Financial Implementation and Human Resource (HR) Practices of Project Management Office: Its Competencies in the E-commerce Industry; A Case Study of Daraz

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Abstract: *Daraz PMO is efficient enough to identify the risks and mitigate them at the earliest. Some low-level resources are responsible for only the Financial Implementation and Human Resource (HR) Practices of the Project Management Office, tracking the projects and working with the teams. To provide better quality, there is a need to introduce controlling PMO, so they will be able to manage the projects in a better way and enhance the Financial Implementation and Human Resource (HR) Practices in Project Management. Furthermore, the PMO needs to constantly work on change through which the overall experience of Daraz users is improved. The functions of PMO in Daraz need to be revised because as the number of projects increases, there is a high need to introduce controlling PMO. After all, the supportive PMO is a low-level and less experienced resource. Therefore, there is a need to maintain their projects in a better way.*

Key Words: Financial Implementation, Human Resources, e-commerce, Daraz, Project Management Office

Introduction

As the name implies, a project manager is the skill of overseeing a project. The fundamental ideas and methodology of project management are universal, whether for software development, government, or any engineering project (Engwall & Jerbrant, 2003). Every project manager examines the many tasks, consults with the team, analyses the various functions, offers realistic estimations, and then assigns them to the appropriate team members to handle the deliverables effectively (Yiu et al., 2019). Aggressive estimating can result in workload, delays, and even the jeopardy of a vital release (Ali et al., 2021). In contrast, overestimation can result in laziness and extreme situations, even influencing the company's return on investment ("Occupational Health & Safety Implementation Framework for Pakistani Construction Industry in Sindh Province," n.d.).Therefore, it is a PMO's responsibility to identify the sweet spot during planning.

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However, to prevent any slipping, the PMO is responsible for all the duties listed above, referred to as project planning (Longinos et al., 2017).

A solid and well-regarded online store might fail due to inadequate project management (Aized et al., 2018). However, even when a process is in place and direction is done correctly, problems might still arise in the future (Satisfaction et al., 2023). To sustain their company's grip on the market, a PMO must constantly monitor current market trends and practices (Engwall, 2003). The following are some of the main factors that make PMO so crucial for e-commerce businesses to maintain afloat, organize the current business model, enhance sustainability, and create stability (Nawaz et al., n.d.).

A PMO for an e-commerce business must schedule recurring site updates that include new features and consider wholesalers' demands when developing the program (Hailiang et al., 2023). The above is only the tip of the iceberg, and every client request, comment, question, proposal for technical and usability improvements, and vulnerability of the website and business must be handled from time to time (Laufer & Tucker, 1987).

In this research, I will delve deep and try to concentrate on the typical challenges involved in running an online store (HOU et al., 2021b). A PMO must maintain composure while prioritizing things based on their importance and severity to overcome all of these obstacles (Hatmoko & Scott, 2010). As we go further in this research, we will discuss the many approaches that every e-commerce organization should take and the anticipated delivery (Samo & Bhatti, n.d.). We would discuss the benefits and drawbacks of each PMO approach before settling on the best one (Meihui et al., 2023).

In addition to planning, other PMO technologies on the market may make life easier (Huemann et al., 2007). These tools may be used to monitor routine work and gain a general idea of how well the team is doing (Khaskhelly et al., 2023). However, a similar endeavour would boost the team's total production while saving time. In the coming sections, we will discuss some of these tools and their notable characteristics (Meng, 2012). After reading the paper, you, as the PMO, will be able to identify several strategies that might help Daraz to simplify its e-commerce business process, smoothing out the jagged edges of current procedures (Nawaz Baloch et al., 2021).

Case Study

Before the launch of Daraz, there was no such thing as internet shopping in Pakistan. Online shopping in Pakistan mostly involved purchasing clothing and accessories from various shops' Facebook pages, most of which were run by people with distinctive ideas and designs (Kazaz & Acıkara, 2015). E-commerce in our nation was frequently characterized by corruption, false information, and poor after-sales support (Khokhar, Zia, et al., 2022). Daraz was the first well-considered internet retailer in Pakistan that aimed to address these problems. Initially, Daraz exclusively offered shoes and clothing for women and me (Ichsan et al., 2023). Spreading this completely new understanding in a nation where most people were unaware of internet buying was a significant problem for the corporation since it was difficult to persuade individuals to change their purchase patterns (Sahabuddin et al., 2023). But Daraz has had some success in Pakistan shifting people's perceptions about online purchasing by offering a first-rate overall experience. With e-commerce services for clothing, accessories, shoes, beauty items, electronics, and general commodities, it is now Pakistan's market leader in online retail (Zeb Khaskhelly et al., 2022).

Additionally, Daraz PMO was facing

several challenges in managing its IT and marketing departments. As technology was changed day by day, they were not able to provide high-level services to regional IT and problems were increasing day by day (Khokhar et al., 2020a). To resolve this problem Daraz introduces PMO for their IT and marketing departments to make sure the completion of projects in a timely manner. Daraz's operational procedures have specific issues and, in an effort to find more sellers, they occasionally fail to assess the sellers' readiness to conduct business with Daraz or handle the transaction (Khokhar et al., n.d.). If the merchants don't deliver the items on schedule, Daraz's image will suffer. Additionally, they were unable to sign up merchants who do not own their own delivery service. There is no formal quality control department at Daraz to assess the product's quality. Customers are more likely to complain because of this and update on this customer get unsatisfied because they must ensure minimum quality even if they plainly prefer low-cost products (Irshad et al., 2019).

Literature Review

Project managers and PMOs are extremely different even though they are nominally similar. A PMO is a group of experts who work for a company, whereas a project manager is aperson who oversees a specific project (Khokhar, Devi, et al., 2022) (Seymour and Hussein, 2014). The PMO is a multidisciplinary team that collaborates to produce top-notch projects. It is in charge of ensuring that every project is handled and completed in accordance with the stated objectives and goals. Not every business has a PMO, and not every business needs one (Khokhar et al., 2020b). A PMO, however, might be useful when the intricacy of the projects causes a rise in their number. In order to reduce risk, it aids in determining the best resources and timing.

Moreover, PMO is on the increase and organizations of all sizes are using them increasingly frequently (Ahmed et al., 2022). Nearly all businesses with over $1 billion in sales have PMOs in 2020 (Aghajani et al., 2023) (Nicholas and Steyn, 2020). PMOs are often very talented and experienced individuals with many years of industry experience, and many of them have a Project Management Professional qualification (Begum Siddiqui et al., 2023). They are developed in accordance with the objectives and requirements of the company, and they answer to C-level executives.

It has already been discussed before that e-commerce projects and industry usually do notfit in the model of a waterfall, which is one of the most common methodologies in the IT industry (HOU et al., 2021a) Meanwhile, all the different analysts along with the designers tends to build theportal and had to absorb all the needs and requirements from the scope-gods. Meanwhile, previous projects tend to be delayed due to the difficulty of managing them and staff members' lack of trust in their ability to complete them (Yumei Hou, 2020). Many projects have been created without looking noticing the rules and policies, as opposed to following existing practices with the inclusion of norms. According to Cooper and Sommer (2020), most of the time deliverables usually take a long road, especially for generating and frequently demanding numerous iterations. However, projects of different sizes with emerging complexities have been responded rarely ina good manner to one-size-fits-all solutions (Kardinal Jusuf et al., 2023).

Additionally, many solutions have been up and running in the e-commerce market that usually provides an ideal level answer, but it depends on the overall needs of the organization. However, these lot of items tend to be shortened for their promises. Most of the time organizations get access to the well-known software off the shelf without considering whether it will be helpfulor not

for achieving their objectives (20). In addition to this, it has become one of the core components of the PMO leaders to reassess their skills along with the workforce equipment. For this above specific purpose, PMOs have to be completely in line with the objective along with the business strategies and all the workers have to be brought into alignment with their values (Akhtar Bhatti et al., 2023).

It has been noticed that a platform that offers a thorough perspective of the organization's resources and is easy to use for all levels of stakeholders is a fundamental prerequisite for a PMO. Moreover, according to the most recent PMI Pulse of Profession survey, firms lose millions of dollars each year as a result of communication gaps between different staff levels. A major source of truth is therefore necessary for a firm to be financially successful. A central repository of information where data is arranged and maintained is a fantastic feature of a PMO solution and this is one of the major problems in the ecommerce industry.

Particularly in the COVID age, virtual teams were becoming more common and project management tends to be more complicated and include more people when it has been running remotely. However, especially for maximizing the organizations' investment, processes were managed to be carefully laid out and supported. In the meantime, the technology worked to decrease the reporting process's administrative load. As most of the PMOs and staff were able to concentrate on their primary duties as a result. Senior management tends to oversee all of the projects and their activity using a single, comprehensive dashboard thanks to the consolidated perspective that a PMO platform may give.

Methodology

The development of qualitative research techniques may be traced to a number of academic fields, such as anthropology, sociology, and psychology (Mohajan, 2018.). Regardless of the subject, qualitative research has to be more concerned with how subjective meaning is interpreted, how social context is described, and how common knowledge is prioritized. However, in this study, qualitative research includes the collection of data in the form of interviews with the three PMOs of Daraz. Moreover, in order to access participants' experiences, sentiments, and social worlds, research interviews seek to extract participants' perspectives on how their tales represent their lives as a PMO in the e-commerce industry. In addition to this, the study tends to incorporate content analysis to analyze the interview answers from the respondents. Moreover, various viewpoints on the application of ideas, processes, and interpretation in content analysis are offered in a survey of the literature (Bengtsson, 2016). In order to find themes, preselected words in written, audio, or visual media are examined along with their context in the process of content analysis. These themes are then quantified for statistical analysis to derive conclusions as the response shown in Table 1 and in Table 2.

In the PMO, there is a need to improve their communication tools, as it has been observed on the PMO that internal teams of IT are not able to understand the tools that are used. Furthermore, the PMO needs to constantly work on change through which the overall experience of Daraz users improves. Meanwhile, respondents of the interview explained that the functions of PMO in Daraz need to be revised because as the number of projects is getting increased, there is a high need of introducing controlling PMO because the supportive PMO is a low-level and less experienced resource. Therefore, there is a need to control their projects in a better way. Moreover, some PMOs feel that due to a lack of resources, they are not performing as

expected. In contradiction of the previous statement, some PMO rates their PMO as 9/10, as they think that they are working great and during the campaign times such as 11.11 and 12.12, the PMO ensure to provide high-level services to all the regions.

Table 1

Interview Questions Regarding PMO in Daraz

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1. Why there was a need to introduce PMO in Daraz?
2. Is the PMO of Daraz as competent as other e-commerce platforms?
3. Is the PMO of Daraz strong enough to identify the risks?
4. What PMO functions are implemented in Daraz PMO?
5. As per your observations, what areas need to be improved in the PMO dept of Daraz?
6. How would you rate the PMO operations of Daraz?

Table 2

Answers to Interview Questions Regarding PMO in Daraz

Answers to Interview Questions Regarding PMO in Daraz	
Question 1:	
Response 1	Considering my opinion, as I am a part of IT – PMO, there were many projects of different departments, and it was getting difficult to deliver all the projects to their given deadlines. Therefore, the main reason for introducing PMO was to provide better IT services to Daraz bydelivering high-quality work at the given deadline.
Response 2	The number of projects was increasing day by day and the team were not able to manage the projects as the complexity and priorities were high. Thereby, the upper management decided tointroduce the PMO department, which will be responsible for managing and controlling the projects.
Question 2:	
Response 1	In my opinion, it was not competent before as the project managers in the PMO dept werenot trained enough. Daraz has introduced many training sessions for them, and some senior resources were also hired. Considering the current operations of PMO, I would say it is competent and it is also improving day by day.
Response 2	Yes! Daraz PMO is highly competent as compared to other e-commerce platforms. The PMO constantly work on identifying the risks and mitigating that for providing a better experience to theusers.
Question 3:	
Response 1	To be very honest, the PMO dept of Daraz was not strong before, but this year 2022, they haveintroduced a risk committee in which they work on identifying risks of all the departments of Daraz and further develop strategies for mitigating the risks.

Answers to Interview Questions Regarding PMO in Daraz

Response 2	Yes! Daraz PMO is efficient enough to identify the risks and mitigate it at the earliest.

Question 4:

Response 1:	In Daraz, Supportive and Directive PMO functions are implemented. There are some low-level resources that are responsible for only tracking down the projects and working with the teams. Whereas, a directive PMO takes the updates of all the running projects provides resources and is a lead member of the risk committee.
Response 2:	Daraz PMO is involved in supportive and directive PMO, but I feel like there is a need of controlling PMO too, because the projects that are under supportive PMO are not controlled oroverlooked by any senior resource. For providing better quality, there is a need to introduce controlling PMO, so they will be able to control the projects in a better way.

Question 5:

Response 1	In the PMO, there is a need to improve their communication tools, as I have observed the internal teams of IT are not able to understand the tools that are used. Furthermore, the PMOneeds to constantly work on change through which the overall experience of Daraz users is improved.
Response 2	The functions of PMO in Daraz need to be revised because as the number of projects is increasing, there is a high need of introducing controlling PMO because the supportive PMO is a low level and less experienced resources. Therefore, there is a need to control their projects in a better way.

Question 6:

Response 1	As I am from the IT – Department, I would like to rate the PMO – IT as 8.5/10 because it is performing great, and it is ensuring to provide high-level IT – services to all 5 regions. I feelthat due to a lack of resources, they are not performing as expected.
Response 2:	I am from the product/technology PMO of Daraz, I would rate the PMO as 9/10 because they areworking great and during the campaign times 11.11 and 12.12, the PMO ensure to provide high-level services to all the regions.

Results and Findings

As it is clear that the PMO's core work is for ensuring that the entire project within the organization is managed and delivered based on the scope and objectives of the project. As not every organization carries PMO, and every organization needs one. However, as per the answer of one of the Daraz PMOs clearly explained that there were a good number of projects in different departments, and it tends to be very difficult for them to deliver all their project within their set deadlines. However,this becomes one of the main reasons for introducing PMO, especially to provide good IT services to Daraz just by delivering high-quality work at the given deadline in addition to this, based on another respondent's view, it seems to be very clear that PMO is one of the beneficial due to increase of the complexity. As the number of projects in Daraz was increasing day by day and their team was not able to manage their projects complexity and priorities for every project were very high. Therefore, the higher

management of Daraz initiated the PMO department and after this, all the projects are the responsibility of the PMO along with the controlling of the projects.

It has already been discussed in the literature review that there are several operational solutions in the e-commerce sector that often offer an optimal level response, but it relies on the overall requirements of the firm. Based on this, the PMO of Daraz responded that Daraz was not competent before, as the project managers in the PMO department were not trained enough. In the meantime, Daraz has introduced many training sessions for their project manager and some senior resources were also hired. However, by considering the current operations of PMO, it can be assumed that Daraz is competent, and it is also improving day by day. Moreover, one of the statements by others seemed to be contradicted by explaining that the PMO of Daraz is very competent as compared to the other platforms of e-commerce. As their PMO consistently works for the identification and mitigation of risks for providing a better experience to their customers.

It is obvious that the same procedures and standards are used when gathering data for use in decision-making, consistency is crucial. Moreover, lack of consistency makes it challenging to compare project success across the portfolio and makes it possible for individual biases to influence the study. In addition to this, Daraz PMO responded that the PMO department of Daraz was not strong before, but in the year 2022, they introduced a risk committee in which they work on identifying risks of all the departments of Daraz and further develop strategies for mitigating the risks. Similar to this, another Daraz PMO responds that their PMO department is more efficient and more capable of identifying risks and mitigate at their earliest. Admirably, In Daraz, supportive and directive PMO functions are implemented. There are some low-level resources that are responsible for only tracking down the projects and working with the teams. Whereas, a directive PMO takes the updates of all the running projects provides resources and is a lead member of the risk committee. It is also identified from the interview that Daraz PMOs are involved in supportive and directive PMOs, but it gives feel like there is a need for controlling PMOs too, because the projects that are under supportive PMOs are not controlled or overlooked by any senior resource. Hence, to provide better quality, there is a need to introduce controlling PMO, so they will be able to control the projects in a better way.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Previously projects tended to be delayed due to the difficulty of managing them and staff members' lack of trust in their ability to complete them. Additionally, many solutions have been up and running in the e-commerce market that usually provides an ideal level answer, but it depends on the overall needs of the organization. It has been noticed that a platform that offers a thorough perspective of the organization's resources and is easy to use for all levels of stakeholders is a fundamental prerequisite for a PMO. Particularly in the COVID age, virtual teams were becoming more common and project management tends to be more complicated and include more people when it has been running remotely. Senior management tends to oversee all of the projects and their activity using a single, comprehensive dashboard thanks to the consolidated perspective that a PMO platform may give. However, in this study, qualitative research includes the collection of data in the form of interviews with the PMOs of Daraz. Moreover, in order to access participants' experiences, sentiments, and social worlds, research interviews seek to extract participants' perspectives on how their tales represent their lives as a PMO in the e-commerce industry. Therefore, the main reason for

introducing PMO was to provide better IT services to Daraz by delivering high-quality work at the given deadline. Thereby, the upper management decided to introduce the PMO department, which will be responsible for managing and controlling the projects.

Daraz PMO is efficient enough to identify the risks and mitigate them at the earliest. There are some low-level resources that are responsible for only tracking down the projects and working with the teams. Whereas, a directive PMO takes the updates of all the running projects provides resources and is a lead member of the risk committee. For providing better quality, there is a need to introduce controlling PMO, so they will be able to control the projects in a better way. Improvements for Daraz in the PMO department, there is a need to improve their communication tools, as observed that the internal teams of IT are not able to understand the tools that are used. Furthermore, the PMO needs to constantly work on change through which the overall experienceof Daraz users is improved. The functions of PMO in Daraz need to be revised because as the number of projects is increasing, there is a high need of introducing controlling PMO because the supportive PMO is a low level and less experienced resources. Therefore, there is a need to control their projects in a better way.

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