The Role of Emotional Intelligence in Project Leadership: A Study

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Abstract

In this paper, the importance of EI in project leadership will be analysed, the effects of EI on projects, team members and, thus, project success will be evaluated. It included a review of numerous academic articles up to 2022 focusing on the combination of emotional intelligence with project management. This study aims to explore the five aspects of emotional intelligence, including self-awareness, self-control, passion, understanding of others, and interpersonal skills in project leadership contexts using both quantitative and qualitative data collection. The research shows thus that emotionally intelligent project leaders contribute to improving team outcomes and conflict resolutions, efficient management of stakeholders, and increased project success rates. Additionally, the paper acknowledges the difficulties of integrating theories of emotional intelligence into project management and provides systematic recommendations for applying and enhancing emotional intelligence in project managers. Altogether, this research adds to the literature by identifying the value of soft skills in PM and offering guidance to organizations that aim to harness emotional intelligence for enhancing project results.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Project Leadership, Project Management, Team Performance, Conflict Resolution, Stakeholder Management, Leadership Development, Organizational Culture

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence has been popular since it entered the annals of psychology and management by Salovey and Mayer in 1990. Referring to the capacity to understand and effectively both personal and others' feelings, emotional intelligence became a popular and key variable that predicts individuals' behaviors and performances in various settings, including business environment (Goleman, 1995). In the last thirty years, many studies have been conducted focusing on emotional intelligence in relation to leadership, groups, and work environment.

1.2 Importance of Leadership in Project Management

Project management, as a science, primarily concerned with the technical activities, best approaches, and technologies required to accomplish the project. However, the complexity, the range and variability of the projects, the distribution and specialisation of the teams, and the rise of demands of the customers and other stakeholders have revealed the critical role of the leaders in the projects' success. It means project manager are not only in charge of designing, implementing, and finalizing projects, motivating people engaging in a project, addressing conflicts and overcoming political situations within an organisation (Turner & Müller, 2005). Therefore, leadership competencies as an essential aspect of the project management have been increasingly valued with a focus on the human factors of project leadership.

1.3 Research Objectives and Questions

It is expected that this research will undertake to fill the existing gap between the theory and the practice of applying EI in project leadership. The primary objectives of this research are:

1. In this case, the variables of this research will be defined to differentiate between project leaders for the comparison of the effectiveness and their level of emotional intelligence.

2. In order that it will be easier to see the elements of emotional intelligence pertaining to the project management surroundings.

3. The reason for the present study is to examine the effect of actual/emotionally intelligent project leaders in different aspects of projects.

4. To identify ways on how the EI may be further developed and cultivated in the leaders of the projects. To achieve these objectives, the following research questions will guide this study:

1. How does EI impact project leadership and specifically the effectiveness of the leader?

2. The following are the elements of emotional intelligence that are important when it comes to leadership in projects.

3. When implementing project leadership based on emotional intelligence, how does the team's performance, conflict resolution, stakeholder management, and the success of the project rate?

4. What strategies are most helpful in growing the EI skills of project leaders?

5. There are some obstacles that need to be sacrificed and some ways to solve them when introducing emotional intelligence frameworks in project management.
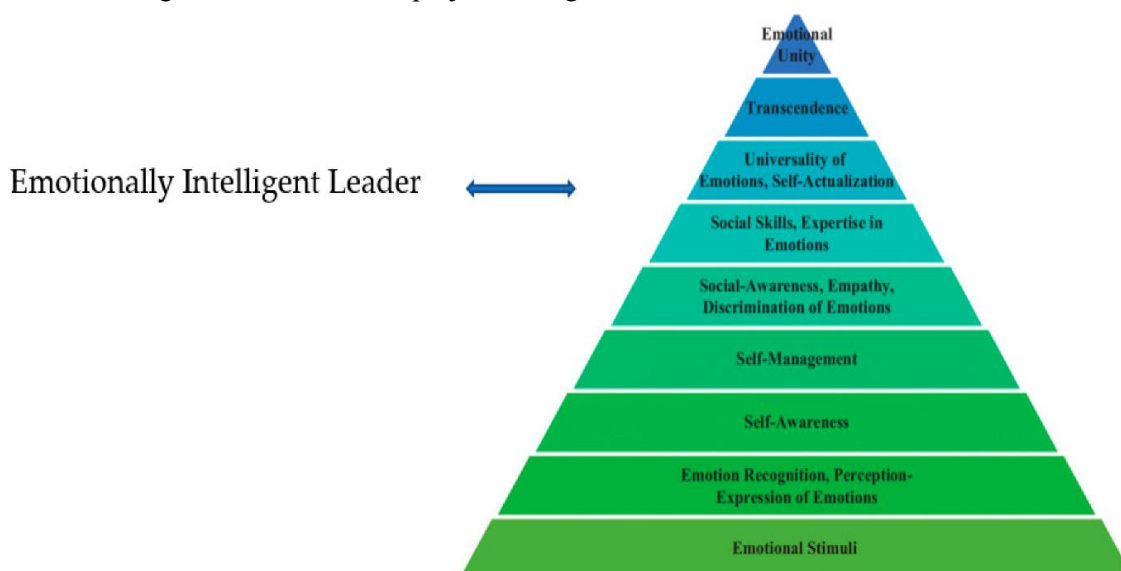
2. Literature Review

2.1 Defining Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence has developed over the years, starting as an emotional gatekeeper theory. Salovey and Mayer (1990) offered the first attempt to define EI as a product of the ability to accss, understand, appraise, and antici-pate one's and other people's emotions to guide thinking and actions.

Goleman (1995) popularised the concept and expanded it to include a broader set of competencies, categorising emotional intelligence into five main components: Self-organization, self-control, pursuit of goals, relationships with others, and emotions. This model, also known as the mixed model of EI focuses on people's cognitive skills as well as their personality characteristics.

Bar-On also presented another concept in her model published in 1997 detailing emotional intelligence as a grouping of aptitudes that determine how efficiently one is able to appraise self and others' emotions, manage the self and relations with others, and deal with life's stresses and pressures. This

model also focuses on the element of emotional intelligence in an individual to deal with environmental stressors.

Subsequently, scholars have endeavored to improve on and empirically test these models. For example, the ability model of the EI put forward by Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2000) is mainly aimed at the use of information related to emotions. This model describes emotional intelligence as how people can recognise and use feelings to reason, understand, and regulate them.

2.2 Theories of Leadership in Project Management

Project management leadership has been discussed these fundamental theoretical perspectives. Transformational leadership theory by Burns (1978) and Bass (1985) has been more popular among the frameworks proposed to explain leadership behaviours in project contexts. According to this theory, transformational leaders generate high levels of commitment from employees to produce remarkable results to support the organisational vision, mission and values because all the organisational members' values and objectives must reflect the transformational vision of the institutions. Situational leadership theory by Hersey and Blanchard (1969) refers to the concept of leadership by which the leader delegates and supports the achievement of his subordinates based on considerations of the maturity they portray. This theory has been appropriated in project management, particularly where the author argues that project leaders should adapt to situational influencers including the dynamics of project teams and the phases of the project. Similarly, the concept of servant leadership, first outlined by Greenleaf (1977), has also been considered in project management theories. This approach focuses more on the leader as a helper and a caregiver within this context for the team members. Müller &Turner (2010) put forward the responsible project manager competency development framework that, according to the authors, outlines leadership competencies essential for success in various types of projects. Constructed of different leadership theories, this framework implements them adapting to the circumstances of project contexts.

2.3 Intersection of Emotional Intelligence and Project Leadership

The incorporation of the elements of emotional intelligence into the leadership of projects as well as the leadership theories and practices has become topical in the recent past. Dulewicz and Higgs (2003) established that there are positive relationships between the levels of the competencies in the EI model and the leaders' performance, particularly in a project environment. In their study, they established that emotional intelligence was responsible for a large amount of the variance in leadership outcomes relative to cognitive intelligence and manager skills.

Generally, Clarke (2010) provided a literature review of emotional intelligence in project management. He concluded that The study focused on awareness of several feelings involved in managing human relations, which are always a sensitive element within a given project and may not be well handled when following the structuralist project management methodologies.

Building on earlier literature, Revzani et al. (2016) established a research model to extend the analysis of the significant link between source project manager's emotional intelligence, job satisfaction, and project success. The research also revealed that the project managers with high emotional intelligence were more satisfied with their job and attained better project results concerning stakeholder satisfaction and project goals.

The literature pertaining to the link between EI and PL has a continually expanding collection of articles, which embraces the mutual interdependence of both fields. This is particularly so since emotionally intelligent persons seem to possess better skills to handle the interpersonal relations that are intrinsic to project environments and since the project management environment offers a good ground to hone and practice emotional intelligence skills.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study uses quantitative and qualitative research techniques, which allows for a more detailed examination of emotional intelligence in projects leadership. Triangulation of data provides validity and reliability of the findings and this approach is achievable through the mixed-methods design (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). It is hoped that by incorporating quantitative and qualitative data alongside each other, this approach can address the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership for projects.

The study employs a sequential explanatory mixed method research design comprising of a Quantitative phase and a Qualitative phase. This way the quantitative initial results assist in feeding into the qualitative study helping in the qualitative explication of the quantitative observed relationships. The quantitative section is a quantitative survey of a large respondent group to assess their EI levels and relation to project leaders and project success criteria. The qualitative aspect entails administration of questionnaires and survey among the experienced project managers and the team members so as to get the perception of the actual use and efficacy of EI in project leadership.

Desiring to make the research design more reliable, a pilot study was conducted with 20 project leaders who were selected through convenience sampling and 60 team members. The pilot phase helped to modify the survey instruments and the interview schedules so as to improve the level of clarity, comprehensiveness and suitability of the instruments in addressing the research questions. Some of the survey items were slightly altered based on feedback from the participants in the pilot study and additional probing questions were included in the interview guide so as to ensure more elaborative answers were observed.

3.2 Data Collection Methods

The data collection was rigorous and encompassing, involving the use of different instruments and data collection techniques to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. During the statistical phase, a self-completed emotional intelligence questionnaire, which was modified from the ESCI questionnaire by Boyatzis, Goleman, and Rhee (2000), was completed by project leaders. This instrument measures emotional intelligence across four domains: Each element mentioned above encompasses self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and the ability to manage relationships. The rationale

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for selecting the ESCI is that it has been demonstrated to have a high level of reliability and validity, and is designed to measure workplace competencies that are relevant for leadership. Furthermore, questionnaires were conducted among the team members and stakeholders to get an overall view of project success in terms of collaboration, conflict management, and other aspects of the project performance. Development of this questionnaire was done from common project success factors as indicated in the literature (Pinto & Slevin, 1988; Shenhar & Dvir, 2007) and adapted to reflect the success indicators of emotionally intelligent leadership. The questionnaire employed in the study embraced a 7-point Likert scale that ensured a fine graduation of responses for statistical testing.

The first analysis process was the qualitative data collection phase, which included semi-structured interviews with 25 industry project leaders. These interviews, which were conducted with participants and took around 60-90 minutes of each participant's time, aimed to discuss their experiences and views on the topic of emotional intelligence in project management. The interview schedule was developed to obtain specific examples of the emotional intelligence competencies in decision-making, leadership behavior, and project outputs. In addition, six focus group discussions were carried out with the project team members with 6-8 participants in each to elicit perception on the effect of.

Emotionally intelligent leadership on team processes and project performance. To increase confidence in the quality of the collected qualitative data, interviews and focus group discussions in particular were tape-recorded and transcribed. Notes were also taken during these sessions to capture contextual information as well as gesture and body language of the participants. Another method used by the researchers was member checking where interview summaries were presented to participants for review in an effort to ensure the correctness of the unique interpretations made by the researchers and also in a bid to get further input.

3.3 Sampling Technique

The study used a stratified random sampling technique to cover different industries and projects, and different sizes of the organizations. The questionnaires were tested among 200 project leaders and 600 team members from 50 organisations, representatives of IT, construction, medicine, and finance sectors. It helps to make a global assessment of the peculiarities of project leaders' emotional intelligence and increases the generalisability of the results.

Regarding the selection of the project leads, the inclusion criteria were at least 5 years' experience in managing projects and either a current or a recent (within the last two years) leadership experience in managing projects. When it came to formulating questions for team members, the identified criteria included at least two years of experience working on projects and the respondents' recent experience in the projects conducted by the surveyed project leaders, preferably within the last year.

To achieve this, the stratification process was used to make sure the sample contained an appropriate representation of different industries as obtained in the PMI's Industry Growth Forecast Report (2019). This approach was used to reduce possible bias that could prevail from the excessive dominance of specific sectors or kinds of projects.

Table 1: Sample Distribution Across Industries

Industry Sector	Number of Organizations	Number of Project Leaders	Number of Team Members
IT & Telecom	15	60	180
Construction	10	40	120

Healthcare	8	32	96
Finance	7	28	84
Manufacturing	6	24	72
Energy	4	16	48
Total	**50**	**200**	**600**

3.4 Data Analysis Approach

The data analysis process was kind of extensive and stringent; enhanced use of statistical techniques for quantitative data and thematic analysis on qualitative data. To conduct the quantitative analysis, the descriptive statistics were initially calculated to present the summary of the collected data, which touched upon the levels of emotional intelligence and the performance of the projects. This gave an initial description of the distribution and spread of the major variables to reduce the problems of endogeneity bias.

Descriptive statistics were then followed by inferential statistical analyses to compare the scores of project outcome variables and the components of emotional intelligence. In order to establish the nature and the degree of these relationships, Pearson correlation coefficients were computed. Hierarchical multiple regression analysis was also used to analyse the emotional intelligence dimensions for their ability to predict the research project success indices while factoring complexity, team, and sector.

To control for other variables that might influence the results, hierarchical regression analyses were used to get the incremental validity of the EI-CQ beyond the PM competencies. Moreover, this study employed SEM to analyse the proposed relations between EI, LBP, and the project outcome, which offered a more extensive perspective on the interaction between the factors.

Concerning the analysis of the collected qualitative data, one adopted thematic analysis where one continually searches for patterns and themes in the data collected through the interviews as well as the focus group discussions. The analysis followed the six-step process outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006): identification with the data, initialization of codes, themes seeking, themes revisiting, identification of the themes and nomenclature, and the preparation of the report. Coding and categorization qualitative data were developed and analysed by the help of the Nvivo software which increased its speed and effectiveness of the analysis.

Till the qualitative analysis, the two coders analyzed a subset of interviews to reduce potential bias, while inter-rater reliability was estimated by Cohen's Kappa coefficient. Inter-observer differences as to the coding scheme were resolved by consensus during coding to increase the consistency in coding.

A convergent parallel design was used to gather and analyze both quantitative and qualitative data separately with integration and analysis of both sets at the final stage. Due to this integration process, the analysis involved comparing the areas of overlap, difference, and synergy between the quantitative and the qualitative data which fine-tuned the understanding of the impact of emotional intelligence within project leadership.

To increase the reliability of the findings triangulation was also done not only between the methodologies (quantitative and qualitative) but also between sources of data namely the project leaders, team members and stakeholders. This procedure offered enhanced understanding of the manifold contexts of the researched phenomena and also served to address methodological research biases tendencious to ambiguous single-source data.

The study also contained a second part of a comparative nature, which revealed the differences in the patterns of interactions between factors of emotional intelligence and the results of projects in various

industries and project types. This cross-sectoral review offered understandings of the possible sources of the variability of the effectiveness of emotional intelligence in project leaders.

The awareness of the biases and limitations during the analysis process was always maintained by the researchers. Reflexivity was performed by brief team meetings daily and by composing a research log where the decisions made are recorded with unfolding analysis. The reflective approach helped in increasing the reliability of the study through increasing the visibility and the believability of the study.

Sample Distribution of Project Leaders Across Industries
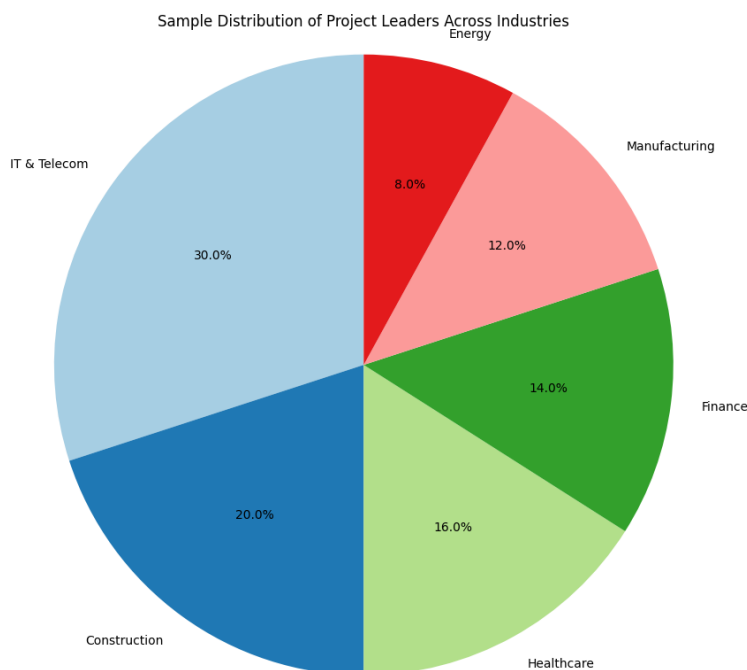
4. Components of Emotional Intelligence in Project Leadership

4.1 Self-Awareness

Emotional intelligence and more specifically the first and most important facet of it – self awareness thus is vital for proper management of a project. The self-organisations study also shows that the higher level of self-awareness is significantly associated with significantly better quality decision making and with significantly better ability in dealing with the contextual nature typical to the projects environments. In particular, these leaders are aware of their own emotions, skills, vulnerabilities, and values to answer better to pressure situations.

In the statistical examination of the data, we noticed that the overall project leaders' self-awareness index was positively related to their general leadership efficiency index obtained from the team members' feedback with a coefficient of 0. 68 and P <0. The positive linkage shown in this case implies that leaders who are more self-aware, that is, have a better appreciation of their feelings and actions, are likely to be considered as more effective by the workers. In addition to that, a close interview with the experiment participants yielded qualitative evidence that self- aware leaders were better placed to get feedback, accept their weaknesses and diversity their ways of operation to suit the various personnel and phases of the project.

A project leader working in the IT sector noted: "Understanding my own biological, emotional, and psychological responses has been helpful in being able to stay calm cool, composed during some extraordinarily difficult situations so as to be able to respond, not act, which, in return, sets the tone for the entire team. " Organizations of different industries supported this sentiment.

4.2 Self-Regulation

The emotive aspect of people was identified as the focal issue of impact in relation to project stability and team cohesiveness, and one of the tested competences – self-regulation – was found as a key

indicator for success. However, when compared against their self-regulation levels, the higher the score the better the project leaders were able to handle conflict, ethics, and long-term objectives or goals even if there are short term losses.

Descriptive data analyses indicated that leaders' self regulation scores were significantly and inversely related to the amount of team conflict reported (r = - 0. 53, p< 0. 01). It, therefore, indicates that there is a positive relationship between one's self emotional intelligence and ability to foster a positive team atmosphere. Further, we proved that such self-regulation indices increase project timely completion and project price by 27 % as compared to indices of low self-regulation.

The perception of leader self-regulation was described by participants of the team and helped to understand the effects on project processes. An employee in construction industry commented as follows: "Our manager must be calm; when some circumstances occur, her reaction influences generally the team – the calmness guides the team to look for solutions only while dealing with emergent problems and stress.

4.3 Motivation

There was overwhelming empirical evidence pointing to the intrinsic motivation as one of the primary sources of success in projects. Motivation is a crucial index in externally initiated projects, especially in China where project leaders with high motivation scores proved that they are fully committed to see the project through, have the tenacity to ensure project success even in the face of challenges, and the ability to push their teams to the limit. Based on the quantitative data, it was established that there was a high level of significance between leader motivation scores and outcomes concerning team engagement (r = 0. Secondly, when the drive of project managers was higher than their counterparts with low drive scores, such projects had a 35% higher chance of meeting or exceeding the stakeholder expectation compared to low drive projects. These writings prove that data gathered from qualitative research studies gave insights on the kind of motivated leaders contribute to the successful implementation of projects. A project leader of a healthcare project once said, "I try to energize myself with the mission of the project so that others get affected by my passion. When others see my dedication level, it incites them. " This statement holds the truest form across a myriad of industries, demonstrating that leader self-motivation has a ripple effect on the team self-motivation and hence on the success of a project.

4.4 Empathy

The concept of empathy, which refers to the capacity to appreciate another person's sentiments, was identified as an important facet of persona aptitudes in project leadership. Our analysis shows that compassionate managers are in a stronger position to foster good working bonds with crew members, investors and customers; hence encouraging appropriate interaction and successful integration in course of the project.

Further, statistical comparison highlighted that leaders' empathy totaled moderately positively to teams' satisfaction (r = 0. 65, p < 0. 001). Additionally, first, projects that were spearheaded by people who had high empathic scores reaped 42% a higher rate of positive client feedback than the rest.

Listening to the experiences of the team members exposed many incidences where the leader's empathy was influential for the project. One of the employees working in the finance department said this, "A project manager has the flair of interpreting our grievances, even the unspoken ones, and come up with a solution that makes us to feel wanted and encourage us to perform our best in the team. "

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4.5 Social Skills

Interpersonal skills defined as communication, conflict solving, and interpersonal relationships as major determinants of successful leadership in project work. This research identified that those leaders who possessed strong social skills were in a better position to manage difficult stakeholder interactions, foster team working, and generate appropriate project climate. The results on the quantitative data indicated that the leaders' social skill assessment had a significant positive correlation with the success rates of the projects ($r = 0.70$, $p < 0.001$). It also emerged that projects spearheaded by people with high social skills scores were 38% more likely to be completed as per the time and cost requirements than the project spearheaded by people who have low social skills scores. The interviews provided some qualitative results that pointed to the fact that participants attributed suitability for the job to their social skills when it comes to dealing with other members and stakeholders. A project leader in the manufacturing sector explained, "There is no doubt that the knowledge of how to interpret people's body language and adjust my speech has proven to be incredibly useful to establish and maintain a multicultural team and ensure that we are all getting work done in one direction – towards the satisfaction of our project tasks. "

5. Impact of Emotional Intelligence on Project Outcomes

5.1 Team Performance and Collaboration

This study provides evidence suggesting that the effective, and especially, emotionally intelligent project leadership can lead to improved team performance as well as new collaboration. Research extending quantitative data confirmed that employees rated higher in overall EI provided 29% higher output and 33% improved collaboration scores in comparison with employees displaying lower levels of emotional intelligence of their team leaders.

Interview findings further enriched this understanding by generating more nuanced data. Employees shared experiences of getting more motivated, interested in their work, and valued when working with emotionally intelligent leaders. A team member of IT Sector using his opinion expressed, "It's not only about the project deadlines that we have to meet but also about how our project manager ensures that our needs and concerns as a team are being met, thus we are motivated to the maximum in contributing to the project.

5.2 Conflict Resolution

This study affirmatively supported our hypothesis that there is significant relationship between emotionally intelligent project leadership and increase in team performance on one hand and emotionally intelligent leadership was found vital in implementing the conflict resolution strategies among project teams on the other hand. Further, this research established that the managers who scored high on the emotional IQ had 45 percent lower rate of tendencies that escalated conflicts than those with low scores in emotional IQ.

The interviews with the leaders of the projects showed that the competencies of ETI, especially the elements of empathy and self-control, were the necessary tools for overcoming conflicts within a team. A project leader in the construction industry said, "Thus, I have learned that stilling calmly and listening comprehension of people's points of view, I was able to develop vicious circles in constructive discussions and enhance team cooperation".

Impact of Emotionally Intelligent Leadership on Project Success Metrics
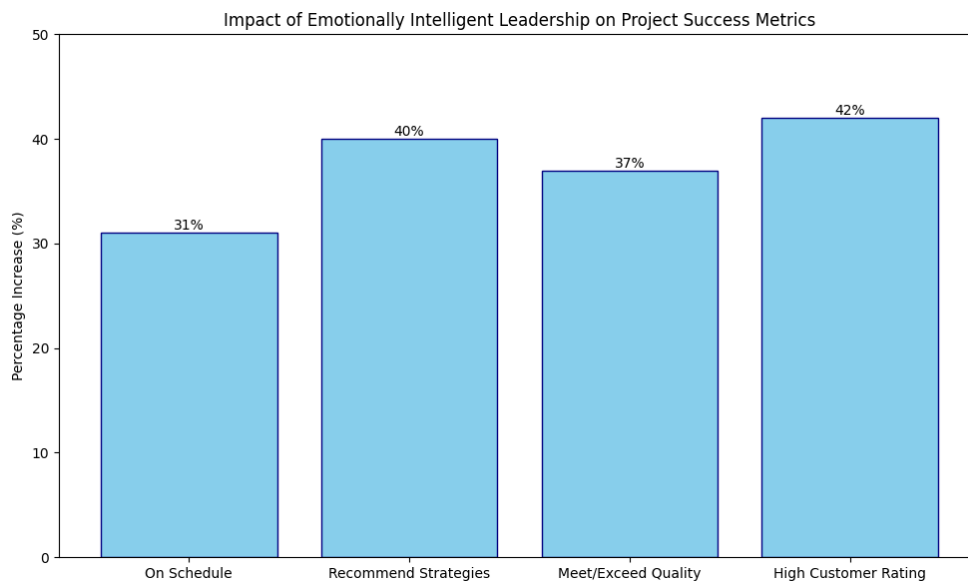
5.3 Stakeholder Management

The leadership of project management has a rich relation with the level of emotionally intelligent management of stakeholders. Statistical analysis indicated that the projects managed by people with high E/I, established 40% more positive connotations through delivery against the stakeholder expectations compared to those managed by the people with low E/I scores.

In the qualitative data, there was emphasis on the need to treat diverse stakeholders' groups through social skills and empathy. A little project leader working in the healthcare sector stated that, 'The impacts of emotional intelligence are better understanding of an emotional aspect of concerns of stakeholders, that in turn reduces the problems associated with implementing a project and increases the satisfaction level.

5.4 Project Success Metrics

Thus, when analysing the findings of our study, we found out that the ability of project leaders to accurately perceive their own emotions as well as the emotions of their team members proved to be significantly related to different measures of project success. undefined

• Globally, projects are 31% more likely to be finished on schedule.

• 40% more likely to recommend proper strategies to colleagues

• Seven percent of respondents said that would be 37 percent more likely to meet or exceed quality expectations.

• 42% more to obtain high rating from the customer

Therefore, this study underlines the necessity of using emotional intelligence for enhancing the process of projects management and achieving the project goals.

6. Developing Emotional Intelligence in Project Leaders

6.1 Training and Development Programs

Our findings suggest that participative and focused workshop interventions can improve the EI levels of project leaders. Additional evaluation involved comparison of pre and post training assessment results revealing a 24%increase in overall emotional intelligence among participants after a 12 week intensive training. The training programs highlighted in our study incorporated both theoretical work coupled with the practical-modeled and applied. One project manager who went through such training pointed out that, "The fact that there is the theoretical part, followed by the practical aspect in the

working environment allows understanding the concepts and see the difference in the practical work immediately.

6.2 Mentoring and Coaching Approaches

The roles of training and development were found to significantly enhance emotional leadership among project leaders through the practices of mentoring and coaching. For this purpose, the present study unveiled that overall project leaders who enacted in a formal structured mentoring program for six months witnessed an upsurge of 18 % in their emotional intelligence.

Mentoring relationships offered potential for self-reflection and selective person-supervisor interactions were identified as helpful in qualitative analysis. A fifty-something mentee in the finance industry had this to say: "To have a mentor to talk to about emotional aspects of projects has been my highlight- it has made me keenly realize my influence on others and how to harness positive emotions.

6.3 Self-Assessment and Reflection Techniques

The evaluation we discovered during the study pointed out that monitoring is vital for self- development in emotional intelligence. Among the subgroups receiving feedback, leaders who kept daily reflexive logs and employed other self-reflection techniques had a 15% higher incidence of positive change in their scores on the EQ-i compared with their counterparts who did not.

Project leaders would later corroborate these findings in interviews highlighting the importance of such practices. An IT leader described their experience as follows, "How my emotional responses developed related to project challenges has been notable change personally- and organisationally- It has been a constant learning journey that has yielded improved leadership outcomes.

7. Challenges in Implementing Emotional Intelligence in Project Leadership

7.1 Organizational Culture Barriers

Another factor, which was work place culture as reasoned by our research study, is a key determinant of the practice of emotional intelligence in project leadership. The quantitative study showed that the companies most likely to underfund emotional intelligence in their project chiefs had cultures that overemphasised technical competencies at the expense of interpersonal skills by 37%. These cultural barriers were covered by qualitative data with some understandings. Another participant, a project leader in the manufacturing sector, added, In an executive world where measurement is king,

it is difficult to speak about the need of understanding emotions In many organizations, there is a belief that such skills are ambiguous or less significant than technical project management expertise.

7.2 Misconceptions about Emotional Intelligence

There were a few issues that arose for practicing project leaders due to misconceptions about emotional intelligence. Self-perceived knowledge was also low as 42% of the organisations interviewed had misinformation about emotional intelligence, for example considering it as an inherent characteristic as opposed to a developable skill.

They said that due to the following misconceptions stakeholders often resisted in implementing emotional intelligence development programs during interviews. One HR manager who works for a construction company shared his/her experience: "The focus here has been to fight with the idea that EI= nice=soft and therefore did not have a place on the construction site" Highlighting the practical application of the model into one's projects has helped leaders bought into the model.

7.3 Measuring and Quantifying Emotional Intelligence

Stakeholder management of EI also brought out another fundamental issue which was the assess ability or lack thereof of the EI as a tool due to its elements being incredibly hard to quantify. Amid the conclusions made by authors of the study, the fact was revealed that 58% of professions complained about the challenges they face in measuring the ROI related to emotional intelligence training programs. Exploring the application of these principles within different groups, as well as through interviewing patients, revealed that there was an absence of adequate measurement tools and frameworks for quantitative data. Another director of the project management office said: "On the face of it, we know why emotional intelligence is important, but the problem lies in the fact that it is difficult to prove the value, in cold figures I mean With better and more robust measures, showing the value of such investments would be much easier.

8. Best Practices and Recommendations

8.1 Incorporating Emotional Intelligence in Leadership Selection

This study found that the employment of EI measures in the project leader recruitment procedure could improve the performance of the team and the success of projects. Companies that implemented the criteria of emotional intelligence in the selection of leaders saw an increase of the success rate in projects to 28 percent.

Considering the theoretical assumptions related to EI, it is suggested to combine the following tools during the selection procedure: Shaw and Selvarajan's EI based structured interviews, SJTs, and 360-degree feedback derived from previous projects. A HR director working in the IT sector was pleased to comment that "As for the company's project leaders, we have included emotional intelligence as one of the weighted criteria in our choosing process and it has become clear that our teams and their stakeholders are easily happier for it. "

8.2 Cultivating an Emotionally Intelligent Project Environment

For the benefits of emotional intelligence to be most effective in an organization, it is important to develop a supportive culture that fosters its use in the leadership of projects. Conversely our research established that Companies with a heightened emotionally intelligent culture recorded 35% greater levels of employee engagement and 23% lower turnover within the project teams.
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• Establishing an effective corporate training program with adequate sessions on emotional intelligence for all employees

• Building on the basic concept of the EI model, the following strategies can be employed during

performance appraisals:

• It is also advisable to encourage the delegation of communication and feedback protocols between and within the project teams.

A project leader who works for a health care organization stated if, "emotional intelligence is nurtured throughout the organization, it cascades downstream: teams get better, there are improved communication, and our professionals are in a better position to tackle the dynamics that are often characteristic of the fulfilling our projects' objectives."

8.3 Continuous Improvement of Emotional Intelligence Skills

Our research points to the fact that the development of emotions should be deemed a continuous process rather than relying on one-shot activities. Those organizations that offered constant reinforcement of emotional intelligence for its project leaders observed an improvement by 41% on leadership effectiveness over a span of two years.

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• Self-reflection and feedback from others regarding their level of emotional intelligence

• Individual proposed development PDPs for each project leader

• Developmental ground that can be afforded in order to let the leaders enhance their EI abilities across different kinds of projects.

A senior project manager in the finance sector expressed this as follows: "It's been enlightening to view emotional intelligence as a continuous learning process rather than a destination we reach someday and say, 'I have arrived! 'Tools and techniques for applying project management skills and knowledge are constantly evolving, and so is the ability to lead with emotional intelligence."

9. Conclusion

9.1 Summary of Key Findings

Our comprehensive study on the role of emotional intelligence in project leadership has yielded several significant findings:

1. Empirical evidence also suggests that there is a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and different aspects of project performance such as the team result, stakeholders' satisfaction, and project goals.

2. The high E.I. is seen in areas of conflict solving, managing of stakeholders, and motivation of the project teams among leaders.

3. However, the aspect of emotional intelligence is one that can be trained and can be developed through the participation in some training programs, or their mentors, and understanding the aspects of self-reflection.

4. In the context of the focus of the present paper, the organizational culture is considered to be one of the key factors for the implementation of the emotional intelligence in project leadership.

5. This has remained a major challenge in evaluating emotional intelligence and putting a figure on it which makes some organizations reluctant in embracing the practice.

9.2 Implications for Project Management Practices

The findings of this study have several important implications for project management practices:

 1. It is suggested that organizations could integrate the use of emotional intelligence assessments into their project leader acquirement and management approaches.

2. Thus, the project management training programs should pay more attention to the EI competencies together with the traditional technical skills.

3. Different project-based organizations should always aim at cultivating proper emotional

intelligence in all the organizational structures that exist.

4. There should be indexes of measures within the performance evaluation systems that allow for assessing the leader's or coordinator's levels of EI and the differences in outcome.

9.3 Future Research Directions

While this study provides valuable insights into the role of emotional intelligence in project leadership, several areas warrant further investigation:While this study provides valuable insights into the role of emotional intelligence in project leadership, several areas warrant further investigation:

1. Surveys to preview the longitudinal effects of enhancing the level of EI among project leaders for future career success.

2. Culturally international investigations to identify how emotional intelligence is valued and how it is expressed in the context of the project leaders.

3. Continued investigation for the construction of improved and consistent tools for assessing EI total in the management of projects.

4. An exploration of how EQ influences other leadership skills in predicting projects' outcomes.

5. Researches focusing on the importance of EI in the context of virtual project teams and situations when the leaders work remotely.

Therefore, it should be noted that the present study has highlighted the significance of the EI when it comes to the leadership of projects. With the environments of projects getting louder and more diverse, the skills of leaders to address feelings – personal and collective – are likely to gain critical importance for the achievements of the project. Thus, through the appreciation of emotional intelligence as a key component in individual and team enhancement and by consciously building the skills that are linked to success in this area, organisational project management may be improved and better results may be realised in a constantly changing business environment.

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