

Conclusions

Public sector knowledge networks address important challenges of public service and administration. Research on interorganizational relations, knowledge management, public sector networks, and e-government all contribute to our ability to understand the factors that are associated with PSKN success. Success is clearly not a unified concept, although certain success measures may be more important to some observers than to others. Success can be assessed at the network, organizational, and individual levels and subdivided into structural, performance, and process and relationship categories. Just as important, this research offers some explanation of the conditions that are conducive to success, again by parsing success into more specific levels and types.

This research offers a typology of public sector knowledge network success factors that may be useful in guiding future network research. Investigators might focus their attention more deeply on one category of success, or one level of analysis to test and improve the validity and robustness of this model. Combined with stakeholder analysis, such work could reveal what kinds of success are important to what kinds of stakeholders. It would also be very useful to determine whether there is a general hierarchy of measures or types of measures, or a temporal order in which certain kinds of success need to be achieved in order to attain comprehensive network success.

PSKN evaluations might also benefit from the typology by taking advantage of the cross-cutting dimensions to create manageable areas of focus with appropriate measures, metrics, timing for assessment and feedback into practice and resource allocation.

Practitioners can make use of the typology to help design PSKN's that have greater likelihood of success by giving attention to the conditions for success as well as the goals, methods, and relationships that compose the network and its operations. By conceptually breaking these immensely complex efforts into more fundamental and familiar pieces, designers and managers of future networks might be more successful in achieving the public value that the networks are intended to serve.