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The integration of risk and performance management: the role of boundary objects

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Abstract:

Purpose

This paper investigates the role of boundary objects and boundary work in the integration of risk management (RM) and performance management (PM) systems. In particular, the paper combines theoretical insights with an empirical focus to examine how shared contexts are created through the boundary work performed by key actors across knowledge boundaries.

Design/methodology/approach

The paper develops an exploratory qualitative case study from a local government context. The methodology is based on document analysis and semi-structured interviews.

Findings

Boundary objects can act as knowledge integration mechanisms, allowing key actors to understand the meanings and uses of RM and PM practices. The paper shows how collaborative versus competitive boundary work exerted by key actors can explain the creation of shared contexts leading to integration between RM and PM.

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Originality/value

The results contribute to the debate about the integration of RM with other managerial systems. Differently from previous research, the integration theme is addressed in the present work by looking specifically to the integration between RM and PM. In doing so, the role of both boundary objects and the boundary work performed by relevant actors to demarcate their legitimacy and autonomy over preferred practices is portrayed.

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