Politecnico di Torino

LM-31 Engineering and Management
Innovation Management and Entrepreneurship
A.a. 2023/2024
November 2024

The Role of Power Skills and Organizational Culture in Achieving Project Success

Supervisors:

Alberto De Marco - Politecnico di Torino
Richard Maltzman - Boston University

Candidate:

Romina Bellarmino

Abstract

This study examines the evolving conceptualization of project success, with a particular emphasis on the roles of power skills and organizational culture within contemporary project management frameworks. In the past, project success was typically gauged by the "iron triangle" parameters of time, cost, and scope. However, in light of the evolving business environment and mounting societal expectations, the criteria for success have expanded to encompass additional dimensions, including stakeholder satisfaction, sustainability, and strategic alignment. This research is based on an extensive literature review, a cross-industry survey, and interviews with experienced project management professionals, which together illuminate a transition toward a more comprehensive success paradigm. The findings align with the recent redefinition by the Project Management Institute: ***"Successful projects deliver value that was worth the effort and expense."*** (PMI, 2024)

The ability to communicate effectively, adapt to changing circumstances, lead a team, and, in particular, demonstrate emotional intelligence are identified as key competencies for navigating complex project landscapes. The research findings revealed that emotional intelligence, which encompasses self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management, emerged as a significant predictor of project success. These competencies enable project managers to cultivate collaborative relationships, manage interpersonal conflicts, and build cohesive teams, thereby supporting sustainable project outcomes. Survey findings corroborate the significance of communication and emotional intelligence as facilitators of team collaboration, innovation, and resilience. Furthermore, insights from interviews reinforce the value of power skills in addressing stakeholder expectations, aligning projects with sustainability objectives, and promoting the well-being of project teams.

The research also examines the relationship between the possession of strong power skills and the sustainability of project outcomes. With sustainability defined in a comprehensive manner to encompass environmental, economic, and social dimensions, the findings indicate that power skills contribute not only to immediate project objectives but also to enduring positive outcomes. These insights underscore the intricate role of power skills in advancing sustainability,

emphasizing both their potential advantages and intrinsic limitations. While power skills can facilitate sustainable outcomes when utilized ethically, their misapplication may result in deceptive stakeholder influence, reinforcing the necessity for integrity and transparency in project management practices. Furthermore, organizational culture has been identified as a significant factor influencing project outcomes. Psychological safety has been identified as a crucial element within this context. A culture that fosters openness and accountability has been shown to facilitate more effective decision-making, enhance adaptability, and encourage proactive stakeholder engagement. The findings suggest that successful project outcomes are heavily influenced by a supportive culture that empowers teams to contribute meaningfully and sustainably.

Moreover, this study examines the evolving role of artificial intelligence (AI) in project management and its implications for the development of human-centric power skills. As AI automates routine tasks, project managers are increasingly assuming responsibility for strategic, empathetic, and innovative endeavors. It is recommended that organizations implement comprehensive training programs that integrate AI proficiency with power skills development, emphasizing strategic thinking, problem-solving, empathy, and leadership.

Table of Content

Introduction and Objectives

Introduction

The concept of project success has been widely discussed and debated in the field of project management. Traditionally, project success has been measured using the "iron triangle" of scope, time, and cost (Atkinson, 1999; Munns & Bjeirmi, 1996). However, with evolving market dynamics and changing project environments, new definitions of project success are emerging that go beyond these traditional measures to include elements such as stakeholder satisfaction, sustainability, and long-term business impact (Pinto & Slevin, 1988; Maltzman & Shirley, 2015; Richard et al., 2009). In the contemporary era, the expectation is that modern projects will deliver benefits that align with the strategic goals of organizations. This entails a consideration of not only immediate outcomes but also the long-term implications for stakeholders and the environment. The concept of sustainability has become a pivotal element in the development of contemporary project success frameworks. Researchers have underscored the necessity for the integration of social, environmental, and economic considerations into project management practices. This expanded perspective recognizes the growing significance of sustainability not merely as an isolated objective, but as a foundational element that contributes to the comprehensive success of projects.

In this context, power skills—often referred to as soft skills or interpersonal skills—have gained increasing recognition as critical factors in achieving project success. As defined by the Project

Management Institute (PMI), power skills are abilities and behaviors that facilitate effective interaction with others, thereby enabling professionals to succeed in the workplace. Such skills include leadership, communication, and emotional intelligence, all of which play a crucial role in cultivating team cohesion, strategic thinking, and adaptability. Studies show that effective communication can improve project success rates significantly (Ibdayanti et al., 2024), as project managers spend a considerable amount of their time communicating with stakeholders and team members. Similarly, leadership and emotional intelligence contribute to creating a motivating environment, managing conflicts, and ensuring that team members are aligned with project goals.

Organizational culture also plays a key role in determining project success. Defined as a set of shared values, norms, and practices (Tran, 2023), organizational culture shapes the behaviors and decision-making processes of project teams. A culture that promotes open communication, accountability, and adaptability can enhance the likelihood of successful project outcomes (Denison et al., 2014). In contrast, rigid and hierarchical cultures may inhibit innovation and reduce the ability of teams to respond to changing project demands (Kotter, 2014).

Objectives of the Study

The principal objective of this research is to examine the manner in which power skills and organizational culture impact project success. This study aims to elucidate the pivotal elements that facilitate project success and it examines the pivotal power skills, including leadership, communication, and emotional intelligence. Moreover, the study seeks to examine the influence of organizational culture on the behaviors and decision-making processes of project teams.

Overview of Research Components

This research is structured around three core components: a comprehensive literature review, a survey distributed to professionals via digital platforms, and insights gathered from interviews conducted with eleven top industry leaders. The initial component entails a comprehensive examination of existing literature, encompassing approximately 200 research papers, of which 90 were identified as pivotal in the formulation of this thesis. The second component comprises a survey designed to ascertain the perceptions of professionals regarding the significance of power

skills and organizational culture in attaining project success. The third component incorporates in-depth and structured interviews with prominent leaders, facilitating insights into their experiences and perspectives on the subjects under investigation.

Structure of the Paper

This paper is structured into distinct sections. The initial section is dedicated to the definition of core concepts, including the notion of project success, the role of sustainability within this concept, the identification of "power skills" (with a particular focus on leadership, communication, and emotional intelligence), and the examination of organizational culture. The second section of the paper is devoted to an exposition of the methodology employed in the research project. Subsequently, the following section of the paper examines the interrelationship between these components, based on the findings of the research project, which takes into account the comprehensive literature review, survey responses, and interview insights. In conclusion, the findings are synthesized in a comprehensive manner, offering a revised definition of project success and delineating the strategies that organizations can adopt to achieve it. This synthesis incorporates insights gained from the study.

Core Concepts

Project Success

The concept of project success has experienced significant evolution over the past three decades, influenced by the changing dynamics of business environments, project complexity, stakeholder expectations, and societal concerns. Traditionally, project success was evaluated based on the "iron triangle" framework, focusing primarily on three key constraints: time, cost, and scope. This approach dominated the early literature on project management, prioritizing efficiency and control. However, as projects grew more complex and the demands of stakeholders diversified, the notion of project success expanded to encompass multiple dimensions, including client satisfaction, benefits realization, strategic alignment, and sustainability. The evolving definition of project success is not just an academic concern but a professional imperative as well (Ika & Pinto, 2022). Without clear guidelines for evaluating success, project managers' careers are substantially affected . When organizations and their managerial staff have only a vague notion

of what constitutes project success or if different key organizational members offer mixed messages about how and when they assess project delivery, project managers may be incorrectly rewarded or sanctioned due to murky evaluative criteria. Erroneous or premature evaluations of a project's success can send signals to other project managers as to what appears to be expected of them and cause them to alter their approaches accordingly, even if these changes ultimately lead to adverse project outcomes (Pinto et al., 2021). Thus, the evolving understanding of project success has important implications for both managerial practices and the broader organizational strategy.

From the Iron Triangle to Client Satisfaction and Beyond

During the period between the 1960s and the 1980s, project success was largely defined by delivering projects on time, within budget, and meeting scope requirements. This "iron triangle" model served as the foundation for measuring project outcomes, reflecting the emphasis on efficiency in an era characterized by rapid industrial growth and technological advancements. By the late 1980s, researchers and practitioners began to recognize the limitations of this narrow definition. Client satisfaction emerged as a crucial factor in evaluating project success, particularly in sectors where projects were closely tied to consumer products or end-user services. Atkinson (1999) observed that the literature showed a gradual shift towards incorporating client satisfaction into the assessment of project success, not only at the end of the project life cycle but also throughout the product life cycle. This shift signaled the growing recognition that projects are not isolated endeavors but part of a broader system of value delivery and stakeholder engagement. Without linking success to an organization's strategic goals, its definition becomes diffuse, as different stakeholders apply different assessments or metrics to the concept. Shenhar and Dvir (2007) argued, "any collection of measures should address more than one need and should represent the concerns of more than one stakeholder group. But above all, success measures must reflect the strategic intent of the company and its business objectives" (p. 25).

The 1980s and 1990s marked a turning point in project management literature, as researchers began to explore the concept of Critical Success Factors (CSFs) in more depth. Rather than relying solely on traditional metrics, scholars like Morris and Hough (1987) sought to identify key determinants of project success through comprehensive frameworks. They proposed that

success is a multi-faceted construct, shaped by a variety of factors such as project definition, organizational structures, *communication and control*, *human qualities*, and external influences. Their work emphasized the importance of *clearly defining project goals* and establishing *robust communication channels* to ensure alignment between all stakeholders.

Hoegl and Gemünden (2001) made a substantial contribution to the study of CSFs by focusing on teamwork quality as a critical factor for innovative project success. Their empirical research demonstrated that effective collaboration, trust, and communication within teams are vital to achieving project outcomes. This shift toward an emphasis on interpersonal dynamics and soft skills reflected a broader trend within the field of management theory, which increasingly highlighted the importance of human factors in achieving success. Around the same time, Shenhar et al. (2002) took a more structured approach by categorizing 96 different variables relevant to project success into three groups: those independent of project characteristics, those influenced by project uncertainty, and those affected by project scope. Shenhar's work introduced a multi-dimensional perspective on success, acknowledging that different projects have varying levels of complexity and uncertainty, which necessitates tailored success strategies. This research established a more sophisticated understanding of the influence of project characteristics on outcomes, thereby facilitating future investigations into contingency and complexity theories in project management.

Modern Perspectives: Multi-Dimensional Success and Sustainability

As the new millennium approached, project management scholars and practitioners began to expand the scope of project success even further. Shenhar and Dvir (2007) introduced a comprehensive framework with five overlapping success dimensions: project efficiency, impact on customers, business success, strategic potential, and preparation for the future. This model recognized that success extends beyond the immediate outputs of a project to include long-term strategic goals and impacts on both internal and external stakeholders. During this period, sustainability emerged as a critical component of project success, driven by increasing awareness of environmental issues and social responsibility. Maltzman and Shirley (2015) emphasized the importance of balancing short-term *efficiency* with long-term *effectiveness*, particularly in relation to environmental and social impacts. Their concept of "green success" called for project managers to consider the long-term sustainability of their projects, integrating environmental

stewardship and social responsibility into traditional measures of success. In international development projects, the OECD's policy-makers introduced evaluation criteria such as relevance (*is the project doing the right things?*), efficiency (*how well the resources are being used?*) , effectiveness *(is the project achieving its objectives?*), impact (*what difference does the project make?*), and sustainability (*will the project benefit last?*) to provide a structured framework for assessing success in complex environments. Recently, the coherence criteria was added (*how does the project fit with the other projects?*) to better apprehend linkages, systems thinking, partnerships dynamics, and complexity (OECD, 2019). These criteria facilitated the codification of a more comprehensive conceptualization of success, underscoring the necessity of assessing not only the tangible outcomes of a project but also the long-term advantages and ramifications for stakeholders and the environment. The transition towards a multi-dimensional framework has prompted researchers to refine their understanding of critical success factors (CSFs) and success criteria (SCs). As mentioned, traditionally, success criteria focused on cost and performance, with Kerzner (2009) highlighting their importance in evaluating project outcomes. However, as studies such as Bayiley & Teklu (2016) demonstrated, the concept of success criteria expanded to include broader dimensions like strategic alignment, stakeholder satisfaction, and user satisfaction. A 2023 study by Bjelica et al. emphasized the importance of fulfilling project goals as a key success criterion, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The researchers found that client and owner satisfaction, adherence to schedules, meeting quality specifications, and profitability were key indicators of project success. Their findings highlighted the variability in success criteria across different industries and project types, underscoring the need for tailored evaluation approaches.

The Tesseract Model

In their influential work, *The "Re-meaning of Project Success: Updating and Recalibrating for a Modern Project Management"* (2022), Lavagnon Ika and Jeffrey Pinto present a four-dimensional model for evaluating project success. This framework builds on the earlier contributions of Maltzman and Shirley (2015) and Ika (2018) to offer a comprehensive method for assessing projects based on project plan success, business case success, green efficacy (environmental sustainability), and stakeholder satisfaction. According to Ika and Pinto, these

four dimensions reflect a more holistic view of success beyond traditional metrics, acknowledging that projects are multifaceted endeavors with varying stakeholders and goals. They also emphasize that success is a relative and subjective concept, shaped by the perspectives of different stakeholders and phases of the project.

Figure 1: The Tesseract model of project success (Ika & Pinto, 2022)
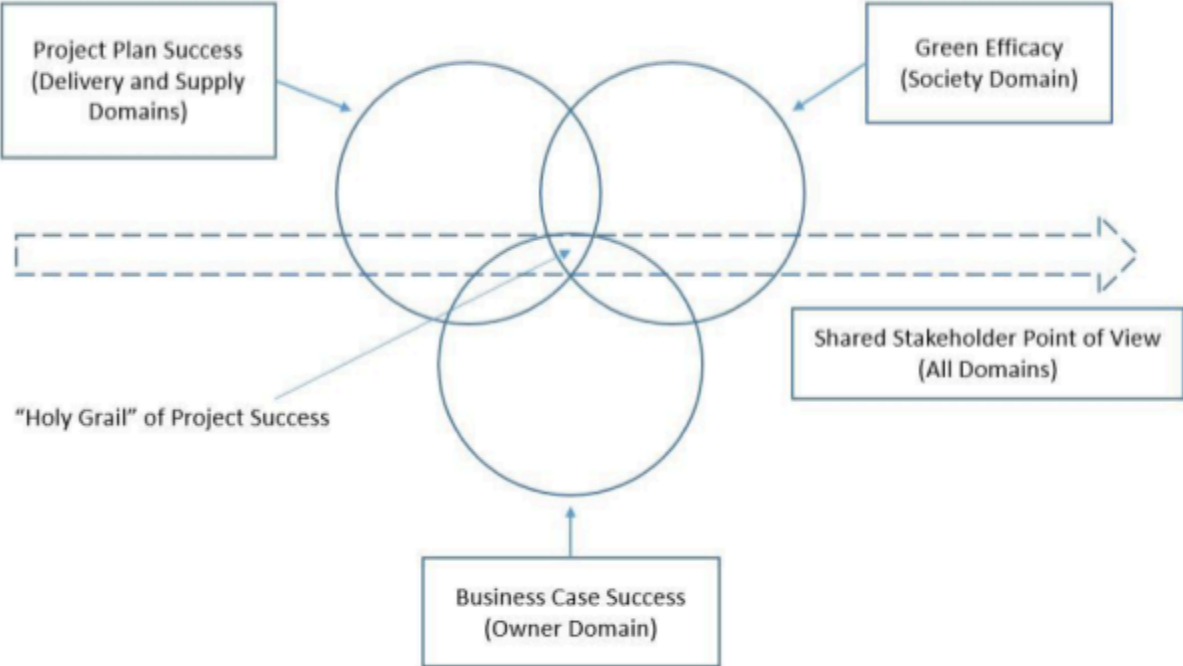
Ika and Pinto's starting point is a three-dimensional model of project success that offers a framework for evaluating projects based on three critical aspects: project plan success, business case success, and green *efficacy*. The proposed approach recognizes the potential for projects to manifest in a multitude of combinations across these dimensions. Consequently, it permits a more nuanced evaluation of their ultimate outcomes. Although the ultimate aspiration is to achieve success across all three dimensions—referred to as the "holy grail"—the reality is often more complex, with projects displaying a mix of successes and shortcomings.

For instance, projects like the 2016 Panama Canal expansion represent all-around success. This undertaking stayed relatively on schedule and within its $5.25 billion budget and doubled the canal's shipping capacity while integrating innovative water-saving measures to promote

environmental conservation. In contrast, projects that were ultimately unsuccessful, such as the Nicaragua Canal, which was designed to compete with the Panama Canal, encountered significant challenges and setbacks. Environmental concerns pertaining to the canal's route through Lake Nicaragua, coupled with a dearth of foreign investment and protracted legal disputes, led to a deterioration in project execution, business benefits, and sustainability objectives. Some projects achieve success in terms of execution and business benefits but fail to meet sustainability standards, as is the case with large dam constructions in developing regions. Such dams frequently utilize hydroelectricity to stimulate economic growth, yet they can also result in the displacement of local communities and the submergence of natural ecosystems. In response to these challenges, countries such as India and Norway have adopted a strategy of constructing multiple smaller dams, aiming to achieve a balance between electricity generation and environmental impact. Conversely, some projects like California's High-Speed Rail (CHSR) fail in both execution and business dimensions while still achieving sustainability goals. Despite budget overruns and missed targets, CHSR emphasized reducing carbon emissions and promoting sustainable transportation, resulting in a positive environmental impact. Other projects, such as Google Glass, succeed in efficient execution but fall short of business success while still advancing sustainability goals. Although the product faced public skepticism and failed commercially, it demonstrated technological potential and minimal environmental footprint. Similarly, the London Crossrail project, while plagued with delays and rising costs, shows promise in long-term business and sustainability outcomes, suggesting its eventual integration into London's public transport system. In cases where projects succeed in execution but fail in both business and sustainability, negative consequences arise. An example is the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, which efficiently diverted water and generated electricity but did so at the expense of downstream communities and the environment, leaving many affected residents uncompensated. On the other hand, projects like Berlin's Brandenburg Airport, despite decades of mismanagement and missed deadlines, have achieved business success by becoming a significant hub in Europe, even amid ongoing environmental challenges. Lastly, some projects fail in both planning and business dimensions yet contribute positively to sustainability or social objectives. An example is the US Department of Veteran Affairs' initiative to digitize patient records. Despite substantial financial waste and technical issues, the effort aimed to improve healthcare efficiency and reduce reliance on paper-based systems.

Building on this three-dimensional analysis, Ika and Pinto introduce the Tesseract model, which incorporates a fourth dimension—stakeholder satisfaction—to capture the shared perceptions of key internal and external stakeholders. This model is predicated on the understanding that the success of a project cannot be defined solely in terms of quantifiable metrics. Rather, it must also be considered in the context of the collective assessment of stakeholders over time. This approach, which is both subjective and intersubjective, acknowledges that projects can evolve and be reassessed based on the perceptions of stakeholders at different stages of their lifecycle.

Moreover, the Tesseract model accounts for the roles of different domains, including the delivery and supply domain (responsible for project *outputs*), owner domain (focused on *outcomes*), and society domain (concerned with long-term environmental and social impacts). By acknowledging the interconnectivity between these domains and stakeholders, the Tesseract model presents a more dynamic and contextually sensitive framework for project success assessment.

Given that stakeholders' perceptions and criteria for success often evolve over the project's life cycle, project success cannot be viewed as a static assessment. There are debates among scholars and practitioners about the optimal timing for evaluating project success (e.g., Varajão et al., 2021). This dynamic nature of success implies that the evaluation must consider distinct time horizons, such as *ex-ante* (before project approval), *project time* (during execution), and *ex-post* (after completion) as represented in Figure 2. These stages reflect not just the project's immediate outcomes but also its long-term impacts. During the *ex-ante* phase, success is assessed in terms of the project's feasibility and alignment with strategic objectives, which can be gauged through tools like a Project Initiation Request or Business Case. During the project execution phase, or *project time*, success is typically measured through efficiency metrics like cost, scope, and time—essentially focusing on "doing the project right" (Williams & Samset, 2010). Lastly, in the *ex-post* phase, the evaluation shifts to long-term impacts, where the focus is on whether the project deliverables have led to anticipated changes or benefits for the organization.

Figure 2: Different facets of success over time (Varajão et al., 2021)

On the other hand, Benefits Management has recently attracted growing interest, but implementing and executing it effectively remains challenging for many organizations (Aubry et al., 2021). Also referred to as Benefits Realization Management (Breese, 2012), this approach is characterized by processes designed to align projects, programs, and portfolios with business strategies, transitioning them into routine operations to create lasting and meaningful value. Bradley (2006) defines BRM as "the process of organizing and managing, so that potential benefits, arising from investment in change, are actually achieved". Nevertheless, numerous organizations continue to overlook or inadequately assess the realization of project benefits as an indicator of project success (Atkinson, 1999; Cooke-Davies, 2002;). As Musawir et al. (2017) and Zwikael & Smyrk (2012) have emphasized, this approach connects project outcomes with value creation, particularly in the private sector, where *benefit streams* are often related to revenue flows or accumulated strategic benefits (or outcomes) that can take significant time to realize. Project benefits are defined as "the flows of value that arise from a project" (Zwikael & Smyrk, 2012, p. 11), where "value" represents the sum of economic and broader social benefits to be accrued minus the costs incurred (Garcia-Castro & Aguilera, 2015; Gil & Fu, 2022).

Zwikael and Meredith (2021) further illustrate that project plan success can be measured immediately at the end of project execution or soon after, when all project outputs have been delivered. On the other hand, business case success can be evaluated when benefits or disbenefits manifest. Over time, outcomes delivery becomes crucial, as impacts may take years or even decades to fully emerge. For instance, a typical assessment of the economic rate of return (ERR)

of a World Bank-funded project often includes benefit flows lasting 25-30 years. Sustainability considerations, meanwhile, may take even longer—potentially extending over decades or centuries, as highlighted by Maltzman & Shirley (2015).

In the *"Re-meaning" of Project Success: Updating and Recalibrating for a Modern Project Management"*, Lavagnon Ika and Jeffrey Pinto (2022) gave a comprehensive overview of the evolution of success criterias in the last 30 years. However, scholars and practitioners alike have recognized that success is not a one-size-fits-all concept but rather a dynamic construct shaped by diverse stakeholder perspectives and contextual factors. Ultimately, the challenge for project managers lies in balancing diverse success dimensions to achieve long-term value and positive impacts for all stakeholders involved.

Sustainability in Project Success

Sustainability has increasingly become a crucial element in defining project success, aligning with broader organizational goals and global challenges. The concept of sustainability is defined by the World Commission on Environment and Development as "a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development, and institutional change are made consistent with future as well as present needs" (Brundtland, 1987). In the field of project management, the principle of sustainability extends beyond mere economic gains, advocating for a balanced consideration of environmental and social dimensions.

The triple-bottom line (TBL) framework, introduced by Elkington (1998), provides a foundation for integrating sustainability into projects. TBL highlights three dimensions: economic, environmental, and social. These dimensions are interdependent and must be considered collectively to achieve project success. For example, economic sustainability focuses on financial aspects such as profit maximization and shareholder value, while environmental sustainability aims at efficient resource utilization and ecosystem preservation. Social sustainability, on the other hand, is concerned with fostering equity, trust, and quality of life within communities. Project management literature increasingly acknowledges the role of TBL in measuring project success. Silvius and Schipper (2014) underline that achieving sustainability

in projects requires balancing these three pillars. Consequently, this integrated approach expands the traditional project management paradigm of the "iron triangle" (time, cost, quality) by including long-term impacts and stakeholder satisfaction.

Sustainable project management (PSM) is "the planning, monitoring and controlling of project delivery and support processes, with consideration of the environmental, economical and social aspects of the life-cycle of the project's resources, processes, deliverables and effects, aimed at realizing benefits for stakeholders, and performed in a transparent, fair and ethical way that includes proactive stakeholder participation" (Silvius & Schipper, 2014). This approach aligns project processes and deliverables with sustainability goals, offering a structured way to integrate sustainability into everyday project activities.

Studies by Khalilzadeh et al. (2016) and Carvalho and Rabechini (2017) reveal that PSM positively influences project success. While the level of impact varies among studies, the correlation between PSM and success factors, such as stakeholder satisfaction and alignment with strategic goals, is evident. For example, addressing sustainability in projects can lead to greater stakeholder satisfaction and enhance a project's "fit for purpose" by considering the long-term impact on communities and the environment. However, incorporating sustainability into projects also presents challenges. Projects are inherently temporary endeavors, while sustainability involves enduring impacts. This dichotomy raises questions about the compatibility of project management and sustainability goals. Additionally, integrating sustainability into projects may require additional resources, result in higher stakeholder expectations, and create complexities in decision-making processes.

Power Skills

Power skills, as defined by the Project Management Institute (PMI), are crucial abilities and behaviors that enable professionals to work effectively with others and achieve success in the workplace. Previously referred to as *soft skills* or *interpersonal skills*, the rebranding to *power skills* underscores their strategic importance within teams and organizations. This transition underscores their function in promoting alignment, propelling innovation, and achieving organizational objectives. While technical skills offer tactical capabilities, power skills provide a strategic advantage by complementing and enhancing hard skills. They act as *force multipliers*

(SHRM, 2023) by expanding workforce potential and equipping professionals with the flexibility to thrive as technology and work environments evolve. Technical proficiency may open doors, but power skills sustain careers by fostering flexibility and agility (SHRM, 2023).

In the *Pulse of the Profession 2023*, PMI (2023) identified key power skills essential for project managers in navigating the complexities of modern projects:

➔ **Accountability**: Taking ownership of commitments and following through.
➔ **Adaptability**: Responding effectively to unforeseen changes.
➔ **Collaborative Leadership**: Working across boundaries to make decisions collectively.
➔ **Communication**: Effectively explaining, writing, and speaking.
➔ **Discipline**: Imposing structure through planning, routines, and timelines.
➔ **Empathy**: Understanding others' emotions by putting oneself in their situation.
➔ **For-purpose Orientation**: Recognizing and addressing the needs of others.
➔ **Future-focused Orientation**: Inspiring others with a clear vision of the future.
➔ **Innovative Mindset**: Generating creative solutions to problems.
➔ **Problem-solving**: Identifying issues and resolving them efficiently.
➔ **Relationship Building**: Establishing trust and deepening connections.
➔ **Strategic Thinking**: Identifying patterns and alternative approaches to complexity.

According to a PMI survey spread to over 3000 professionals worldwide, communication, problem-solving, collaborative leadership, and strategic thinking are the most critical power skills for achieving organizational objectives.

The ability to cultivate transferable skills across various contexts is increasingly vital in adapting to dynamic workplace demands. The ability to engage in critical thinking, to organize and plan effectively, to innovate, to work effectively in teams, to lead others, and to communicate effectively with colleagues are all essential skills for maintaining flexibility, promoting collaboration, and ensuring reliability in changing environments. In the contemporary business environment, employers have identified a preference for empathetic professionals who are able to cultivate productive relationships, navigate conflict, and identify mutually beneficial solutions. The capacity to exercise influence effectively is a key competence for project managers. It

enables them to direct their teams in a manner that is both efficacious and inspiring, fostering mutual trust and alignment.

In this research, the focus will be on *communication, leadership*, and the foundational social skill of *emotional intelligence*, which underpins effective interactions and relationships within projects and organizations.

Communication

According to Hoegl and Gemuenden (2001), communication is the process of positively exchanging information between individuals or groups. It ensures that all members are aligned and informed and it is particularly relevant in project teams where members often come from different departments and educational backgrounds. Such diversity introduces varying problem-solving approaches and perspectives, which can fuel new ideas. Open communication systems, as Puck and Rygl (2006) point out, are vital to achieving this collaborative synergy.

Effective communication involves more than just the flow of information; it encompasses active listening, comprehension, and thoughtful responses (Tongia et al., 2024). The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE, 2021) consistently ranks communication as one of the most desirable skills in job candidates, reflecting its critical role across various professional fields. This skill includes both verbal and nonverbal communication, as well as the ability to convey information simply and effectively.

In project management, communication is particularly crucial, as project managers spend a significant portion of their time, estimated at over 90% (PMI, 2008), communicating with their teams and stakeholders. This involves leading meetings, providing updates, gathering feedback, and ensuring clarity in the project's direction. A well-developed communication management plan helps project managers manage these interactions, specifying the channels, frequency, and modes of communication to be used (Ahmed et al., 2007). The implementation of this plan facilitates transparency and engenders trust among team members and stakeholders, which is imperative for preparing the team to respond effectively to any changes or risks that may emerge during the project.

Furthermore, communication is about building relationships and understanding diverse perspectives, particularly in international projects. According to Ramsing (2009), effective communication requires sensitivity to cultural differences, which can impact decision-making, risk tolerance, and conflict resolution. Project managers who acknowledge and adapt to these differences are better positioned to enhance team engagement and support an environment of creativity and innovation (Ibdayanti et al., 2024).

Leadership

While authority is primarily concerned with the enforcement of regulations and the exercise of power, leadership is fundamentally concerned with the creation of change and the inspiration of others. As posited by Dimov (2004), the act of leadership entails the establishment of a unified vision that resonates with the members of a given team. This vision must then be encouraged and adopted by the team members as their own, with a subsequent commitment to its realization. This approach is designed to encourage individuals to align their personal aspirations with the collective goals of the entire team, with the aim of fostering a unified direction.

Leadership operates through three key processes: establishing direction, aligning people, and inspiring them to overcome challenges (Dimov, 2004). Establishing direction involves creating a vision of the future that incorporates the dreams and aspirations of all team members. The next step, aligning people, focuses on gaining the internal commitment of team members to move towards that shared vision. Once aligned, the leader's role is to inspire and motivate the team to tackle the inevitable obstacles that arise. In contrast to the prescription of specific methods for achieving the desired outcomes, effective leaders provide their teams with the motivation and inspiration necessary to navigate the journey in a creative and enthusiastic manner. However, Dimov (2004) cautions that strong leadership, while essential, can also be disruptive. With its emphasis on motivation and vision, leadership sometimes leads to compromises for the greater good, potentially resulting in a chaotic culture where traditional hierarchies and roles become blurred. This can create opportunities for individuals to prioritize their own interests over the collective vision. Good leadership is ultimately defined by its ability to move people from their current state to a place of greater well-being without infringing on the rights of others. It is about empowering and guiding individuals to reach their fullest potential, creating a positive impact on

both the team and the organization. There are various leadership styles, each with its own distinct characteristics and methods of influencing and guiding others.

Transformational Leadership

Introduced by Burns (1978), transformational leadership revolves around inspiring and motivating followers to go beyond their self-interests for the sake of the team or organization. Transformational leaders aim to bring positive changes by understanding the motivations and needs of their team members and fostering a supportive environment. Northouse (2001) describes this style as involving the "four I's":

- *Idealized Influence*: Leaders act as role models, earning trust and respect through their actions.
- *Inspirational Motivation*: They inspire and encourage their teams to achieve common goals.
- *Intellectual Stimulation*: Transformational leaders promote creativity, innovation, and analytical thinking by challenging existing ideas and encouraging new solutions.
- *Individual Consideration*: They pay personal attention to team members' growth and development, acting as mentors and advisors.

Transformational leaders are charismatic and reliable, instilling a sense of shared purpose and commitment in their teams. A prominent example is Sam Walton, founder of Walmart, who frequently visited stores to engage with employees and express his appreciation for their efforts.

Transactional Leadership

Transactional leadership, popularized in the 1970s, is based on structured exchanges ("transactions") between leaders and followers. This approach emphasizes clear, predefined roles and expectations, with rewards or punishments given based on performance. Leaders using this style believe in maintaining order through established systems and expect compliance in return for rewards. Boseman (2008) outlines key characteristics of transactional leaders, including a belief in their own solutions and a reliance on control to achieve short-term goals. While effective in achieving immediate objectives, transactional leadership can limit creativity and innovation by focusing predominantly on results rather than team development (Baze, 2024). Bill

Gates, co-founder and former CEO of Microsoft, is often cited as an example of a successful transactional leader.

Servant Leadership

Coined by Robert Greenleaf in 1970, servant leadership is grounded in the idea of prioritizing others' needs above one's own. Greenleaf argued that true leaders serve their team first, creating a culture of trust and mutual respect. Servant leaders focus on fostering the personal and professional growth of their team members, often leading by example. Key characteristics of servant leaders include developing people, demonstrating humility, and striving for authenticity. They provide direction while maintaining a commitment to the collective good. One notable servant leader is Howard Schultz, former CEO of Starbucks, who treated employees as partners and initiated the Starbucks College Achievement Plan to support their education.

Democratic Leadership

First defined by Kurt Lewin and colleagues in the late 1930s, democratic leadership emphasizes inclusiveness and collaboration. Leaders using this style encourage team members to participate actively in decision-making, fostering an environment of trust, involvement, and open dialogue. According to Lewin, Lippitt, and White (1939), democratic leaders guide their teams by promoting self-determination, inclusivity, and shared responsibility. Research (Hackman & Jonson, 1996) suggests that democratic leadership is associated with higher productivity, job satisfaction, and team commitment. Sundar Pichai, CEO of Google, is a prime example of a democratic leader who values input and encourages innovation within his teams.

Autocratic Leadership

In contrast to the democratic style of leadership, autocratic leadership is characterized by a high degree of centralisation in decision-making and a strict control of the decision-making process. In contrast to the democratic style, autocratic leaders make decisions based on their own perceptions and beliefs, with minimal input from team members. This style may be an effective approach in situations where prompt and decisive action is required, such as in crisis management. Nevertheless, this approach frequently constrains creativity and long-term growth by suppressing input and emphasizing obedience. Ardichvili and Kuchenke (2010) note that

autocratic leaders typically motivate through rewards or punishments, which can undermine team morale over time. Elon Musk, CEO of Tesla and SpaceX, is often seen as an autocratic leader who maintains strict control over his companies' strategic direction.

Situational Leadership

Developed by Hersey and Blanchard (1988), situational leadership is based on adapting one's leadership style to fit the specific situation or the readiness level of the team members. This model identifies four key behavioral styles: directing, coaching, supporting, and delegating. Effective situational leaders assess the current circumstances and their team's maturity to choose the most appropriate approach. Flexibility and adaptability are critical traits in this leadership style, particularly in project management, where changing project dynamics and phases often require different approaches.

Laissez-Faire Leadership

Also known as a hands-off approach, laissez-faire leadership involves minimal intervention from the leader. This style allows team members to make decisions and find solutions independently, with the leader providing guidance only when necessary (Maqbool et al., 2017; Turner & Muller, 2005). Although this approach may facilitate autonomy and creativity, it carries the potential risk of fostering a lack of direction and accountability if not managed with sufficient care.

Figure 3: Leadership Styles

Autocratic Leadership
- High Centralization
- Strict Control
- Prompt Decision-making

Situational Leadership
- Directing
- Coaching
- Supporting
- Delegating

Transformational Leadership
- Idealized Influence
- Inspirational Motivation
- Intellectual Stimulation
- Individual Consideration

Leadership Styles

Transactional Leadership
- Clear Roles and Expectations
- Rewards and Punishments
- Short-term Goals

Democratic Leadership
- Active Participation
- Trust and Involvement
- Open Dialogue

Servant Leadership
- Developing People
- Demonstrating Humility
- Striving for Authenticity

Laissez-Faire Leadership
- Minimal Intervention
- Autonomy
- Creativity

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence (EI) has become an essential component in both psychology and management, gaining prominence since its introduction by Salovey and Mayer in 1990. They framed EI as a set of adaptive skills that enable individuals to appraise, regulate, and leverage emotions to guide thinking and actions. EI plays a crucial role in influencing behaviors and performance in various environments, including project management (Goleman, 1995). Project management presents unique challenges that require a blend of technical and interpersonal skills. EI is particularly crucial in this context, as project managers are often responsible for guiding diverse teams, coordinating with stakeholders, and adapting to complex project environments.

Project managers with higher levels of EI can create a more open and supportive atmosphere, which fosters collaboration, trust, and creativity among team members (Carmeli, 2003; Mazur et al., 2014). Emotional intelligence not only enhances communication and decision-making but also contributes to effective conflict resolution. Studies show that emotionally intelligent leaders are better at identifying and addressing emerging conflicts, reducing the likelihood of tensions escalating within the team (Verma, 1996). This ability to navigate interpersonal challenges is linked to improved team performance and greater stakeholder satisfaction (Mazur et al., 2014).

Goleman (1998) organized emotional intelligence into four primary dimensions: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. Each dimension includes key competencies that help individuals interact more effectively with others and manage their own emotional responses.

1. Self-Awareness: the foundation of emotional intelligence. It involves recognizing and understanding one's emotions, strengths, and limitations, and how these influence behavior. Individuals with strong self-awareness are conscious of their emotions and how they impact decisions. This dimension promotes honest self-reflection, leading to greater self-understanding and confidence. Being self-aware also means having a realistic view of one's abilities and constructively accepting feedback.

2. Self-Management: the ability to regulate and control emotions and behavior, particularly in stressful situations. This dimension includes skills like emotional self-control, adaptability, trustworthiness, and a strong drive to achieve. Those with strong self-management can remain calm, focused, and flexible in the face of challenges, maintaining their integrity and commitment to goals.

3. Social Awareness: it involves understanding and empathizing with others' emotions and perspectives. It includes recognizing nonverbal cues and understanding the broader social and power dynamics in a group. Key competencies include empathy and organizational awareness, which help build strong connections and respond effectively to others' needs.

4. Relationship Management: it uses emotional awareness to foster positive relationships. It includes clear communication, conflict resolution, influence, and collaboration. Those skilled in this dimension can effectively manage interactions,

resolve disagreements, inspire others, and build trust within teams. This leads to a supportive environment built on mutual respect.

Table 1: Components of Emotional Intelligence

RECOGNITION	REGULATION
Self-Awareness • Emotional self-awareness • Accurate self-assessment • Self confidence	**Self-Management** • Emotional self-control • Trustworthiness • Adaptability • Achievement drive
Social Awareness • Empathy • Service orientation • Organizational awareness	**Relationship Management** • Clear communication • Conflict resolution • Catalyzing change • Teamwork and collaboration

These competencies enable project managers to effectively influence team dynamics, facilitate collaboration, and align individual efforts with organizational objectives. Moreover, high EI contributes to the well-being of team members by mitigating stress and preventing burnout, thereby enhancing overall job satisfaction and engagement (Cherniss & Goleman, 2001; WHO, 2019).

Organizational Culture

Organizational culture is a multifaceted concept encompassing the shared values, beliefs, and norms that shape the behaviors and interactions of members within an organization. Schein (2010) defines it as a set of basic assumptions developed by a group to solve problems related to external adaptation and internal integration. These assumptions become ingrained within the organization and are taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and act.

O'Reilly, Chatman, and Caldwell (1991) describe organizational culture as the dominant pattern of shared assumptions and values that emerge as groups solve challenges, establishing what is considered valid and acceptable behavior. This cultural framework shapes how employees collaborate, make decisions, and approach their work.

Xu et al. (2012) take a slightly different perspective, emphasizing that organizational culture explains why organizations "do what they do and focus on what they focus on". It is the underlying system of beliefs and values that informs and influences actions and strategies within the company. According to Tran (2023), an organization's culture consists of shared beliefs, values, and norms that guide the workforce's behavior, setting the stage for ethical philosophies, effective leadership, and successful strategies.

Understanding these perspectives reveals that organizational culture serves as the "personality" of an organization. It not only shapes how employees interact with each other but also guides their approach to external challenges and stakeholders. This cultural framework profoundly influences all aspects of organizational life, from team cohesion to innovation, decision-making, and performance (Hector & Cameron, 2023).

Cameron and Quinn (1999) categorize organizational cultures into four distinct types:

1. **Clan Culture**: Emphasizes a family-like atmosphere with a focus on collaboration, mentoring, and employee involvement. It values relationships, teamwork, and open communication.
2. **Adhocracy Culture**: Encourages innovation, adaptability, and risk-taking. Organizations with this culture aim to be dynamic and entrepreneurial, fostering creativity and a forward-thinking mindset.
3. **Market Culture**: Results-oriented, prioritizing competitiveness and the achievement of specific goals. This culture emphasizes winning in the marketplace and obtaining measurable results.
4. **Hierarchy Culture**: Values structure, stability, and control, with a focus on standardized procedures and efficiency. It emphasizes clear lines of authority and well-defined roles.

Figure 4: Types of Organizational Cultures

Adhocracy Culture

Focuses on innovation, adaptability, and a dynamic entrepreneurial spirit.

Market Culture

Prioritizes competitiveness and achieving specific measurable results.

Clan Culture

Emphasizes collaboration, mentoring, and a family-like atmosphere.

Hierarchy Culture

Values structure, stability, and control with clear authority lines.

The aforementioned types of culture reflect disparate organizational priorities and strategies, each of which impacts employee behavior and organizational performance in distinctive ways. For project managers, an understanding of and alignment with their organization's culture is of paramount importance for the fostering of team cohesion and the achievement of project goals. A robust and constructive organizational culture encourages alignment between employees and strategic objectives, enhances collaborative efforts within teams, and drives motivation. Furthermore, it directly affects the manner in which project teams collaborate and respond to challenges. To illustrate, an adhocracy culture may foster a proclivity for experimentation with novel approaches among project teams, whereas a hierarchy culture may prioritize strict adherence to established procedures and protocols.

Psychological Safety and Its Role in Organizational Culture

A critical aspect of a healthy organizational culture is *psychological safety.* As defined by Edmondson (2018), in a climate where individuals feel accepted and respected, psychological safety allows employees to express ideas, share concerns, and take interpersonal risks without fear of negative consequences. In such an environment, team members feel free to be themselves, voice opinions, and admit mistakes without facing blame or retribution (Maurer et al., 2011). This openness encourages innovation, learning, and resilience, thereby creating a

culture that is conducive to collaboration and continuous improvement. Psychological safety is essential for effective teamwork (Edmondson, 2018). It serves to encourage candid discourse while simultaneously deterring occurrences such as burnout and disengagement. Those in positions of leadership who prioritize psychological safety are able to cultivate cohesive teams in which members demonstrate a high degree of mutual trust and are comfortable taking calculated risks. Such an environment is conducive to enhanced creativity and the sharing of knowledge.

Research Methodology

Introduction

The principal objective of this research is to examine the interrelationship between power skills and organizational culture in the context of project success. However, as evidenced in the preceding literature review, the concept of project success is subject to interpretation by different stakeholders and across diverse industries. The initial objective of this research is to ascertain the perception of project success among professionals from diverse backgrounds. This study endeavors to address the existing literature gap by focusing on the role of power skills (such as communication, leadership, and emotional intelligence) and organizational culture in determining and achieving project success. To achieve the aforementioned objectives, this research employs a mixed-methods approach integrating insights derived from qualitative interviews with experienced professionals and quantitative survey responses from a diverse group of project managers. The findings seek to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of power skills in project sustainability outcomes and the impact of organizational culture on decision-making processes. Furthermore, the study examines the growing significance of power skills in the context of digital transformation and artificial intelligence (AI) adoption.

In this chapter, the research methodology is outlined by presenting the research philosophy, research type, strategy, time horizon, sampling approach, data collection methods, and analytical techniques employed. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the study's limitations and the mitigation strategies employed to preserve the integrity of the findings.

Research Questions

1. What is the current industry perception of project success?

2. How do power skills influence project success?

3. What is the relationship between the presence of strong power skills and the sustainability outcomes of a project?

4. What is the contribution of emotional intelligence to project success?

5. What is the influence of the organizational culture in the decision-making process? And how does it shape success?

6. How is AI changing the importance of power skills for project managers?

Research Philosophy

This study employs a **positivist research philosophy**, which posits that reality is objective, measurable, and independent of the observer (Bryman, 2016). Positivism is often associated with quantitative research; however, it can also underpin mixed-methods research where objectivity and empirical data are the primary focus. The choice of this philosophy aligns with the study's aim to identify patterns and relationships between power skills, organizational culture, and project success through the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data. Adopting a positivist stance allows for the maintenance of a structured and systematic approach, thereby facilitating an objective understanding of the factors that influence project success.

Research Type

The research adopts an **inductive approach**, which involves collecting specific observations to develop broader conclusions or theories (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The inductive research methodology is particularly well-suited to exploratory studies of this nature, as it allows for the identification of emerging trends and relationships between variables. The study's emphasis on the gathering of insights through the utilization of a literature review, survey responses, and open-ended interviews is in accordance with the fundamental principles of inductive research.

Research Strategy

The research strategy employed in this study is **ethnography**. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), ethnographic research involves the detailed observation and examination of a group's behavior, culture, and practices within their natural context. In this study, the "group" under investigation comprises project professionals. This strategy is optimal for the research in question, as it allows for a comprehensive examination of professional insights while also capturing the collective perceptions of a larger sample through survey responses. Ethnography provides a means to understand the intricate relationships between power skills, organizational culture, and project success, as well as the broader implications of these factors on sustainability and decision-making.

Sampling Strategy

This study employed a combination of purposive and convenience sampling to select the participants for interviews and respondents for the survey. The 11 interviewees were selected based on their direct involvement with project management, either as experienced project managers or as professionals engaged in mentoring and coaching project managers to achieve success. The selection of interviewees was based on their expertise and contributions to previous research or fieldwork in the areas of project success, sustainability, and power skills. To guarantee clarity and preserve the anonymity of the interviewees in the primary text, references to specific individuals are provided in a coded format (e.g., I1, I2, etc.). These codes correspond to the interviewees listed in alphabetical order in Appendix A. This methodology ensures the readability of the text while allowing readers to cross-reference insights with the interviewees' credentials as detailed in the appendix.

The survey respondents were recruited through the professional networking platform LinkedIn. Initially, respondents were queried to ascertain whether they had experience in project management. This served to filter out any responses that were not valid, leaving only the responses from those with the requisite knowledge to provide a meaningful contribution to the study. Of the 105 responses received, only 101 were deemed valid (see *Appendix C*). The survey was anonymous, thereby enabling respondents to freely express their perceptions without the potential for bias or influence. The objective of this sampling approach was to reach a diverse

range of professionals across different industries and regions, thereby facilitating a more comprehensive understanding of the research questions.

Data Collection Method

The study employed a multi-faceted data collection strategy comprising a literature review, qualitative interviews, and a quantitative survey.

Literature Review

A thorough review of literature was conducted using academic databases such as Google Scholar and ResearchGate. Keywords related to "project success," "sustainable project management," "power skills," "soft skills," "emotional intelligence," "organizational culture," and "psychological safety" were used to identify relevant sources. Over 200 papers were initially found, and around 90 were classified as relevant for further analysis.

Interviews

The interviews were conducted using Zoom and were recorded for transcription purposes (see *Appendix B*). Transcriptions were reviewed to extract key insights and direct quotes for the analysis. In order to maintain focus on the central issue at hand, the author elected to limit the number of questions to six. This was done to prevent an unnecessarily lengthy discussion that might have impeded her ability to secure sufficient time with the key leaders. The questions were transmitted to the interviewee via email in advance of the interview, thus enabling a more direct and straightforward dialogue during the actual conversation.

Table 2: Interview Questions

#	Question
1	What is your definition of "project success"?
2	What role do power skills (e.g., communication, leadership, emotional intelligence) play in determining project success?

3	Considering "project sustainability outcomes" as the long-term, broad effect on the environment, economy, and society. Do you think having strong power skills positively impacts a project's sustainability outcomes? If so, how?
4	What do you think is the specific contribution of emotional intelligence to project success?
5	What is your view on the relationship between organizational culture and the decision-making process? Please comment on how organizational culture influences project success.
6	What effect do you think the rise of AI and digital transformation will have on the importance of human-centric power skills for project managers?

Survey

The survey was developed using Google Forms. With the exception of the initial question, which inquired about the experience of the field, the remaining questions were multiple-choice and Likert-scale. A table summarizing the survey questions and response options is presented below.

Table 3: Survey Questions

Question	Type of Question	Answer Choices / Likert Scale
To begin, please confirm that you have project management experience.	Yes/No	Yes, No
How do you primarily define project success?	Multiple Choice	☐ Adhering to the triple constraint (time, cost, scope) ☐ Stakeholder satisfaction ☐ Sponsor satisfaction

Question	Type of Question	Answer Choices / Likert Scale
		☐ Long-term impact and sustainability ☐ Alignment with organizational strategy ☐ Other (please specify)
In your judgment, rank the following factors based on their importance in determining project success (1 = Least Important, 5 = Most Important)	Likert Scale	1 = Least Important, 5 = Most Important
In your opinion, how important are the following power skills in contributing to project success?	Likert Scale	1 = Not Important, 5 = Extremely Important
How would you rate the importance of emotional intelligence (EQ) in your role as a project manager?	Likert Scale	1 = Not Important, 5 = Extremely Important
Does your organization provide training in power skills?	Multiple Choice	☐ Yes, regularly ☐ Yes, occasionally ☐ No, but it's planned soon ☐ No, and I'm unaware of any plans

Question	Type of Question	Answer Choices / Likert Scale
If there is not enough training, what do you think is the main reason?	Multiple Choice	☐ Lack of awareness of its importance ☐ Budget constraints ☐ Lack of resources or trainers ☐ Focus on technical skills ☐ Other (please specify)
Would you participate if your company offered optional training sessions on power skills?	Multiple Choice	☐ Yes, definitely ☐ Maybe, depending on the topic ☐ No, not interested ☐ Not sure
To what extent do you agree that having strong soft skills positively impacts a project's sustainability outcomes?	Likert Scale	1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree
To what extent do you agree to the following statements?	Likert Scale	1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree
To what extent do you think an organization's culture is related to project success?	Likert Scale	1 = Not at all related, 5 = Strongly related
During your hiring process, were you required to demonstrate any power skills?	Multiple Choice	☐ Yes, it was a major focus ☐ Yes, but it was a minor focus ☐ No, not at all ☐ I'm not sure

Question	Type of Question	Answer Choices / Likert Scale
How would you describe the impact of your organization's culture on your project decision-making?	Likert Scale	1 = No impact, 5 = Strong impact
Do you believe that power skills are more important in the era of AI and digital transformation?	Multiple Choice	☐ Yes, significantly more important ☐ Yes, somewhat more important ☐ No change in importance ☐ Less important than before
Do you think the emphasis on power skills should increase, decrease, or remain the same in a future driven by AI?	Multiple Choice	☐ Increase ☐ Decrease ☐ Remain the same ☐ Not sure
How many years of experience do you have in project management?	Multiple Choice	☐ Less than 5 years ☐ 5-10 years ☐ 10-15 years ☐ More than 15 years

Question	Type of Question	Answer Choices / Likert Scale
In which industry do you primarily work?	Multiple Choice	☐ Technology ☐ Healthcare ☐ Consulting ☐ Manufacturing ☐ Financial Services ☐ Government ☐ Hospitality ☐ Real estate ☐ Other (please specify)

Data Analysis Methods

The analysis of the data was conducted in multiple stages to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the research questions. The objective of the literature review was to identify common themes and trends across various studies, thereby enabling the triangulation of findings from previous research with new data gathered through interviews and surveys. This approach allowed for a comparison between existing theories and the emerging insights derived from this study's findings.

The survey results were automatically analyzed by Google Form (see *Appendix C*). The quantitative data gathered through the use of Likert-scale and multiple-choice questions were employed in order to ascertain patterns and correlations in perceptions regarding project success, power skills, and organizational culture. The qualitative data obtained from the interview transcriptions were subjected to a meticulous examination and coding process with the objective of identifying recurrent themes and pertinent direct quotes (see *Appendix B*). Thematic analysis was employed to extract key insights and perspectives from the interviews, which were then compared with the survey results to identify congruences and divergences.

Methodological Limitations

While a comprehensive approach was employed in this study, certain inherent limitations must be acknowledged. The anonymity of the online survey presented a challenge, as it precluded the comprehensive verification of respondents' project management experience. Furthermore, although the survey was designed to encompass a globally diverse sample, it was not feasible to achieve comprehensive regional representation due to constraints in the data collection process. The lack of complete global representation may impact the generalizability of the findings, as power skills and organizational culture can be influenced by local and regional factors.

To address these limitations, the interviewees were purposefully selected for their extensive professional and multicultural experience, which provided a broader perspective on the research questions. Interviewees were drawn from diverse regions, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Austria, the Caribbean, Bahrain, Australia, Canada, Turkey, and Portugal, thereby contributing valuable cross-cultural insights to the study.

Findings

Project Success

Perceptions of project success vary significantly based on industry, role, geography, and experience, revealing the complex and subjective nature of this concept. For instance, older project managers place higher importance on team satisfaction than their younger counterparts, and European professionals assign lower priority to end-user, supplier, and team satisfaction than project managers from other parts of the world (Müller & Jugdev, 2012). The survey participants of this research represented a diverse array of sectors, with the largest groups from consulting (21.8%) and technology (21.8%), as well as government (9.9%), manufacturing (7.9%), and healthcare (6.9%). Smaller groups included Financial Services (7.9%), Real Estate (3%), Construction (3%), Academia (2%), and other industries each around 1%. Experience levels also varied, with 33.7% of respondents having over 15 years in project management, while 24.8% had less than five years, contributing a range of perspectives to the discussion on defining success.

In the survey, a mix of definitions of success emerged. The largest segment of respondents (39.6%) identified "stakeholder satisfaction with the project's outcomes" as the primary definition, underscoring a shift toward meeting expectations and needs (of a variety of stakeholders) that may change over time. Meanwhile, 18.8% valued "long-term impact and sustainability," and another 15.8% adhered to the classic triple constraint of time, cost, and scope. Responses such as "alignment with organizational strategy" and "sponsor satisfaction" received lower emphasis, signaling a broader preference for defining success through meaningful stakeholder engagement and long-term outcomes. Moreover, some participants felt that these options did not fully encompass their perspective on project success. They provided additional answers, for example, *"An appropriate blend of factors for achieving intended critical success outcomes."*

The interview insights reinforced this perspective, with all participants acknowledging that the triple constraint alone is insufficient for capturing project success. One interviewee emphasized, *"Project success is not just about meeting traditional measures like time, cost, and quality. Instead, it's about achieving the desired outcomes—those carefully crafted, effective results that align with the future you aimed to create. It's about realizing benefits while maintaining an acceptable and optimized use of resources, time, and money" (I1)*. This aligns closely with PMI's latest conceptualization of project success: ***"Successful projects deliver value that was worth the effort and expense."*** (PMI, 2024)

Interviewees frequently cited the relevance and usefulness of project outcomes as central to success. *"A more comprehensive view includes sustainability,"* one participant stated, *"assessing whether the solution will still be effective and relevant a decade from now" (I11)*. Commenting on AI entering the profession, an interviewee stated *"AI has a strong potential to improve project success. Because it makes fewer mistakes and operates in a much faster way" (I9)*. Another recurring theme was the distinction between project management success and project success. As one interviewee explained, *"Project management success is about the operational aspects, like delivering on time and on budget, but true project success is about the value it creates. Look at the Eiffel Tower —despite delays and budget issues, it ultimately became a tremendous success due to its long-lasting impact" (I3)*. Another elaborated, *"Success is not just about the output, like completing a building; it's about achieving the intended outcome and delivering benefits.*

For example, if you build a school that nobody studies in, you might have finished on time, on budget, with a perfect building, but that doesn't make it successful or sustainable" (I9). Regarding the impact of sustainability on the project management success, an interviewee stated *"The impact on the typical iron triangle is unclear. There is an argument that it may take more time or more money. But in general it results in a better deliverable that fits the needs of stakeholders. If we disregard sustainability perspectives, we might be lucky or we might pay the price" (I4).*

PMI's research (2024) further reinforces the value of defining, measuring, and tracking project success through robust criteria and performance levers. As one interviewee aptly put it, *"Success means delivering value by doing the **'right things right'**, not just completing tasks or achieving set targets like time and budget" (I9).* Sustainability and stakeholder satisfaction emerged as integral components of project success, with one participant observing, *"Success means delivering value in a sustainable way, without harming society or the environment" (I9).* This perspective is echoed in PMI's findings (2024), which demonstrate that projects measuring sustainability and social impact are 2.6 times more likely to achieve high project success rates. An interviewee emphasized the importance of team well-being, noting, *"For a project to be truly successful, the team must emerge strong enough to undertake future projects. Success is not only about achieving the end result but also about maintaining a positive, sustainable journey for everyone involved" (I11).* This reflects a nuanced understanding of sustainability, where success transcends immediate outcomes and considers the tangible and sustained value that the project brings to the organization, community and society at large.

Power Skills and Project Success

The relationship between power skills and project success is increasingly recognized in contemporary project management literature. According to survey results from PMI's Pulse of the Profession (2023), 92% of respondents assert that power skills enhance their effectiveness at work. Organizations that prioritize these skills demonstrate higher project management maturity, better benefit realization, and greater agility. This prioritization significantly minimizes risks, such as scope creep, budget overruns, and unfulfilled business goals, ultimately reducing wasted investment from 8.8% to just 4.8% on average for organizations that place a high emphasis on power skills (PMI, 2023).

The role of power skills as success factors is supported by a range of studies. For instance, Mazur et al. (2014) and Procaccino et al. (2005) emphasize the importance of "people-related" skills, particularly effective communication, troubleshooting, clear project mission, and management support, as crucial for navigating complex project dynamics. Effective communication is consistently highlighted as essential as it enables project managers to articulate project goals, facilitate stakeholder engagement, and promote a collaborative environment. Rivard and Dupré (2009) add that a robust communication process is closely linked to effective stakeholder management, a critical component of project success. As one interviewee noted, power skills are not merely generic attributes; their importance lies in their capacity to *"facilitate specific processes essential for success" (I1)*. For instance, they are pivotal in *"creating and transferring knowledge,"* especially in transforming implicit or tacit knowledge into explicit, codified forms. A strong communication process is crucial here, as it enables the team to *"co-create and share knowledge effectively" (I1)*.

Ling et al. (2009) and Muzio et al. (2007) attribute a leading cause of project failure to the lack of soft skills competencies among project management practitioners. In high-risk projects, Couillard (1995) observed that communication and troubleshooting were indispensable for success. Studies confirm that projects with robust communication can achieve an 80% success rate, compared to just 52% in projects where communication is lacking (Zuo et al., 2018). This aligns with findings by Manazar et al. (2005), who indicated that hard skills contribute just 15% to project success, while 85% is driven by power skills. Such insights reinforce the idea that while technical proficiency charts a project's path, power skills is how project managers "bring the team along for the journey together to execute a common vision" (PMI, 2023).

Interview responses from this study further illustrate how power skills facilitate project success in practice. One interviewee shared, *"Projects are about people, and understanding what motivates them is key. Leadership, communication, and motivation skills are the added value that transforms basic organizational skills into impactful project management" (I10).* The same participant noted that *"recognizing which individuals are best suited to drive progress"* relies on emotional intelligence and adaptability, which underscores research suggesting that emotional intelligence is vital in handling interpersonal dynamics and fostering resilient teams (Doan et al., 2020).

The survey data in this research reaffirms the critical role of power skills, with 95.1% of respondents rating communication as highly important, followed closely by adaptability (93.1%) and leadership (90.1%). Respondents also emphasized emotional intelligence and strategic thinking as key contributors, supporting findings by Alvarenga et al. (2019), who recognized these competencies as pivotal for successful project outcomes. Studies by Ahmad et al. (2022) and Doan et al. (2020) confirm that skills like transformational leadership and emotional intelligence empower project managers to steer complex projects toward success by promoting team cohesion and responsiveness to evolving project demands. Studies show that transformational and servant leadership positively impact outcomes (Bhatti et al., 2021; Afzal et al., 2018) building trust, engagement and productivity within the project teams. An interviewee acknowledges that *"the project manager should embrace leadership skills to inspire and guide the team. If the team is driven by the project's vision, they will give their best, contributing to a successful project" (I3)*. In line with these insights, El-Sabaa (2001) and Awan (2015) differentiate between the "objective" side of project management, which involves technical skills, and the "intangible" yet vital people skills that drive collaboration and influence within and across teams. One interviewee elaborated, *"No matter how smart the project plan, it won't succeed without people playing their part, engaged and committed" (I2)*. Moreover, power skills are *"essential, not just important for addressing one of project management's greatest challenges: identifying and aligning project benefits with stakeholders' goals" (I8)*. This underscores the necessity of possessing the requisite skills to accurately ascertain the expectations of stakeholders and to guarantee that the outcomes of a project align with their intended value.

The growing emphasis on power skills in project management literature indicates a transition from a narrow technical focus to a more comprehensive approach to project success. As projects become increasingly complex, the importance of human-centric competencies is becoming increasingly evident. Nevertheless, despite the acknowledged significance of power skills in attaining project success, organizations persist in underinvesting in their development. According to PMI (2023), talent decision-makers report dedicating only 25% of their training and development budgets to power skills, while over half (51%) is allocated to technical competencies. This disparity extends to individual project professionals, who spend nearly half (46%) of their development hours on technical skills but only 29% on cultivating power skills.

The survey results of this research also show a gap in formal training for power skills within organizations: only 11.9% of respondents receive regular training in these skills, while 43.6% noted occasional training. Yet, interest in such training is high, with 74.6% of respondents indicating they would participate if offered. This disconnect is often attributed to limited awareness (43.5%) and budget constraints (22.8%), as organizations continue to prioritize technical skills . As one respondent observed, *"Time constraints and the need to focus on immediate project tasks prevent investment in skills development."* These barriers, combined with perceptions that soft skills are *"reserved for the leadership level"*, suggest an opportunity for organizations to broaden access to power skills training across all levels.

Interviewees provided compelling anecdotes on the impact of practical experience in honing power skills, noting that *"the best way to train people in power skills is to let them participate in real problems" (I9)*. This experiential approach aligns with Geoghegan and Dulewicz's (2008) view that while competencies can be taught, effective development often requires sustained application in real-world contexts. Structured mentoring programs, as highlighted in studies by Abd Ullah, Khan and Uddin (2024), have demonstrated measurable improvements in skills such as emotional intelligence, with some organizations reporting a 28% increase in project success rates after incorporating emotional intelligence assessments into recruitment and training.

When it comes to hiring, organizations are gradually shifting focus toward candidates who exhibit strong power skills. Although 43.6% of survey respondents noted that power skills were only a minor focus in recruitment, 30.7% indicated they were a major consideration, reflecting an evolving recognition of the need for leaders who can engage and motivate teams. This shift is supported by literature from Clarke (2010) and Moe and Khang (2008), who argue that recruitment processes should assess alignment between candidates' interpersonal abilities and the social demands of project management. As Gabelaia (2020) explains, employers are increasingly seeking individuals who possess not only the technical abilities to perform the requisite tasks, but also the communication, teamwork, and empathy skills necessary to excel in the modern workplace. In the context of contemporary team-oriented and collaborative work environments, these skills are indispensable.

Power Skills and Artificial Intelligence

As artificial intelligence (AI) becomes more integrated into project management, the role of power skills—often described as human-centric skills—has grown more significant. AI is transforming the profession, automating routine tasks such as data analysis, scheduling, and monitoring, and enabling project managers to redirect their focus toward higher-level strategic initiatives. Deloitte's 2019 report predicts that "soft skill-intensive occupations will account for two-thirds of all jobs by 2030," underlining the long-term strategic value of power skills in an era where technical competencies alone are insufficient. Forbes (2021) highlights a similar trend, noting that as AI and automation take over repetitive tasks, soft skills such as empathy, emotional intelligence, strategic thinking, and adaptability will become essential in bridging human interactions that AI cannot replicate.

Survey data from this study indicates a strong awareness of this shift: 53.5% of respondents believe power skills will become significantly more important in an AI-driven world, while 33.7% see them as somewhat more important. A substantial 77.2% of respondents supported an increased emphasis on power skills in response to digital transformation. Interviewees reinforced this view, suggesting that as AI advances, the demand for human attributes—especially those related to emotional intelligence and judgment—will intensify. *"AI will lead to giving more importance to critical thinking"* states one interviewee (I4). Another one noted, *"When everyone of us will use AI for repetitive tasks, power skills will become more important and human beings with excellent communication skills will be in high demand."* Then he continued, *"AI can do repetitive tasks, but till now I have never seen AI deal with a difficult client on a day-to-day basis" (I7)*. This deficiency in AI's ability to emulate emotional intelligence highlights the distinctive value of human-driven power skills, a viewpoint that was unanimously endorsed by all the interviewees. While AI can optimize certain technical processes, it lacks the ability to "create psychological safety or lead a team." One interviewee elaborated, *"Something that is gonna get woven into the power skills is—'how do we create that sense of psychological safety when most of the interactions are between us and the machines?' There are some people who won't like it, that may feel unsafe in that environment and so power skills are going to be important in order to create that safety again in an environment that is changing very fast" (I10).*

Robles (2012) and the World Economic Forum (2020) identify creativity, critical thinking, and complex problem-solving—attributes deeply intertwined with power skills—as pivotal for future workforce success. Power skills also remain irreplaceable when navigating complex human-centered decisions involving ethical considerations and stakeholder interests. An interviewee echoed this sentiment, noting, *"AI can bring improvements in speed and efficiency. However, when it comes to effectiveness—specifically meeting stakeholder expectations, delivering business case benefits, and addressing ethical considerations—AI falls short. AI can handle functional aspects, but creating value, engaging stakeholders, and ensuring fair distribution of benefits require judgment and human-centric skills" (I6).* Furthermore, AI's limitations in interpersonal interactions create a distinct advantage for project managers who excel in empathy and emotional intelligence. *"I think power skills are exactly what AI doesn't have. AI can analyze, put things in order, but it is not going to pick up on the fact that the last three days your mood has been different than usual. It's not going to show empathy" (I10).* Thus, as automation reshapes the operational side of project management, power skills will become even more crucial for handling the strategic and human elements that AI cannot address. One interviewee summarized this shift aptly: *"The rise of AI will push project managers to become more strategic and human-centric, focusing on leadership, understanding stakeholder needs, and creating societal value" (I6).* Power skills are not just about maintaining relevance; they are about navigating the aspects of project management that are inherently human. This is consistent with the views expressed by several interviewees, who asserted that *"Power skills are still beyond the reach of AI. They are the advantage of being a project manager"(I9)* and *"the more high-tech we become, the more we need that human touch and power skills. AI has its limits—it can't bring the authentic, genuine human experience behind interactions or decisions" (I2).*

Power Skills and Sustainability Outcomes

As defined by the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987), sustainability refers to development that meets present needs without compromising future generations' ability to meet their own. This concept encompasses the economic, social, and environmental dimensions, with the objective of achieving a balance between immediate objectives and long-term impacts. In the context of project management, the integration of sustainability reflects the evolving expectation that projects contribute to broader sustainability goals in a positive

manner. BSR and Globescan (2012) underscores the imperative for leaders to integrate sustainability into core business functions, including project management, as a pivotal leadership challenge in the present era. Organizations are recognizing that sustainable projects enhance not only corporate reputation and risk management but also support the long-term survival of the organization (Tharp, 2012).

The extant literature provides support for the assertion that there is a link between sustainability-focused project management and the possession of power skills. As Gareis et al. (2013) posit, sustainable project management is aligned with values such as transparency, accountability, and stakeholder engagement, which are closely related to power skills such as communication, adaptability, and leadership. Furthermore, Sydney Pons et al. (2024) argue that project managers with robust power skills facilitate the cultivation of responsible practices within organizations, thereby nurturing collaboration and innovation that align with sustainable goals.

In this study, respondents were provided with a definition of "project sustainability outcomes" as the long-term, broad effects on the environment, economy, and society. Survey data underscores the strong link between power skills and these outcomes, with 84.2% of respondents rating the connection as significant. Further breakdowns reveal that 89.1% of respondents recognized strong leadership as crucial for integrating sustainability goals into project objectives, 91% highlighted adaptability and flexibility in aligning project strategies with sustainability goals, and 92% noted that problem-solving skills support innovative solutions for sustainable practices. Respondents also expressed strong agreement, at 85.2%, with the statement that "effective communication enhances the implementation of sustainable practices."

Interviewees provided detailed insights into how power skills shape sustainable project outcomes. One participant emphasized the expanded stakeholder perspective that sustainability demands, explaining, *"When we look at sustainability, our stakeholders expand to include the planet, people, and the environment—all of which hold expectations tied to sustainable outcomes. The challenge is not only in identifying these sustainability-focused benefits but also in convincing project sponsors and organizational leaders to prioritize them, as they may not yield immediate profit. Here, power skills like communication and influence are essential to advocate for sustainability by demonstrating long-term value" (I8).* Another added, *"What*

people want to see is a leader with emotional intelligence and empathy to handle the challenges faced by local communities. If you don't listen to them and empathize with them, how can you build a world that is a better place? You need to understand their concerns and spend time with these groups, especially the marginalized and powerless. That's the only way you can create value for them" (I6).

Several interviewees highlighted how power skills encourage project managers to take a holistic view of project impacts. One participant noted, *"Power skills help us take a broader perspective beyond the narrow and short-term view. They allow us to see and think about why we're doing this project and what it means for the larger system—whether it's the business organization, another type of organization, or the world. Power skills enable us to understand those bigger impacts and engage the right people to ensure that these considerations are taken into account" (I2).* Another interviewee emphasized that leadership and negotiation skills are particularly vital for navigating sustainability-focused projects, stating, *"Leadership can help guide anybody involved in the project and make sure that their focus is on sustainability. Negotiation skills will help because anytime we're talking about sustainability, we are talking about different stakeholders, including local communities, regulators, and government bodies. You need negotiation skills to communicate and deal with the differing expectations from these stakeholder groups" (I6).*

However, two common themes emerged regarding the limitations and potential ethical concerns of using power skills in sustainability efforts. First, several interviewees noted that project managers often lack the authority to shape sustainability outcomes directly, as project scopes and objectives are frequently defined by sponsors or higher-level executives. This aligns with existing literature, which highlights the traditional role of project managers as primarily executing a sponsor's vision (Association for Project Management, 2006; Silvius et al., 2012). One interviewee described the dynamic, noting, *"In cases where sustainability strategies are set by senior leaders or sponsors, the team's role might be limited to executing these predefined goals" (I11).* Another added *"The direct impact on decision-making may vary, but strong power skills generally support more effective and sustainable projects when managers are granted autonomy" (I4).* The second theme identified an ethical dimension to using power skills in sustainability contexts. While power skills can indeed support sustainable project outcomes, they

may also be used to persuade stakeholders in ways that might not align with genuine sustainability goals. One interviewee expressed concern, stating, *"I don't think that strong power skills bring automatically to a project executed in a more sustainable way because we can use power skills to persuade people of things that are actually not good and not sustainable" (I10).* Another added, *"Soft skills can impact project sustainability outcomes, but they can also push us in the wrong way. They can persuade people to believe that the product is going in one direction when the reality is not that one" (I5).* These perspectives underscore the necessity for the ethical deployment of power skills in order to forestall unintended or counterproductive actions.

Importance of Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence (EI) is a critical competency for project managers, allowing them to effectively manage relationships, handle stress, and navigate the complexities of stakeholder needs (Thomas & Mengel, 2008). According to Goleman's framework, EI consists of four main components: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management (Cherniss & Goleman, 2001). Each component contributes to project success, particularly in complex projects with diverse stakeholder requirements and demanding timelines.

1. **Self-awareness** enables project managers to recognize their emotions, strengths, and limitations, which helps them stay objective in high-stress environments. Research shows that self-aware leaders better navigate interpersonal dynamics, facilitating smoother collaboration and conflict resolution (Verma, 1996). This awareness is essential, as one interviewee explained: *"The problem I see many times is that project managers don't know themselves. There's a big risk that they overestimate their abilities, leading to ineffective interactions and conflict within teams" (I9).*

2. **Self-management** involves regulating emotions, maintaining composure, and acting with integrity under pressure. Emotionally self-controlled project managers are less likely to react impulsively and are better at maintaining team morale and motivation (Afzal et al., 2018). An interviewee highlighted this skill, stating, *"Emotional intelligence gives you the chance to respond instead of react" (I10).* Studies support that managers with strong self-management skills experience fewer conflict escalations, enhancing team harmony and cohesion (Mazur et al., 2014).

3. **Social awareness**, particularly empathy, enables project managers to understand and anticipate the perspectives and concerns of others, which is essential in building trust and cooperation among stakeholders. Carmeli (2003) found that empathy and social awareness contribute to higher project performance, as they allow leaders to address diverse interests and emotional undercurrents within teams. One interviewee emphasized, *"Emotional intelligence encompasses empathy, respect, and genuine interest in others' expertise. These qualities are essential for a project manager to build a good environment for collaboration and knowledge sharing" (I1)*. This sensitivity is especially relevant when project managers work with external stakeholders who may have high stakes but limited control over project outcomes, such as policy regulators or local communities. An interviewee noted, *"A big part of emotional intelligence is empathizing with the different needs and concerns of key stakeholders…issues like sustainability or economics are perceived very differently by people at different levels, in different roles, in different places in society and around the world" (I2).*

4. **Relationship management** encompasses conflict resolution, inspirational leadership, and teamwork. Project managers with high relationship management skills are more likely to create environments where teams feel valued, motivated, and encouraged to contribute, enhancing project success. According to Müller and Turner (2010), emotionally intelligent leaders are better at handling complex projects due to their ability to inspire collaboration and resolve conflicts proactively. As one interviewee described, *"Being a project manager is all about navigating the needs and concerns of different stakeholders…It's about building relationships, influencing without authority, collaborating, problem-solving, and making decisions" (I2).*

Figure 5: Emotional Intelligence in Project Management

Self-awareness
- Recognizing Emotions
- Understanding Strengths
- Identifying Limitations
- Staying Objective

Self-management
- Regulating Emotions
- Maintaining Composure
- Acting with Integrity
- Responding Instead of Reacting

Emotional Intelligence in Project Management

Relationship management
- Conflict Resolution
- Inspirational Leadership
- Teamwork
- Creating Valued Environments

Social awareness
- Empathy
- Building Trust
- Cooperation Among Stakeholders
- Addressing Diverse Interests

Overall, emotional intelligence is a significant predictor of project success. Weiss and Cropanzano (1996) found that emotional experiences shape work behaviors, with positive emotions generally promoting better performance (Mayer et al., 2008; Sy et al., 2006). Conversely, negative emotions such as frustration and irritation can hinder enthusiasm and reduce performance (Fisher, 2003; McColl-Kennedy & Anderson, 2002). Emotionally intelligent project managers who can maintain positive emotions are more effective in communicating with team members and inspiring creativity in tackling challenging tasks (Carmeli, 2003). Mount (2006) adds that project managers with high EI are often more motivated to positively influence their teams and offer innovative solutions to the complex problems they face. In addition, research supports the notion that EI increases resilience and adaptability in project managers. Thomas and Mengel (2008) found that project managers who scored high on EI were able to recover quickly from stress and maintain focus and effectiveness in high-pressure environments. Similarly, Clarke (2010) emphasized that EI enables project managers to navigate complex situations with greater behavioral flexibility, a necessary skill in managing diverse and dynamic project demands.

The survey findings reinforce the critical role of EI in project management, with 91.1% of respondents rating it as highly important for their roles, and 87.2% stating it is essential for achieving project success. These results align with studies by Goleman (1998), who found that

EI is responsible for up to 80% of success in management roles, and by Rezvani et al. (2016), who demonstrated that EI contributes positively to job satisfaction and trust that in turn bring productivity and efficiency to the organization (Dâmbean & Gabor, 2021). This connection is especially evident in complex projects, where Müller and Turner (2010) found that EI directly enhances the chances of success. Sy et al. (2006) further reinforce that EI, as a social capability, promotes job satisfaction, encourages flexibility, and ultimately contributes to a positive work environment.

In interviews, participants highlighted how EI directly impacts both team dynamics and the management of external stakeholders. As one interviewee explained, *"Emotional intelligence may not be strongly correlated with the direct delivery of a project within time and cost targets—what is typically seen as project management success. However, it plays a more significant role when it comes to delivering on the business case or achieving sustainable outcomes" (I6).* Another interviewee remarked on the importance of EI in fostering positive perceptions of leadership, stating, *"You need to have a certain level of emotional intelligence to be attractive as a manager. You may not be the most talented one, but you need to have sensitivity. It's important to have a clear understanding of the dynamics with regards to individuals in your project and the organization as well" (I4).* Interviewees further emphasized that EI allows project managers to adopt a "big-picture perspective" that goes beyond individual interests to address the broader social and environmental impact of a project. One participant noted, *"You're not just focused on yourself; you're expanding your scope to include others…trying to satisfy all the different stakeholders within your scope" (I3).* This is consistent with the findings of Goleman (1998) that emotional intelligence (EI) facilitates the development of trust, effective communication, and the alignment of stakeholders with shared objectives. Consequently, it can be considered a crucial attribute for achieving both short-term and long-term sustainability. Another interviewee observed the potential for EI to mitigate unintended consequences, stating, *"Emotional intelligence helps in understanding and managing external stakeholders' needs and concerns, which can be critical to project success." (I6).* This perspective is consistent with the emphasis on social awareness and relationship management proposed by Cherniss and Goleman (2001). These competencies enable project managers to engage stakeholders in a constructive manner, address their concerns, and enhance the overall impact of the project.

Organizational Culture and Project Success

Organizational culture, as one interviewee noted, is often a stronger predictor of future success than even past performance: *"The best predictor of future performance is not past performance: it's culture. Culture eats strategy for lunch" (I2).* The survey results support this connection, with 84.1% of respondents rating the relationship between organizational culture and project success as significant, and a similar percentage (82.1%) highlighting culture's strong influence on decision-making. These insights are consistent with the findings of previous studies indicating that culture serves as the foundation upon which employees operate, affecting behavior, decision-making, and alignment with organizational goals (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Denison et al., 2014). According to Iroanya (2012), organizational culture significantly impacts project outcomes by shaping how project teams approach initiation, goal setting, and task management. In their study, Morrison, Brown, and Smit (2006) identified twelve cultural aspects that contribute to project success, including flexibility, innovation, open communication, leadership support, focus on market needs, personal competence development, decentralized decision-making, and result orientation.

Another interviewee emphasized the importance of culture, noting, *"Organizational culture is very important because it allows you to maximize your people's potential. By doing so, you maximize not only the potential of people but also business outcomes—by letting them feel everyone is capable of thinking and expressing their ideas to make an impact" (I7).*

This is strongly related to the concept of "psychological safety", which enables team members to voice ideas and concerns without fear of negative consequences. Psychological safety has been identified as the <u>number one</u> characteristic of successful high-performing teams (Bergmann & Schaeppi, 2016), influencing team cohesion, learning, and project success (Edmondson, 1999; Baer & Frese, 2003). One interviewee described this need: *"One of the biggest things we can do culture-wise is create a culture of psychological safety. If people don't feel safe to get their voices heard, you're going to have failure" (I2).* In organizations where leaders actively encourage input, transparency, and support, employees feel more engaged and willing to contribute. Denison et al. (2014) found that organizational cultures promoting participation and adaptability perform better in dynamic environments. This adaptability is critical, as another interviewee explained: *"The primary job of a leader is creating a culture where people feel safe to have ideas, creating an environment where people have every opportunity to be successful and*

effective" (I10). By fostering a psychologically secure atmosphere, leaders can facilitate transparent communication among team members, which in turn optimizes the quality of decision-making and enhances project outcomes. Organizational culture profoundly affects decision-making by determining the level of team involvement in defining project goals and shaping communication flow. For example, Morrison et al. (2006) identified that open communication, decentralized decision-making, and flexibility contribute to quicker, more effective decisions. An interviewee illustrated the significance of hierarchy in decision-making by describing how some cultures limit project managers' access to sponsors, noting, *"In some organizations with more hierarchical or paternalistic structures, project managers are not even allowed to speak directly to the project sponsor. Decision-making is likely more effective when there's less power distance" (I4).* In cultures where decision-making is inclusive and employees are empowered, team members report a greater sense of value, feel more able to share insights, and are more inclined to suggest creative solutions. In contrast, cultures that restrict open communication may fail to gain insights that could enhance project effectiveness. This is evidenced by the observation of an interviewee who noted that *"When lower levels are not permitted to participate fully, crucial insights can be missed, which ultimately weakens the overall process" (I1).*

Figure 6: Organizational Culture's Influence on Project Success
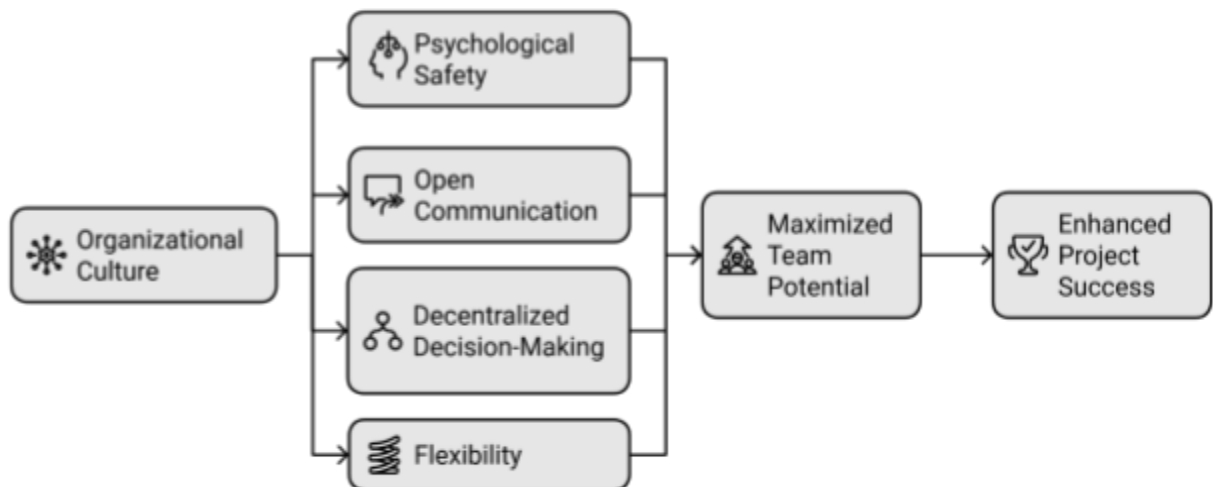
Leadership also plays a key role in setting and sustaining an organization's culture. Leaders who prioritize transparency, inclusivity, and development create environments that encourage

psychological safety and innovation. Schein (2010) emphasizes that leaders act as the primary architects of culture, setting norms that guide organizational behavior. As one interviewee noted, *"If leaders themselves prioritize work-life balance, participate in leadership programs, and actively seek feedback from employees, it sets a precedent for an open and supportive environment" (I11).* This style of leadership cultivates a culture where team members feel a sense of value and autonomy, which in turn enhances the likelihood of project success. On the other hand, a lack of supportive leadership can lead to a toxic culture that stifles creativity, reduces employee engagement, and impacts decision-making. Interviewees pointed out the dangers of toxic cultures where shortcuts, *"normalization of deviance"*, or even deviant practices become accepted as routine, eroding trust and safety. As one interviewee shared, *"Reward systems in [some] organizations reinforced a 'get-it-done' mentality over safety" (I5).* Such toxic environments may prioritize short-term gains but often lead to project failures in the long run by undermining ethical decision-making and safety. Another interviewee noted that *"if an organization fosters a culture where certain groups receive preferential treatment regardless of performance, this can affect project outcomes. In this type of culture, feedback on performance issues may not be addressed, which can impede project success. A project manager who continually misses deadlines or procrastinates without consequence can affect the entire project portfolio, resulting in delays and setbacks" (I3).* In essence, organizational culture can be considered a double-edged sword. A positive culture can greatly contribute to project success, whereas a negative culture can lead to project failures.

Conclusions

At the time of conducting this research, the author was not yet aware of the recent PMI study, which involved a comprehensive analysis with nearly 10,000 survey participants and 150 in-depth interviews aimed at redefining project success. While the official report is scheduled for release in December 2024, early findings shared through webinars (Cabrey and Garett, 2024) and publications provided valuable insights closely aligned with this study. PMI's updated definition of project success, ***"The consensus view across intended beneficiaries, other stakeholders, and project participants that a project was perceived to have delivered value that was worth the effort and the expense",*** reflects this research's conclusions. It broadens the concept of success

beyond traditional metrics like time, cost, and scope to include enduring value, stakeholder satisfaction, and sustainability—key themes frequently emphasized in interviews and survey responses. For example, 39.6% of survey respondents identified stakeholder satisfaction as the most significant definition of success. PMI identified specific "performance themes" that reinforce the importance of well-rounded success criteria. Having a well defined measurement system that guides decisions is key. This includes defining success criteria upfront, implementing robust performance measurement systems, and consistently tracking performance to optimize outcomes. This aligns with findings from this research, which highlights the significance of Benefit Realization Management techniques, stakeholder engagement, and long-term impacts in achieving success. Among PMI's performance themes to measure, "sustainability and social impact" stands out as the most influential, increasing the likelihood of project success by 2.6 times. Interviewees in this study repeatedly stressed the necessity of addressing environmental and social impacts to achieve meaningful success, illustrating a broader understanding of ethical responsibility. Other performance themes include level of quality (1.6x), customer satisfaction (1.6x), safety (1.6x), meeting defined requirements (1.5x), and employee experience (1.5x). Importantly, PMI's findings reveal a strong connection between "sustainability and social impact" and "customer satisfaction." In essence, projects aligned with social impact are significantly more likely to deliver on customer satisfaction, a finding that correlates with this research's exploration of power skills and sustainable project outcomes.

PMI's themes of "meeting defined requirements" and "level of quality" emphasize reliable execution aligned with stakeholder expectations. While these are foundational aspects of *project management success*, real success is positioned beyond the iron triangle, that is a necessary but insufficient baseline. The importance of a "sound business case" and "safety" as highlighted by PMI echoes this study's findings, where "long-term impact" was consistently identified as essential for project success. PMI's focus on "employee experience" and "caring for team morale" further supports this research's emphasis on the interplay between organizational culture and power skills in achieving project success. Notably, "caring for team morale" ranks as the second most critical performance factor, following effective measurement practices. These findings are entirely consistent with the conclusions of the present study regarding the significance of a psychologically safe work environment and emotional awareness within a project team. As previously stated on numerous occasions throughout this document, a

psychologically safe environment is conducive to accountability, while adaptability encourages innovation, resilience, and effective decision-making. This study emphasized the connection between power skills (particularly communication, adaptability, leadership, and emotional intelligence) and team cohesion, stakeholder trust, and long-term value. Interviewees underscored the importance of creating sustainable team environments, where "caring for team morale" directly ties to emotional intelligence. This prevents burnout and enhances "employee experience," enabling proactive conflict resolution and resilience. Communication, ranked as the most important power skill, was found to play a crucial role in stakeholder alignment, knowledge creation, and team cohesion—factors vital for navigating complex projects.

As AI becomes increasingly integrated into project management, its ability to automate routine tasks like monitoring and planning allows project managers to focus on strategic, human-centric responsibilities. More than 87% of survey participants believe power skills will become even more essential in an AI-enhanced environment. High adopters of generative AI reported significant gains in productivity, collaboration, and creativity (PMI, 2024). One interviewee aptly summarized this shift: *"AI's purpose is not to merely speed up what we've done for 30 years but to redefine how projects are identified, managed, and evaluated" (I5).* Another emphasized, *"The more AI is growing, the more you need people that can handle it and who can interface it. So you need people that are cognitively intelligent to do that" (I11)* highlighting the enduring importance of technical and analytical expertise alongside power skills.

Organizations are encouraged to invest in holistic training programs that integrate AI proficiency with the development of power skills. Training should encompass strategic thinking, problem-solving, empathy, and leadership, alongside technical capabilities, to prepare project managers for evolving demands. Practical, immersive experiences are essential for helping individuals refine their skills in real-world contexts. Moreover, creating a change-capable culture is vital. As one respondent explained, *"Creating a change-capable culture involves both individual skill-building and systemic improvements. We do not have enough systems in place to communicate effectively across levels and to give feedback up the chain. Cross-level collaboration is often lacking, and project communication tends to be top-down, one-size-fits-all, focusing mostly on the 'head'—the what and why of a project. This approach often falls short of*

showing the line of sight to each person's role or connecting to the 'heart'—engaging people emotionally" (I2).

This research demonstrates that project success is a dynamic, multifaceted concept that transcends traditional metrics. Building on the insights and the findings of this study, a new definition of project success emerges:

> **"Project success is the realization of meaningful, long-term value that balances the needs of diverse stakeholders, promotes sustainability, and aligns with broader organizational and societal goals, achieved through the integration of strategic, technical, and power skills within a supportive organizational culture."**

The findings of this research highlight the pivotal roles of sustainability, power skills, and organizational culture in influencing contemporary project success. As AI and digital transformation persist in redefining project management, human-centric power skills will continue to be essential for navigating complexity, fostering collaboration, and driving innovation. The ethical application of these skills ensures that projects not only achieve immediate goals but also contribute to the betterment of society and the environment, which is an unwritten duty of every project professional committed to creating lasting, positive change.

Appendix

Appendix A - Interviewees

1. Alexandra Chapman

Alexandra Chapman is a global thought leader in Outcomes Thinking, dedicating her career to teaching organizations how to enhance their project and strategy execution results dramatically. Her expertise is crucial for major projects and transformative in achieving personal aspirations and goals. Alex's mission is to empower individuals with the Outcomes mindset and skills, driving both organizational and personal success. Alex began her career over 40 years ago as a project manager. Her skills quickly earned her the reputation of being a 'project fixer,' renowned for achieving strategic results and extracting value from challenging projects. Her experience spans a diverse range of industries in Australia, the UK, The Netherlands, and Denmark, highlighting her global perspective. Holding an MBA from Cranfield School of Management, UK, Alex continues to impart her knowledge, teaching Innovation and Entrepreneurship at Melbourne University at the postgraduate level. Her dedication to mentorship is evident as she regularly guides developing managers, molding the next generation of strategic thinkers. Alex's teaching combines practical experience with academic rigor, establishing her as a sought-after speaker and mentor. She is not just a theorist but a practitioner with methodologies that have proven successful in the real world. Her sessions offer a mix of experienced wisdom and innovative strategies, making her an invaluable asset for anyone aspiring to excel in project management and strategy execution.

2. Barbara A. Trautlein

Barbara A. Trautlein, PhD is author of the best-selling book *Change Intelligence: Use the Power of CQ to Lead Change thatSticks*, principal and founder of Change Catalysts, and originator of the CQ® System for Developing Change Intelligence®. For over 30 years, Barbara has coached executives, trained leaders at all levels, certified change agents, and facilitated mission-critical change management initiatives - achieving bottom-line business and powerful leadership results for clients. In 2015 she had the honor of being awarded Change Management Consultant of the Year by the Association of Change Management Professionals (ACMP) Midwest Chapter. She is gifted at sharing strategies and tactics that are accessible, actionable, and immediately applicable. Her blend of research and real-world

expertise makes her an in-demand speaker at conferences around the globe. Barbara has a unique ability to connect with her audiences, from C-level executives in Fortune 500 organizations to front line employees, and across industries, from steel mills to sales teams, refineries to retail outlets, and healthcare to high tech. Clients served include Abbott Laboratories, BP, Cisco, Deloitte, Northwestern University, and the United Nations. Barbara holds a doctorate in Organizational Psychology from the University of Michigan.

3. Eman Deabil

Eman Deabil is a Bahraini transformation management leader with 15+ years of diversified experience. Throughout her career, she has interacted and engaged with Boards and senior management (c-suite) and she demonstrated her ability to advise top management, lead cross functional teams, and successfully manage transformational projects. Eman is a doctoral student examining the moderating role of PMO on the relationship between ESG adoption and organizational performance. She's a chartered manager (CMI), the first Bahraini lady who obtained the PMI-PfMP, the first Bahraini who obtained SIP, and the first Bahraini who obtained Diploma in ESG from CGI. Eman is an award-winning professional; in 2024, she got the AACE award (outstanding woman in project controls), PowerList Middle East Award for leading the Green PMO global initiative, and Women Changing the World bronze award (community impact). Eman is a speaker and a published author.

4. Gilbert Silvius

Gilbert Silvius is an experienced and innovative researcher, author, lecturer, consultant and trainer in the field of project management, with affiliations at HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht, Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences, and the University of Johannesburg. He has authored several books and over 60 academic journal articles, and is a recognized expert in the field of sustainability in project management. For his work on this topic, Gilbert received the GPM 2013 sustainability award and an 2020 outstanding contribution IPMA research award. As a practitioner, Gilbert has over 20 years' experience in organizational change and IT projects and is a member of the international enable2change network of project management experts. Gilbert holds a PhD degree in information sciences from Utrecht University and masters' degrees in economics and business administration. He is also a certified project manager, scrum master and product owner.

5. Jeffrey Pinto

Professor Jeffrey Pinto is the Andrew Morrow and Elizabeth Lee Black Chair in Technology Management at Penn State-Erie's Black School of Business. He is also an Honorary Professor at Apsley Business School (London) and was a Visiting Professor at the Kemmy Business School, University of Limerick and Cranfield School of Management (UK). Since 2002, Professor Pinto has been the Program Chair for Penn State's on-line Master of Project Management (MPM) degree program. Professor Pinto is the author or editor of 27 books and over 200 scientific papers that have appeared in a variety of academic and practitioner journals, books, conference proceedings, video lessons, and technical reports His work has been translated into 10 languages. He served as Editor of the *Project Management Journal* from 1990 to 1996. With over 35 years' experience in the field of project management, Professor Pinto is a two-time recipient of the Distinguished Contribution Award from the Project Management Institute (1997, 2001) for outstanding service to the project management profession. He received PMI's Research Achievement Award in 2009 for outstanding contributions to project management research. In 2017, Professor Pinto was honored with the International Project Management Association's Research Achievement Award for his research career in project management. With Professors Peter Love and Lavagnon Ika, he received the Research Award from the International Project Management Association in 2022 for "Major project behavior theory and practice: The case of social infrastructure." Dr. Pinto has consulted widely in the US and Europe on a variety of topics, including project management, new product development, information system implementation, organization development, leadership, and conflict resolution.

6. Lavagnon Ika

Lavagnon Ika, MSc, PhD is Professor of Project Management and Founding Director of the Major Projects Observatory at the Telfer School of Management at the University of Ottawa. He is also an Extraordinary Professor at both the Graduate School of Technology Management and the Gordon Institute of Business Science of the University of Pretoria. He is a Carnegie African Diaspora Fellow, an Associate Editor of the *International Journal of Project Management* and *the Canadian Journal of Development Studies*, and a (former) member of the Academic Boards of the international project management associations PMI and IPMA. Professor Ika is a key contributor to the most recent debates on major infrastructure delivery, and he is considered the world leader of the research on managing global

development projects (e.g., World Bank or DFID-funded projects delivered in Africa). Professor Ika's work has earned him three Emerald Publishing House Awards of Excellence, as well as three IPMA Global Awards of Excellence. He won the *PM World Journal* Editor's Choice Award in 2021. He was a finalist of the 2023 UK Association for Project Management (APM) Award for the Research Paper of the Year. He was awarded the Telfer Innovative Researcher Award in 2017 and the Telfer Established Researcher Award in 2021. He is the co-author of the 2024 David Cleland PMI Book of the Year Managing Fuzzy Projects in 3D and he is leading a handbook on project behavior to be published with Cambridge University Press in 2024. Professor Ika has provided guidance for the World Bank as external advisory panel member on their Results and Performance of the World Bank Group in 2023 and for the PMI in 2024 as a lead scholar on how to reframe project success.

7. Mark Burnett

Mark Burnett is a seasoned Project Transformation Expert, Consultant, Author, and Engineer with over two decades of experience leading mission-critical projects across 30+ Caribbean islands. He is the Founder of The Ambidextrous Project Manager©, a transformative community empowering teams, leaders, and organizations to navigate dynamic project environments with innovative solutions. Through his work, Mark has successfully supported small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) across sectors such as telecommunications, ICT, energy, and construction, delivering innovative solutions that align with both local and global standards. His efforts have significantly contributed to economic empowerment and talent transformation in the Caribbean region. In collaboration with IAPM (International Association of Project Managers), Mark serves as a Senior Official of Network University, where he oversees student events, advises on organizational issues, and contributes to thought leadership in project management. His partnerships with organizations such as TrueProject, The PMO Leader, and the Institute of Project Management (IPM) Dublin have produced impactful articles, eBooks, and global conferences that elevate project management practices worldwide. Mark is also the author of *The Ambidextrous Project Manager©*, a guide that emphasizes resilience, adaptability, and people-centered leadership as keys to thriving in high-stakes, dynamic project environments.

8. Mustafa Hafizoglu

Mustafa is a distinguished expert in knowledge management and program/project management, boasting an illustrious 25-year career in aerospace, defense electronics, and manufacturing. He currently serves as the Managing Partner at Advisors Turkey and holds positions as a part-time instructor at three prestigious universities, and is the co-author of two books. Furthermore, Mustafa is the co-founder and past president of PMI Turkey Chapter, founder of PMO Summit Academy, and represents the Knowledge Management Institute (KMI) in Turkey andMEA region. In addition to his extensive professional engagements, Mustafa plays a pivotal role as a core team member for two of the Project Management Institute's (PMI) esteemed publications: the Practice Guide on the Governance of Projects, Programs, and Portfolios, and the Practice Guide on Benefits Realization Management. His contributions underscore his deep commitment to advancing project management practices globally.

9. Ricardo Vargas

Ricardo Vargas is a globally recognized expert in project management and a pioneer in integrating artificial intelligence into the field. Over a career spanning 27 years, he has directed projects worth more than $20 billion across industries and continents. As the former Chairman of the Project Management Institute (PMI), Ricardo spearheaded numerous advancements in the field, including the creation of the Brightline Initiative, a think tank that bridges the gap between strategy design and delivery. From 2016 to 2020, he also served as Director of Project Management and Infrastructure at the United Nations, where he led over 1,000 humanitarian and development projects in more than 120 countries. Ricardo is a prolific author, having written 16 books on project management, risk management, and transformation, translated into seven languages with over half a million copies sold. His thought leadership extends to public speaking, with 250 keynote addresses delivered in 40 countries, and to his popular *5 Minutes Podcast*, which has reached over 14 million views since its launch in 2007. A recognized authority in AI-driven project management, Ricardo co-authored the Harvard Business Review article *"How AI Will Transform Project Management,"* a top-read article worldwide for nine weeks. He also authored the LinkedIn course *"Leveraging Generative AI for Project Management,"* which has enrolled over 117,000 students. Ricardo's achievements have earned him the PMI Fellow Award, PMI's highest honor, along with multiple international accolades for his leadership in project and risk management. Ricardo holds a Ph.D. in Civil

Engineering, a master's in Industrial Engineering, and an undergraduate degree in Chemical Engineering.

10. Ruth Pearce

Ruth Pearce is a passionate advocate for advancing mental health in the workplace and fostering healthy, thriving organizations. With a vision to make workplaces part of the solution to the mental health crisis rather than part of the cause, she champions environments that promote well-being, innovation, and productivity. Ruth believes that mental health benefits everyone—from employees to leadership, organizations, and society at large. Ruth brings a unique perspective shaped by her personal journey through anxiety, burnout, and resilience, combined with an impressive academic background from the London School of Economics and Concord Law School. With over 25 years of experience in project leadership across financial services, state government, and non-profits, she offers valuable insight into creating balanced and engaged workplaces. Her passion lies in helping individuals and teams cultivate leadership and followership skills, empowering organizations to prioritize mental health as a foundation for innovation and sustainable success. As an adjunct faculty member at Suffolk University Law School, Ruth mentors the next generation of professionals, blending her practical expertise with a commitment to education and empowerment. Ruth's mission is to inspire resilience, innovation, and balanced success in both personal and professional life. When not coaching or speaking, she can be found embracing outdoor adventures or indulging in activities that fuel her passion for well-being and her dedication to helping others thrive.

11. Susanne Madsen

Susanne Madsen is an internationally recognised executive coach, who specializes in transformational leadership for managers of complex projects. With a career spanning almost three decades, she has worked with many prestigious organizations including JP Morgan, Citigroup, LEGO, Philips, NXP and BAM. Having coached hundreds of individuals across the globe, Susanne excels at helping her clients rethink how they lead global teams, handle challenging situations and deal with huge amounts of pressure. Her philosophy is centered on the belief that the best results in leadership stem from

self-awareness, emotional intelligence and the desire to grow and give back to others. In addition to her work as a leadership facilitator and coach, Susanne is a sought-after speaker and a guest lecturer at the University of Westminster. She is also a regular contributor to Project Journal and the award-winning author of three books, including *The Power of Project Leadership* (now in 2nd edition) and *How to Do the Inner Work*. The Power of Project Leadership has been described as "a must-read for everyone in the project world" and How to Do the Inner Work has been highlighted by Tara Brach as "brimming with insight, inspiration and powerful tools that free us from a lifetime of conditioning". Susanne is the co-founder of the *Project Leadership Institute* and the founder of Susanne Madsen International Ltd, a UK company governed by English law. She is a fully qualified Corporate and Executive coach, NLP Practitioner, and DISC accredited.

Appendix B - Data Collection from Interviews

Figure 7: Interviews were conducted and recorded using Zoom.

Figure 8: Transcripts were uploaded in an Excel file.

Transcripts

File Edit View Insert Format Data Tools Extensions Help

fx 0:0t OK, perfect.

Oh Very interesting question and very complicated relationship to be very frank.

Now, organizational success or organizational culture can be actually broken down further.

So what is organizational culture in a nutshell?

That's the way you are.

It's say the, the unwritten rules of your organization.

Yeah, the practices within your organizations, the way of working the people who are inside your organization, how they are feeling about it.

So all of these are very, you know, crucial when it comes to your culture.

All these aspects and all these components, there are a lot of components for the organizational culture as such and there are many types for the organizational culture.

If we break it down, you, you will find a lot of types of organizational culture and each department might have a different culture.

Than the other.

Each region might have a different culture, although they are part of the same international group, but each region is different.

So yes, organizational culture, the relationship between it and the, the decision making process.

So if we are looking at the different types of the, the culture, let's say a performance driven culture, yeah, the their focus will be more on the performance.

So they will be catering for their benefits.

They will be actually capturing those benefits.

They will be capturing the performance of the organization.

They will be capturing clear K P I s for their individuals, for their departments, for their organ and they will be trying their best to succeed because it's a performance driven type of organization.

And then, yeah, if we are looking at a different type of culture, learning culture, they are more keen towards learning.

They, they want to learn everything they want, they are really eager to go and grab knowledge from everywhere.

So, again, this is one of the power skills, by the way, being a learner, being able to grab everything learn as, as you go.

So now what's the relationship between this and the decision making process if we're looking at a hierarchical type of culture?

Yeah, bureaucracy.

Is there one single decision maker who's not allowing anyone to, to, you know, to, to to put her his perspective or her perspective on the table.

He's the only one who's controlling everything.

Figure 9: Responses from each respondent were analyzed and keywords were extracted.

What is your definition of "project success"?

Interviewee	Key Words	Answer
Mark Burnett	Client and Stakeholder Satisfaction, Impactful and Sustainable Outcomes	"Project success for me is pretty much client and stakeholder satisfaction. Beyond that, it's about being impactful and having sustainable outcomes." I have seen a lot of projects where we were working hard every day, it was toxic and people were getting blame. But when the project was finished not even the project manager knew the real value.
Ruth Pearce	Impact	"What I consider a measure of project success is the impact it has. I worked with financial organizations where usually the project was about putting in place a system that was going to make running the business easier. So I asked myself: did we do that?" "Sometimes the impact we want to achieve is not achieved - and in that case I don't care if you do it cheaper than intended and quicker than intented. If your goal was to make people 50% more productive and you didn't have any impact - that is a project failure.
Susanne Madsen	Iron Triangle, Sustainability, Longevity, Viability, Relevance	Project success is about fulfilling the commitments made—delivering the project on schedule, within budget, and to the specified standards. However, this is just one facet of success. A more comprehensive view includes sustainability, which not only considers the longevity of the product but also the long-term viability of the solution. This involves assessing whether the solution will still be effective and relevant a decade from now and whether the materials used are sustainable over time.
	Relevance, Broader Organization Objectives	Relevance is another crucial factor. A project can be sustainable and well-executed, but if it doesn't meet market needs or align with strategic goals, it can't be truly successful. Success also depends on the project's impact on broader objectives, such as achieving environmental goals or advancing key business priorities.
	Sustainability of the Team	Moreover, an essential yet often neglected dimension is the sustainability of the team. A project should not drain the team's energy or lead to burnout. For a project to be truly successful, the team must emerge strong enough to undertake future projects. Thus, success is not only about achieving the end result but also about maintaining a positive, sustainable journey for everyone involved.
Jeffrey Pinto	Customer perspective	"The problem with the iron triangle is that those metrics (cost, time, scope) are internal. We need to look at customers too, this is why waterfall is a dangerous process - because it doesn't look at the customer satisfaction."
Gilbert Silvius	Iron Triangle / Usefulness / Business cases criteria (benefits)	"It cannot be captured in a single criterion. Traditionally there are the criteria around the iron triangle so balancing project objectives with budget and time considerations. However, there are also criteria around the outcomes of a project - did we deliver something useful? So regarding benefits, and business case criteria. A third group of criteria is about satisfaction of stakeholders. So project success for me is a multidemensional thing."
Alexandra Chapman	Input → Output → Outcomes → Benefits → Value → Drivers	Project success is not just about meeting traditional measures like time, cost, and quality, which are often considered inputs to a project. Instead, it's about focusing on what comes out of the project. Success means achieving the desired outcomes—those carefully crafted, effective results that align with the future you aimed to create. It's about realizing the benefits, or positive consequences, of these outcomes working effectively, even if it's at the minimum viable level.
	TOP Value Equation	These benefits are categorized into seven different areas, ranging from customer satisfaction to risk reduction. Beyond benefits, project success also involves value, which can be measured in terms of financial gains, key performance indicators (KPIs), proxy indicators, or even through observational measures. The overall goal is to achieve all of these while maintaining an acceptable and optimized use of resources, time, and money.
Lavagnon Ika	Delivering business case benefits, meeting stakeholder expectations, and incorporating sustainability considerations	Project success is ultimately in the eyes of the beholder, meaning it depends on whom you ask. If you ask a project manager, they'll likely define success as meeting time, cost, quality, or scope targets. On the other hand, if you ask a CEO or general manager, they'll focus on value delivery and meeting stakeholder expectations, ensuring stakeholders are happy with the outcomes. For those in policy or regulatory sectors, success may be defined in terms of sustainability and making the world a better place.
		Organizations, however, don't have the luxury of sticking to just one perspective. They need to balance and assign weight to these different dimensions of success to cater to all stakeholder groups. Different parts of the organization will inevitably have varying definitions of success based on their focus, but there's a growing understanding—supported even by PMI—that the old iron triangle of time, cost, and quality/scope is not enough. It falls short of delivering on business case benefits, meeting stakeholder expectations, and incorporating sustainability considerations.

+ ≡ 1 Project Success def ▾   2 Role of Power Skills in PS ▾   1 Project Sustainability Outcomes ▾   EQ ▾   Organizational Cult

Appendix C - Survey Results

Figure 10: The Google Form survey received 105 responses.

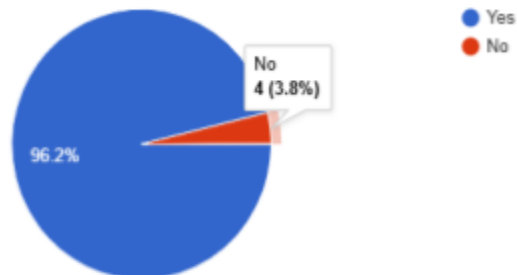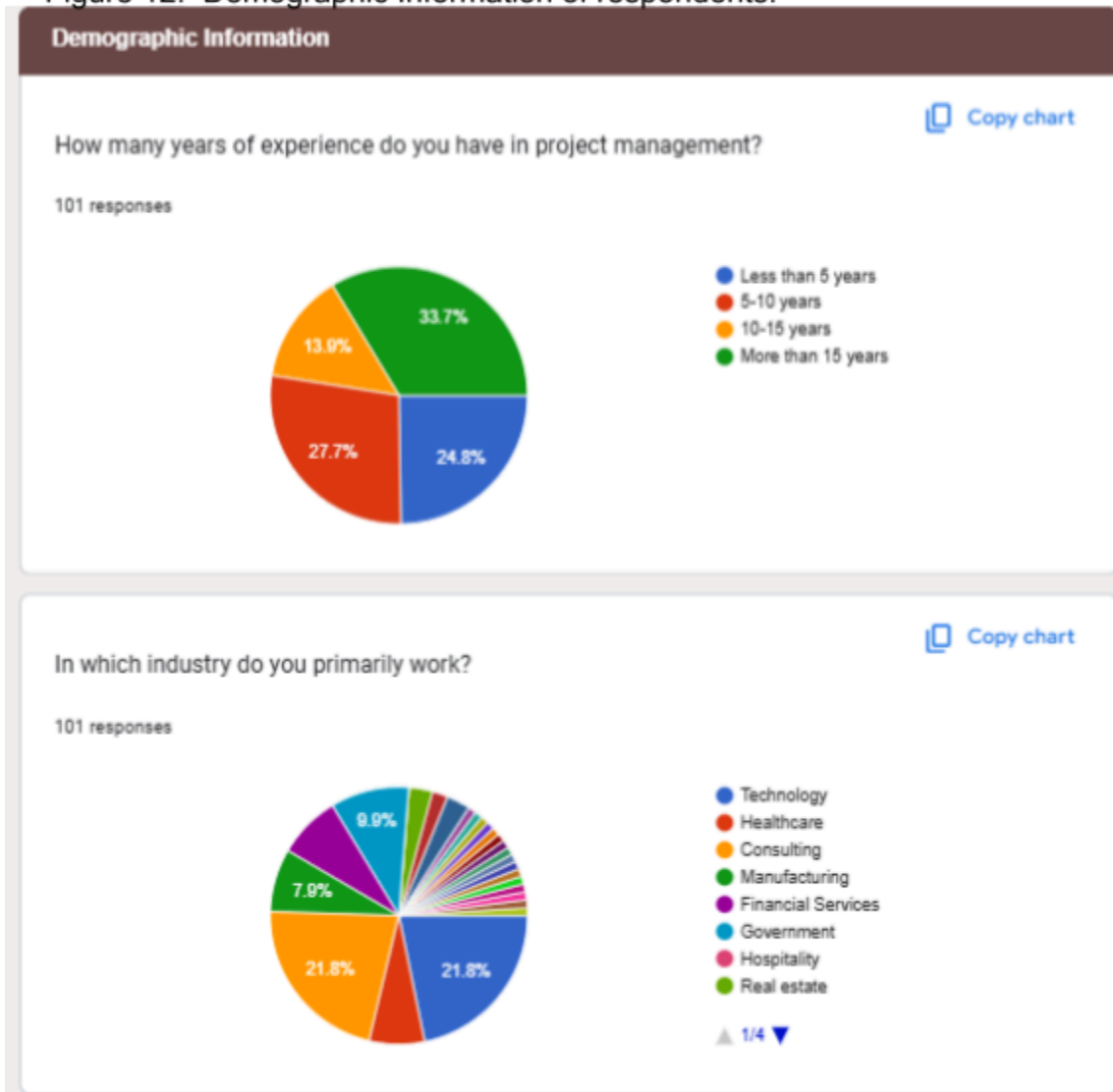*Figure 11: 4 of the 105 were not considered valid for this research.*

Figure 12: Demographic Information of respondents.

References

Abd Ullah, A., Khan, S., & Uddin, F. (2024). Building emotionally intelligent teams: A survey on the impact of emotional intelligence on organizational success. *Journal of Asian Development Studies, 13*(3), 62–80. https://doi.org/10.62345/jads.2024.13.3.62

Afzal, A., Khan, M. M., & Mujtaba, B. G. (2018). The impact of Project Managers' competencies, emotional intelligence and transformational leadership on project success in the Information Technology Sector. *Marketing and Management of Innovations*, (2), 142–154. https://doi.org/10.21272/mmi.2018.2-12

Ahmad, M. K., Abdulhamid, A. B., Wahab, S. A., & Nazir, M. U. (2022). Impact of the Project Manager's Transformational Leadership, Influenced by Mediation of Self-Leadership and Moderation of Empowerment, on Project Success. *International Journal of Managing Projects in Business*, 15, 842–864.

Ahmed, A., Kayis, B., & Amornsawadwatana, S. (2007). A review of techniques for risk management in projects. *Benchmarking: An International Journal, 14*(1), 22-36.

Alvarenga, J. C., Branco, R. R., Guedes, A. L. A., Soares, C. A. P., & Silva, W. S. (2019). The Project Manager Core Competencies to Project Success. *International Journal of Managing Projects in Business*, 13, 277–292.

Ardichvili, A., & Kuchinke, K. P. (2010). Leadership styles and cultural values among managers and subordinates: A comparative study of countries of the Former Soviet Union, Germany, and the United States. *Retrieved from Unpan*. https://un.org/unpan07373

Association for Project Management (2006). APM supports sustainability outlooks.

Atkinson, R. (1999). Project management: Cost, time and quality, two best guesses and a phenomenon, it's time to accept other success criteria. *International Journal of Project Management, 17*(6), 337-342.

Aubry, M., Boukri, S. E., & Sergi, V. (2021). Opening the black box of benefits management in the context of projects. *Project Management Journal, 52*(5), 434–452. https://doi.org/10.1177/87569728211020606

Awan, M. (2015). Impact of Project Manager's Soft Leadership Skills on Project Success. *Journal of Poverty, Investment and Development*, 8. Available at: https://iiste.org/Journals/index.php/JPID/article/view/19288

Baer, M., & Frese, M. (2003). Innovation is not enough: Climates for initiative and psychological safety, process innovations, and firm performance. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 24*, 45–68.

Bayiley, Y. T., & Teklu, G. K. (2016). Success factors and criteria in the management of international development projects: Evidence from projects funded by the European Union in

Ethiopia. *International Journal of Managing Projects in Business, 9*(3), 562-582. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJMPB-06-2015-0046

Baze, X. (2024). Project managers' leadership style as a success factor of the end product.

Bergmann, B., & Schaeppi, J. (2016, July 12). A data-driven approach to group creativity. *Harvard Business Review.*

Bhatti, S. H., Kiyani, S. K., Dust, S. B., & Zakariya, R. (2021). The Impact of Ethical Leadership on Project Success: The Mediating Role of Trust and Knowledge Sharing. *International Journal of Managing Projects in Business*, 14, 982–998.

Bjelica, D. Lj., Mihić, M., Kavčič, K., & Gošnik, D. (2023). Relationship between project success factors, project success criteria and project success in SME: Evidence from selected European transitional economies. *International Journal of Industrial Engineering and Management, 14*(4), 297-310. https://ijiemjournal.uns.ac.rs/index.php/ijiem/article/view/915

Boseman, G. (2008). Effective leadership in a changing world. *Journal of Financial Service Professionals, 62*, 36-38.

Bradley, G. (2006). *Benefit Realisation Management*. Gower, Aldershot.

Breese, R. (2012). Benefits realisation management: Panacea or false dawn? *International Journal of Project Management, 30*(3), 341–351. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijproman.2011.08.007

Brundtland, G. H. (1987). *Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our common future*. Oxford University Press.

Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods* (5th ed.). Oxford University Press.

BSR & GlobeScan. (2012). *The state of sustainable business poll 2012*. BSR. https://www.bsr.org/en/reports/bsr-globescan-state-of-sustainable-business-poll-2012

Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. Harper & Row.

Cabrey, T., & Garrett, D. (2024, November 7). *Project success defined and measured* [Webinar]. Project Management Institute. https://www.projectmanagement.com/videos/1024321/project-success-defined-and-measured#_=

Cameron, K. S., & Quinn, R. E. (1999). *Diagnosing and Changing Organizational Culture: Based on the Competing Values Framework*. Addison-Wesley.

Carmeli, A. (2003). The relationship between emotional intelligence and work attitudes, behavior and outcomes: An examination among senior managers. *Journal of Managerial Psychology, 18*(8), 788–813. https://doi.org/10.1108/02683940310511881

Carvalho, M. M., & Rabechini, R. (2017). Can project sustainability management impact project success? An empirical study applying a contingent approach. *International Journal of Project Management, 35*(6), 1120-1132.

Cherniss, C., & Goleman, D. (2001). How to select for, measure and improve emotional intelligence in individuals, groups, and organizations. In *Emotionally Intelligent Workplace*. Jossey-Bass.

Clarke, N. (2010). Emotional intelligence abilities and their relationships with team processes. *Team Performance Management: An International Journal*, 16(1/2), 6–32. https://doi.org/10.1108/13527591011028906

Cooke-Davies, T. (2002). The "real" success factors on projects. *International Journal of Project Management, 20*(3), 185–190. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0263-7863(01)00067-9

Couillard, J. (1995). The role of project risk in determining project management approach. *Project Management Journal*, 26, 3–15.

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Dâmbean, C. A., & Gabor, M. R. (2021). Implications of Emotional Intelligence in Human Resource Management. Economics,9(2), 73-90. https://doi.org/10.2478/eoik-2021-0016

Deal, T. E., & Kennedy, A. A. (1982). *Corporate cultures: The rites and rituals of corporate life.*

Deloitte Access Economics. (2019). *Premium skills: The wage premium associated with human skills*. DeakinCo.

Denison, D. R., Nieminen, L., & Kotrba, L. (2014). Diagnosing organizational cultures: A conceptual and empirical review of culture effectiveness surveys. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology, 23*(1), 145-161.

Dimov, P. I. (2004). Leadership: When management is not enough. Paper presented at PMI® Global Congress 2004—North America, Anaheim, CA. Newtown Square, PA: Project Management Institute.

Doan, T. T. T., Nguyen, L. C. T., & Nguyen, T. D. N. (2020). Emotional Intelligence and Project Success: The Roles of Transformational Leadership and Organizational Commitment. *Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business*, 7, 223–233.

Edmondson, A. C. (1999). Psychological safety and learning behavior in work teams. Administrative Science Quarterly, 44, 350–383.

Edmondson, A. C. (2018). *The fearless organization: Creating psychological safety in the workplace for learning, innovation, and growth*. John Wiley & Sons.

El-Sabaa, S. (2001). The skills and career path of an effective project manager. *International Journal of Project Management, 19*(1), 1–7.

Elkington, J. (1998). Partnerships from cannibals with forks: The triple bottom line of 21st-century business. *Environmental Quality Management, 8*(1), 37-51.

Fisher, C. D. (2003). Why do lay people believe that satisfaction and performance are correlated? Possible sources of a commonsense theory. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 24*(6), 753–777. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.219

Forbes Human Resources Council. (2021, January 20). Soft skills are essential to the future of work. *Forbes*.

Gabelaia, I. (2020). Soft skills training: College teaching that matters and learning that lasts for emerging professionals. *IJASOS-International E-journal of Advances in Social Sciences*. https://doi.org/10.46529/socioint.2020170

Garcia-Castro, R., & Aguilera, R. V. (2015). Incremental value creation and appropriation in a world with multiple stakeholders. *Strategic Management Journal, 36*(1), 137-147.

Gareis, R., Huemann, M., Martinuzzi, A., Weninger, C. and Sedlacko, M. (2013), Project Management and Sustainable Development Principles, Project Management Institute, Newtown Square, PA.

Geoghegan, L., & Dulewicz, V. (2008). Do Project Managers' Leadership Competencies Contribute to Project Success? *Project Management Journal*, 39(4), 58–67. https://doi.org/10.1002/pmj

Gil, N., & Fu, Y. (2022). Megaproject performance, value creation and value distribution: An organizational governance perspective. *Academy of Management Discoveries*. In Press.

Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ*. Bantam Books.

Goleman, D. (1998). What makes a leader? *Harvard Business Review, 76*(6), 93-104.

Greenleaf, R. (1970). *The servant as leader*.

Hackman, M. Z., & Johnson, C. E. (1996). *Leadership: A communication perspective* (2nd ed.). Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.

Hector, O., & Cameron, R. (2023). Human-centric management: Nurturing talent, building culture, and driving organizational success. *International Journal of Science and Society, 5*(4), 511. http://ijsoc.goacademica.com

Hersey, P., & Blanchard, K. H. (1988). *Management of organizational behavior* (5th ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Hoegl, M., & Gemuenden, H. G. (2001). Teamwork quality and success of innovation projects: A theoretical concept and empirical evidence. *Organization Science, 12*(4), 435-49.

Ibdayanti, D. R., Oktaviani, C. Z., & Husin, S. (2024). Multiple regression analysis of the influence of communication management on project success. *E3S Web of Conferences, 476*, 01001. https://doi.org/10.1051/e3sconf/202447601001

Ika, L. A. (2018). Beneficial or detrimental ignorance: The straw man fallacy of Flyvbjerg's test of Hirschman's Hiding Hand. *World Development, 103*(1), 369–382.

Ika, L., & Pinto, J. (2022). The "re-meaning" of project success: Updating and recalibrating for a modern project management. *International Journal of Project Management, 40*(8), Article 102. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijproman.2022.08.001

Iroanya, C. C. (2012). *The relationship between organizational culture and quality of communication in project management* (Doctoral dissertation). ProQuest Dissertations and Theses.

Kerzner, H. (2009). *Project management: A system approach to planning, scheduling and controlling* (8th ed.). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley & Sons.

Khalilzadeh, M., Akbari, H., & Foroughi, A. (2016). Investigating the relationship of sustainability factors with project management success. *Industrial Engineering & Management Systems, 15*(4), 345-353.

Kotter, J. (2014). *Power and influence*. Free Press.

Lewin, K., Lippit, R., & White, R. K. (1939). Patterns of aggressive behavior in experimentally created social climates. *Journal of Social Psychology, 10*, 271-301. https://doi.org/10.1080/00224545.1939.9713366

Ling, F., Pham, V., & Hoang, T. (2009). Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats for Architectural, Engineering, and Construction Firms: Case Study of Vietnam. *Journal of Construction Engineering and Management*, 135(10), 1105–1113.

Maltzman, R., & Shirley, D. (2015). *Driving project, program, and portfolio success: The sustainability wheel*. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press.

Manazar, M., Hussain, A. M., Ahmed, K., & Zulqarnain, W. (2005). Impact of project manager's soft leadership skills on project success. *Journal of Poverty, Investment and Development*, 8, 27–46.

Maqbool, R., Sudong, Y., Manzoor, N., & Rashid, Y. (2017). The impact of emotional intelligence, project managers' competencies, and transformational leadership on project success: An empirical perspective. *Project Management Journal, 48*(3), 58–75. https://doi.org/10.1177/875697281704800304

Maurer, I., Bartsch, V., & Ebers, M. (2011). The value of intra-organizational social capital: How it fosters knowledge transfer, growth and innovation performance. *Organization Studies, 32*, 157-185.

Mayer, J. D., Salovey, P., & Caruso, D. R. (2008). Emotional intelligence: New ability or eclectic traits? *American Psychologist, 63*(6), 503.

Mazur, A., Pisarski, A., Chang, A., & Ashkanasy, N. M. (2014). Rating defense major project success: The role of personal attributes and stakeholder relationships. *International Journal of Project Management, 32*(6), 944–957. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijproman.2013.10.018

McColl-Kennedy, J. R., & Anderson, R. D. (2002). Impact of leadership style and emotions on subordinate performance. *The Leadership Quarterly, 13*(5), 545–559.

Moe, T. L., & Khang, D. B. (2008). Success Criteria and Factors for International Development Projects: A Life-Cycle-Based Framework. *Project Management Journal*, 39, 72–84.

Morris, P. W. G., & Hough, G. H. (1987). *The anatomy of major projects: A study of the reality of project management* (Vol. 1). Wiley.

Morrison, J. M., Brown, C. J., & Smit, E. M. (2006). A supportive organizational culture for project management in matrix organizations: A theoretical perspective. *South African Journal of Business Management, 39*(4), 39–54.

Mount, G. (2006). The role of emotional intelligence in developing international business capability: EI provides traction. In *Linking emotional intelligence and performance at work* (pp. 97–124).

Müller, R., & Jugdev, K. (2012). Critical success factors in projects: Pinto, Slevin, and Prescott - the elucidation of project success. *International Journal of Managing Projects in Business, 5*(4), 757-775.

Müller, R., & Turner, R. (2010). Leadership competency profiles of successful project managers. *International Journal of Project Management, 28*(5), 437–448.

Munns, A., & Bjeirmi, B. (1996). The role of project management in achieving project success. *International Journal of Project Management, 14*(2), 81-87.

Musawir, A. U., Serra, C. E. M., Zwikael, O., & Ali, I. (2017). Project governance, benefit management, and project success: Towards a framework for supporting organizational strategy implementation. *International Journal of Project Management, 35*(8), 1658–1672. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijproman.2017.07.007

Muzio, E., Fisher, D., Thomas, E., & Peters, V. (2007). Soft Skills Quantification (SSQ) for Project Manager Competencies. *Project Management Journal*, 38(2), 30–38.

National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE). (2021). *Job Outlook 2021*. NACE.

Northouse, P. G. (2001). *Leadership theory and practice* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.

O'Reilly, C., Chatman, J., & Caldwell, D. (1991). People and organizational culture: A profile comparison approach to assessing person-organization fit. *Academy of Management Journal, 34*(3), 487-516. https://doi.org/10.2307/256404

OECD. (2019). *Better criteria for better evaluation: Revised evaluation criteria definitions and principles for use*. OECD/DAC Network on Development Evaluation.

Patrick (2007). The origins of modern project management. In *The Fourth Annual Project Management Institute College of Scheduling Conference*, Vancouver, Canada.

Pinto, J. K., & Slevin, D. P. (1988). Project success: Definitions and measurement techniques. *Project Management Journal, 19*(1), 67-72.

Pinto, J. K., Davis, K., Ika, L. A., Jugdev, K., & Zwikael, O. (2021). Call for papers for special issue on project success. *International Journal of Project Management, 39*, 213-215.

Procaccino, J. D., Verner, J. M., Shelfer, K. M., & Gefen, D. (2005). What do software practitioners really think about project success: an exploratory study. *Journal of Systems and Software*, 78(2), 194–203.

Project Management Institute (PMI). (2008). *A guide to the project management body of knowledge (PMBOK® Guide)* (4th ed.). Project Management Institute.

Project Management Institute (PMI). (2023). *Pulse of Profession 2023: Power Skills, Redefining Project Success* (14th ed.).

Project Management Institute. (2024, September 19). *Reframing project success*. PMI Blog. https://www.pmi.org/blog/reframing-project-success

Project Management Institute (PMI). (2024). *First movers' advantage: The immediate benefits of adopting generative AI for project management.* Project Management Institute.

Puck, J. D., & Rygl, E. A. (2006). Cultural antecedents and performance consequences of open communication and knowledge transfer in multicultural process-innovation project teams. *Journal of Organizational Transformation and Social Change, 3*, 223-241.

Ramsing, L. (2009). Project communication in a strategic internal perspective. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal, 14*, 345-357.

Rezvani, A., Chang, A., Wiewiora, A., Ashkanasy, N. M., Jordan, P. J., & Zolin, R. (2016). Manager emotional intelligence and project success: The mediating role of job satisfaction and trust. *International Journal of Project Management, 34*(7), 1112–1122.

Richard, P. J., Devinney, T. M., Yip, G. S., & Johnson, G. (2009). Measuring organizational performance: Towards methodological best practice. *Journal of Management, 35*(3), 718-804.

Rivard, S., & Dupré, R. (2009). Information Systems Project Management in PMJ: A Brief History. *Project Management Journal*, 40(4), 20–30.

Robles, M. M. (2012). Executive perceptions of the top 10 soft skills needed in today's workplace. *Business Communication Quarterly*, 75(4), 453–465.

Schein, E. H. (2010). *Organizational culture and leadership* (4th ed.). Jossey-Bass.

Shenhar, A. J., & Dvir, D. (2007). *Reinventing project management: The diamond approach to successful growth and innovations*. Harvard Business School Press.

Shenhar, A., Tishler, A., Dvir, D., Lipovetsky, S., & Lechler, T. (2002). Refining the search for project success factors: A multivariate, typological approach. *R&D Management, 32*(2), 111-126.

SHRM. (2023). *The power of soft skills*.

Silvius, A. J., & Schipper, R. P. (2014). Sustainability in project management: A literature review and impact analysis. *Social Business, 4*(1), 63-96.

Silvius, A.J.G., Schipper, R., Planko, J., Van den Brink, J., & Köhler, A. (2012). Sustainability in Project Management, Farnham: Gower Publishing.

Sy, T., Tram, S., & Hara, L. A. O. (2006). Relation of employee and manager emotional intelligence to job satisfaction and performance. Journal of Vocational Behavior, 68, 461–473. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2005.10.003

Sydney Pons, Jalayer Khalilzadeh, Melvin R. Weber, & Ruth Annette Smith. (2024). Cultivating sustainability savvy: the role of soft skills in shaping sustainable practices. International Hospitality Review. https://doi.org/10.1108/ihr-01-2024-0007

Tharp, J. (2012). *Project management and global sustainability.* Paper presented at PMI Global Congress 2012—EMEA, Marseille, France. Project Management Institute.

Thomas, J., & Mengel, T. (2008). Preparing project managers to deal with complexity–Advanced project management education. International journal of project management, 26(3), 304-315.

Tongia, S., Jain, C., et al. (2024). The relevance of soft skills in career success. *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice, 30*(1), 1809-1812.

Tran, Q. H. N. (2023). A cross-cultural comparison of organizational culture: Evidence from academic libraries in Vietnam and China. *Global Knowledge, Memory and Communication*.

Turner, J. R., & Muller, R. (2005). The project manager's leadership style as a success factor on projects: A literature review. *Project Management Journal, 36*(1), 49-61.

Ullah, A., Khan, S., & Uddin, F. (2024). Building emotionally intelligent teams: A survey on the impact of emotional intelligence on organizational success. *Journal of Asian Development Studies*, 13(3), 62–80. https://doi.org/10.62345/jads.2024.13.3.62

Varajão, J., Magalhães, L., Freitas, L., & Rocha, P. (2022). Success management – From theory to practice. *International Journal of Project Management, 40*(5), 481-498. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijproman.2022.04.002

Verma, V. K. (1996). *Human resource skills for the project manager - The human aspect of project management* (Vol. 2). PMI.

Weiss, H. M., & Cropanzano, R. (1996). Affective events theory: A theoretical discussion of the structure, causes, and consequences of affective experiences at work. *Research in Organizational Behavior, 18*, 1–74.

Williams, T., & Samset, K. (2010). Issues in front-end decision making on projects. *Project Management Journal, 41*(2), 38–49. https://doi.org/10.1002/pmj.20160

World Commission on Environment and Development. (1987). *Our common future.* Oxford University Press.

World Economic Forum. (2020). *The Future of Jobs Report 2020*. World Economic Forum.

World Health Organization (WHO). (2019). Burn-out an "occupational phenomenon": International Classification of Diseases. https://www.who.int/news/item/28-05-2019-burn-out-an-occupational-phenomenon-international-classification-of-diseases

Xu, Y., Schneier, F., Heimberg, R. G., Princisvalle, K., Liebowitz, M. R., Wang, S., & Blanco, C. (2012). Gender differences in social anxiety disorder: Results from the national epidemiologic sample on alcohol and related conditions. *Journal of Anxiety Disorders, 26*(1), 12–19. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.janxdis.2011.08.006

Zuo, J., Zhao, X., Nguyen, Q.B.M., Ma, T. & Gao, S. (2018). Soft skills of construction project management professionals and project success factors: A structural equation model. Engineering, Construction and Architectural Management, 25(3), 425-442. https://doi.org/10.1108/ECAM-01-2016-0016

Zwikael, O., & Meredith, J. (2021). Evaluating the success of a project and the performance of its leaders. *IEEE Transactions on Engineering Management, 68*(6), 1745-1757.

Zwikael, O., & Smyrk, J. R. (2012). A general framework for gauging the performance of initiatives to enhance organizational value. *British Journal of Management, 23*, S6-S22.