

**Application of Social Network Analysis to Understand Knowledge
Sharing In a Facilities Management Network**

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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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