



SAUDI ARABIA CULTURE IMPACTS ON PROJECT MANAGEMENT - CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

As a result of globalization in the last few decades, cross boarder business became enormous. Many project managers are working away from their home countries and cultures. Many of them came to Saudi Arabia on project management assignments; many failed due to the cultural shock, others hardly succeeded. To help foreign companies to rightly choose and train their project managers when conducting business in Saudi Arabia, I tried in this research to investigate the impact of Saudi Arabia Culture on Project Management Methods and Practices, and then develop a profile for a culturally successful project manager.

The research consists of three main parts; the first part is a literature review about project management processes and the main project manager competencies as it appears in project management literature which focuses mainly on the science part of project management (tools, techniques, processes...) rather than on culture. This part concludes with a table mapping competencies of project management competencies to certain groups of behaviors.

The second part of this research is, as well, a literature review about cross-cultural management. In this part I briefly introduced the main theories about culture impact on business; this includes the works of Hofstede, Trompenaars, and Hall. This part concludes with a frame of cultural dimensions of Saudi Arabia.

The third part of this research is the analysis part, where I apply the cultural frame developed in the second part to the 7 project management behavior competencies developed in the first part to develop the culturally successful project manager profile.

In the developed profile, I identified 7 competencies (Negotiation, Time Management, Decision Making, Risk Management, Communications, Influencing and Motivating, and Conflict Management). If those competencies are mastered in the Saudi Culture, the competencies to master the main project management processes from behavior view will be mastered and the project manager will succeed. Otherwise, the project manager behavior will be seen strange and the cultural shock could have a very negative impact.

As secondary research, the validity of the conclusion depends on the validity of the resources and their interpretation. I stated some limitations about the resources used in the research in the Methodology chapter of this research.



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1. Introduction

As a result of globalization in the last few decades, cross boarder business became enormous. Export and import of employees and especially project managers became a necessity and resulted in many project managers working away from their home countries and cultures; some of them got the culture shock and failed, others hardly adapted to the new culture but finally succeeded, and not many were well prepared and faced no problems. So, what is the secret of success in the new culture?

Fogel (1998) answered this question by saying: 'The secret of managing and operating internationally or cross-culturally is not to be a stranger'. Not to be a stranger means not to offend, and to learn the local customs so that not to appear rude, ignorant, or abusive. So what it is all about is 'culture awareness' and this is exactly what this research is all about.

The **objective** of this research is to investigate the impacts of Saudi Arabia culture on Project Management methods and practices and define the core competencies that a foreign project manager should have to succeed in Saudi Arabia.

This research will help companies when choosing a Project Manager for their projects in Saudi Arabia. Project Managers whose work style and attitude, personal competencies and work beliefs are close to Saudi Arabia are more likely to succeed (Michael 1997). Training programs can also benefit from this research in designing project management courses that increase Project Managers awareness in cultural differences between their home culture and Saudi Arabia culture to adapt their project management practices and avoid any cultural shock.

The drivers for this research can be summarized as follows:

- Even though culture awareness is very important in project management, there was very little written on this subject in the project management literature. After the analysis of leading project management journals and project management books published between 1993 and 2003, Henrie and Sousa-Poza (2005) wrote in the conclusion 'Based on this analysis, annually published project management literature focuses more on tools, techniques, processes, etc. than culture'. And when it comes to the subject of Arabic culture impact on project management, the literature becomes even less (Robertson, Al-Khatib, and Al-Habib 2002).

- ▶ I choose Saudi Arabia for the case study for many reasons:
- ▶ Saudi Arabia is the richest Arabic country. Foreign investments in Saudi Arabia grew 2 percent in 2022 to SR2. 4 trillion (\$640 billion) compared to SR2. 36 trillion in 2021 (<https://www.arabnews.com/node/2286121/business-economy>), and so foreign companies that are sending their project manager to Saudi Arabia will get benefit from this research.
- ▶ Saudi Arabia is a country with in somehow unique culture and with significant differences to other countries, especially Western countries. However business culture in Saudi Arabia and other Arabic countries is very close, 'Badawy (1980) also indicates that significant differences between Middle Eastern managers and western managers exist, but the Middle Eastern management styles are consistent from country to country' (Elsayed-Ekhouly and Buda, 1996), this means that the findings of this research can be applied equally to the regional Arabic countries.
- ▶ On the personal level, I had worked as a project manager for few years in Germany, and now I am working as a project manager in Saudi Arabia, so I felt the impacts myself and decided that I could add a piece of work to the huge amount of project management literature with a focus on this research.
- ▶ Another driver to conduct this research is to increase my knowledge in Project Management processes and competencies and cross-cultural management.

2. Methodology

This is secondary research; so, I will not collect any primary data and I will entirely rely on the literature and studies that have been written in project management and cross-cultural subjects in books and academic journals.

To solve the problem addressed in this research, I divided the work in three work streams.

The First work stream: Project Management literature review. This is the scope of Chapter 3. In this chapter and after an introductory section, I briefly described the main project management processes and the standard project manager competencies. This part concluded by a table mapping competencies of project management competencies to certain groups of behaviors.

The Second work stream: Cross-cultural management literature review. And this is the scope of Chapter 4. In this chapter, the work of the main theorists in cross-cultural management was briefly described. This was used to derive a **frame** of cultural dimensions for Saudi Arabia.

The Third work stream: Developing a culturally successful project manager profile. And this is the scope of Chapter 5. In this chapter I will apply the frame developed in chapter 4 to the picture of standard project manager competencies developed in chapter 3 in order to find how these competencies should be applied in order to be homogeneous with Saudi Culture.

Figure 2-1 below shows the methodology of this research is a pictorial form.

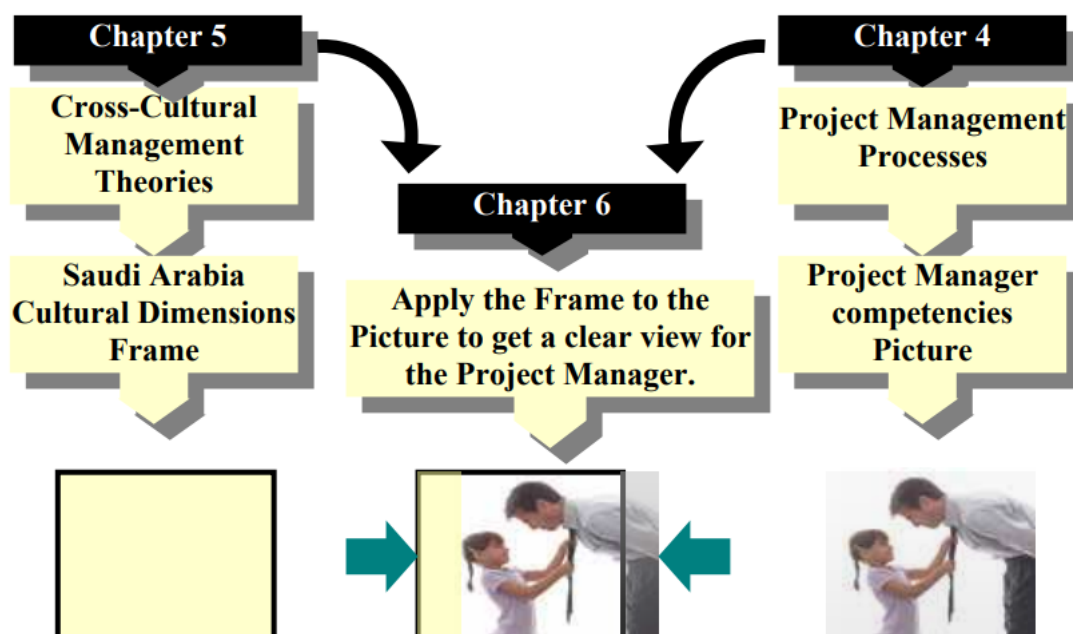


Figure 2-1 Research Methodology

In this research I focused on the Saudi Arabia Culture, however in some occasions it was necessary to compare the Saudi Arabia culture with other countries in order to make the difference clear, the convention used in this research is that when a comparison is needed, I use USA dimensions as an example. I chose USA for the following reasons:

- ▶ USA is the biggest economical partner for Saudi Arabia, so number of project managers coming from USA to Saudi Arabia will be more than from any other country.
- ▶ Most USA cultural dimensions are standing on the opposite side of Saudi Arabia dimensions (see Table 4-1, p.40, Table 4-2, p.41 and Table 4-3, p.42), and this will provide a better context for comparison.

3. Project Management

3.1 Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to briefly explain what Project Management is all about to identify the aspects where culture can have an impact. Those aspects that are culture specific will be the focus of this study.

After defining some key terms in this introduction, the next section will explain the project management processes, within every process the project manager core competencies to master that process will be investigated, and then mapped to certain groups of behavior competencies.

3.1.1 What is a Project?

The Project Management Institute (PMI) in its Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) Book defines a Project as

‘A temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product, service, or result’ (PMBOK, 2004, p.5)

Harvard Business School (HBS) in its Project Management Manual defines the Project as ‘A unique set of activities that are meant to produce a defined outcome, with a specific start and finish date, and a specific allocation of resources’ (HBS 1997, p.4)

From those definitions and other definitions found in the project management literature we can identify the following main characteristics for any project:

It is temporary; that means the project has a definite beginning and a definite end. The end of the project is reached when the objectives of the project have been achieved, or it becomes clear that the objectives cannot be achieved.

It produces a unique and defined outcome. It develops in steps.

Project differs from normal operation of a business in that operations are ongoing and repetitive, while projects are temporary and unique. (PMBOK, 2018)

3.1.2 What is Project Management?

As we saw in the previous section, projects are different from normal operation and as a result project management is different from operation management, and project managers should have different competencies other than those of normal managers.

There are many approaches to define Project Management: some definitions emphasize the project management processes as the key word in the definition, while others emphasize the project parameters as being the key words. Project Management Institute in its PMBOK emphasized the processes and defined Project Management as:

‘The application of knowledge, skills and techniques to project activities to meet project requirements and is accomplished through the application and integration of project management processes of initiating, planning, executing, monitoring and controlling, and closing’ (PMBOK, 2004, p.8).

On the other hand, Harvard Business School in its Project Management Manual indicated that as the project is bounded by its parameters (results, time and resources) and by the need to make tradeoffs among these three elements, HBS has defined Project Management as

‘The process of developing substantive, systematic data about each parameter so that the tradeoffs decision making between project parameters is more effective.’

(HBS, 1997, p.4).

In some project management literature, Project management is considered as the compromise between three project’s constraints: TIME, MONEY, and SCOPE and use the project triangle concept to show the interaction between those constraints as shown in Figure 3-1 (Kumar 2005)

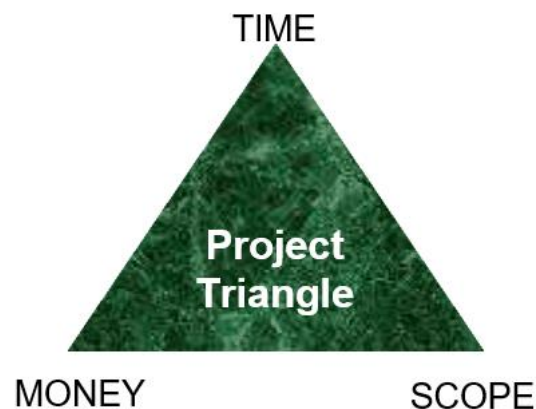


Figure 3-1 Project Triangle

We can identify two major aspects of Project management:

The Science: defining and coordinating the work to be done. The

Art: leading the people on the project.

The Science aspect of project management relates to the knowledge, understanding, and skillful application of prescribed project management processes (Heerkens, 2002). This part of Project Management is standardized (even though processes are slightly different from one school of project management to another) and is given in many training courses. Most of project management books are talking about this part. Project Management Institutes can develop assessment sessions for the purpose of Certification on this part of project management (Udo & Koppensteiner, 2004 and Waller, 1999).

On the other hand the Art of project management relates to the fact that projects are really about people getting things done. Project management requires a keen knowledge of human behavior, culture, ways of communications and the ability to skillfully apply appropriate interpersonal skills (Heerkens, 2002). With these characteristics this aspect of Project management highly depends on the competencies of the project manager. In other words, a successful project manager working with one team in one culture is not necessarily a successful project manager working with a different team and in another culture.

3.2 Project Management Processes and Competencies

In this section I will talk about Project Management processes and project manager competencies as they are found in most of project management literature. As mentioned before the project management literature in the last 15 years was focusing on the tools, techniques, and the science part of project management (Henrie and Sousa-Poza, 2005).

I will explore the nine project management processes found in most of project management literature (PMBOK, 2004, Heerkens, 2005); at the same time and for each process I will identify the main competencies that a project manager should have in order to master that process. In fact, most of those competencies will be Knowledge based, i.e. related to the science part of the project management and they are out of the scope of this research. However, some of those competencies are related to the art part of project management and they need the cultural awareness in order to successfully apply them in the daily work of the project manager (PMCD 2001). Those competencies will be the focus of this research and from now on I refer to them as Behavior Competencies.

In the next section, I will write about the different project management processes and about the required competencies (Mix between knowledge based and behavioral based) that are needed to master that process.

To choose relevant behavior competencies that of significance in management practice, I will rely on the work of J. B Hunt & J. Wallace (Hunt & Wallace 1997) and choose from their list of competency elements for every process, every competency element will then be mapped to one of 7 groups of Behavior Competencies.

At the end of this chapter, in Section 3.3, all behavior competencies will be summarized and related to the project manager process competencies. In Chapter 5, those 7 groups will be assessed against the cultural frame of Saudi Arabia (that will be developed in Chapter 4) to develop the successful project manager profile.

3.2.1 Project Integration Management

3.2.1.1 *Project Integration Management Processes*

The project integration management is the processes and activities needed to identify, define, combine, and coordinate all project processes (defined in subsequent sections) to successfully meet the stakeholders' requirements.

Project Integration management Processes include:

- 3.2.1.1.1 Develop Project Charter: developing the project charter that formally authorizes a project or a project phase.
- 3.2.1.1.2 Develop Preliminary Project Scope Statement: developing the preliminary project scope statement that provides a high-level scope definition.
- 3.2.1.1.3 Develop Project Management Plan: documenting the actions necessary to define, prepare, integrate, and coordinate all subsidiary plans into a project management plan.
- 3.2.1.1.4 Direct and Manage Project Execution: executing the work defined in the project management plan to achieve the project objectives.
- 3.2.1.1.5 Monitor and Control Project Work: monitoring and controlling the execution of all project processes to achieve the objectives and taking the necessary corrective actions when necessary. (PMBOK, 2018)

Figure 3-2 shows the detailed Project Integration Management sub processes.

3.2.1.2 Project Integration Management Competencies

The main competencies of the project manager required in this process are:

- 3.2.1.2.1 The ability to develop needs requirement, project feasibility study.
- 3.2.1.2.2 The ability to develop project plan including any Work Breakdown Structure, and stakeholder management plan.
- 3.2.1.2.3 The ability to use the information systems to provide project information.
- 3.2.1.2.4 The ability to produce change requests and work results. (PMCD, 2001)

Most of the competencies needed for this process are knowledge based, however I can identify the following behavioral competencies in order to be able to master this process:

- 3.2.1.2.5 Personal time management, Mapped to the group: Time Management
- 3.2.1.2.6 Environmental awareness, Mapped to the group: Communications Management (Hunt, 2005 and PMCD, 2001)

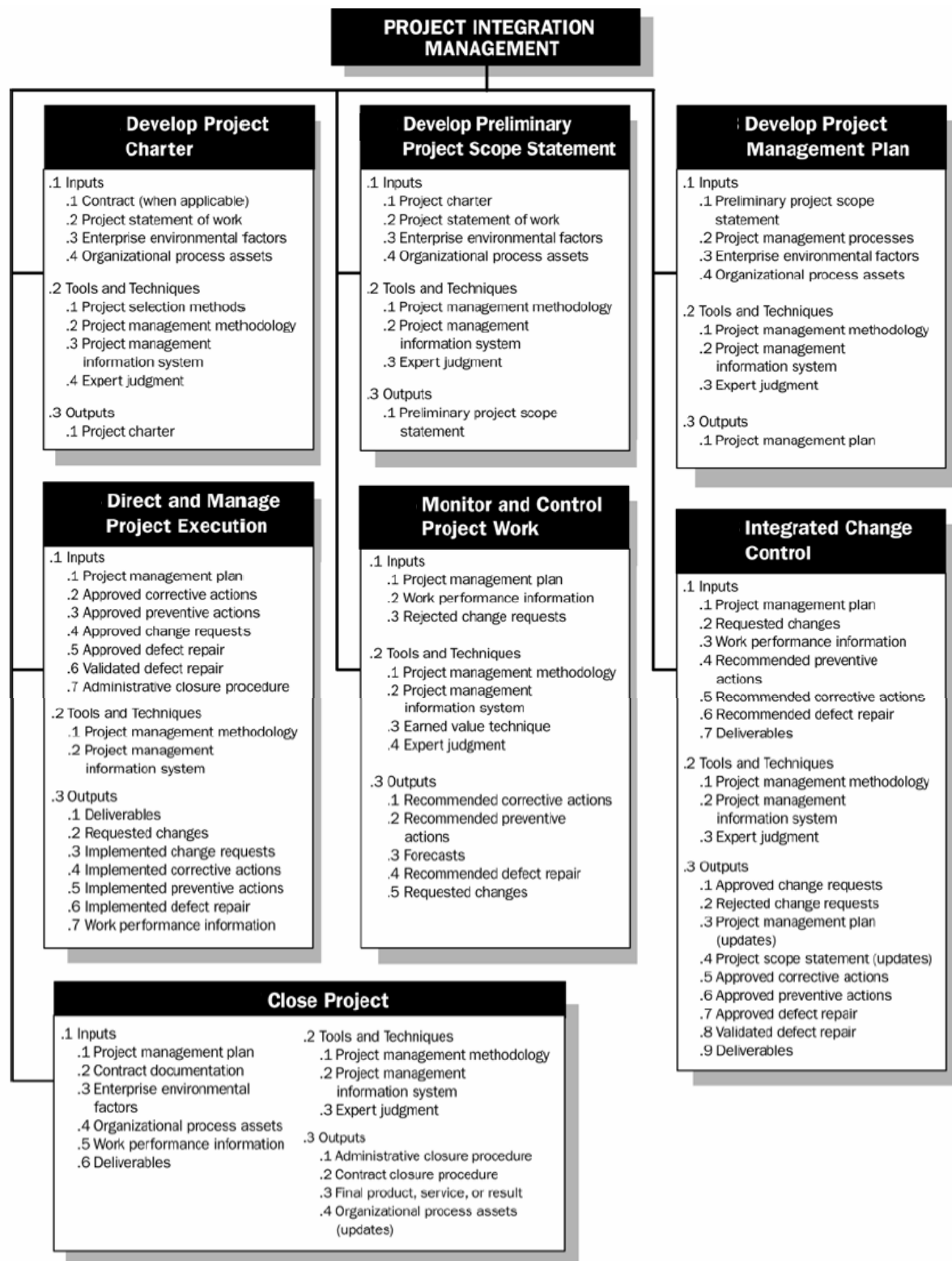


Figure 3-2 Project Integration Management Process (PMBOK, 2018).

3.2.2 Project Scope Management

3.2.2.1 *Project Scope Management Processes*

The Project Scope is: the work that needs to be done, to deliver the project results within the specified features and functions. Project Scope Management includes the sub processes required to ensure that the project includes all the work required, and only the work required, to complete the project successfully. Those sub processes are:

3.2.2.1.1 Scope Planning: Creating a project scope plan, including verification, and controlling.

3.2.2.1.2 Scope Definition: developing a detailed project scope statement.

3.2.2.1.3 Create WBS: subdividing the major project deliverables and project work into smaller components.

3.2.2.1.4 Scope Verification: formalizing the acceptance of the completed project deliverables.

3.2.2.1.5 Scope Control: controlling changes to the project scope.

Figure 3-3 shows the detailed Project scope management sub processes.

3.2.2.2 *Project Scope Management Competencies*

The project manager should be able to understand exactly what the inputs are and the expected deliverables of his scope. He should effectively define his responsibilities and other organizational managers' responsibilities.

The project manager should have effective communication with all stakeholders, to agree on what is part of the project and what is not.

The project manager should be able to develop the project charter, the WBS and initiate a review approval process for the project deliverables. (PMCD, 2001)

I can identify the following behavioral competencies to be able to master this process:

3.2.2.2.1 Verbal communication, Mapped to the group: Communications Management

3.2.2.2.2 Written communication, Mapped to the group: Communications Management

3.2.2.2.3 Judgement and perceptiveness, mapped to the group: Decision Making

3.2.2.2.4 Diplomacy, mapped to the group: Influencing and Motivating.

3.2.2.2.5 Persuading & influencing superiors, mapped to the group: Influencing and Motivating. (Hunt, 2005 and PMCD, 2018)

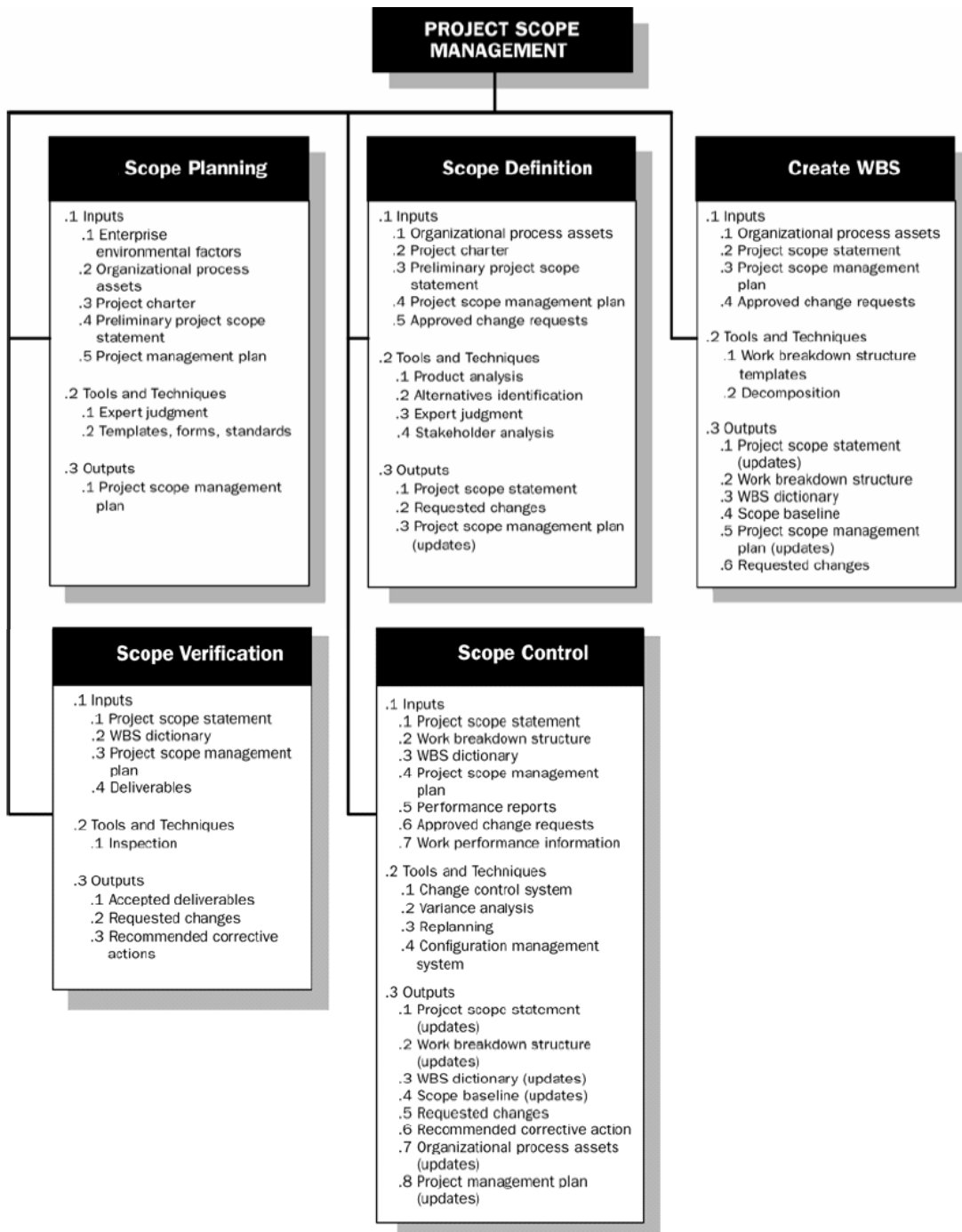


Figure 3-3 Project Scope Management Process (PMBOK, 2018)

3.2.3 Project Time management

3.2.3.1 *Project Time management Processes*

As we already saw in section 3.1.2, time is considered one of the most important project parameters and constraints (HBS 1997 and Kumar 2005). It is worth mentioning here that in most of the projects I was involved in the last ten years, Time was one of the scarcest resources available to the project manager and project team, and careful management of time was a key to project success.

Project Time Management includes the process required to accomplish timely completion of the project. This includes the following sub processes:

- 3.2.3.1.1 Activity Definition: identifying the specific schedule activities that need to be performed to produce the various project deliverables.
- 3.2.3.1.2 Activity Sequencing: identifying and documenting dependencies among schedule activities.
- 3.2.3.1.3 Activity Resource Estimating: estimating the type and quantities of resources required to perform each schedule activity.
- 3.2.3.1.4 Activity Duration Estimating: estimating the number of work periods that will be needed to complete individual schedule activities.
- 3.2.3.1.5 Schedule Development: analyzing activity sequences, durations, resource requirements, and schedule constraints to create the project schedule.

3.2.3.1.6 Schedule Control: controlling changes to the project schedule. (PMBOK, 2018)

Figure 3-4 below shows an overview of Project Time Management sub processes including Inputs, Tools and Techniques, and Outputs required for every sub process.

3.2.3.2 *Time management Competencies*

As time management processes are very important in the complete life cycle of any project and occurs at least one in any project, the skills and competencies required to implement these processes are of crucial importance and should exist in any successful project manager.

The main time management competencies required by a successful project manager are:

- 3.2.3.2.1 Time Planning: This includes:

3.2.3.2.1.1 The project manager should be able to develop a Project Milestone Plan taking into consideration any internal or external schedule constraints.

3.2.3.2.1.2 Conduct activity sequencing identifying any dependencies.

3.2.3.2.1.3 Conduct activity duration estimation including defining the basis for activity duration estimates and possible work duration ranges.

3.2.3.2.1.4 Conduct schedule development including project and resource calendars, performing mathematical analysis, e.g. critical path, identifying activity leads, lags and constraints.

3.2.3.2.2 Implementing and Controlling Project Schedule competencies: these include the knowledge and ability of progress measuring and reporting, schedule change forecasts or trends, schedule updates and taking corrective actions. (PMCD, 2001)

I can identify the following behavioral competencies in order to be able to master this process:

3.2.3.2.3 Personal time management Mapped to the group: Time Management

3.2.3.2.4 Attendance, punctuality, time usage Mapped to the group: Time Management

3.2.3.2.5 Environment Awareness, Mapped to the group:

Communications (Hunt, 2005 and PMCD, 2001)

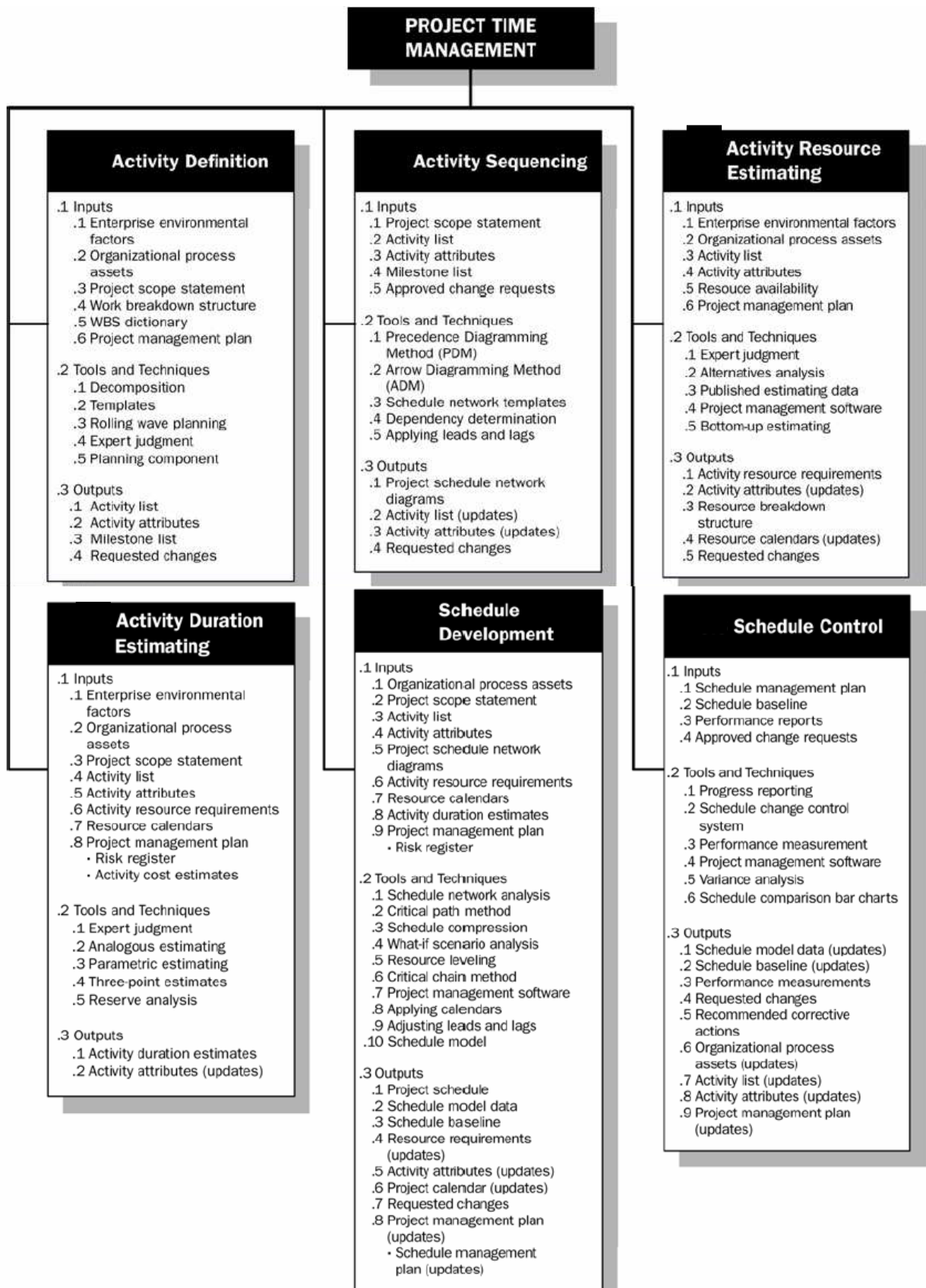


Figure 3-4 Project Time Management Overview (PMBOK, 2018)

3.2.4 Project Cost management

3.2.4.1 *Project Cost management Processes*

Project Cost Management includes the processes involved in planning, estimating, budgeting and controlling costs so that the project can be completed within the approved budget.

Project Cost Management is primarily concerned with the cost of the resources needed to complete scheduled activities and includes the following sub processes:

- 3.2.4.1.1 Cost Estimating: developing an approximation of the costs of the resources needed to complete project activities.
- 3.2.4.1.2 Cost Budgeting: aggregating the estimated costs of individual activities or work packages to establish a cost baseline.
- 3.2.4.1.3 Cost Control: influencing the factors that create cost variances and controlling changes to the project budget. Figure 3-5 below shows an overview of Project Cost Management sub processes. (PMBOK, 2018)

3.2.4.2 *Project Cost Management Competencies*

The project manager should have a good financial skill, he should be able to develop a cost benefit analysis, conduct Resource Planning, conduct cost estimates, and make cost management plan. (PMCD, 2001)

I can identify the following behavioral competencies in order to be able to master this process:

- 3.2.4.2.1 Purchasing; Mapped to the group: Negotiation, Communication
- 3.2.4.2.2 Cost Accounting; Mapped to the group: Decision Making.
- 3.2.4.2.3 Understanding Financial Implications of Decisions; Mapped to the group: Decision Making

(Hunt, 2005 and PMCD, 2001)

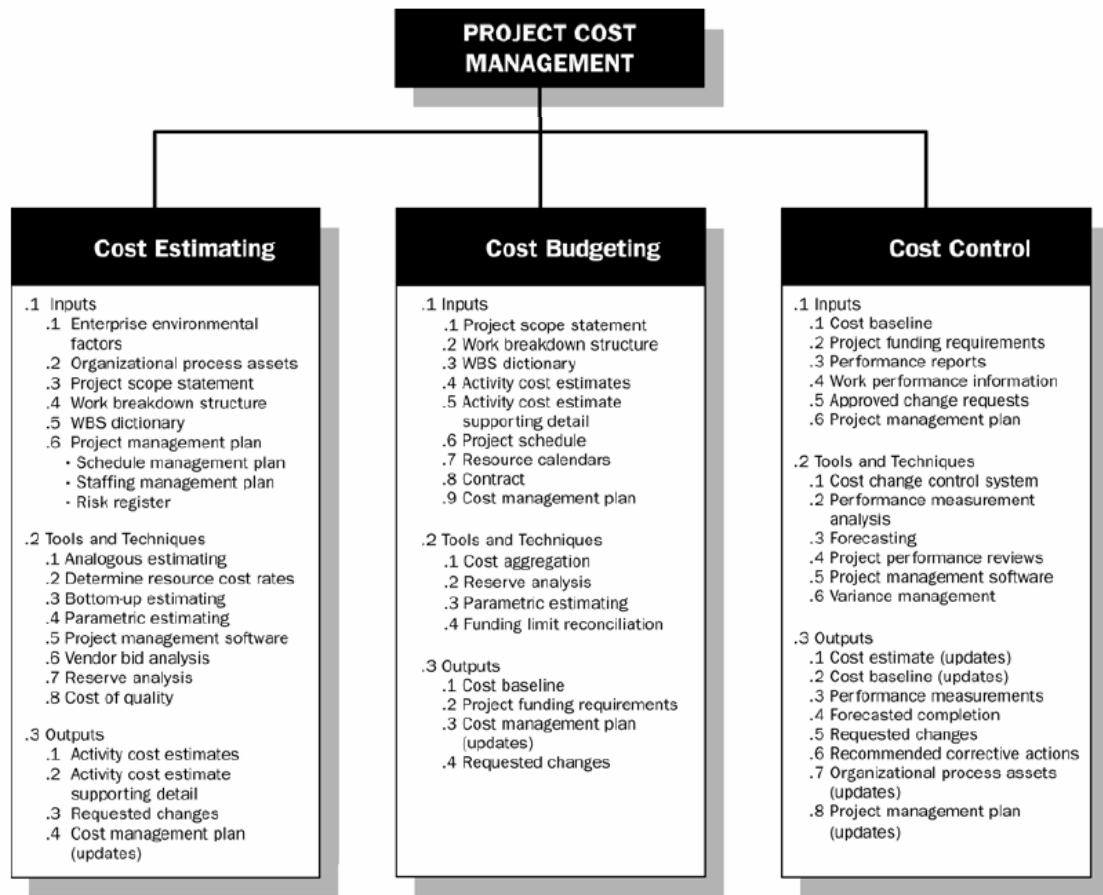


Figure 3-5 Project Cost Management Overview (PMBOK, 2004)

3.2.5 Project Quality management

3.2.5.1 Project Quality management Processes

Project Quality Management processes include all the activities that determine quality policies, objectives, and responsibilities so that the project will satisfy its needs.

The Project Quality Management processes include the following:

- 3.2.5.1.1 Quality Planning: identifying which quality standards are relevant to the project and how to satisfy them.
- 3.2.5.1.2 Perform Quality Assurance: applying the planned systematic quality activities to ensure that requirements will be met.
- 3.2.5.1.3 Performing Quality Control: such as monitoring specific project results for compliance with the set standards and eliminating any noncompliance. (PMBOK, 2018)

3.2.5.2 Project Quality Management Competencies

The project manager should be able to plan, conduct and evaluate Project Quality. He should be able to perform inspections, reviews and walkthroughs to ensure compliance with requirements.

The project manager should be able to develop Acceptance Decisions, Reductions in rework procedures, Process adjustments to increase the quality and efficiency of the project processes. (PMCD, 2001)

I can identify the following behavioral competencies to be able to master this process:

3.2.5.2.1 Identifying opportunities; Mapped to the group: Risk Management

3.2.5.2.2 Effective risk taking; Mapped to the group: Risk Management.

3.2.5.2.3 Persuading & influencing subordinates; Mapped to the group: Influencing and Motivating

(Hunt, 2005 and PMCD, 2001)

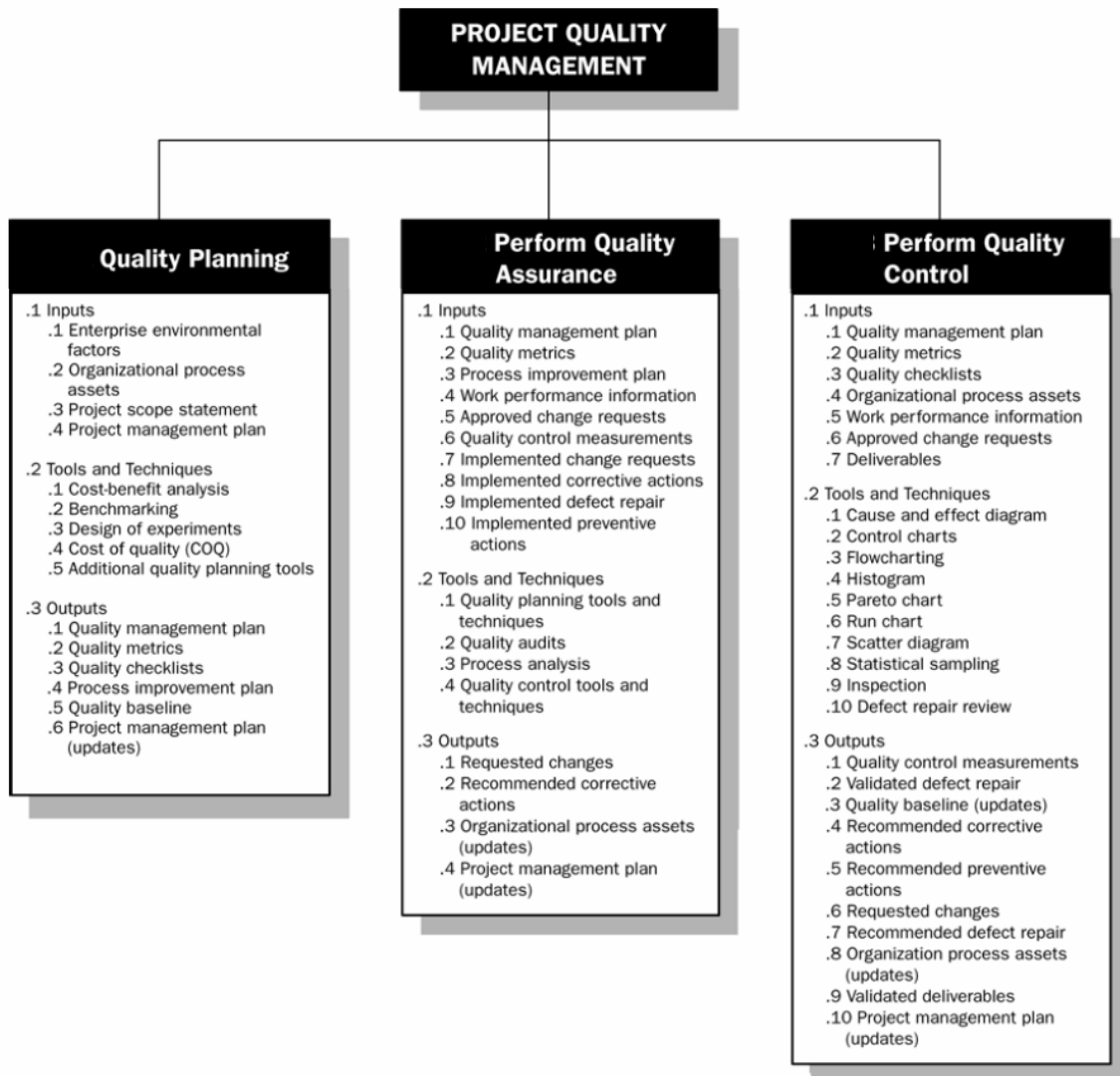


Figure 3-6 Project Quality Management Overview (PMBOK, 2018)

3.2.6 Project Human Resource Management

3.2.6.1 Project Human Resource Management Processes

Project Human Resource Management includes the processes that organize and manage the project team. The project team is comprised of the people who have assigned roles and responsibilities for completing the project. This team most likely, has come from different departments within the organization and some of them will be partly assigned to the project (Heerkens, 2005).

The Project Human Resource Management processes include the following:

- 3.2.6.1.1 Human Resource Planning: Identifying the Human Resource needs for the project and documenting project roles, responsibilities, and reporting relationships.

3.2.6.1.2 Acquire Project Team: Obtaining the human resources needed to complete the project.

3.2.6.1.3 Develop Project Team: Improving the competencies and interaction of team members to enhance project performance.

3.2.6.1.4 Manage Project Team: Tracking team member performance, providing feedback, and resolving conflicts. (PMBOK, 2004)

Figure 3-7 provides an overview of the Project Human Resource Management sub processes.

3.2.6.2 Project Human Resource Management Competencies

The project manager should be able to make Role and Responsibility Assignment. He should be able perform Planning and staff acquisition, staff appraisals, motivation for project team. (PMCD, 2001)

I can identify the following behavioral competencies in order to be able to master this process:

3.2.6.2.1 sensitivity to national differences; Mapped to the group: communications and Influencing and Motivating

3.2.6.2.2 Motivating others; Mapped to the group: Influencing and Motivating.

3.2.6.2.3 Resolve conflict between subordinates, peers, and superiors; Mapped to the group: Conflict Management.

(Hunt, 2005 and PMCD, 2001)

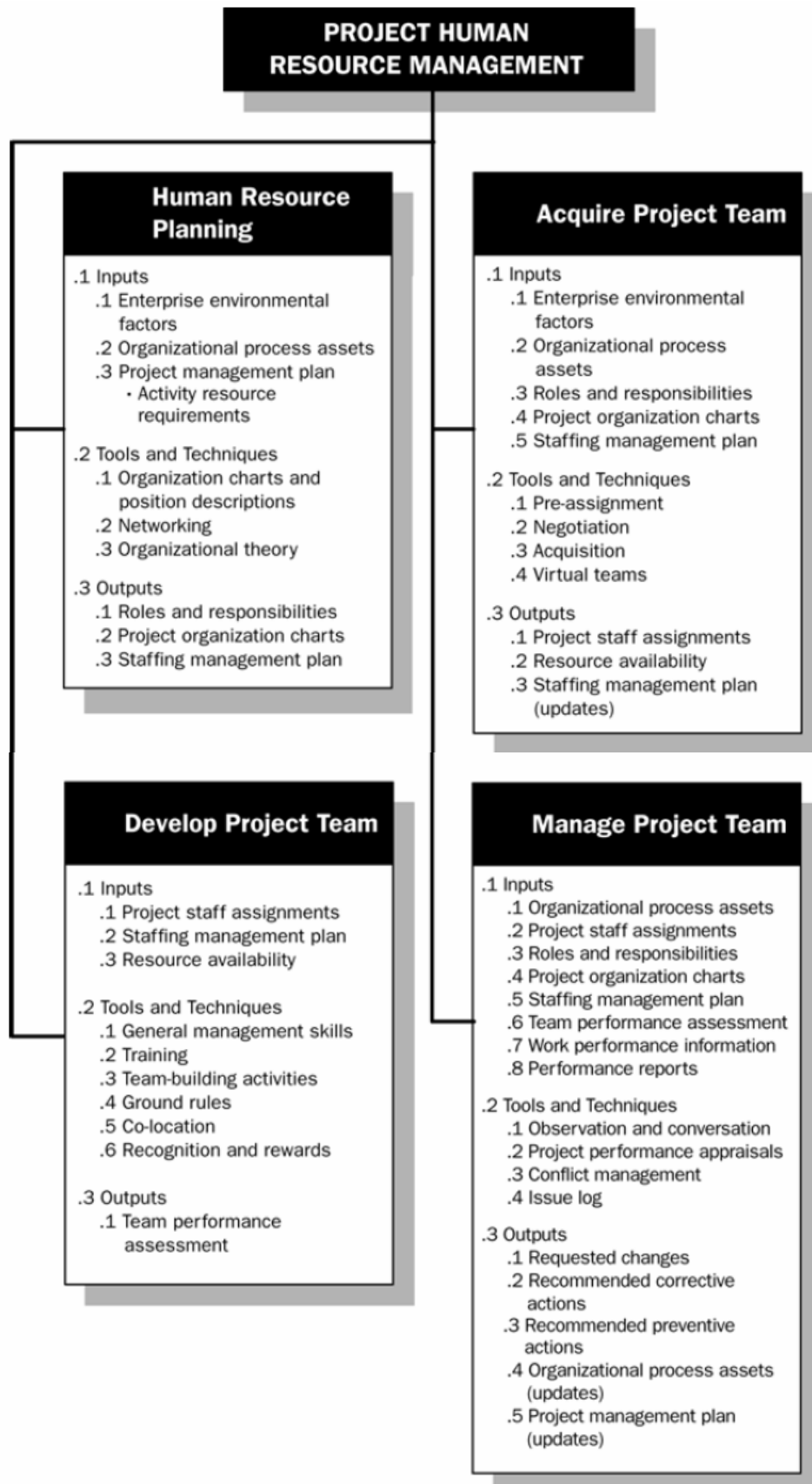


Figure 3-7 Project Human Resource Management Overview (PMBOK, 2018)

3.2.7 Project Communications Management

3.2.7.1 *Project Communications Management Processes*

Project Communications Management is the know how of the processes required to ensure timely and appropriate project information handling.

Project Communications Management processes provide the critical links among people and information that are necessary for the success of the project.

The Project Communications Management processes include the following:

- 3.2.7.1.1 Communications Planning: determining the information and communications needs of the project stakeholders.
- 3.2.7.1.2 Information Distribution: making needed information available to project stakeholders in a timely manner.
- 3.2.7.1.3 Performance Reporting: collecting and distributing performance information. This includes status reporting, progress measurement, and forecasting.
- 3.2.7.1.4 Manage Stakeholders: managing communications to satisfy the requirements of stakeholders.

Figure 3-8 provides an overview of the Project Communications Management processes (PMBOK, 2004)

3.2.7.2 *Project Communications Management Competencies*

Project communications process competencies can be summarized as follows:

- 3.2.7.2.1 The project manager should be able to plan the requirements for effective communication, He should determine the frequency of team meetings, identify information share protocols.
- 3.2.7.2.2 The project manager should develop the means to get relevant feedback.
- 3.2.7.2.3 The project manager should attend progress meetings with all stakeholders and define the format and content of progress reports. (PMCD, 2001)

I can identify the following behavioral competencies in order to be able to master this process:

- 3.2.7.2.4 Leading and conducting meetings; Mapped to the group: communications and Influencing and Motivating

3.2.7.2.5 Tolerance of ambiguity, uncertainty; Mapped to the group: communications and Risk management.

3.2.7.2.6 Resolve conflict between subordinates, peers and superiors; Mapped to the group: Conflict Management. (Hunt, 2005 and PMCD, 2001)

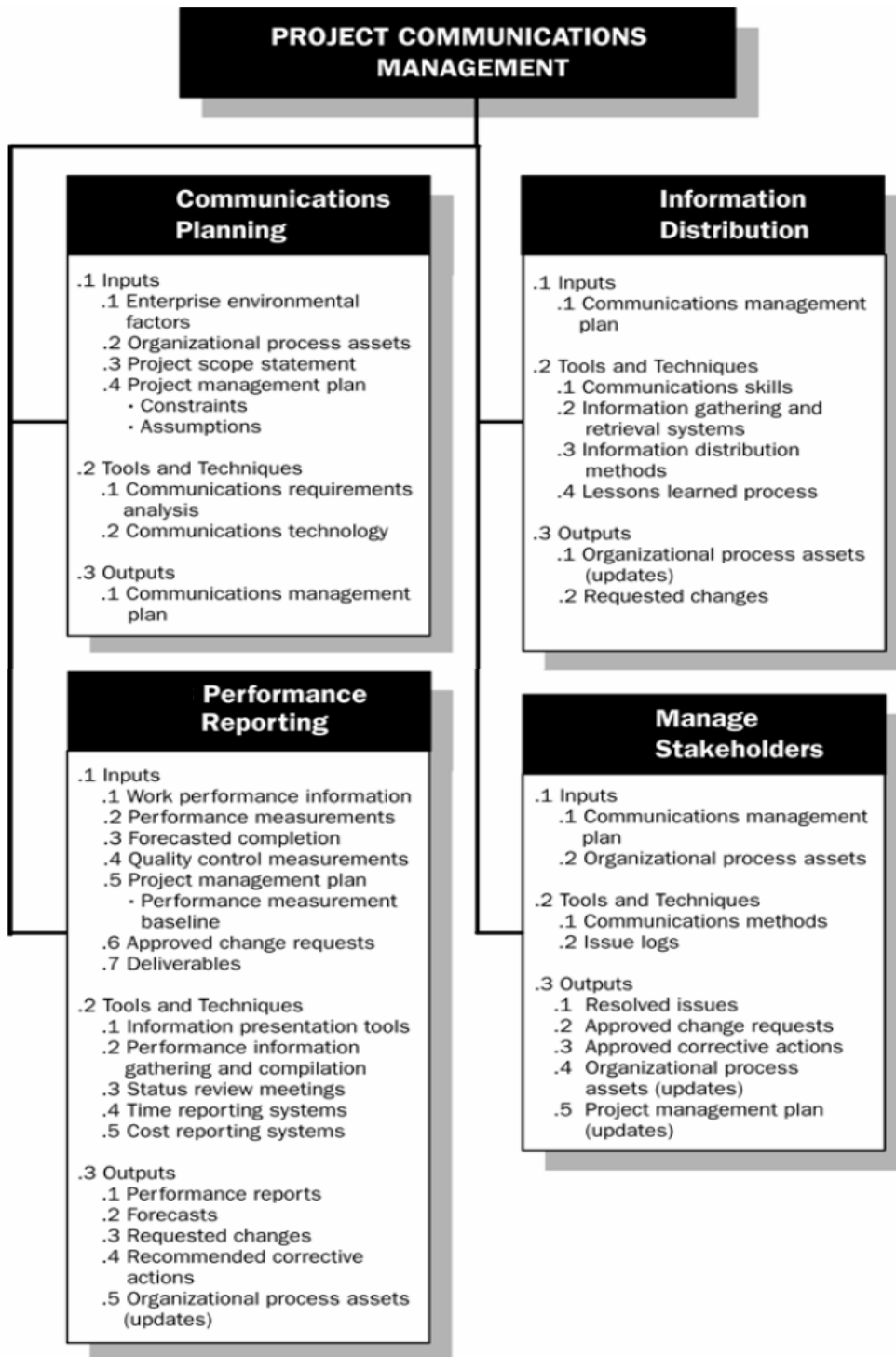


Figure 3-8 Project Communications Management Overview (PMBOK, 2018)

3.2.8 Project Risk Management

3.2.8.1 Project Risk Management Processes

Project Risk is an uncertain event or condition that, if it occurs, will have an effect on at least one of project parameters (time, cost, resources, and results).

Risks could have internal or external causes; internal causes could be related to the project itself or to the organization's environment.

External causes may be as requiring an environmental permit to do a certain work and the agency assigned to issue the work took more time, etc... This will affect the time constraint of the project.

Project internal causes could be due to poor project management practices or external participants who can't be controlled, etc...

Organization's environment could be for example lack integrated management systems, concurrent multiple projects, etc...

Project Risk Management includes the processes concerned with conducting risk management planning, identification, analysis, responses, and monitoring and control on project.

The objectives of Project Risk Management are to increase the probability and impact of positive events and decrease the probability and impact of events adverse to the project. Figure 3-9 provides an overview of the Project Risk Management processes and details that includes:

- ▶ Risk Management Planning: deciding how to approach, plan, and execute the risk management activities for a project.
- ▶ Risk Identification: determining which risks might affect the project and documenting their characteristics.
- ▶ Qualitative Risk Analysis: prioritizing risks for subsequent further analysis or action by assessing and combining their probability of occurrence and impact.
- ▶ Quantitative Risk Analysis: numerically analyzing the effect on overall project objectives of identified risks.
- ▶ Risk Response Planning: developing options and actions to enhance opportunities, and to reduce threats to project objectives.

- Risk Monitoring and Control: tracking identified risks, monitoring residual risks, identifying new risks, executing risk response plans, and evaluating their effectiveness throughout the project life cycle.

3.2.8.2 Risk Management Competencies

Eric Verzuh in his Fast Forward MBA in Project Management wrote: 'Risk management is the primary job of a project manager? Yes, it is' (Verzuh 2005, p.86). This indicates how important Risk Management competencies are to the project manager. Following are the main competencies the project manager should possess to have a good project risk management:

3.2.8.2.1 The project manager should be able to review and Identify organization's risk management policies and procedures, Identify risk tolerance levels of stakeholders. This competency requires good awareness of the stakeholder's business culture related to uncertainties.

3.2.8.2.2 The Project manager should be able to plan his risk management strategy, by

3.2.8.2.3 Identifying the potential risks, prevention measures, insurance coverage needs, roles and responsibilities in case the risk occurs.

3.2.8.2.4 Conduct a detailed risk impact analysis, both qualitative and quantitative.

3.2.8.2.5 Put the response plan (contingency plan) including implementation criteria.

3.2.8.2.6 (PMCD 2001)

I can identify the following behavioral competencies in order to be able to master this process:

3.2.8.2.7 Effective risk taking; Mapped to the group: Risk management.

3.2.8.2.8 Tolerance of ambiguity, uncertainty; Mapped to the group: communications and Risk management.

(Hunt, 2005 and PMCD, 2001)

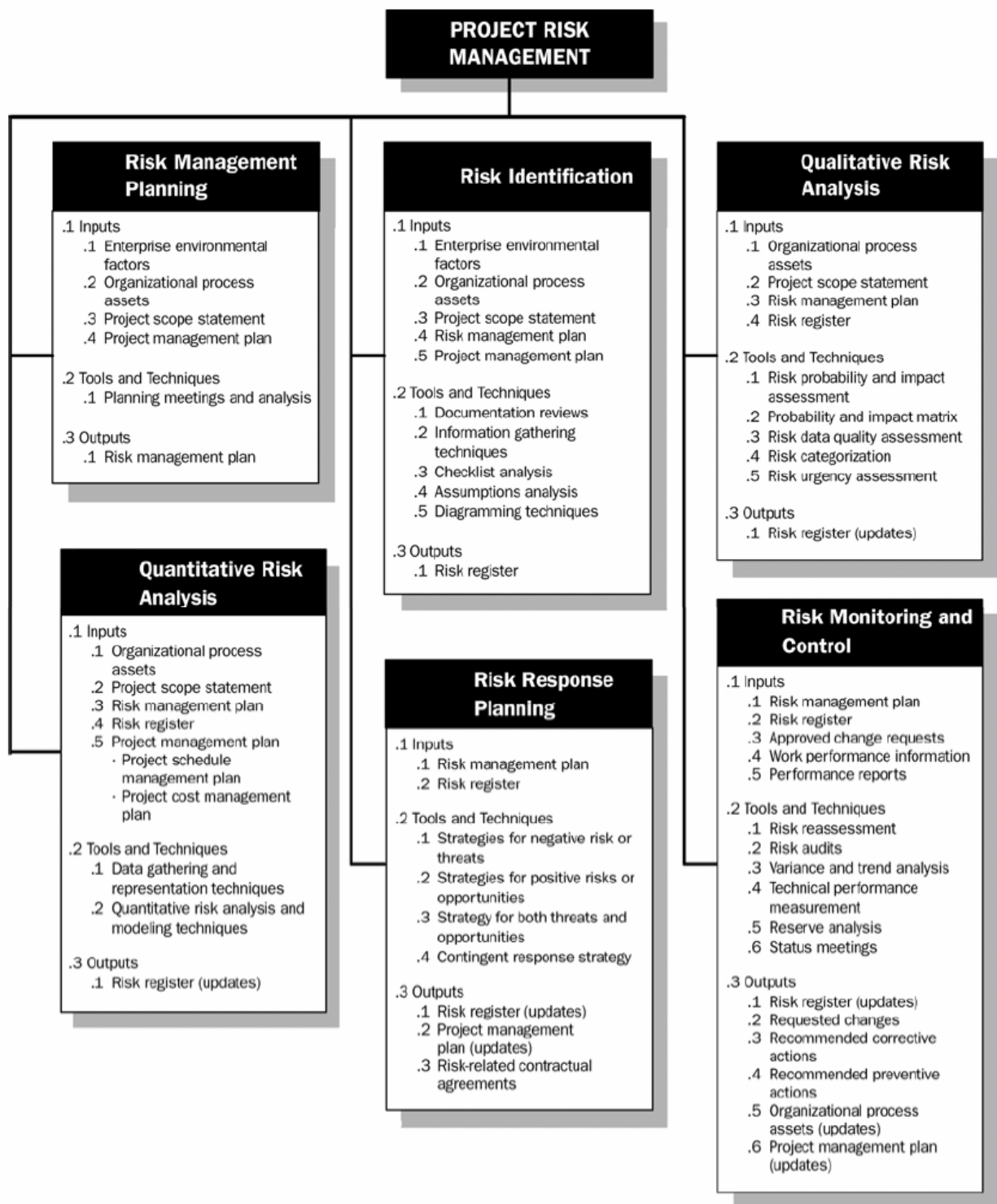


Figure 3-9 Project Risk Management Processes (PMBOK, 2018)

3.2.9 Project Procurement Management

3.2.9.1 Project Procurement Management Processes

Project Procurement Management includes the processes to purchase or acquire the products, services, or results needed from outside the project team to perform the work. Project Procurement Management includes the contract management as well.

The Project Procurement Management processes include the following:

- 3.2.9.1.1 Plan Purchases and Acquisitions: determining what to purchase or acquire and determining when and how.
- 3.2.9.1.2 Plan Contracting: documenting products services and results requirements and identifying potential sellers.
- 3.2.9.1.3 Request Seller Responses: obtaining information, quotations, bids, offers, or proposals as appropriate.
- 3.2.9.1.4 Select Sellers: reviewing offers, choosing among potential sellers, and negotiating a written contract with each seller.
- 3.2.9.1.5 Contract Administration: managing the contract and relationship between the buyer and the seller and evaluating the sellers' performance.

3.2.9.1.6 Contract Closure: completing and settling each contract. (PMBOK, 2004) Figure 3-10 provides an overview of the Project Procurement Management processes.

3.2.9.2 Project Procurement Management Competencies

The project manager should have the ability to make a preliminary procurement plan, conduct Solicitation activities, conduct source selection, contract development and Administration, evaluate the contract performance and then close it after procurement is done. (PMCD, 2001)

I can identify the following behavioral competencies in order to be able to master this process:

- 3.2.9.2.1 Purchasing; Mapped to the group: Negotiation, Communication
- 3.2.9.2.2 Forging alliances (external); Mapped to the group: Influencing and Motivating.
- 3.2.9.2.3 Understanding Financial Implications of Decisions; Mapped to the group: Decision Making

(Hunt, 2005 and PMCD, 2001)

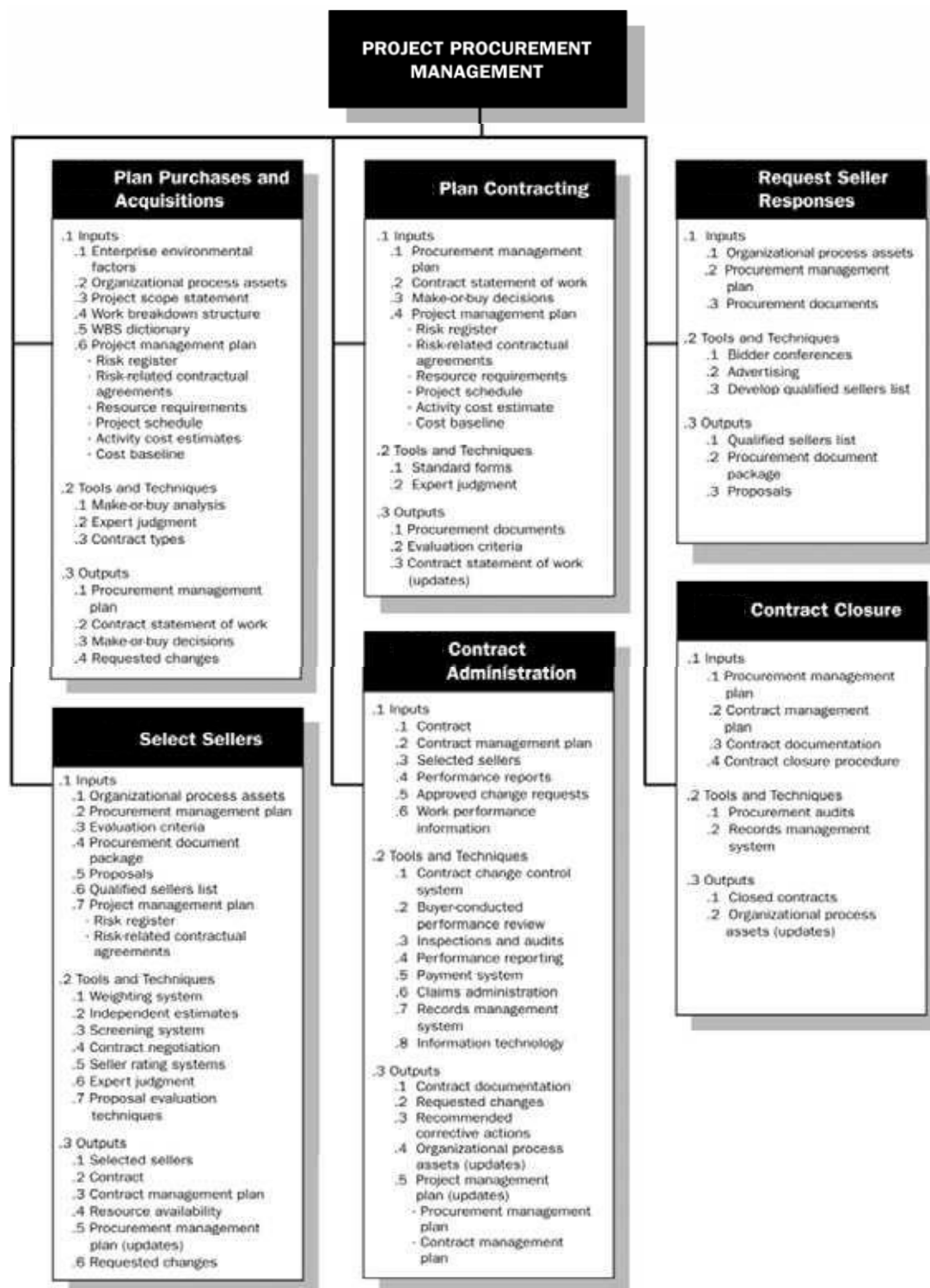


Figure 3-10 Project Procurement Management Processes (PMBOK, 2018)

3.3 Project Manager Standard Competencies Summary

Table 3-1 summarizes the project manager competencies that are needed according to standard project management literature (PMCD, 2001) and maps them to 7 competency groups resulted from combining the similar competency elements of (Hunt, 1997) .

For example, in Hunt (1997) Model he identified the following competency elements.

- ▶ personal time management and
- ▶ attendance, punctuality, time usage

Even though these are two different competency elements according to Hunt, I will combine them into one group calling it Time Management. This is how the seven groups mentioned below came.

I assigned Hunt competency elements to the respective groups during the project manager competencies research done in the previous section.

Table 3-1 Summary Correlation Table of Project manager competencies and behavioral groups

Competency		Integration management	Scope management	Time management	Cost management	Quality management	Human Resource	Communications Management	Risk Management	Procurement Management
1	Time Management	✓		✓						
2	Communications	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
3	Decision Making		✓		✓					✓
4	Noegotiation				✓					✓
5	Risk Management					✓		✓	✓	
6	Influencing and Motivating		✓			✓	✓	✓		✓
7	Conflict Management						✓	✓		

4 Cross-Cultural Management

4.1 Introduction

This chapter forms the second work stream of this research where I make a brief literature review of the major works done in cross-cultural management area.

This chapter will contribute to the overall objectives of the research by giving me the tools to understand Saudi Arabia work culture, and then apply this knowledge to the selected project management competencies to identify the best practices of a successful project manager in Saudi Arabia.

I start with a brief definition of culture then I describe the findings of the major theorists in the field of Cross-Cultural Management such as Hofstede, Trompenaars, and Hall

4.2 What is Culture?

An early definition of culture is.

‘That complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.’ (Tylor 1871 quoted in Morris-Suzuki 1995)

‘The predominating attitudes and behavior that characterizes the functioning of a group or organization’ (www.yourdictionary.com)

Geert Hofstede defined culture as

‘The collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group from another’ (Hofstede, 1980, p25)

However, Culture is being used in business literature since late 1980s to refer to the collective attitudes and behavior of members of corporations. This has also been encouraged by the increased awareness of the importance of genuine cultural differences in a global economy (www.yourdictionary.com).



Figure 4-1 Hofstede's Culture Triangle

Hofstede used the onion model Figure 4-2 with four layers to show the forms culture takes. The most visible forms of culture are symbols and represented by the outside layer. At the other end the values that are hidden in the core. Between those two layers there are the Rituals and Heroes. While symbols can be easily transferred across cultures, the values instilled in individuals and are passed down through the generations.

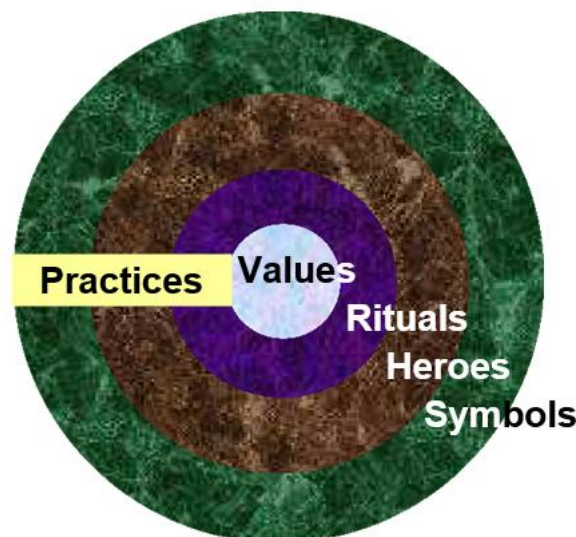


Figure 4-2 Hofstede Onion Model

4.3.1.2 Hofstede's Dimensions of Culture

From the initial results, and later additions, Hofstede developed a model that identifies five Dimensions to assist in differentiating cultures: Power Distance - PDI, Individualism - IDV, Masculinity - MAS, and Uncertainty Avoidance – UAI and Long-Term Orientation - LTO. (www.geert-hofstede.com)

In the following paragraphs I give a short explanation of Hofstede five dimensions Power

Distance Index (PDI)

Focuses on the degree of equality, or inequality, between people in the country's society. A High-Power Distance ranking indicates that inequalities of power and wealth have been allowed to grow within the society. These societies are more likely to follow a caste system that does not allow significant upward mobility of its citizens. A Low Power Distance ranking indicates the society de-emphasizes the differences between citizen's power and wealth. In these societies equality and opportunity for everyone is stressed.

Individualism (IDV)

Focuses on the degree the society reinforces individual or collective achievement and interpersonal

relationships. A High Individualism ranking indicates that individuality and individual rights are paramount within the society. Individuals in these societies may tend to form a larger number of looser relationships. A Low Individualism ranking typifies societies of a more collectivist nature with close ties between individuals. These cultures reinforce extended families and collectives where everyone takes responsibility for fellow members of their group.

Masculinity (MAS)

Focuses on the degree the society reinforces, or does not reinforce, the traditional masculine work role model of male achievement, control, and power. A High Masculinity ranking indicates the country experiences a high degree of gender differentiation. In these cultures, males dominate a significant portion of the society and power structure, with females being controlled by male domination. A Low Masculinity ranking indicates the country has a low level of differentiation and discrimination between genders. In these cultures, females are treated equally to males in all aspects of the society.

Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI)

Focuses on the level of tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity within the society - i.e. unstructured situations. A High Uncertainty Avoidance ranking indicates the country has a low tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity. This creates a rule-oriented society that institutes laws, rules, regulations, and controls in order to reduce the amount of uncertainty. A Low Uncertainty Avoidance ranking indicates the country has less concern about ambiguity and uncertainty and has more tolerance for a variety of opinions. This is reflected in a society that is less rule-oriented, more readily accepts change, and takes more and greater risks.

Long-Term Orientation (LTO)

Focuses on the degree the society embraces, or does not embrace long-term devotion to traditional, forward-thinking values. High Long-Term Orientation ranking indicates the country prescribes to the values of long-term commitments and respect for tradition. This is thought to support a strong work ethic where long-term rewards are expected as a result of today's hard work. However, business may take longer to develop in this society, particularly for an "outsider". A Low Long-Term Orientation ranking indicates the country does not reinforce the concept of long-term, traditional orientation. In this culture, change can occur more rapidly as long-term traditions and commitments do not become impediments to change (www.geert-hofstede.com, Hofstede 1980).

Prof. Hofstede works remained in the last 25 years a primary reference in most of cross-cultural studies and writings (www.geert-hofstede.com). However, Prof. Hofstede's Model was criticised by many writers who pointed the limitations of this model (Sondergaard 1994,

Robinson 1983, Schooler 1983 cited in Hunt 2005). McSweeney has criticized the validity of Prof. Hofstede results in many points:

The organizational culture of IBM, an American high-tech company used for the study, could slant the results drawn from the study.

The participants, IBM employees, are not representing the whole country culture as they are usually well educated and prosperous, and in many countries, those are not the majority if not the minority. A clear example of this draw back exists in South Africa results because black people were not hired by IBM in South Africa at the time of Hofstede's initial research, therefore South African results represented only the white subculture of South African and can't be generalized as being the national culture.

Hofstede made cultures bounded by nation states, which may contain multiple cultures.

Even though the total sample size was huge, in some countries the sample size was very small, for example there were only 37 Pakistani participants in the first survey and 70 in the second (McSweeney 2002)

4.3.2 Fons Trompenaars

4.3.2.2 *Overview*

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner define culture as the way in which a group of people solves problems and reconciles dilemmas (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1997).

Trompenaars, was a student of Hofstede, agreed with Hofstede's onion model, but he limited the layers to three:

The outer layer is what people primarily associate with culture: the visual reality of behavior, clothes, food, language, housing, etc. This is the level of explicit culture.

The middle layer refers to the norms and values which a community holds: what is considered right and wrong (norms) or good and bad (values). Norms are often external and reinforced by social control. Values tend to be more internal than norms. Society doesn't have many means of controlling their enforcement. Values and norms structure the way people in a particular culture behave. But they are not visible, despite their influence on what happens at the observable surface.

The inner layer is the deepest: the level of implicit culture. Understanding the core of the culture onion is the key to successfully working with other cultures. The core consists of basic assumptions, series of rules and methods to deal with the regular problems that it faces. These methods of problem-solving have become so basic that, like breathing, we no longer think about how we do it. For an outsider these basic assumptions are very difficult to recognize. (<http://www.7d-culture.nl>)

4.3.2.3 *Trompenaars's Dimensions of Culture*

Trompenaars has identified seven dimensions for culture:

Universalism vs. Particularism

Trompenaars defines universalism as the application of rules to everybody with no exceptions. Universalism looks for similarities in all members of a group and attempts to apply common rules to them. On the other hand: Particularism searches out differences and assumes that there will be exceptions to every rule. Trompenaars uses the example of a friend driving a car that hits a pedestrian, at least fifteen miles per hour over the speed limit. The universalist view (high in Switzerland, the USA, Canada, and Ireland) would say that one has a responsibility to tell the authorities the friend was speeding. The particularism view (high in Venezuela, Nepal, Russia, and China) says that one has a responsibility to protect the friend, and to lie to the authorities.

Individualism vs. Communitarianism

Trompenaars defines this dimension as orientation primarily to oneself or to the common goals and objectives of a community. He used the case study of a defect in a factory to demonstrate that individualist cultures (Canada, Denmark, USA, Australia, Nigeria, Russia) would consider the defect to be the fault of an individual, whereas communitarian cultures (Indonesia, Singapore, Italy, Japan, Germany, Saudi Arabia) would consider the defect to be the fault of the group. This dimension maps directly to a Hofstede dimension, Individualism IDV

Specificity vs. Diffusion

This dimension refers to the extent to which an individual engages others in specific areas of his life, as opposed to all areas. For example, in a specific culture, a manager has power over his employees only whilst in the workplace. In a more diffuse culture, if the employee and the manager meet on the golf course, the employee defers to the manager there as well. He demonstrates the difficulty in a team environment, when very specific cultures, such as

Americans rub up against diffuse cultures such as Chinese. The very specific American team members are immediately friendly and welcoming to the Chinese team members, but do not expect that the Chinese team members will be a part of their lives outside work. The Chinese team members, on the other hand, are cautious and proceed carefully in making friends in the workplace, as these friends will be invited not only into a working relationship, but into a relationship with the person.

Affective vs. Neutral

Trompenaars defined this dimension by the belief of participants in the appropriateness of showing emotion in public. In neutral cultures such as Austria, Japan, and India, it is highly inappropriate to show one's feelings in public, whereas in affective cultures, such as Spain, Russia, and France, it is entirely acceptable. He used the case study of an emotionally charged situation in the workplace to demonstrate this difference. He also made a distinction between cultures that show emotion but separate it from reason such as Americans, and cultures that show emotion and do not separate from reason, such as Italians and other southern Europeans.

Achieved status vs. Ascribed status.

This dimension describes how a culture determines the status of individuals. A culture rating highly on 'achieved statuses' believes that individuals are judged according to what they do, whereas cultures rating highly on 'ascribed status' believe that individuals are given status based on who they are: their age, class, gender, education, et cetera. Trompenaars used the example of family background, and found that in Austria, India, Hong Kong, and Thailand respect depended heavily on one's family background, whereas participants in the USA, Canada, the UK, and the Scandinavian countries believed that family background was immaterial in a business environment.

Inner direction vs. Outer direction

This dimension refers to an individual's orientation toward nature. Cultures that believe they control their environment are defined as 'inner-directed', whereas cultures that believe that their fate is pre-determined are defined as 'outer-directed'. Using a case study that asked participants whether they believed they controlled their own fate, he found that participants from the UK, Canada, Australia, and the USA were strongly inner-directed, whereas participants from China, Russia, Egypt and Japan were outer-directed.

Sequential time vs. Synchronous time

Trompenaars defined this dimension as the culture's view of time: sequential cultures view time as a series of passing events, whereas synchronous cultures view it as interrelated, with the past, present and future working together to shape actions. In sequential cultures, time is tightly scheduled, with specific time slots available for activities so that a late appointment will throw out the entire day's schedule. Conversely, in a synchronous culture, it is considered rude not to interrupt an activity to make time for an unexpected visitor. (<http://www.7d-culture.nl>, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1997, (Ericson, 2003))

4.3.3 Hall's work

4.3.3.2 Overview

Hall, an American scholar, developed a cultural theory that examines communication at an interpersonal level. His work emerged from realization of the importance of intercultural understanding for facilitating effective communication among and between individuals from different cultural backgrounds. Hall's work has provided a substantial contribution to intercultural communications understanding (Zakaria, Stanton, Sarker-Barney 2003).

Hall identified mainly three cultural dimensions, context, time and space. Even though Hall dimensions lack enough supporting empirical data, they are very easy to understand and apply (Pethő and Heidrich 2004), and I am going to explain them briefly in the next section.

4.3.3.3 Hall's Dimensions of Culture

High Context vs. Low Context

The high and low context concept is primarily concerned with the way in which information is transmitted, that is to say communicated. Hall defined context as "the information that surrounds an event; it is inextricably bound up with the meaning of that event" (Hall E.T. / Hall, M.R. 1990 quoted in Pethő and Heidrich 2004, p.6). Thus, in Hall's framework, context refers to the degree to which the communication situation contains information that is essential for receipt and understanding of a message (Zakaria, Stanton, Sarker-Barney 2003).

Hall defines high context communication as situations "...in which most of the information is in the physical context or internalized in the person, while very little is a coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message" Hall (1976, p. 91). In other words the receiver of the message is able to understand nonverbal messages that are impeded in the context of the verbal message. This usually implies that the sender and receiver of the message are sharing a large store of knowledge which is the context. This context can be voice inflection, pitch, and pace,

or gestures, and facial expression (Pethő and Heidrich 2004). Typical examples of high context cultures are Japan, China, and Saudi Arabia (Zakaria, Stanton, Sarker-Barney 2003) .

Hall defines low context as situations in the following way, "the mass of the information is vested in the explicit code" Hall (1976, p. 91), thus in Low context cultures like United States, Germany and Scandinavia information is transmitted in explicit code and meanings are determined by what is said, rather than by how it is said. So people in these countries rely on spoken words and written communication, stress clarity and favour a straight and to the point communication to avoid any ambiguity and uncertainty. (Pethő and Heidrich 2004)

Monochronic vs. Polychronic

This dimension is trying to measure how members of a certain culture views time. Hall states "Monochronic time means paying attention to and doing only one thing at one time. Polychronic time means being involved with many things at once" (Hall / Hall 1990 quoted in Pethő and Heidrich 2004)

In Monochronic cultures, like USA, Germany and Switzerland, time is experienced and used in a linear way (one thing at a time). Those cultures are characterized by seriously taking time commitments, deadlines, schedules and plans. Members of this culture are also concerned about not disturbing others, follow rules of privacy and consideration and emphasize promptness.

On the other hand, in Polychronic cultures like Saudi Arabia, Japan and China, are committed to people and human relationships more than to time commitments. They do more than one thing at a time, view deadlines, schedules and plans as objectives to be achieved if possible and plans are changed very often (Hall / Hall 1990 quoted in Pethő and Heidrich 2004).

Space

This refers to the boundary around an individual that is considered 'personal space'. For example; Middle Eastern businessmen like to stand close to people they are talking with. To stand away from a foreign visitor might incorrectly be taken as a negative reaction or lack of interest (Abbasi and Hollman 1993). Further studies indicated that The dominant American cultural preference is for a personal space of approximately three feet, or arm's length. For Arabs, the special tendency is approximately two feet (Kanso, Sinno, and Adams, 2001).

4.4 Other Cultural Theorists

There are a number of different cultural models other than those mentioned above, However I prefer not to describe them here as this will make this research unnecessarily long without adding any significant value or contribute to achieving the objectives of the research because after studying some of those models (e.g. the Cultural Orientations Indicator COI (Carper, 1998) and Gesteland's logical patterns of cross-cultural business behaviour: Deal-Focused vs. Relationship-Focused, Informal vs. Formal, Rigid vs. Fluid-Time, and Expressive vs. Reserved Cultures (Gesteland, 1999)). I found that most of their findings can be related to one or more of the dimensions of Hofstede, Trompenaars, or Hall explained above.

4.5 Cultural Dimensions of Saudi Arabia

In this Section I will identify the main culture dimensions of Saudi Arabia based on the definition of Hofstede, Trompenaars and Hall and as described in the previous sections. Those dimensions will form the frame that will be applied in the next chapter to the project manager competencies developed in Chapter 3 and as detailed in the Methodology Chapter of this research.

It should be noted here that there is no enough studies that measured every dimension of every culture model described above on Saudi Arabia Culture (Robertson, Al-Khatib, Al- Habib 2002). However, Saudi Arabia is part of the Arab World cluster, and dimensions that apply to the Arab world can be applied to Saudi Arabia. We can find a theoretical support for this assumption in (Robertson, Al-Khatib, and Al-Habib, 2002) 'The grouping of Middle Eastern countries into one homogenous entity by Hofstede (1980) and Ronen and Shenkar (1985) provides strong theoretical support for the amalgamation of individuals from the three focus countries of this study into one sample '

As was mentioned earlier in the Methodology chapter when a comparison with other cultures is needed to clarify an argument presented, I choose USA. So the culture dimensions of USA are also listed below.

4.5.1 Hofstede's Scores For Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia and USA scores of Hofstede's dimensions are listed in Table 4-1 below.

Table 4-1 Hofstede Cultural Dimensions For Saudi Arabia and USA

Dimension	Saudi Arabia*	USA*	World Avg.
Power Distance (PDI)	80 H	40 L	55
Individualism (IDV)	38 L	91 H	43
Masculinity (MAS)	52 H	62 H	50
Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI)	68 H	46 L	64
Long-Term Orientation (LTO)	32**L	29 L	45

Source: www.geert-hofstede.com

* H: Considered to be High and L: Considered to be Low

* *I couldn't find a score for Saudi Arabia for this dimension, the value mentioned is the average value of Jordan and Iraq (Same cluster as Saudi Arabia)

Figure 4-3 below shows a comparison of Hofstede's cultural dimensions for Saudi Arabia and USA

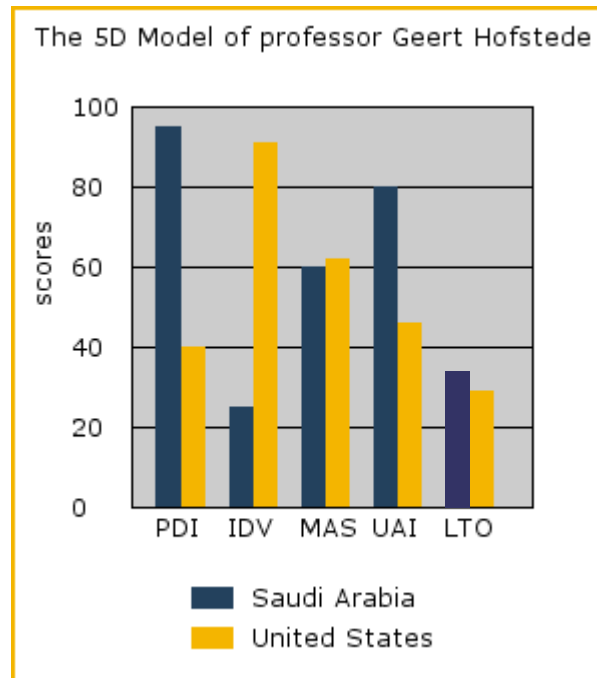


Figure 4-3 Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions For Saudi Arabia And USA Source: www.geert-hofstede.com

4.5.2 Trompenaars' Dimensions Values For Saudi Arabia

Table 4-2 Shows Trompenaars seven dimensions for culture for both Saudi Arabia and USA: Table 4-2

Trompenaars Cultural Dimensions For Saudi Arabia And USA

Dimension		Saudi Arabia	USA
1	Universalism		✓
	Particularism	✓	
2	Individualism		✓
	Communitarianism	✓	—
3	Specificity		✓
	Diffusion	✓	
4	Affective		✓
	Neutral	✓	
5	Achieved status		✓
	Ascribed status	✓	
6	Inner direction		✓
	Outer direction	✓	
7	Sequential time		✓
	Synchronous time	✓	

Sources: (Robertson, Al-Khatib, and Al-Habib, 2002, Kanso, Sinno, and Adams, 2001, www.7d-culture.nl, and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1997)

4.5.3 Hall's Dimensions Values For Saudi Arabia

Table 4-3 Shows the three dimensions defined by Edward Hall for both Saudi Arabia and US

Dimension		Saudi Arabia	USA
1	Low Context		✓
	High Context	✓	
2	Monochronic		✓
	Polychronic	✓	
3	Personal Space big		✓
	Personal Space Small	✓	

Sources: (Robertson, Al-Khatib, and Al-Habib, 2002, and Kanso, Sinno, and Adams, 2001)

5 Successful Project Manager Profile

In Section 3.2 I have explored the main project management processes and project manager competencies from the science point of view. From every process we derived the competencies needed to master that process, and then we added the needed behavioral competencies by identifying which competency elements will be necessary in order to master every project management process. Similar competency elements then were grouped in 7 competency groups that if mastered will help the project manager master all project management processes from behavior point of view (it should be reemphasized here that I am not addressing the science of project management, i.e. tools, techniques, etc.)

In this chapter I use the Saudi Arabia cultural profile developed in the previous chapter and apply it to the 7 competency groups. So the objective of this chapter is to tell any foreign project manager what is the expected behavior in every group of those competencies, then going back to Table 3-1 Summary Correlation Table of Project manager competencies and behavioral groups) he can know in which project management process a particular group of competencies will have effect.

For example, if a project manager wants to know how the behavior in Saudi Arabia in the scope management process of any project will be, he will go to Table 3-1 and he will find that the relevant competency groups related to scope management are Communications, Decision Making and Influencing and Motivating. So by studying these three sections in this chapter he will be able to get a good idea about the expected behavior in Saudi Arabia for this particular process.

Following up with the same concept, I believe that mastering the following 7 sections will provide a good understanding of how the behavior in all project management processes will be explained in Chapter 3 which means that this Chapter is considered as a profile for a culturally successful project manager in Saudi Arabia.

5.3 Negotiation

Different cultures treat negotiations differently, a successful cross-cultural negotiation requires an understanding of others, accept and respect their cultural beliefs and norms, and use that understanding and respect to realize what each party wants from the negotiation and maximize the gains. For example, to be a successful international negotiator, you must know exactly what negotiation connotes in the culture with which you are dealing. It means.

different things to different people: Contracts don't mean the same thing in all cultures, negotiation time as well has different meanings, negotiation communication; direct or indirect, should emphasis be on details or on general issues and finally should we concentrate on tasks and actions or human relations (Fogel 1998 and Chang 2003).

Saudi Arabia is a culture with High power distance index (80), which means that differences in power and wealth are accepted, and decision-making authority is usually not delegated to lower rank employees. So, when the project manager is going to negotiate any project related issues (the scope of the project, certain milestones, resources, costing, ...) with the project sponsor or any of the stakeholders, he should be careful and select negotiation counter partners who have enough final decision taking authority.

Saudi Arabia has a low Individualism index which means it is a collectivist culture and this is usually oriented more towards family, organizations, and community. Members of Saudi culture prefer team works during the negotiation process because when negotiate with foreigners, they feel more comfortable and confident to work in a group than to work alone and they usually discuss together to reach to an agreement before they make any decision. This means that when the project manager is required to make any negotiations with other firms, clients, suppliers or government departments, he should avoid going alone even if he feels confident about the subject of negotiation because the other negotiation team could judge the sincerity of the project by counting the number of people sent for negotiation.

Due to the collectivism and high uncertainty avoidance of Saudi Culture, decisions should avoid any risk and are made in a consultative manner (actually pseudo-participative approach as will be explained in section 5.2) this makes the decision making process very slow. Hence a key word for successful negotiation is patience. Actually, being patient and respecting other negotiators' values and rituals makes difference in negotiation and the project manager can maximize the gain for his project. (Chang 2003)

Saudi Arabia is as well a masculine culture and dominant by men. So, as a first advice it is absolutely a wrong choice to hire a female project manager in most professions except in the special cases where all project team members are women.

In this Masculine society people tend to value decisiveness, assertiveness, competitiveness, and some other traditional manly values as necessary characters to play the leading roles, so in most of his negotiations; the project manager position and ideas will be assertively challenged by stakeholders and/or team members (Chang 2003).

The project manager should also be aware of the high context nature of Saudi Arabia, where information is rarely passed directly and to the point. He should be aware as well that in a such culture the human relations are very important in negotiation and the project manager should spend adequate time to build these relations because they will be an asset later in the project or in next projects. (Abbasi and Hollman 1993)

More about general communications skills needed by the project manager is investigated in section 5.5 of this chapter.

5.4 Time management

Although the Time management competencies explained in Chapter 3 are essential and should exist in any project manager to timely complete the project, there is a big difference in how people in different cultures see and value time, and as a result there will be a big difference in how to implement and the relative importance of time management sub processes explained in section 3.2.3.

As we have already seen in Chapter 4 the perception of time in world cultures has been classified as either monochronic or polychronic. Saudi Arabia is a polychronic country (Michael 1997 and Ihator 2000).

As a polychronic culture, people in Saudi Arabia have the tendency to do many things at the same time, mix official and private activities because they view the social, work, and family lives as one thing. A project manager who is coming from a monochronic culture (like USA, Germany, UK) where only one thing is being done at a time and tries to strictly keep appointments, meet schedules and deadlines may be seen in Saudi Arabia as arrogant and insensitive (Ihator 2000).

Taking the polychronic nature of Saudi Arabia in consideration, The importance of project time planning (even though important) is of lower importance than project time plans in other monochronic countries and people in Saudi Arabia has less commitment to the scheduled dead lines and milestones. So project managers coming from monochronic cultures should expect that the accepted time frame to develop the project plan will be much less than what they usually estimate in their home countries (Michael 1997).

However, activity duration estimates, and sequencing planning will differ in Saudi Arabia as the people are willing to do many tasks at the same time rather than a single task at a time. And some activities could be delayed as human activities are not tied to the rigidities of

timeliness. The flow of social interactions determines the timing, without serious regard to the ticking of the time clock (Ihator 2000).

In Saudi Arabia Strategic Managers engage in more emergent type planning behaviors and recognized for their opportunistic and flexible strategic behavior than those in monochronic cultures who engage in more deliberate type planning behaviors (Michael 1997). This type of planning will have a major impact on project schedules updates and corrective actions as they will be changing more often. So referring back to time management competencies listed in section 3.2.3 I would emphasize that the project manager should have a high implementing and controlling project schedule competencies in order to be a successful project manager in Saudi Arabia.

However, on the other hand an increasing number of managers in Saudi Arabia are adopting Western time culture (monochronic culture) especially those individuals who have to work with expatriates or acquired their education in the West (Ihator 2000)

5.5 Decision Making

Saudi Arabia scored low in Hofstede's Individualism Index, and so it is a collective society where decisions are made in a consultative manner. However Saudi Arabia scored High in the power distance where subordinates see their superior as more powerful, and bosses tend to be paternalistic and autocratic (Hofstede 2001) and subordinates will be expected to be told what to do and not to be consulted about what to be done.

Actually this, what appears as a contradiction about the participation of subordinates (or team members) in the decision-making process, created what is called pseudo-participative approach of decision making.

Pseudo-participative means that a manager may meet with subordinates to make a group decision but makes it clear that he seeks endorsement of his own choices (Ali 1993).

Even though Pseudo-participative approach of decision making has been promoted by many management books written in Arabic as being the ideal management approach, the project manager should not use this approach with his team members, on the other hand he should be aware of this approach when attending any decision making meeting with the sponsor of the project as a relatively high portion of Arab managers display preference for the pseudo- participative approach (Ali 1993).

In Saudi Arabia the concept of "saving face" and preserving one's honor is highly valued. So it is very important for project managers to avoid the "take it or leave it" approach in decision making as this could be as insulting and will cause a negative reaction. Tact and diplomacy are extremely important especially when expressing dissent or even doubt. This may explain why some Saudi Arabia negotiators prefer to negotiate through trusted third parties (Abbasi and Hollman 1993)

5.6 Risk Management

As mentioned in the project manager competencies chapter, the project manager should be aware of the risk management culture of the host country to rightly plan his project risk management strategy. Saudi Arabia as part of the Arab world cluster scored high in Hofstede's Uncertainty Avoidance index. This means that members of this culture (who will be the stake holders and project team) don't feel comfortable with uncertain and ambiguous situations because members operating in high uncertainty avoidance cultures feel threatened by uncertainty (Michael 1997).

In Saudi Arabia, the project manager should give enough time to develop the risk management plan, contingency plan (see sections 3.2.4 Project Cost management and 3.2.8.2 Risk Management Competencies) and he can expect to be given more time for this analysis when compared with countries with low Uncertainty Avoidance Index like USA where risk is more tolerated.

Project team member will prefer a very clear team structure with all roles and responsibilities clearly defined and there is no ambiguity about what is expected from him. He may also seek more regular reassurance throughout the project. If the project manager is coming from USA, UK or any other country with low Uncertainty Avoidance index he may find this behavior strange as he may expect that he can give the problem to the team member and let him decide the best way to solve it.

5.7 Communications

Communication is one of the most important skills that should exist in a successful project manager. The project manager will communicate with the owners/organization of the project to discuss the scope and deliverables of the project, will communicate with the project team to assign tasks and track progress, will write project status reports and distribute them (PMCD 2001).

The project managers working in Saudi Arabia should be aware of how to effectively communicate with all stakeholders. Effective communication doesn't mean short and direct to the point. Communication is part of the culture, and to have effective communication means to be able to fully understand what the others are trying to tell, and on the other hand to be able also to convey the message you want to convey in a manner that can be fully understood by all stakeholders.

So in this section, I will study the communication culture of Saudi Arabia. The best cultural dimensions that can help us understand how communication is being conducted in Saudi Arabia are Hall Context Dimension and Trompenaars' Specific – Diffuse.

According to Hall Context dimension Saudi Arabia is a High Context Society (Zakaria, Stanton, Sarker-Barney 2003; Ihator 2000) and according to Trompenaars' Specific-Diffuse dimension, Saudi Arabia is a diffuse society (Zakaria, Stanton, Sarker-Barney 2003).

The impact of those dimensions is that the project manager in Saudi Arabia should be able to understand not only the directly said words and sentences, but also to understand the hidden meanings, feelings and body language. Indirect and implicit coding of messages in the context of the interaction provides mechanisms to save face and display courtesy in conversations (Feghali 1997; Mackey, 1987 cited in Zakaria, Stanton, Sarker-Barney 2003)

Jandt describes an Arabic communication style as being, "...one that emphasizes... repetition, metaphor, and simile" (Jandt 2001, p. 141), Ferraro as well made a similar comment by saying that "frequently certain pronouns will be repeated in order to fully dramatize the message," and "highly graphic metaphors and similes are common." He added it is not uncommon for an Arabic speaker to use a long list of adjectives to modify a single noun in order to stress a point. A statement may be understated or overstated to bring out or stress a point and the message receiver is expected to easily pick up the cues and make meaning out of them (Ferraro 1994, p.54 cited in Zakaria, Stanton, Sarker-Barney 2003).

Communication in Saudi Arabia is not an isolated event where only the target message is communicated. Any message should have the context, may have something from the past, good hope for the future, appreciation, gratefulness. Being direct and to the point could be considered as impolite. "For the Arab culture, language appears to be a social tool used in the weaving of society. Emphasis is on form over function, affect over accuracy and image over meaning. Accordingly, content may be less important than the social chemistry a message creates" (Zaharna 1996)

This type of language and communication will be strange, confusing and unpredictable to unprepared project managers coming from low context cultures like USA, UK, Germany where language appears to be a medium of communication used to convey information, and where emphasis is on function and, by extension, on substance, simplicity, directness and accuracy.

5.8 Influencing and Motivating

Much managerial work involves motivating and influencing others to do things they otherwise might not do. Influencing is obviously an integral component of managerial and leadership effectiveness (Michael, 1997). For a project manager, having different skills to influence is very essential, because in most organizations, project managers will have no direct control or formal authority over the people in the project team and he should rely on influence and persuasion to drive people to do what should be done (Heerkens, 2002).

In order to know the best influence tactic that will be most effective in influencing project team members in Saudi Arabia, Hard, Soft and Rational influencing tactics will be studied from cultural point of view.

Hard influencing tactic is about the assertive manager demand, threaten, intimidate.

On the other hand, when managers speak nicely and depend on their friendship to influence others, we say that managers use Soft influencing tactic. Between those two extremes there is the rational approach when managers use logic, facts, and bargaining to convince people to do what should be done.

In Saudi Arabia, being a high-power distance society, hard influence tactics will be used by managers to influence subordinates, while soft influence tactics will be used by subordinates to influence bosses. Those tactics are favorably received in Saudi Arabia because they maintain inequalities between boss and subordinates (Michael, 1997).

For the project manager, who has no formal authority over the project team members, he will find it difficult to use the hard tactic and should depend on the soft or rational tactics where it is possible.

However, soft tactics in a high-power distance society like Saudi Arabia is accepted from subordinates to influence their boss and rarely used vice versa, this is because for this technique to work the gap between the manager and his subordinates should disappear which is not common in Saudi Arabia.

Rational techniques, on the other hand, are more accepted in a low distance power society. Using this technique in a high-power distance like Saudi Arabia and trying to present facts and arguments to convince the project team to do something could be interpreted by the team as lack of confidence in the project manager side.

As a conclusion of the above discussion, the project manager should be intelligent enough when choosing influence tactics in Saudi Arabia as there is no single tactic that works always. The project manager could ask for some authority, or define escalation procedures, to be able to use hard tactics when appropriate and necessary.

Another way to have the job done is to motivate and reward people to do the job. Saudi Arabia scores low in Individualism, which means that it has a collective society. In such collective society rewards are based on tenure and loyalty to the group and motivation derives primarily from a sense of belonging (Dedousis, 2004)

Arab employees have high admiration for hard and fulfilling work, however, Arabs tend to emphasize excellence on the interpersonal rather than on the task mastery domain, Also, moral recognition rather than monetary recognition alone of local staff may prove to be strong compensation/motivational scheme in Saudi Arabia Also, moral recognition rather than monetary recognition alone of local staff may prove to be strong compensation/motivational scheme in the Saudi (Michael, 1997).

5.9 Conflict management

Conflict can be defined as 'A state of open, prolonged fighting' or 'a state of disagreement and disharmony' (www.yourdictionary.com, 2006). Conflict influences individual wellbeing, group performance and organizational effectiveness (De Dreu, Evers, Beersma, Kluwer, and Nauta, 2001) and daily life shows that conflict can't be avoided, however can be managed.

In Project conflict can lead to personality clashes and other unproductive outcomes, and so will lead to project failure if they are not managed constructively. It is the project manager responsibility to manage and resolve conflicts between project team members (Heerkens 2005).

In order for the project manager to manage and constructively resolve conflicts, he must understand the sources of conflicts and the best ways to resolve them.

The sources of conflict are culture dependent. What can cause a conflict in one culture, may not in other culture. Next, I am going to identify some sources of conflict (Ericson, 2003) and

using the cultural dimensions of Saudi Arabia, I will examine if those sources have a high or small probability in Saudi Arabia:

Scheduling: deadlines, sequence of tasks and duration of tasks. As Saudi Arabia is a monochronic time culture, commitment to schedules and deadlines is very weak, and so if some team members started to delay their tasks more than tolerated in the project, there will be a high probability for conflict. So the project manager should follow the progress of those tasks that are pre-requisites to other tasks carefully and identify any scheduling problems early enough to take corrective measures.

Managerial and administrative procedures like status reporting, scope definition: As Saudi Arabia is a culture of high Uncertainty Avoidance Index, team members will try to define their roles and responsibilities very clearly from the beginning to avoid any risk in future. Reporting will be done as often as required in order clear one's side. So, there will be a small probability of conflict due to this issue.

Communication: in a high context culture like Saudi Arabia Communication is not direct, will have different interpretations and there will be a high probability of conflict due to communication. Although the project manager can't do much to change this way of communications, he can still impose some communication standards, forms that will make the communication as clear as possible.

Reward structure and performance appraisal or measurement: Saudi Arabia is ascribed status culture, and people could be promoted due to their social status and not due to their actual performance and achievement. The probability of this to happen and cause conflict in the project is high. Actually, this could disappoint other team members who are doing well in their jobs but not promoted and may reduce their performance. The project manager should try his best to avoid such situations, and if happened, to make any type of motivation or compensation to the disappointed team members.

Once conflict happened, and it will happen in any project, it is the project manager responsibility to solve this conflict in a constructive way. Saudi Arabia is a collective society and studies show that Arabs will avoid handling conflict openly and prefer the avoidance style (Elsayed-Ekhouly and Buda, 1996). Ali (1993) stated that 'Arabs have a great sense of pride and self-esteem' (Ali, 1993, p.53-54), and in conflict resolution they appeal to emotions and feelings, seek mediation and to save one's face approach. So the project manager should look to win-win settlement of any conflict (Ali, 1993).

6 Conclusions

For project managers working outside their home countries and cultures to succeed they should have the “cultural awareness” of the host country. In this Research, the specific case of Saudi Arabia was studied. We found that for a culturally successful project manager in Saudi Arabia, he should be aware of, at least, the following seven groups of behavior competencies: Negotiation, Time Management, Decision Making, Risk Management, Communications, Influencing and Motivating, and Conflict Management.

When selecting project managers for their projects in Saudi Arabia, foreign companies should select the one whose work style and attitude, personal competencies and work beliefs are close to Saudi Arabia because they are more likely to succeed.

The project manager profile developed in Chapter 5 can be used also to develop specific project management courses that can elaborate more on the results to have a clearer picture about project management in Saudi Arabia.

From the deep literature search conducted for this research, I found that the literature discussing culture and project management in general and Arabic culture in specific is very scarce. More studies should be conducted to approve or disapprove the results of this research.

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