Abstract of the Master Thesis

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International Project Management
(Building, Real Estate and Infrastructure)

A conceptual framework to build and enhance trust in virtual teams using technology mediated communication

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Abstract body

In the last decades there was an exponential growth of the information technology, new technologies are being introduced nearly in a daily basis enhancing the communication capabilities. The rapidly advancing of these technologies presents as an outcome the increasing of the widely utilization of virtual teams by organizations. However, together with the growth of virtual teams, there are a proportional increase of the challenges related to how to manage this special type of organization. Specifically, one of the biggest challenges in the virtual teams is how to manage the trust between team members, previous studies shows that there is a disposition to virtual team members have a low level of trust among them, indeed, there are several factors that contributes for this situation, such as, low level of socialization, less face to face contact, different time zones, languages and cultures, are the main factors to confirm this tendency.

Therefore, this research purpose is to answer the question “How to build and enhance trust in virtual teams using technology mediated communication?”. Additionally, in furtherance of answering the research question the aim of this thesis is identify the main factors and tools to build and enhance trust in virtual teams using technology mediated communication. Toward to this end, this research collected important theoretical and empirical previous studies from the literature, inputs from experienced practitioners from different fields and finally a validation of the proposed framework was also performed by different practitioners in order to guarantee the
applicability of the tools offered. Furthermore, this research delivers as main finding a conceptual framework to be applied in virtual teams, in order to build and enhance trust in virtual teams, by understanding which are the main drivers to build trust and translating this to specific actions mentioned by the practitioners the framework was developed to cover the most common issues in virtual teams.

In this context, this research conveys some important practical implications, the main points where there is added value offered for the practitioners in their daily work, for instance, shed the lights of high-level management on human relations and values, connect theory and practice, linking important streams, understanding trust in depth, practical actions to build and enhance trust. However, there are few recommendations for further investigations in this research, such as, the deeper analysis in the level of how to implement the proposed actions and also assess the main opportunities and constraints in these regards. Finally, there is a last recommendation, for further research, by applying the proposed conceptual framework in a case study to evaluate which are the practical results with its application.