

Final Project 1
Code: MGM 496-PMG496
Project Template

Faculty of Management
Midocean University

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Faculty of Management

Department/ Specialization



Project title

**The Role of Project Manager's Emotional Intelligence
in Conflict Resolution and Project Success**

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Date of submission – number of Semester

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1. Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Research Background

Stage 1: The Broad Context (Importance of Project Management)

In the modern business environment, project management has become a critical discipline for organizations aiming to achieve strategic goals. As projects become more complex, global, and diverse, the reliance on technical skills alone—such as scheduling and budgeting—is no longer sufficient to guarantee success.

Organizations now realize that projects are essentially human-driven endeavors, where the interaction between stakeholders, team members, and managers dictates the final outcome.

Stage 2: The Specific Area (Human Factors and Leadership)

Within the realm of project management, the human factor is often cited as the primary reason for both project breakthroughs and failures. Leadership styles and interpersonal skills, often referred to as "soft skills," have gained significant attention. Among these skills, Emotional Intelligence (EI) stands out as a vital competency. EI refers to the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's own emotions while influencing the emotions of others. In a project setting, where pressure is high and deadlines are tight, the manager's ability to navigate the emotional landscape of the team is paramount.

Stage 3: Current Trends and Challenges (The Reality of Conflict)

Despite the advancements in project management methodologies (like Agile or PMBOK), conflicts remain an inevitable part of every project lifecycle. Conflicts

can arise from resource competition, personality clashes, or shifting priorities. Traditional management often views conflict as a disruptive force to be suppressed. However, modern research suggests that if managed through high emotional intelligence, conflict can lead to better decision-making and innovation. The challenge lies in how project managers utilize their EI to transform potential friction into constructive collaboration.

Stage 4: Identifying the Problem Overview

There is a growing concern that many project managers are technically brilliant but emotionally unequipped to handle the high-stress environment of project teams. This gap often leads to unresolved conflicts, low team morale, and eventually, project failure. While technical failures are easy to document, the "silent killers" of projects—such as poor communication and emotional mismanagement—are harder to quantify but equally damaging.

Stage 5: The Research Purpose and Goal

The primary purpose of this research is to investigate the correlation between the Project Manager's Emotional Intelligence and the effectiveness of conflict resolution. Furthermore, this study aims to explore how these factors collectively contribute to the overall success of the project. By focusing on this intersection, the research seeks to provide a roadmap for organizations to better select and train their project leaders.

1.2. Research Problem

Conflict is an inherent feature of project environments due to the temporary nature of teams and the diversity of stakeholders. However, the failure to manage these conflicts often leads to delays, cost overruns, and fractured team dynamics. This

study addresses the lack of focus on emotional competencies as a tool for project stabilization.

1.2.1. Theoretical Gaps

Most existing literature in project management focuses heavily on the "Iron Triangle" (Time, Cost, and Quality) and technical methodologies. There is a limited body of academic research that specifically links the four dimensions of Emotional Intelligence (Self-awareness, Self-management, Social awareness, and Relationship management) directly to specific conflict resolution strategies in a project-based context. Many theories remain general and are not tailored to the unique, fast-paced environment of project management.

1.2.2. Practical Gaps

In practice, many organizations prioritize technical certifications (like PMP or PRINCE2) when hiring project managers, often overlooking emotional maturity. There is a lack of practical frameworks that show project managers how to apply emotional intelligence to resolve technical or interpersonal disputes on the ground. Consequently, many managers resort to "authoritative" styles that might solve the immediate conflict but damage long-term team cohesion and project health.

1.3. Research Significance

The significance of this study lies in its potential to shift the focus from "managing tasks" to "leading people" within the project management discipline.

1.3.1. At the theoretical level

This research contributes to the existing body of knowledge by integrating psychological constructs (Emotional Intelligence) with administrative frameworks (Project Management). It provides a new theoretical perspective on how emotional competencies can act as a mediator between conflict occurrence and project outcomes. It also enriches the literature on "Human Resource Project Management" by providing empirical evidence on the importance of soft skills.

1.3.2. At the practical level

For organizations, this study provides a justification for investing in leadership development and emotional intelligence training for their project managers. It offers insights for HR departments to refine their recruitment criteria, moving beyond technical expertise to include emotional stability. For project managers, the study offers a practical understanding of how their emotional reactions affect team performance, ultimately leading to higher success rates, better stakeholder satisfaction, and a healthier work environment.

1.4. Research Questions

The study aims to answer the following central and sub-questions:

Main Question: How does the Project Manager's Emotional Intelligence (EI) influence conflict resolution effectiveness and overall project success?

Sub-Question 1: What is the current level of Emotional Intelligence among project managers in the targeted industry?

Sub-Question 2: Is there a statistically significant relationship between the dimensions of Emotional Intelligence and the chosen conflict resolution styles?

Sub-Question 3: To what extent does effective conflict resolution lead to improved project success (Time, Cost, Quality, and Stakeholder Satisfaction)?

1.5. Research Objectives

The primary objectives of this research are:

1. To assess the level of Emotional Intelligence (EI) competencies among project managers.
2. To investigate the relationship between a manager's EI and their ability to resolve team conflicts constructively.
3. To examine the impact of effective conflict resolution on the key indicators of project success.
4. To provide recommendations for organizations on integrating EI assessments into their project management recruitment and training programs.

1.6. Research Hypotheses

Based on the research questions, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- H1: There is a significant positive relationship between a Project Manager's Emotional Intelligence and the use of collaborative conflict resolution styles.
- H2: Effective conflict resolution has a significant positive impact on overall project success.
- H3: Emotional Intelligence indirectly contributes to project success through the mediation of effective conflict resolution.

1.7. Research Model

The conceptual framework of this study illustrates the relationship between the variables:

Independent Variable (IV): Project Manager's Emotional Intelligence (Self-awareness, Self-management, Social awareness, Relationship management).

Mediating Variable (MV): Conflict Resolution Effectiveness (Collaboration, Compromise, Negotiation).

Dependent Variable (DV): Project Success (Meeting deadlines, Budget adherence, Quality standards, Team morale, and Client satisfaction).

1.8. Research Methodology

This study will adopt a Quantitative Research Approach to test the hypotheses and ensure the objectivity of the results.

Data Collection: A structured online questionnaire will be distributed to project managers and team members.

Population & Sampling: The target population includes project management professionals in [Insert Industry, e.g., Construction or IT] in [Insert Country/City]. A convenience or random sampling technique will be used.

Data Analysis: The collected data will be analyzed using statistical software (such as SPSS or SmartPLS) to perform descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis.

1.9. Scope of The Study

Topical Scope: The study is limited to the impact of Emotional Intelligence on conflict resolution and project success. It does not cover technical project management skills (e.g., scheduling software).

Geographical Scope: The study focuses on companies operating within [Mention your City/Country, e.g., Riyadh, Saudi Arabia].

Time Scope: The research is conducted during the academic year 2024-2025.

Target Population: Project managers, team leaders, and team members in the private and public sectors.

1.10. The Suggested Project Structure

The research is organized into five main chapters as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction: Includes the background, problem statement, objectives, questions, hypotheses, and methodology.

Chapter 2: Literature Review: Reviews existing theories and previous studies related to Emotional Intelligence, Conflict Management, and Project Success.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology: Provides a detailed description of the research design, data collection tools, population, and statistical methods used.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results: Presents the findings of the study through tables, charts, and statistical testing of the hypotheses.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations: Discusses the results in light of previous literature and provides practical recommendations for organizations and future researchers.

2.Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive review of the existing literature regarding Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Project Success. It establishes the theoretical foundation of the study by exploring the definitions, models, and dimensions of both variables. Furthermore, it examines the critical link between a manager's emotional competencies and their impact on project outcomes, specifically through the lens of human resource management in a project-based environment. The chapter concludes by highlighting the theoretical framework that guides this research.

2.2. The independent variable

Emotional Intelligence in the workplace has transitioned from a "nice-to-have" skill to a core competency for leadership.

Definition: According to Daniel Goleman (1995), EI is the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships.

Dimensions of EI: Most literature follows Goleman's four-pillar model:

Self-Awareness: Understanding one's emotions and their impact on team performance.

Self-Management: Keeping disruptive emotions and impulses under control during project crises.

Social Awareness (Empathy): Sensing others' emotions and understanding their perspectives.

Relationship Management: Influencing, coaching, and resolving disagreements within the project team.

EI in Project Management: Literature suggests that since project managers spend over 90% of their time communicating, their ability to process emotional data is more critical than their technical proficiency in complex environments.

2.3. The dependent variable

The definition of "Project Success" has evolved significantly over the decades.

The Traditional View (The Iron Triangle): Early research focused primarily on three constraints: Time, Cost, and Quality. If a project was delivered on time, within budget, and met specifications, it was deemed successful.

The Modern Multidimensional View: Contemporary scholars (e.g., Shenhar & Dvir) argue that success is broader. It includes:

Stakeholder Satisfaction: Meeting the expectations of clients, sponsors, and the team.

Team Satisfaction: The growth and well-being of the project team members.

Future Potential: Opening new markets or developing new organizational capabilities.

Success Factors: Research identifies leadership and communication as "critical success factors" (CSFs) that bridge the gap between technical planning and final delivery.

2.4. The relationship between the independent and the dependent variables

The literature indicates a strong positive correlation between a Project Manager's EI and the overall success of the project.

Stress Management and Decision Making: High EI allows managers to remain calm under pressure, leading to more rational decision-making, which directly impacts the "Cost" and "Time" dimensions of success.

Team Cohesion: Managers with high EI foster an environment of trust. Literature shows that "Psychological Safety" (driven by the manager's empathy) leads to higher team productivity and lower turnover rates.

Conflict as a Mediator: A significant portion of the literature emphasizes that EI affects project success through conflict resolution. Managers who use their EI to "collaborate" rather than "force" solutions tend to have higher project success rates because they preserve stakeholder relationships.

Empirical Evidence: Previous studies (e.g., Müller & Turner, 2010) have shown that the leadership style of the project manager—deeply rooted in emotional competencies—is a significant determinant of project success across different industries.

2.5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the literature review highlights that while technical skills are essential for project planning, Emotional Intelligence is the catalyst for effective execution and leadership. The theoretical consensus suggests that managing the "people side" of projects is where most value is created. However, there remains a need for more empirical research specifically targeting how these emotional dimensions interact in high-pressure sectors like logistic industry. This study aims to fill that gap by testing these relationships in a real-world context.

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