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# The Emotional Intelligence of Project Manager and the Project Success

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**Abstract**

The massive failure of projects emphasizes the need to understand the factors that contribute to the project’s success. It is observed that projects of the construction sector in Peshawar also face such difficulties of unachievable targets because of both emotional and technical skills therefore this casual study is undertaken to check the influence of project manager’s emotional intelligence on the success of the project in the construction sector of Peshawar. A sample of 250 project managers that work in those construction companies involved in construction projects is selected using convenient sampling technique.The data is analyzed using reliability study (Cronbach’s Alpha), descriptive statistics, Skewness-Kurtosis, Correlation, and Regression analysis. The results of the study explain that the dimensions of emotional intelligence including self-awareness and self- regulation of project managers are showing positive and significant impact on the success of construction projects. Construction industry and other project based firms in Peshawar can take benefits from this research to improve the ratio of their successful projects by focusing on the significance of the attributes of emotional intelligence. The findings of the study strongly recommend a detailed study covering all dimensions of emotional intelligence including social awareness and empathy.

# Key Words: Emotional Intelligence, Project Success, Self-Awareness, Self-Regulation.

**Introduction**

Globalization and growing industry have increased the number of projects in different areas including construction, information technology, security, and social sector (Yatim, Bredillet & Ruiz, 2009). Organizations that use project management practices need to be more skilled to respond to risk or chances. Worldwide the investing budget on projects has largely increased which is now in billions (Anantatmula, 2008; Joseph &Marnewick, 2018; Mullin, Smith & McNamara, 2019). These increasing figures show the increasing demand of superior, rapid, and more cost-effective projects and with this increasing demand it is becoming difficult for project managers to manage the projects (Anantatmula, 2008). Literature is evident of failure of projects regardless of well- organized and research-oriented project management (Cicmil & Hodgson, 2006, Lee & Xia 2005, Papke-shields et al., 2010).

This increasing usage of project-based management systems increases the role of project managers. Researchers have widely discussed the project manager’s skills and capabilities needed to successfully complete the project. As everyone is confronted by his or her own emotions and those of other people, various studies have depicted the worth and usage of emotional intelligence (EI) of managers in successful completion of projects (Crawford, 2007; Gehring, 2007; Oke, Aigbavboa, Ngcobo, & Sepuru, 2017; Luong, Sivarajah &Weerakkody, 2019). According to the findings of the studies, managers having high levels of emotional intelligence tend to motivate and lead the employee in a better way, resulting in project success. Moreover, emotional intelligence relatively a new approach which tends to forecast project success and outcomes. However, the idea of emotional intelligence and its immediate connection with the success of the project is not greatly examined theme in the context of Peshawar.

It is observed that projects in the construction sector in Peshawar also face these difficulties of unachievable targets because of both emotional and technical skills therefore the current study is undertaken to check the influence of project manager‘s emotional intelligence on the success of the project in construction sector of Peshawar. Therefore, the current study is intended to find the relationship of emotional intelligence on the success of the project in the construction industry, Peshawar. The main aim of the study is to check the impact of project managers‘ emotional intelligence on project success. However, the specific objectives of the study are:

1. Self-Awareness (emotional intelligence) has a positive and significant impact on the success of the project in construction industry in Peshawar.
2. Self-Regulation (Emotional Intelligence) has a positive and significant impact on the success of the project in construction industry in Peshawar.

# Literature Review

# *Emotional intelligence (EI)*

Salovey and Mayer (1990) were one of the first who work on the emotional intelligence (EI) and defined it as “ability to monitor the feelings and emotions of one self and other and be able to discriminate among them and use them to guide the thinking and actions” (p. 189), emotional intelligence (EI) has been identified as one of the necessary managerial skills ever since this work came out. Studies highlighted how significant the influence of manager’s iteration has on the other. This influence is particular seen in case of complex projects (Joseph & Newman, 2010; Clarke, 2010; Muller & Turner, 2010). There has been evidence in the literature on the effectiveness of emotional intelligence with the managerial effectiveness (O’Boyle et al., 2011). The literature has highlighted that “effective project management is not only done by the hard skills but there is role of the emotions regulation as well” (Fisher, 2011). Mazur at al. (2014) and Muller & Turner (2007) highlighted the role of the emotional intelligence (EI) of managers in context of the project management and particularly this research has highlighted that “project’s manager’s ability to understand and regulate their emotions in oneself and other helps them to achieve high quality results along with effective relationship with different stakeholders”. Self-Awareness as a dimension of emotional intelligence is to understand and value one’s own emotions (Siddiq, Baloch, Nadeem, Ahmad, & Jan, 2015). ln construction projects, the manger must have self-awareness so that he can easily identify their own emotions and also able to aware of his workers emotions for enhancing performance (Blair et al., 2007). According to (Shahzad et al., 2010) self-awareness deals with the one’s feelings and his/her performance on the work so that to identify his strengths and weaknesses. Self-Regulationdimension of emotional intelligence deals with the management of emotions or governing one’s values and emotions. It refers to the capability of keeping emotions under control and not showing disturbing emotions (Siddiq et al., 2015). Rahim et al., (2002) concluded that in complex nature of projects where normally individuals deal with stressful circumstances, strong management of emotions and strong self-belief lead them to overcome stressful situations and find a way out from the problems. The other dimension of emotional intelligence called social awarenessrefers to being empathetic to others and being able to understand other’s emotions (Boyatzis 1982; Siddiq et al., 2015). There is a changing nature of individuals working in an association and administrators can just successfully manage them, when they have the competency of sympathy, and it can upgrade the execution also. As indicated by (Boyatzis 1982), individuals having the expertise of social mindfulness are equipped for perusing circumstance normally and keep away from biases in their work and this recognizes star entertainers to the normal one. As a result of numerous works, EI is considered a critical success factor in different fields like construction projects. engineering, banking law, other sports and in academic fields (Song et al., 2010, Brackett et al., 201l, Landa et al., 2008). In the area of project management, El plays a vital and positive role, as projects are temporary in nature and have definite start and end dates, so project managers need a high level of El skills to cope with the different aspects of the project (Druskat et al., 2006).

# Project Success

Project success (PS) in the complex project has always been an issue because of their timeframe of completion and their size (Toor & Ogrunlana, 2010: Wang & Huang, 2006). The studies, however, defined project success (PS) in context of the project management and has considered two important components necessary to define the project success which are success criteria and critical success factors (Muller & Jugdev, 2012; Turner & Zolin, 2012). Success factors usually focus on the objective’s measures such as cost, quality and the timeframe for completion (Pinto & Slevin, 1987) these objective measures have been criticized when used to define the project success (PS) of the complex projects due to use of overly simplistic constructs for the complex and bigger projects (Toor & Ogrunlana, 2010). Jugdev & Muller (2005) have argued that these objective measures fail to address the other broader factors such as strategic management in project and the behavioral skills. The commitment, coordination and ability of the project participants support winning project performance (Jha & Lyer, 2007; Doloi et al, 2011). Teams of “low” and “high” performance showed variations in terms of communication, human resource, cost, scope, risk and quality management areas in favor of “high” levels of project success (Papke-Sheilds et al, 2010).

# *Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Project Success (PS)*

Lidebaum & Jordan (2014) highlighted that emotional experience of people changes with time depending on the work behaviors and work experiences. However, employees at the working environment having positive emotions can perform better (Mayer et al, 2008; Sy et al, 2006) whereas negative emotions give rise to frustration and decrease in performance (Fisher, 2003; Von Glinow et al, 2004). Project managers with high emotional intelligence have positive impact on the employee in the troubleshooting and providing solutions for the success of the project (Peslak, 2005; Mount, 2006; Clarke, 2010, Mazur et al, 2014; Muller & Turner, 2010). Based on the reviewed literature the following hypotheses are developed for the study and can be seen in the theoretical model of the study (Fig. 1).

H1. Self-Awareness (Emotional Intelligence) is positively related with the project success in the construction companies of Peshawar.

H2. Self-Regulation (Emotional Intelligence) is positively related with the project success in the construction companies of Peshawar.

# 

Emotional Intelligence (Independent Variable) (Dependent Variable)

Self-Awareness

Self-Regulation

Project Success

H1

H2

# *Fig 1. The theoretical framework of the study. Source: (Author Constructed)*

# Methodology

This casual study is conducted to investigate the role of factors of emotional intelligence in project success. The population of the study is the construction industry of Peshawar out of that a sample frame of 150 medium and large construction companies working in Peshawar is selected for the study. The data is collected from a sample of 250 project managers that work in those construction companies involved in construction projects is selected. The convenience sampling technique is used, realizing the fact that not all the individuals in the sample would have an equal chance to be chosen. Cross-sectional time horizon was used for the study, conducted only a one-time due to the time constraint and limited resources. Data is collected from the professionals of construction industry using adopted questionnaires (details given in Table 1) for the Emotional intelligence and Project Success as:

Table 1

*Details of the instruments used in the Study*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sr. | Variable | Source | Year |
| 1 | Emotional Intelligence | Wong and Law | 2019 |
| 2 | Project Success | Shenar et al., | 2008 |

For the analysis of collected data, a mix of statistical methods were employed including rreliability study (Cronbach’s Alpha), descriptive statistics, Skewness-Kurtosis, correlation, and regression analysis.

**Results and Discussion**

***Descriptive Analysis***

Table No.2 shows the mean values of all variables that are approximately the same of descriptive analysis, the minimum value shows the minimum value of the variables, and the maximum value shows the maximum value of the variables. This table elaborates that all values are from 1 to 5. It means statistical values are the mean values in actual about a specific variable. Standard deviation represents the deviance from the mean value of the data. Skewness and Kurtosis is the gauge to check the normality of the data. For confirmation the value of the Skewness must be between +1 to -1 and this table also elaborates that almost all values are in the defined ranges of skewness and confirmed the normality of the data. Kurtosis is measured to identify the normality of the data.

## Table 2

## *Descriptive Statistics*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Skewness | | Kurtosis | |
| Statistic | Statistic | Statistic | Statistic | Std. Error | Statistic | Std. Error |
| Self Awareness | 228 | 3.2719 | .96151 | -.252 | .161 | -.653 | .321 |
| Self-Regulation | 228 | 3.9489 | .88484 | -1.492 | .161 | 1.836 | .321 |
| Project Success | 228 | 3.7639 | .73655 | -.628 | .161 | .183 | .321 |

*Valid N (listwise)= 228*

**Reliability Analysis**

Reliability study is conducted on all variables using the Likert scale to measure the coordination influence from the scale of 1 to 5. On the basis of the results obtained from reliability test (as in Table 3) the alpha coefficient value for the 5 items of EI (Self-Awareness) is 0.82 i.e. 82%., for 5 items of self-regulation is .875 i.e. 88%.

Table 3

*Reliability Analysis*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sr. No | Name of Variable | No of Items | Cronbach's Alpha |
| 1 | EI (Self- Awareness) | 5 | 82% |
| 2 | EI (Self-Regulation) | 5 | 88% |
| 3 | Project Success | 6 | 71% |

The alpha coefficient values for all the scales are greater than 0.6 suggesting a moderate and strong levels of internal consistency among the items.

## **Correlation**

Table No. 4 shows that correlation between EI (Self- Awareness) , EI (Self- Regulation) , EI (Self- Regulation) and Project Success.

Table 4

*Pearson Correlation Analysis of the Study (Sample n= 228)*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | SA | SR | PS |
| Self Awareness (SA) | “r” | 1 |  |  |
| Sig. (2-tailed) |  |  |  |
| Self Regulation (SR) | “r” | 0.176\*\* | 1 |  |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.001 | 0.001 |  |
| Project Success  (PS) | “r” | 0.505\*\* | 0. 807\*\* | 1 |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.001 | 0.001 |  |

*Significant at 0.01, two tailed*

The Pearson correlation value (r=0.799, p=0.000) between Self regulation (SR) and Self Awareness (SA) explains a positively strong relationship. This explains the significance of link between the self-awareness and regulation in the same direction. This means that both components of emotional intelligence have strong relationships with each other. The increase in one will bring positive changes in other and vice versa. The correlation between Project Success and Self Awareness (SA), (r= 0.505, p=0.000) explains the significantly positive and moderate relationship. Whereas the relationship between project success and self-regulation (SR), (r= 0.807, p=0.000) explains the significantly positive and strong relationship. This implies that the self-awareness and regulated managers can play a vital role in the success of project.

***Regression analysis***

Regression analysis is conducted for estimating the relationships between a dependent variable and independent variables called as 'predictors' (Seber & Lee, 2012). Table 5 indicates that the model as a whole (which includes both dependent and independent variables) is statistically significant (F=20.809, p=.000], as the p-value is less than .005. Further, the R-Square value (R2= 0.528 explains an overall variation in the dependent variable (project success) is 53% due to the predictors (emotional intelligence) while remaining variation in success may be due to other factors.

Table 5

*Results of Regression analysis*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Dependent Variable | | | | | |
| Independent Variable | Project Success | | | | |
| Emotional Intelligence | Beta (β) | T -Value | Sig. | F- value | Sig. |
| Constant  SA  SR | 2.015  0.27  0.373 | 7.488  6.801  7.449 | .000  .000  .000 | 20.809 | .000 |

*Predictor: SA= Self Awareness , SR= Self Regulation, SoA= Social Awareness*

*Dependent Variable= Project Success*

**Regression equations**

PS= α+ β1 (SA) +β2 (SR) …………..……eq.1

PS= 2.015 + 0.27 SA + 0.373 SR ……..eq.2

The results (from eq. 2) show that 1 unit change in Self Awareness (SA), will bring 0.27 units change in Project Success (PS). The value of β1=0.27, (t=6.801, p=0.000), as the p-value is less than 0.05 so the null hypothesis is rejected, and alternative hypothesis is accepted. This implies a 27% variation in project success is due to self-awareness of project managers in construction companies of Peshawar. The results (from eq. 2) show that 1 unit change in Self Regulation (SR), will bring 0.373 unit change in Project Success (PS). The value of β2=0.373, (t=1.37, p=0.000), as the p value is less than 0.05 so the null hypothesis is rejected, and alternative hypothesis is accepted. This implies a 37.3% variation in project success is due to self-regulation of project managers in construction companies of Peshawar.

Table 6

*Findings of the Study*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| S No | Hypotheses | Decision |
| H1 | Emotional Intelligence (Self Awareness) is positively related with the project success. | Hypothesis Accepted |
| H2 | Emotional Intelligence (Self-Regulation) is positively related with the project success. | Hypothesis Accepted |

**Conclusion and Discussion**

The main objective of this study was to identify the impact of independent variables i.e emotional intelligence on project success in construction industry of Peshawar. Three attributes of emotional intelligence were used to check the impact on project success. The result of the study explains that the dimensions of emotional intelligence, self-awareness and self- regulation of project managers are showing positive and significant impact on the success of construction projects, while social awareness has insignificant impact. All the attributes have an impact on project success in their own way. The highest rate of change 37% is found of self-regulation that explains the significance of managing self-emotions in any situation to achieve exceptional performance (Rahim & Psenicka, 2002). A total of 228 project managers responded out of 250 distributed questionnaires (91% response rate) from the construction companies in Peshawar. The responses showed the significance of having self-awareness as well as self-regulation of project managers to come up with success. The reason of this finding can be the managers’ more emphasis on tangible targets and materialist approach towards the project achievements which are mostly with short span of time and limited resources. The race to finish the project may not let the managers focus on understanding and respond to the needs of the team and that may deprive them of enjoying the impact of emotional intelligence on success. The results of the study are supported by the work of Mazur at al., (2014) and Muller & Turner, (2007). The construction industry in Peshawar can benefit from this research to improve the ratio of their successful projects by focusing on all the attributes of emotional intelligence as both have direct relations. The findings of the study strongly recommend a detailed study covering all dimensions of emotional intelligence (including empathy) as well as other work settings. Moreover, the managerial training of the project managers are suggested covering the contents of social awareness. The sample size of only 228 must be increased in future studies and for more than one city.

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