Abstract

Facilities Management (FM) is an emergent field that offers great promise to organisations in terms of optimal value and support from physical resource and associated services, and can potentially be vital to the success of the core business itself. Although the strategic organisational role of FM has been explored in FM literature, there is little evidence to support the case for potential business centrality of the facilities function. It is argued in thesis that by gaining a greater understanding into the network position of the facilities function in organisations, and through determining which factors influence its role in the strategic management process, not only can the practice of strategic FM be better understood but that the theoretical underpinnings of the profession can also be refined.

The study adopts a mixed methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative analysis of a single case study using Social Network Analysis (SNA). Research findings indicate that organisational structures that share similarities with the Informed Client Function (ICF) appear to be very effective in utilising FM’s knowledge, accessing required organisational resources and delivering better value. Findings also reveal that in projects where there is a close interface between the senior management and the FM function, the facilities function tends to occupy a central network position in projects involving facilities-related organisational change. Within such organisations, the study concludes, the FM function is well placed to utilise and share its knowledge with key stakeholders, and act as a strategic function.

The contributions of the study are two-fold: the introduction of a methodological approach new to facilities research; and a theoretical contribution to FM theory. Methodologically, the research introduces network-level analysis to strategic facilities management studies. Network-level analysis may prove to be a critically important approach in understanding the role of the FM function in relation to its various stakeholders. The study also builds FM theory by presenting important conclusions about the senior management interface, the nature of organisational structure that can leverage FM’s strategic role, and the need for established communication structures to support facilities change management.
Dedication

The thesis is dedicated to my husband, Habib, and to my children, Shafique and Umar. Also to my parents, Waheed Alam and Riffat Waheed: whose guidance, love and prayers have made all of my life’s achievements possible.
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I could not have completed this thesis without scarifies made by my husband and my two young boys, who were pre-schoolers when I started my research. For this, I am endeared by the patience and understanding shown by my husband, Habib; and for the quiet understanding, kisses, cuddles and prayers from my children, Umar and Shafique, who offered me more than I could ever return to them. Last but not least, heartfelt thanks to my parents and my uncle, Nazir Ali, who prayed for my success, encouraged me, and always lent me an ear when I needed somebody to listen to me.
List of Publications


Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION
1.1 Chapter Overview ................................................................. 1
1.2 The Role of FM as a Resource Manager ................................. 3
1.3 FM as a Function Embedded in a Network ......................... 4
   1.3.1 Individual Function vs. Networked Function .................. 4
   1.3.2 Theoretical Advantage of the Network Approach .......... 6
1.4 The Knowledge of Facilities and Services Support .......... 7
1.5 Research Focus ................................................................. 9
1.6 The Research ..................................................................... 10
   1.6.1 The Research Objectives ............................................. 12
   1.6.2 Research Design ........................................................ 12
1.7 Structure of the Thesis ....................................................... 14
1.8 Chapter Summary ............................................................. 17
1.9 References ................................................................. 18

CHAPTER 2: A REVIEW OF FACILITIES MANAGEMENT LITERATURE
2.1 Chapter Overview ................................................................. 24
2.2 Defining Facilities Management ....................................... 25
   2.2.1 The Definitional Debate ............................................. 25
   2.2.2 Non-Core Support Function ........................................ 28
2.3 Facilities Management: A Chronology of Research, Practice and Professional Origins .......................................................... 29
   2.3.1 Historical Roots of the Discipline ................................ 29
   2.3.2 Aligning with Organisational Objectives .................... 31
   2.3.3 Institutionalisation ....................................................... 33
2.4 The Need for Facilities Management .................................. 34
   2.4.1 The Financial Significance of Physical Assets ............... 34
   2.4.2 The Link between Business Performance and Facilities ... 35
2.5 Organisational Support through Facilities .......................... 37
   2.5.1 Facilities Support Areas: Categories ............................ 37
   2.5.2 What is a Service? ....................................................... 40
   2.5.3 Facilities Services and their Provision .......................... 42
2.6 Strategic Facilities Management ......................................... 44
   2.6.1 Corporate Strategy and Facilities ................................ 44
   2.6.2 Linking FM to the Core Business ............................... 48
2.7 The Knowledge Gap .......................................................... 52
CHAPTER 3: A REVIEW OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT LITERATURE

3.1 Chapter Overview ............................................................................................................. 65
3.2 The Knowledge Economy ................................................................................................. 66
   3.2.1 Knowledge Economy: Major Research Themes ...................................................... 68
3.3 Theoretical Background: Resource Based View of the Firm ........................................ 69
   3.3.1 Knowledge as an Organisational Resource ............................................................ 72
   3.3.2 The Nature of Knowledge ......................................................................................... 73
      3.3.2.1 Explicit versus Tacit ......................................................................................... 76
      3.3.2.2 Individual versus Collective ............................................................................. 76
      3.3.2.3 Intellectual versus Practical ............................................................................. 77
      3.3.2.4 Canonical versus Non-canonical .................................................................... 77
   3.3.3 Hierarchical view of data information and knowledge: should there be a
       distinction? ..................................................................................................................... 77
   3.3.4 Beyond Dualisms: Knowledge in Practice ............................................................... 79
3.4 Knowledge: Competitive Advantage and Value Creation ............................................ 80
3.5 The Significance of Knowledge Sharing ........................................................................... 81
3.6 Knowledge Sharing ......................................................................................................... 82
   3.6.1 Important areas of research in knowledge sharing research ... 82
      3.6.1.1 The organisational context of knowledge sharing ...... 84
      3.6.1.2 The impact of interpersonal characteristics on knowledge sharing ............... 85
3.7 The Sharing of Facilities Knowledge .............................................................................. 86
   3.7.1 Knowledge Sharing and this Research ................................................................. 88
3.8 Chapter Summary ............................................................................................................ 90
3.9 References ....................................................................................................................... 91

CHAPTER 4: A REVIEW OF SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS LITERATURE

4.1 Chapter Overview ............................................................................................................ 102
4.2 The Network Perspective in Organisational Research:
   Terminology ..................................................................................................................... 102
4.3 The Network Perspective in Organisational Research:
   Research Streams ............................................................................................................ 103
      4.3.1 Social capital ........................................................................................................ 104
      4.3.2 Embeddedness .................................................................................................... 106
      4.3.3 Joint ventures and alliances ................................................................................. 106
      4.3.4 Knowledge management ..................................................................................... 107
CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

5.1 Chapter Overview .................................................. 122
   5.1.1 Methodology: The Term and Its Use in This Chapter ............ 122

5.2 Revisiting the Research Question .................................. 123

5.3 Research Paradigms and their Impact on Research ............... 127
   5.3.1 Research Paradigms ........................................... 128
   5.3.2 Ontological Orientation: Objectivism vs. Constructionism ...... 129
   5.3.3 Epistemological Orientation: Positivism, Interpretivism and Pragmatism .................................................. 131
         5.3.3.1 Epistemological Position of this Research ............... 133
   5.3.4 Research Strategy: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Method Approaches .................................................. 134

5.4 Theory Building: Inductive vs. Deductive Research .............. 137

5.5 Justification for the Case Study Research Design:
   Comparison of Alternatives ....................................... 138
   5.5.1 The Experimental Design ...................................... 139
   5.5.2 The Cross-Sectional Design .................................... 139
   5.5.3 The Longitudinal Design ....................................... 140
   5.5.4 The Case Study Design ....................................... 140

5.6 Ensuring Critical Rigour in the Case Study:
   Reliability and Validity ............................................. 142

5.7 Single vs. the Multiple Case Study Design ........................ 144

5.8 The Phases of the Case Study ...................................... 147
   5.8.1 Unit of Analysis and the Selection Criterion for Case Study ... 150
   5.8.2 Site Selection Criteria ......................................... 150
   5.8.3 Data Collection ................................................ 151
   5.8.4 Data Analysis .................................................. 151

5.9 Chapter Summary .................................................. 152

5.10 References .......................................................... 153
7.5 Limitations, Conclusions and Recommendations ................................ 220
  7.5.1 Limitations .............................................................................. 220
  7.5.2 Conclusions ........................................................................... 220
  7.5.3 Recommendations ................................................................. 222

7.6 References .................................................................................. 224

Appendix A .......................................................................................... 226
Appendix B ........................................................................................... 228
Appendix C ........................................................................................... 230
Appendix D ........................................................................................... 232
Appendix E ........................................................................................... 235
Appendix F ........................................................................................... 242
Appendix G ........................................................................................... 246
Appendix H ........................................................................................... 250