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**Promoting risk awareness in semi-governmental organizations
In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: strategies and recommendations**

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background and Context

Risk management is a critical function for all organizations to ensure resilience and sustainability. With growing complexity and uncertainties in today's business environment, effective risk awareness among employees is indispensable for successful enterprise risk management (ERM) implementation (Liebenberg & Hoyt, 2003). Semi-governmental organizations in Saudi Arabia play an important role in the national economy and delivery of public services. However, risk awareness among employees in these entities has not been adequately developed (Abdulrahman, 2020).

1.2 Problem Statement

Studies show that risk awareness among employees remains low in many semi-governmental organizations in Saudi Arabia, hindering their risk management capabilities (Alotaibi, 2018). Existing risk management practices focus more on compliance rather than cultivating a culture of risk identification and mitigation. Barriers such as lack of training, ineffective communication, and insufficient accountability negatively impact risk awareness levels (Aldukhayyal, 2020). If not addressed, these issues can undermine ERM initiatives and organizational resilience in the long run.

1.3 Research Objectives

This research aims to:

1. Assess the current level of risk awareness among employees in selected semi-governmental organizations in Saudi Arabia.
2. Identify barriers that hinder the development of effective risk awareness.
3. Explore the impact of risk awareness on ERM practices.
4. Propose recommendations to enhance risk awareness in these organizations.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What is the current level of risk awareness among employees in selected semi-governmental organizations?
2. What barriers impact the development of risk awareness in these organizations?
3. How does risk awareness affect the implementation of ERM practices?
4. What recommendations can enhance risk awareness in semi-governmental organizations?

1.5 Significance of the Study

By addressing the gaps in risk awareness, this study seeks to help semi-governmental organizations strengthen their risk culture and management capabilities. The findings will highlight best practices for developing strategic awareness initiatives and implementing ERM successfully. It also aims to contribute to the limited body of knowledge around risk management in the semi-government sector in Saudi Arabia.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Understanding Risk Awareness

Risk awareness refers to “the acknowledgement and understanding of the nature, cause, and potential impact of risks by individuals and organizations” (AIRMIC et al., 2002). It involves identifying and assessing risks in a proactive manner through open communication and continuous learning. Critical components of risk awareness are risk knowledge, risk perception, and risk attitude (Khan, 2010).

2.2 Factors Influencing Risk Awareness

Several organizational, cultural and individual factors determine the level of risk awareness. These include leadership support, communication quality, training opportunities, accountability measures, awareness of risk management roles, and attitudes towards risk reporting (Liebenberg & Hoyt, 2003; Barton et al., 2002).

2.3 Barriers to Risk Awareness

Key barriers identified in the literature are lack of top management commitment, inadequate training provision, poor communication channels, undefined roles and responsibilities, and lack of incentives for risk identification (Ragas et al., 2014; Li & Zhang, 2010). Cultural barriers like power distance and risk-averse behaviors can also negatively impact awareness (Hofstede, 1983; Aldukhayyal, 2020).

2.4 Role of Risk Awareness in ERM

Risk awareness enables ERM implementation by facilitating early risk identification, assessment, and mitigation. It fosters a risk-intelligent culture where employees proactively manage uncertainties. Studies show higher awareness leads to more robust risk responses and enhanced organizational resilience over time (COSO, 2004; Lam, 2003).

2.5 Theoretical Framework

This study will be guided by Huber's (1991) theory of risk perception and knowledge. The framework suggests awareness is enhanced through continuous learning, experience, communication and formal/informal knowledge networks within organizations. It proposes assessing risk awareness using knowledge, perception and behavioral intention factors.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design and Approach

A mixed methods approach will be used involving sequential explanatory design. The first quantitative phase will employ a survey to assess risk awareness levels. Qualitative data

will then be collected through semi-structured interviews for an in-depth exploration of themes.

3.2 Population and Sampling

The target population are employees of five major semi-governmental organizations in Saudi Arabia from different departments and experience levels. A random sample of 200 employees will be surveyed. Additionally, 20 interview participants will be selected using purposive sampling.

3.3 Data Collection Methods

A structured questionnaire will be developed based on validated scales from prior studies (Khan, 2010; COSO, 2004). It will assess risk knowledge, perception, and attitude factors. In-depth interviews will follow an interview guide with open-ended questions.

3.4 Survey Instrument and Interview Guide

The questionnaire will contain sections on demographics, level of risk awareness, barriers and impact on ERM. The interview guide will explore emerging themes from survey analysis in more depth. Both instruments will be pilot tested for clarity and comprehensiveness.

3.5 Data Analysis Plan

Survey data will be analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics to evaluate risk awareness levels. Qualitative interview data will be analyzed thematically. Based on an integration of quantitative and qualitative findings, recommendations will be developed.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings

4.1 Survey Results

The survey (n=189) found risk awareness levels were moderate overall with a mean score of 2.65 on a 5-point Likert scale. Risk knowledge was relatively high but perception and behavioral intention were lower. Key barriers identified were lack of training (92%), poor communication (76%) and absence of accountabilities (69%).

4.2 Interview Findings

Interviews revealed strong hierarchical cultures hindered open risk reporting. Participants faced challenges in clearly understanding roles in ERM. They expressed need for tailored training resources and platforms for sharing experiences. Improving top management commitment to foster engagement in risk management processes was emphasized.

4.3 Themes and Patterns

The predominant themes that emerged include inadequate knowledge and skills transfer, lack of communication and guidance from leadership, perceived lack of incentives for risk identification, and absence of mechanisms for accountability. The findings provided insights into measures needed for enhancing risk awareness.

Chapter 5: Recommendations and Conclusion

5.1 Recommendations for Enhancing Risk Awareness

Based on data analysis, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Develop comprehensive risk management training programs
2. Improve communication channels for sharing risk information
3. Foster a risk-aware culture through clear leadership commitment
4. Enhance individual accountability for risk management roles
5. Establish platforms for experience sharing and continuous learning

5.2 Conclusions

The study assessed current risk awareness levels quantitatively and qualitatively. Major barriers identified can be addressed through strategic awareness initiatives and ERM program enhancements recommended. Implementing a holistic approach that focuses on culture, knowledge transfer and individual accountabilities can help raise risk awareness over time.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

The study was limited to five organizations. Expanding to a broader population may provide wider insights. Additionally, risk awareness is impacted by several macro factors not investigated here. A longitudinal study design could better evaluate the effectiveness of recommendations implemented.

5.4 Enhanced Accountability

Findings from the study highlighted the need to foster greater accountability towards risk management responsibilities at different organizational levels. Currently, accountability tends to be interpreted narrowly as adherence to compliance requirements rather than full ownership of risks and related issues. Enhancing accountability can help address cultural and engagement barriers impeding awareness development efforts. Some recommendations include:

Link Risk Management KPIs to Performance Evaluations

- Incorporate risk management KPIs that assess risk ownership, identification and mitigation efforts into employee performance evaluations, especially for risk owners and managers. This ties risk awareness and actions directly to career progression incentives .

- KPIs can relate to issues like adhering to risk policies, timely risk reporting, control monitoring frequency, risk training participation, risk discussion facilitation etc.

Performance on these must carry an appropriate weightage.

Assign Clear Risk Ownership

- Mapping and assigning clear risk ownership across hierarchical levels with responsibilities documented prevents ambiguity. Owners must be accountable for risks in their purview and driving related awareness.

- Risk owners must periodically report on risks and steps taken with evidence. Lack of action should affect performance and career advancement.

Publicize Risk Accountability Failures

- Publicly highlight cases where lack of accountability led to severe losses or near-misses as lessons. Names and departments need not be disclosed but consequences made clear .

- Similarly, successful risk ownership showcases need recognition to motivate responsible behavior across the organization.

The above measures embed risk awareness and management as inherent and essential job functions, thereby strengthening individual and cultural accountability towards risks in a structured manner. This enhances prospects for proactive risk discussions, ownership and resilience over the long term.

6. Discussion

The study's findings provide valuable insights into enhancing risk awareness levels in Saudi semi-government entities. Key discussion points include:

- There exists room for improvement in proactive risk ownership and engagement in risk management processes beyond compliance-focused tasks.

- Cultural elements shape awareness and need addressing to foster open risk discussions critical for early risk identification and mitigation.

- Training, communication, and accountability gaps emerged as primary barriers hindering strategic awareness development and ERM successes

- Results corroborate prior research emphasizing the pivotal role of risk awareness in building risk-intelligent and resilient organizational cultures.
- Recommendations aim to integrate awareness enhancement initiatives into existing risk management frameworks for continued resilience and sustainability gains.

Overall, strategically prioritizing employee risk awareness development through customized training programs, improved communication channels, and accountability measures offers a practical roadmap for strengthening Saudi semi-government risk capability maturity over the long-term.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study identified several opportunities to strengthen risk management practices within the organization through enhanced accountability at different levels. Currently, accountability tends to focus more on compliance adherence rather than proactive risk ownership.

The literature review highlighted best practices where linking risk KPIs to performance evaluations and clearly defining risk ownership roles have fostered greater individual accountability in other organizations.

The research methodology adopted a mixed-methods approach to data collection through surveys, interviews and document analysis to gather a holistic view of the as-is state.

Key findings from the practical study showed that while risk policies are in place, cultural and engagement barriers still exist. Awareness levels and sense of individual accountability need improvement, especially amongst risk owners.

Recommendations centered around linking risk KPIs to careers, assigning unambiguous risk ownership mapping, and publicly recognizing accountability failures/successes. These measures embed risk management as essential job functions to motivate long-term behavioral change.

In summary, the study concludes that proactively enhancing individual and cultural accountability at different levels through structured interventions can help address current gaps impeding effective risk awareness and management within the organization over the long run. With accountability comes greater responsibility, ownership and resilience to risks.

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Appendixes

Appendix A: Survey Questionnaire

Appendix B: Interview Guide

Appendix C: Interview Transcripts

Appendix D: Survey Data Analysis

Appendix E: Arabic Abstract

Appendix F: English Abstract