

PROJECT MANAGERS' EFFECTIVENESS IN THE TELECOM INDUSTRY OF PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT: *This study examines the Project Managers' (PMs') effectiveness through the lens of PMs' willingness and organization support in telecom industry of Pakistan. The impact of PMs' willingness and organization support on PMs' effectiveness is measured. The data was collected from telecom industry's employees through survey questionnaires. Total 410 questionnaires were distributed, however, 360 were returned and the response rate was 87 %. It is hypothesized that PMs' willingness and organization support are equally and strongly related to PMs' effectiveness which is theoretically associated with organizational performance. The study shows that there was a high correlation between PMs' willingness (0.754) with PMs' effectiveness. It is also concluded that the organizational support is a positive relationship with PMs' effectiveness. This study clearly identifies that PMs' willingness and organizational support also plays significant role to enhance the PMs' effectiveness for telecom projects in Pakistan.*

Keywords: Project Managers' Effectiveness, Willingness, Organization Support, Telecom Industry

INTRODUCTION

The top management is thinking that the role of Project Managers (PMs) is becoming more challenging especially in the service industry. To abreast with internal and external challenges project plays a key role to implement business directions within organizations. Service industry demands to provide services to customers according to customer needs focusing customer satisfaction. PMs' performance and its association with project success has been the focus in the past researches, factors impacting project success are also discussed in terms of PMs' Performance [1]. [2] argues that managers' effectiveness can be measure through their willingness. Managers' motivation can play a vital role for their outcome. Researchers believe that a high level of organization support is required to persuade thoughts of trust and strong feelings of classification with the organization. Since employees often respond positively to the support they receive from their organizations [3; 4]. Pakistan is a developing country where service industry like telecom has been prosperous day by day. As the role of the telecom personnel is increasing tremendously [5]. This sector is significant in view of its current growth potential. Telecom industry of Pakistan is one of the leading industries in economic growth of the country with a lot of national and international investment coming into this industry. As per telecommunication authorities, many projects are being initiated in this sector from expansion to optimization, from customer satisfaction to quality of services improvements, from new products and innovation to compliance for regulatory. These projects are handled and managed by professionals who are known as Project managers (PMs) in the organization and the industry [6]. Ideally these PMs are well conversant with project management practices and act as a bridge between organizational project objectives and its implementation into project success [7]. This job demands high performance and high performance criteria of deliverance. As Projects are getting more pivotal for the organization the role of PM is getting critical in the

organizations [8]. There are many factors which can impact project manager's effectiveness in telecommunications industry of Pakistan however researchers will encompass few of them which consists of PMs' willingness and Organizational support (OS). Looking into current challenging environments of telecommunication industry with high competition around the industry where cost cutting, saturation in terms of customer and services offering by all players the need to optimized and successful project management is building day by day. PMs' effectiveness is the basic output to serve the purpose of projects and to get maximum from the project outcomes [7]. The purpose of this study is first, to understand the relationship between PMs' willingness and OS with PMs' effectiveness. Second, the study investigates the impact of PMs' willingness and organization support on PMs' effectiveness.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The idea of managerial effectiveness is not new. It has been of interest to researchers since the 1960. But the studies on PMs' effectiveness are new area to explore. PMs' effectiveness can be defined that project managers are concerned and tabled to meet the goals that they set to do the project management work. Most of the research work has been carried out to highlight the factors which influence project success [9]. The Project manager is said to be the backbone of any organization because PM translates organizational objectives and goals into project success. [10] emphasized that a PM is an individual allocated by the existing organization to guide his team members that are accountable for accomplishing the objectives of a project.

Project Manager Effectiveness

According to [11] a project is any sequence of related activities and duties having a unique purpose to be accomplished within definite conditions as that of clear beginning and ending dates, having limited and specified resources. Project is a short-term venture that is carried out to develop a unique result or a service. Projects are impermanent with specified start and end [10]. Furthermore,

this is because of the temporary nature of projects. When the project objectives are attained that is when it ends or when the project is finished because its objectives are not being able or cannot be met or when the project is no more required [10]. Project management performance is discussed in variety of dimensions in many research articles. Effective project manager encourage his team to think out of the box and determine innovative solutions to the problems and to be decisive based on the accuracy of the data collected [12; 13].

Employees' Willingness

[14] argues that activities and roles can be performed more innovatively if employees are 'Willing' to do so. As per [15] project managers of an organization are artists in the theatre i.e. project management, wearing attire, and performing in front of spectators' i.e. management and stakeholders of the projects. [16] argue that lack of employee's willingness and motivation to put in their skills for a project will result in project breakdown. As per [10]. PMs are well conversant with project management practices and act as a bridge between organizational project objectives and its implementation into project success. PM can be one among most of the project managers will table a plan or then a manager who manages portfolio will in the end be responsible for multiple projects within the organization. PM remain strongly interactive with rest of the functions, such as the business related analysis, managers responsible for quality control, and other experts. In keeping with this general line of argument, the researchers can propose that one way for project success in the organization is, if PMs are willing to actively contribute to implement the project management activities through their competencies to achieve competitive advantage for the organization. [17]. suggest that the 'Willingness' factor has in general, not been emphasized in organization knowledge based work and management activities.

Organization Support

18 [16] argue that OS is required to perform any initiative or task, and when it comes to projects, OS is inevitable. Literature reveals that organizational support is the most critical and significant factor for project success. Project success is not possible without PMs' performance which is always dependent and required for project success 12 [10]. Organizations change their priorities on the basis of market opportunities and then on going project suffers if they are not part of that priority list of organization, which always lead to failure of PMs [19]. The commitment, priority and support for project manager in return provide and capitalized in project success which somehow lacks if OS is not present at the time of need by project managers. OS is not limited to resources (human resource and financial) but are also required in terms of management buy in, stakeholders' satisfaction, sponsorship of financing authorities as well as from top management. OS is always needed by PMs to perform their role effectively and efficiently for project success. [20; 21]. The idea of OS is well acknowledged among various researchers and is playing an important role in enhancing the managers' effectiveness [20]. OS has been considered as one of the independent variable for this study. One of the vital factors that has been said to affect managers' performance is OS such as resources, infrastructures, moral and social

support [21; 22]. On the other hand, [23] suggested that top management support and stakeholders' authority is one the key reasons behind the project's failure or success as it has often brought into the notice from the project team members that the OS is not provided to them which they require to successfully accomplish the project with the defined timelines and specified scope hence, the reason behind this was they did not identify the key stakeholder and the top management support before starting the project. An effective project manager can hence contribute in to the project success by incorporating measures to attain the OS during the planning stage of the project.

Relationship between Willingness, Organization Support and Effectiveness

24 [22] established in his research that employees' willingness plays a significant role for their effectiveness. According to 25 [23] 'Will' is linked with the basic inspiration to be effective or not. Moreover, without support from the organization, a PM cannot perform effectively and efficiently. The one way a PM can add value for the organization, if PM be willing to actively contribute to project strategies implementation in order to become effective. Therefore, present study seeks to contribute to the PMs' effectiveness literature by examining the relationship between PMs' willingness and Organizational Support that have received less attention from the previous researchers see below figure 1.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The research model shown in figure 1 includes the three following predictors to assess and their impact on PMs' effectiveness: PMs' willingness and organization support.

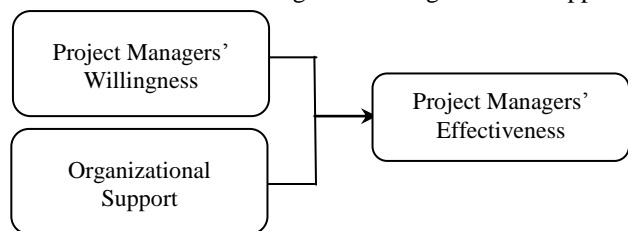


Figure 1: Research Model for Present Study

Based on the above theoretical model the following hypotheses are proposed.

H1: PMs' Willingness is positively related with PMs' Effectiveness as perceived by employees.

H2: Organization Support is positively related with PMs' Effectiveness as perceived by the employees.

Data Collection and Analysis

The survey instrument for the present study is taken from the prior researches [25; 26; 27] using five point likert scale and is adapted through proper alteration that is appropriate for the Pakistan and its telecom environment. The respondents consist of project team members and people who are somehow participating in the projects within the organization based in Pakistan telecom industry. In this study, the snowballing technique has used to gather the response efficiently and comparatively in less time. Before sending the final survey instrument, a Pilot test was conducted to test the reliability of survey instrument. This pilot study was done among the 30 employees of telecom organization. The

reliability value can be seen from the Cronbach alpha (≥ 0.60 are considered reliable). Therefore, the overall Cronbach Alpha of the survey instrument is reliable and met the requirements.

FINDINGS

Descriptive statistics is a technique to organize, explain and describe the collected data through tables [28]. The constructs are calculated on a five point Likert scale, where 1 referred to “Strongly disagree” and 5 corresponds to “Strongly agree”. Any scores that are below the midpoint (3.00) can be considered as low with regard to the how survey respondents have evaluated the PMs’ effectiveness, PMs’ willingness, Organizational Support. The results shows in the Table 1 that most mean scores are on the above the midpoint scores 3.0. In other words all the variables to be of a moderate standard where these scores are higher than the 3.00 level. The respondents in the opinion that the PMs are getting maximum support from their organization and the mean score of OS is 4.13 and the PMs’ willingness mean score is 3.62. As far as dependent variable is concern, it is to be noted that the mean value of PMs’ effectiveness is above the midpoint (3.44). The correlation (see table 1) between the dependent variable PMs’ effectiveness and independent variables i.e. PMs’ willingness and OS also calculated. PMs’ willingness has a significant and high correlation at 0.754 with the PMs’ effectiveness. We can further note that OS also has a significant correlation at 0.712 with the PMs’ effectiveness.

Table 1: Means and Correlation

Variables	Means	1	2	3
1.PMs’ Effectiveness	3.44	1.00		
2.PMs’ Willingness	3.62	0.754	1.00	
3.Organizational Support	4.13	0.712	0.775	1.00

*** $p < .000$. n=360

Table 2: Model Summary and Regression Analysis

Regression Statistics			
Independent Variables	Regression Coefficient		
	Standardized	T	Sig.
PMs’	0.506	0.011	000*
Organizational	0.321		000*
Adjusted R ²	0.645		
ANOVA	F		117.788
	Sig		000*

Dependent Variable: PMs’ Effectiveness
 $p < .000$. n=360

The results of regression analysis are presented in Table 2. The R² shows the goodness of fit of the model and is estimated as 65% which shows that 65% of variation in dependent variable is explained by independent variables. The standardized coefficients (β s) reflect the change in the dependent measure for each unit change in the independent variable. Comparison between regression coefficients allows for a relative assessment of each variable’s importance in the regression model [29]. In our study, the β value for PMs’ willingness on their effectiveness is 0.506 with significance of ($p < .000$). As far as the β value of organizational support is 0.321 with significance of ($p < .000$). The results support for

the relationship envisaged in the H1 and H2 that are PMs’ Willingness and Organizational support have a positive and significant impact of PMs’ effectiveness.

DISCUSSION

Regression analysis is a set of statistical procedures use to forecast and describe the value of dependent variable base on the values of independent variables [30]. So, linear regression analysis test is performed to examine the impact of the explanatory variables on the responsive variable. In the following section we report the results of the hypotheses that are tested using regressions. To test the hypothesis simple regression run. The result of regression analysis shows that the standardized regression between independent variables i.e. PMs’ willingness and OS with dependent variable PMs’ effectiveness. The model using adjusted R² fit for the expression, $Y = a + bx$ where y = the PMs’ effectiveness and X is the PMs’ willingness and OS, 0.65 with significance at $p < .000$ level shows a good model fit. This indicates that 65% of the any variation in PMs’ effectiveness is explained by PMs’ willingness and OS. The results report to H1 and H2 the PMs’ willingness and OS has a significant impact on PMs’ effectiveness.

We can observe this phenomenon from the evaluation done by surveyed managers of willingness, organizational support, and effectiveness, where all are considered above the average level. In other words they believe that the project managers have the willingness and organizational support which can eventually make him effective. [27] report that managers’ willingness is a necessary first step towards the managers’ effectiveness. The relationship between the PMs’ effectiveness and PMs’ willingness and OS are also supported by the results of correlation test. The one way a project manager may add value for the organization, if project manager be willing to actively contribute to project success. On the other hand, [31] claim that managers willingness is one of the best ways to make them effective. We have already indicated that PMs’ effectiveness as is quite at early stages most developing countries including Pakistan. The findings of the study can be used as a benchmark for other developing countries, which would need to cross cultural studies to further review and verify these findings.

CONCLUSION

The present study has aimed to explain the phenomenon of the PMs’ effectiveness in the telecom industry of Pakistan. PMs are the strength of any organization and their importance cannot be ignored. To manage a project, the project manager needs to be willing to meet project objectives. Therefore, the current study has contributed in enlightening the PMs’ effectiveness for telecom industry in few aspects, like PMs’ willingness and organization support. Finding of this study has proved that PMs’ willingness has a significant and high correlation with PMs’ effectiveness. This study clearly identifies through the β and p value that PMs’ willingness and organizational support also plays significant role to enhance PMs’ effectiveness for telecom projects in Pakistan.

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