of a project is considered to be the degree to which the way of proceeding in the project differs from what has been done so far in the organisation (cf., e.g. Griffin, 1997; Shenhar, Dvir, 2008; Kiełbus, 2011; Trocki, 2012), then in highly innovative projects (the so-called "breakthrough projects") the previous ways of doing things must be abandoned and proven practices should be replaced by action based on the trial-and-error method. Shenhar and Dvir (2008) additionally point out that creative people with the ability to innovate across disciplines and with the freedom to express and test new ideas are sought for breakthrough projects. These people should – at least partially – move away from existing patterns by developing new ways of doing things.

This different approach to the implementation of highly innovative projects affects, among others, the way in which they are positioned within the structures of an organisation. A critical analysis of the literature on the subject reveals a divergence of views regarding the isolation of innovation-related projects from organisation structures (cf., e.g. Trocki, 2009; Galbraith, 1999; Zgrzywa-Ziemak, Kamiński, 2009; Kamiński, Rosłoń, 2023). These discrepancies are particularly evident between popular project management methodologies and the literature on innovation and strategic management, which will be discussed in more detail later in the article. In order to dispel these doubts, the research team conducted their own studies in this area (Kamiński, Rosłoń, 2023). Thus, they showed some poor differences in the learning of project teams that were in isolation from the rest of the organisation compared to teams where interaction between project team members and the rest of the organisation was fostered. A cautious suggestion was then made on the basis of the findings. As a matter of fact, in organisations of a rather conservative nature, i.e., where the core business does not involve

unique projects and is process-oriented in nature, the number of interactions between the learning project team and the rest of the organisation should – to some extent – be limited. This is because the isolation of an innovative project limits the take-up of existing organisational solutions (*e.g.*, experience gained over many years) by the team and provides a basis for learning and developing new ways of working.

Unfortunately, the conclusions formulated at the time were based on very weak differences in the results obtained from the empirical studies. This dictates both a great deal of caution regarding the treatment of the conclusions themselves and prompts further research. Therefore, the article aims to answer the question whether to isolate innovative projects or not. In this case, the answer is to be obtained by using the dimensions of project success, as defined by Shenhar and Dvir (2008), in projects with varying degrees of isolation. Accordingly, the study uses both a short-term measure that focuses on the efficiency of the project and a long-term measure that assesses the project in terms of the preparation for the future that the project gives to the organisation. In the first case, therefore, an assessment will be used to determine whether the project meets the three constraints, i.e., whether it is delivered on time, within budget and according to the specification. In the second case, to answer the question whether the project is preparing the organisation for the future, the cultural metaphor of the organisation will be used (Sułkowski 2004). It was assumed that the transformation of the project team's cultural norms and values from those of the existing organisational culture could prepare the organisation to take on new challenges that require a different response.

The article consists of three main parts. In the first part, the issue of assessing project success will be addressed; it will therefore present Shenhar and Dvir's (2008) dimensions of project success. In the second part, two research hypotheses will be introduced. In the third part, the hypotheses will be verified by empirical research and discussed.

2. Assessment of project success

Focusing considerations on project success forces the definition of project success criteria. The author of an extensive discussion on this topic is Klaus-Rosińska (2019). Based on her analysis of the literature, she concludes that there is no single universal list of "success criteria" that fits all types of projects. Thus, success criteria will vary in projects depending on many aspects, including the size or complexity of the project (cf., e.g. Westerveldt, 2003). Success criteria are usually associated with the iron triangle of a project, i.e., cost, time and quality (Pinto, Slevin, 1988; Chan et al., 2002). However, many researchers stress that even taking all the cited criteria into account at once, assessing the success of a project by means of them will be insufficient (Atkinson, 1999; Judgev, Müller, 2005; de Wit, 1988). Above all, they do not take into account whether the project product has met the end-users' needs (Baker et al., 1988).

Klaus-Rosińska (2019) ultimately concludes that success can mean something different to different stakeholders. Success criteria should comprehensively reflect different interests and lead to a multidimensional approach to assessing success.

One model for assessing the success of a project that takes into account the satisfaction of the needs of different stakeholders as well as the link between these criteria and the different phases of the project life cycle is the model developed by Shenhar, Dvir, Levy and Maltz (2001). Thus, Shenhar and Dvir (2008) note in their book that assessing the success of a project on the basis of meeting three constraints – delivery on time, within budget and according to the specification – is no longer sufficient. Thus, the cited authors propose a full assessment of project success in the short and long term based on five basic groups of measures: (1) the efficiency of the project, (2) its impact on the client, (3) its impact on the team, (4) business and immediate success and, ultimately, (5) preparation for the future.

Thus, in the shortest term, the measure of project efficiency refers to whether the project was completed as planned, on time and whether expenditure was within the budget. In this case, meeting the resource constraints indicates that the project was effectively and efficiently managed. The impact of the project on the client is then assessed. This measure represents the key stakeholders whose perception is critical to the success of the project. The third measure, team impact, reflects how the project impacts the team and its members. The fourth measure – business and immediate success – reflects the direct and immediate impact the project has on the parent organisation. Ultimately, in the longest term, the project is assessed to prepare for the future. This measure reflects the extent to which the project will help the organisation prepare its infrastructure for future needs and how it will create new opportunities. Future infrastructure may include new organisational processes as well as additional technical and organisational competences; it may also improve management capabilities.

In the context of considering innovative projects, it should be noted that they are characterised by both a higher degree of risk and the fact that they offer greater opportunities for growth and success. According to Shenhar and Dvir (2008), the measure of success should reflect these opportunities, which means that rather long-term measures should be used for innovative projects. As they write, for low-risk projects, meeting resource constraints may be more critical and appropriate than for higher-risk projects. The immediate success of low-risk projects is based on meeting budget and time constraints and potential returns can be determined in advance. In contrast, for high-risk and highly uncertain projects, poor short-term performance, budget overruns and even limited business success can be offset by long-term benefits such as the creation of new markets, the development of knowledge in new technologies and the preparation of the infrastructure for more advanced products created in the future. Because of the importance, measures of project success change along with the level of risk and uncertainty.

Consequently, as no set of dimensions can serve all projects, managers must, according to Shenhar and Dvir, adapt their expectations to the type of project and the importance of different measures of success. For example, a project with high uncertainty and high risk will be assessed primarily on the basis of business and long-term facts rather than on the basis of short-term measures related to time and budget execution. In contrast, a project with a low level of uncertainty and low risk is unlikely to help the organisation develop new technologies or create new opportunities and should, therefore, be assessed on the basis of short-term metrics. These differences should become an integral part of project planning and be taken into account when making key decisions, including, as it seems, decisions to isolate highly innovative projects. Thus, the decision concerning whether to foster interaction between the project team and the rest of the organisation should be analysed in the context of two different dimensions of project success: the efficiency of the project and the preparation for the future that it offers.

3. Project management standards and methodologies and the isolation of highly innovative projects

To answer the question whether to isolate highly innovative projects, one can refer to the most popular project management standards and methodologies. And so, according to the PRINCE2 methodology, the project team should not be isolated. Indeed, the methodology places a strong emphasis on communication, collaboration and stakeholder engagement. Furthermore, in the PRINCE2 methodology, a project is a management environment created to deliver one or more business deliverables according to the specific requirements of the business. This, therefore, does not indicate a universal solution to be implemented for every project but rather a flexible structure that can be easily adapted to each type of project and its context (Office of Government Commerce, 2010). This alignment will not be possible without numerous interactions between the project team and the rest of the organisation.

The lack of isolation of the project team is also indicated by the IPMA standard, according to which the project manager should act in such a way that project management is linked to the organisation's business administration. In addition to this, he or she should coordinate project activities in line with the organisation's objectives and characteristics, taking into account its needs, culture and management processes. This is because the compatibility between the project and the permanent organisation is intended to help attract resources to the project, which will not be possible if the members of the organisation do not accept the functioning of the project team.

Similarly, according to PMI or agile methodologies, project management processes should be configured according to the specific characteristics and needs of the organisation as the way a project is implemented is also influenced by the factors related to the organisation

implementing the project. While PRINCE2 offers a more formalised management and reporting structure, which ensures systematic communication and stakeholder engagement, reducing the risk of project team isolation, PMI relies on flexibility, adaptation and strong communication and stakeholder management. Teams are more dynamic and adapt their practices according to the needs of the project and the environment. Ultimately, Agile methodologies are designed to minimise team isolation through continuous collaboration, frequent meetings and regular stakeholder engagement. Compared to PMI and PRINCE2, Agile offers more intensive and daily interaction, which effectively counteracts the isolation of the project team and allows project management methods to be tailored to project realities.

The analysis of the above-mentioned methodologies indicates that also in the case of highly innovative projects, the isolation of the project team is considered undesirable. In such projects, in which innovation and creativity are key, collaboration, communication and involvement of all team members and stakeholders are even more important. This results partially from that fact that the lack of isolation of the project team:

- fosters synergy and diversity of thinking; in innovative projects, it is crucial to draw on diverse perspectives and skills to generate new ideas and solutions;
- enables dynamic adaptation and rapid response; innovative projects often require rapid adaptation to changing conditions and technologies. Regular communication and close team collaboration allow problems to be identified more quickly and necessary changes to be made;
- stimulates creativity; isolation can inhibit creativity as team members may not have access to inspiration and ideas from others. Collaborating and exchanging ideas openly foster creativity and innovation in projects;
- enables support for innovation through stakeholder management; stakeholder engagement at different stages of a project can provide valuable feedback and perspectives that can be crucial to the success of innovative ventures. Regular reporting and communication with stakeholders also help to quickly identify and respond to changing market and technology needs.

To sum up, it is inappropriate to isolate project teams in highly innovative projects as this limits the possibilities for synergy, creativity or dynamic adaptation. Teams should work in an environment that fosters collaboration, open communication and active stakeholder engagement in order to achieve success. In doing so, assuming that project success in the methodologies cited above refers to all the project dimensions mentioned (i.e., both the triple constraint and the long-term view), the following research hypothesis H1 can be formulated: Hypothesis H1 – The less isolated the team implementing a highly innovative project is, the greater the extent to which both the short-term and long-term objectives of the project are achieved.

4. Preparing for the future and isolating highly innovative projects

In the case of preparing for the future, reference can be made to the resource approach in strategy formulation, which is based on the observation that only those organisations are sustainably competitive that have special basic or core competences. They do not refer to one market or one domain but are permeable in nature and can be applied to different domains and especially to future markets (Hamel, Prahalad, 1999). One of the most vital features of core competences is the way of their creation, which is not stuck in the material aspects of the resources. This is because core competences result from team learning or long-term innovation processes and are therefore not individually assimilable (Steinmann, Schreyögg, 2001; Moszkowicz, 2001; Chrupała-Pniak, Sulimowska-Formowicz, 2010). Thus, if new norms and values, which differ from the existing organisational culture, are developed in a project team carrying out an innovative project (Kamiński, 2021), then, in particular, norms and values that are new or that challenge the *status quo* will enrich the organisation. They may prove to be essential for the organisation to operate in new and unpredictable conditions. The necessity of developing new and even contradictory norms and values for the sake of maintaining competitive advantage was discussed in *Leading the Revolution* by Hamel (2001). In it, he describes innovations that do not pertain to new products or new technologies but to new entrepreneurial models. Following Hamel, this kind of innovation is the source of the most important competitive advantage in the current century. He defines them as discontinuous innovation as opposed to continuous innovation, which is merely an improvement of an existing product or service. Discontinuous innovation concerns entire innovative business concepts. As examples, he cites companies that break with the previous rules of competition in an industry and adhere to the principles of formulating revolutionary visions, which means endorsing intuition as well as supporting differently thinking and thought-provoking heretics (who show and overturn dogmas and constantly ask why). These contradictions create the so-called tension, which, according to Martin and Behrends (1999), belongs – alongside loose coupling and organisational slack – to the basic tenets of innovation. This tension is either triggered by changes in the environment or is the result of intra-organisational contradictions. Changes in the environment involve a discrepancy between the expected (and intended) and actual responses of the (changing) environment. Changing organisational conditions, therefore, force learning processes and can give rise to innovation. Moreover, intra-organisational contradictions arise from the different preferences and beliefs of the members of the organisation as they often operate in different sub-systems of the organisation and the problems that arise on a daily basis have many potential solutions. The different viewpoints of the members of the organisation thus developed lead to contradictions during decision-making, which – if properly exploited – can be a source of innovative solutions.

Many practical examples of such innovative solutions are described, among others, in *The Future of Management* by Hamel and Breen (2007). When traditional management models based on hierarchy, control and predictability are outdated in the face of today's market challenges, they need to adopt a more flexible, innovative and collaborative management approach to survive and thrive in today's rapidly changing business environment. As Dvir and Shenhar (2011) point out, innovative projects can be the source of new management models. As examples, they cite Boeing's collaboration with carriers and supplier networks in the project to build the Boeing 777 and the design of the BMW Z3, a stylish roadster developed by the BMW Group in the early 1990s. Another example is Chrysler (Dodge's parent company), which used an out-of-the-box approach to manage the project to build the Dodge Viper (Rose, 2023; Boyd, 2024). Key elements included a small, autonomous engineering team, rapid decision-making, minimal bureaucracy and an emphasis on innovation and rapid implementation. This approach helped to create a car that has become iconic while reducing the time of launching it on the market. In the case of the Dodge Viper, much of the development work was transferred to suppliers. Chrysler followed an approach in which key components, such as the engine and other essential components, were developed in collaboration with external suppliers. This allowed the company to shorten the time of launching the product on the market and reduce costs while benefiting from the expertise and innovation of partners (such as Lamborghini). This approach of transferring part of the development work to suppliers is widely used today in the automotive industry and beyond. Given the above, those projects transformed the way the entire organisation, sector and even the industry operates.

To sum up, preparing for the future on the basis of norms and values which are new or different from the binding ones fosters the development of the so-called strategic flexibility, which is defined as: "[...] the ability of an organisation to identify major changes in the external environment, to quickly allocate resources to new courses of action in response to those changes and to recognise and act quickly in a timely manner so as to pause or undo existing commitments of corporate resources" (Shimizu, Hitt, 2004, p. 45). On the one hand, strategic flexibility, understood in this way, leads to competitive advantage in a rapidly changing and increasingly uncertain environment (Eryesil et al., 2015). The lack of strategic flexibility, on the other hand, stems from the common routines and taken-for-granted thinking and decision-making principles of top management. Ideas and actions that deviate from existing procedures are not adopted, resulting in organisational inertia and reducing the likelihood that new information will be brought to the attention of the organisation. Instead, it is ignored or considered an exception to the rule and no one analyses it further.

In the context of the above, it is not surprising that many authors tend to isolate innovative ventures so that there is the possibility of developing intra-organisational contradictions. Thus, for example, Trocki (2009), for the implementation of large and highly innovative projects, recommends the so-called "pure" project organisation, in which a separate project team has the resources necessary to implement the project and has implementation capabilities

beyond the scope of the organisation's existing competences, which provides the potential for new experiences and learning.

Similarly, the need for offering freedom during implementation in innovative projects is pointed out by Hammer (1998) and Wozniak (Wozniak, Łokaj, 2009). Hammer notes that if organisations operate on the basis of paternalism, use extensive control mechanisms, are bureaucratic and target personal freedom, then all invention is lost in the maze of formal company rules and creative thinking can rather only be developed outside working hours. In the interview, Wozniak, a co-founder of Apple Inc., talks "about a small garage on the sidelines of the corporation". In his view, corporate culture can hinder the development of ideas and a group of innovators should not be located too deep in the organisational structure. It means that they should not have too many hierarchical levels, superiors and decision-making dependencies above them. Organisational executives need to understand that true innovation, which brings things so new that they are called revolutionary, almost always arises not in the company but at home – it is created by young people who often work in their garage. This is why highly innovative organisations provide their employees with 20% of their working time to independently develop their own ideas and projects.

What is more, in the strategic management literature, one can point to studies by Utterback (1994), Bower and Christensen (1995) or Benner and Tushman (2003). According to Utterback, well-established companies can gain a foothold in markets shaped by radical technological innovation by creating autonomous, independent units to harness the organisational flexibility and entrepreneurial spirit needed to succeed in the new environment. IBM, for example, successfully entered the PC market through a separate, dedicated unit set up far from the company's headquarters. Likewise, both Ford Motor Company and General Motors formed separate entities (Team Taurus and Saturn Motor Company, respectively) to market their new car models. The task of creating the competences needed to successfully enter selected markets depended on creating organisations with a high degree of independence from the staff, committees and other burdens of their parent companies. Bower and Christensen (1995) were the first to introduce this idea into the literature on business model innovation. They suggested that the functioning company should place the responsibility for building groundbreaking businesses in an independent organisation by creating teams in skunkworks projects to keep them away from the core business. By isolating, they said, a company can avoid any potential negative influences from organisational culture, policies and systems that could hinder new business development. Finally, it should not be forgotten that also Benner and Tushman (2003), in their study on ambidextrous organisation, concluded that experimentation and groundbreaking innovation should be separated organisationally and that what should be set up is the organisational units focused only on this activity.

To conclude this part, it is worth stating that isolating innovative projects from the core of the organisation is conducive to their more effective development and implementation as it protects them from the influence of the existing organisational culture, bureaucratic procedures

and routine ways of thinking that can inhibit important creativity and innovation in terms of preparing for the future. One may get the impression that the emphasis is, therefore, primarily on learning and that short-term issues are secondary. Thus, in the context of the above considerations and the literature references cited, the following research hypothesis H2 can be formulated: Hypothesis H2 – The more isolated the team executing a highly innovative project, the more the norms and values that prepare the organisation for the future are developed – the long-term objectives of the project are achieved.

5. Verification of research hypotheses

The empirical verification of the research hypotheses will be carried out on the basis of surveys. The research tool is a questionnaire while statistical methods are used to analyse the empirical data. Thus, for research hypothesis H1, the fulfilment of the project objectives, budget and timetable was assessed to measure the extent to which the short-term objectives of the project were achieved based on the opinion of the project manager. Moreover, when measuring the extent to which long-term project objectives were achieved (hypotheses H1 and H2), the cultural metaphor of the organisation was used, according to which organisations can be treated as cultures. They can be considered socially conditioned both at the level of social groups, ties, power mechanisms and communication as well as at the level of their products, i.e., values, norms and social patterns. Such an analogy is developed in the organisational culture and cross-cultural management strand (Sułkowski, 2004). In such a metaphor, the project team will have their own norms and values and can be regarded as an organisational subculture whose norms and values will be all the more different from the organisational culture, the more intensive the learning within the project team is. This is because the project team, when carrying out an innovative project, will have to create and verify new ways of doing things that can prepare the organisation for the future (Kamiński, 2021). This is in line with, among others, the views of Schein (2017), according to whom organisational culture is the result of learning while solving problems of external adaptation and internal integration.

Given the above, in order to assess the organisation's preparation for the future, it was decided to calculate Kendall's tau-b correlation coefficient between the different dimensions of culture in the organisation and in the project team. It was assumed that in the case of:

- the positive value of the correlation coefficient along with the increase in the intensity of a dimension in the organisational culture, the intensity of that dimension in the project team will also increase – the norms and values developed in the project team are in line with the existing organisational culture and the organisation is not preparing for the future in this way,

- the negative value of the correlation coefficient along with the increase in the intensity of a dimension in the organisational culture, the intensity of this dimension in the project team will decrease – the norms and values developed in the project team are not in line with the existing organisational culture, they question the *status quo*, which means that, as a result of the project implementation, the organisation is preparing for the future,
- the zero value of the correlation coefficient, changes in the intensity of a given dimension in organisational culture are not linked in any way to changes in that dimension in the project team – other norms and values, neither conflicting nor confirming the existing organisational culture, are created. The existing organisational culture is thus enriched with something new, which prepares it for the future.

Seven dimensions of organisational culture were used to measure norms and values, consisting of (Hopkins et al., 2005): employee autonomy, formalisation of activities, support of uberdinates by the supervisor, identification of employees with either the project or the organisation, performance awards, acceptance of conflicts between employees or teams and acceptance of risk.

The study included companies whose core business was repetitive and which had project teams using classic project management methodologies (e.g., PRINCE2, PMI, IPMA). The main reasons for selecting the traditional project management approach were identified as being, first and foremost, clearly defined project objectives, a well-defined organisational structure or the restrictiveness of management in terms of how key project processes are carried out (cf., e.g. Wyrozębski, 2007; Kopczynski, 2014). Therefore, the questionnaire was addressed to project managers of different organisations (taking into account the industry as well as organisation size and ownership form). However, only the information from the questionnaires meeting the above-mentioned limitations was used to verify the hypotheses. The research subjects were organisations operating in Europe and the USA. The study was conducted between December 2019 and January 2020. Results were obtained from 106 project managers from organisations operating in Europe and 281 from those functioning in the USA, which gave a total of 387 questionnaires. Next, 98 questionnaires describing projects that were identified by the respondents as ground-breaking based on the levels of project innovation defined by Shenhar and Dvir (2008) were selected.

Thus, research hypothesis H1 considers the relationship between the extent to which the project team interacts with the rest of the organisation and:

- the achievement of short-term project objectives and
- the correlation coefficient between the norms and values found in the project team and the norms and values of organisational culture.

Hypothesis H2 only considers the relationship between how much the project team's interaction with the rest of the organisation is fostered and the correlation coefficient between the norms and values found in the project team and the norms and values in organisational culture.

Finally, the status of the project in the organisation, the dependence of project team members on working for the project team (understood as receiving remuneration for their work on the project, tying their career to their work on the project, the length of time spent working for the project team) and the number of communication methods used in the project were considered to be factors fostering interaction. These three factors were aggregated to a single variable and two ranges of its values were identified to characterise innovative projects where either the project team's interaction with the rest of the organisation was fostered or not. The observations collected in the surveys were assigned to these two ranges. The degree to which the project short-term objectives were met was calculated; it is presented in Table 1. Moreover, the correlation coefficients were calculated – they are presented in Table 2.

Table 1.
Fostering interaction between the project team and the rest of the organisation and the degree of achievement of short-term project objectives

Short-term objective of the project	Degree of implementation	Interactions are not fostered		Interactions are fostered	
		n = 35		n = 63	
Scope of the project (level of the achievement of the defined deliverables)	none implemented	2	5.7%	0	0,0%
	some	3	8.6%	7	11.1%
	most	16	45.7%	21	33,3%
	all	14	40,0%	**35**	**55.6%**
Project budget	significantly exceeded	4	11.4%	9	14.8%
	slightly exceeded	9	25.7%	13	21.3%
	100% implementation	11	31.4%	**24**	**39.3%**
	lower project costs than anticipated	11	31.4%	15	24.6%
Project timetable – implementation time	significantly exceeded	11	31.4%	10	15.9%
	slightly exceeded	13	37.1%	24	38.1%
	in line with the target	10	28.6%	**20**	**31.7%**
	shorter than anticipated	1	2.9%	9	14.3%

Source: The author's own study.

Table 2.
Fostering interaction between the project team and the rest of the organisation and the development of norms and values that prepare the organisation for the future

Dimensions of culture	Interactions are not fostered	Interactions are fostered
	n = 35	n = 63
	Correlation coefficient	Correlation coefficient
Employee autonomy	0.446*	0.364**
Degree of formalisation of activities	0.425*	0.336**
Support provided to subordinates	0.276*	0.323**
Identification with the organisation/project team	0.201*	0.193*
Performance awards	0.457*	0.319**
Acceptance of conflicts	0.465*	0.286*
Acceptance of risk	0.255*	0.437**

* Correlation is significant at the level of 0.05 (in both directions).
** Correlation is significant at the level of 0.01 (in both directions).

Source: The author's own study.

The results presented in Table 1 and Table 2 indicate that both research hypotheses H1 and H2 were not confirmed. However, it should be noted that part of hypothesis H1 has been confirmed, namely that the lack of isolation of highly innovative projects is linked to the achievement of short-term project objectives. If projects were not isolated, they were more likely to have fulfilled their scope and were more likely to be within budget and on time. Moreover, the norms and values within the project team correlate positively with those of organisational culture, indicating that new ways of doing things or challenging the *status quo* are not being developed. Thus, while the recommendations made in project management standards and methodologies have been validated on the basis of empirical research, the findings of the innovation and strategic management literature have not been validated using the selected research method.

6. Conclusions

Empirical findings have shown that fostering the project team's interaction with the rest of the organisation is linked to the achievement of short-term project objectives. Thus, as highlighted in the literature (Hoegl, 2008; Willems et al., 2020), this may be due, firstly, to easier exchange of information as the project team can obtain information from other departments in the organisation, which allows for a better understanding of the context, requirements and potential challenges of the project and a well-informed team can make more accurate decisions. Secondly, regular interaction with the rest of the organisation helps to build support for the project. When other employees feel involved or aware of the project progress, they are more likely to provide assistance when the project team needs it. Thirdly, it is also possible to manage resources more efficiently when projects require resources from different parts of the organisation, such as equipment, data, expertise or personnel. Good relationships and regular communication with the rest of the organisation facilitate access to these resources. Fourthly, various obstacles may arise during the course of a project. They may require a quick response and cooperation with other departments. Regular interaction enables problems to be identified quickly and solutions to be worked out together. Fifthly, working closely with other departments in the organisation helps to understand their objectives and priorities. This enables the project team to better align their activities to be consistent with the overall objectives of the organisation, minimising the risk of conflicts. Finally, sixthly, regular interaction helps the project team to become more integrated into organisational culture, which promotes better collaboration and understanding of internal processes. This can lead to a smoother project implementation and a better fit with the expectations of the organisation. Therefore, these arguments seem to outweigh – at least for the projects examined – the arguments put forward by proponents of isolating innovative projects.

The latter aspect, the compatibility of the project team's norms and values with organisational culture, manifests itself in positive values of the correlation coefficients. This means that if, for example, a high degree of employee autonomy is fostered in an organisation, project team members will also have a relatively high degree of autonomy when implementing projects. However, if risks are avoided in the organisation, risks will not be accepted in project implementation either. The degree of the formalisation of activities or the leadership style of employees will also be shaped similarly. Thus, on the basis of the results obtained, it can be concluded that, while organisations should treat each of their projects as an individual endeavour that is different from others, in this case, in terms of innovation, the way a project is implemented is strongly influenced by the organisation, in which that project is embedded, and its culture. The prevailing view that an organisation's project world will be associated with an entirely different management approach does not hold true in this case. This may be due to the need to – at least partially – embed project management approaches in the organisation's existing management systems and technologies used, the personnel policy practised, health and safety regulations, financial management approaches or the regulations observed. This compatibility will, on the one hand, promote the achievement of the project objectives. As might be assumed, compatibility will help to achieve the scope of the project and not necessarily or only secondarily to ensure its efficiency. This may be because the solutions used are a certain compromise between design and organisation. On the other hand, the alignment of norms and values will counteract the project-induced disruption to the delivery of an organisation's core business.

The research carried out obviously has its weaknesses, which include, first and foremost, a focus on organisations whose *core business* involves repetitive activities rather than unique projects. This may mean that the answer to the question whether innovative projects should be isolated depends on the nature of the organisation in which the project is implemented. It is, therefore, reasonable to ask whether innovative projects should also be isolated in the case of an innovative organisation. Indeed, it can be seen in business practice that isolating the team implementing an innovative project in an innovative organisation is also justified and has certain strengths (Kamiński, Rosłoń, 2023).

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