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About

INSIGHT Journal is an online, open access, international refereed research journal established by Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Johor, Malaysia. It is indexed in MyJurnal MCC.

INSIGHT Journal focuses on social science and humanities research. The main aim of INSIGHT Journal is to provide an intellectual forum for the publication and dissemination of original work that contributes to the understanding of the main and related disciplines of the following areas: Accounting, Business Management, Law, Information Management, Administrative Science and Policy Studies, Language Studies, Islamic Studies and Education.

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FOREWORD BY DEPUTY RECTOR OF RESEARCH, INDUSTRIAL LINKAGES & ALUMNI

Since 2018, the INSIGHT JOURNAL (IJ) from Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Johor has come up with several biennial publications. Volume 1 and 2 debuted in 2018, followed by Volume 3 this year as well as Volume 4 with 19 published papers due to the great response from authors both in and out of UiTM. Through Insight Journal, lecturers have the ability to publish their research articles and opportunity to share their academic findings. Insight Journal is indexed in MyJurnal MCC and is now an international refereed journal with many international reviewers from prestigious universities appointed as its editorial review board members.

This volume 5 as well as volume 6 (which will be published in 2020) are special issues for the 6th International Accounting and Business Conference (IABC) 2019 held at Indonesia Banking School, Jakarta. The conference was jointly organized by the Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Johor and the Indonesia Banking School Jakarta. Hence, the volumes focus mainly on the accounting and business research papers compiled from this conference, which was considered a huge success as over 66 full papers were presented.

Lastly, I would like to thank the Rector of UiTM Johor, Associate Professor Dr. Ahmad Naqiyuddin Bakar for his distinctive support, IJ Managing Editor for this issue Dr. Noriah Ismail, IJ Assistant Managing Editor, Fazdillah Md Kassim well as all the reviewers and editors who have contributed in the publication of this special issue.

Thank you.

ASSOCIATE PROF. DR. SAUNAH ZAINON
Deputy Rector of Research, Industrial Linkages & Alumni
Editor-in-Chief for INSIGHT Journal
Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Johor

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Drivers, Enablers and Challenges of Effective Project Managers

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to examine the drivers, enablers, and challenges of an effective project manager. This is a quantitative research study target to all project managers, project leads, managers and as well as project contributors who work in any company in Malaysia. A total of 250 questionnaires have been distributed via email and hard copies to the major industry state in Malaysia like Penang, Kuala Lumpur and Johor. Resulted in 133 questionnaires or 53.2% of completed questionnaires were returned and used for statistical analysis. The analysis indicates that in knowledge and skill dimension like a soft skill, technical skill, and green skill play an important role to drive and enables the effectiveness of a project manager. Besides, tools and techniques used and applied during project planning, monitoring and controlling also show a significant component in determining the effectiveness of a project manager. Surprisingly, in the innovativeness dimension project manager with innovator characteristic show did not have significant influence for an effective project manager however project manager with adaptor characteristic was shown significantly to be an effective project manager which contradicts with the previous literature study. As a conclusion, in order to remain competitive, these drivers, enablers, and challenges are essential for any organizations' project managers when managing and handling projects.

Keywords: Project Manager, Knowledge & Skills, Tools and Techniques, Innovativeness

1. Introduction

A project manager plays an important role in project management. The project manager is responsible to achieve this objective through the application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques in the project activities - also known as project management (PMI,

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2008). Project management appears to affect the success of an organization and as a result, most corporate companies start to pursue project management as an important activity to manage their operations and expansion.

In the past research, most of the researches were focused on the correlation between project success factors and ability to handle multiple complex projects toward the core competencies of the project managers (Alam, Gale, Brown, & Khan, 2010; Azim et al., 2010; Caird, 1994; Jacques, Garger, & Thomas, 2008). Not many researchers study the relationship between the core competencies (such as knowledge, skills, and innovativeness) and drivers, enablers, and challenges of effective project managers. In addition, most previous studies related to project managers are conducted in other parts of the world (Alam, et al., 2010; Azim, et al., 2010; Caird, 1994; Green & McCann, 2011; M. Kirton, 1984) and not many do on project managers who work in Malaysia.

In Azim (2010) research, he demonstrated that the usefulness of soft skill to help the project manager not only handle the simple project but as well as a complex project. Besides, Azim (2010) further justified soft skills not only help to increase the effectiveness for a project manager who usually handles the single project but also in the situation where a project manager concurrently handles multiple projects. Besides there are also study show that those project managers who are good in building up the knowledge and skills would most likely help them to position themselves for future career success (El-Sabaa, 2001).

Furthermore, ethical is an important green skill for a project manager. According to Parry and Proctor-Thomson (2002), they conclude that ethical integrity is an important factor for effective leadership. Mishra, Dangayach, and Mittal (2011), based on their study, ethics will result in sustainability of the project. Thus, it will increase the values and morality among the team.

In today's business, project managers are provided with various tools and techniques that would increase the effectiveness during the project life cycle. Ika, Diallo, & Thuillier (2009) and Dvira, Razb & Shenharc (2003) propose that tools and techniques that would help to increase the effectiveness of a project manager such as planning, monitoring and controlling tools. Besides, it further justified by the study done by Ebert (1999). Additionally, Potts(2010) argues that the usage of appropriate project management tools and techniques generally reduce the risks of not meeting the deadlines, etc.

Mustapha (1998) had been identified as the personal variable and as well as the job variable is the key factor influencing for the effectiveness of a project manager. Kirton (2003) noted that "The Adaption-Innovation Theory is founded on the assumption that all people solve problems are creative". Tuilett (1996) proposes that the innovativeness of project managers make important contributions to improve their efficiency while managing multiple projects. Kapsali (2011), shows that a project manager who manages the project by using traditional or conventional project management practices it might lead to the failure of the innovation project. Therefore, the result of the study shows that the innovativeness of a project manager in his thinking, an adopter, will eventually bring innovation project more successful. According to (Drucker, 2006), "effectiveness is an important discipline which can be learned and must be earned". From the study by Wang

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(2011), he identified that an effective manager is supposed to be supportive, caring, fair, engaging, self-disciplined, unselfish, responsible, and knowledgeable.

2. Statement of the problem

Thus, the limited study contributed to project management and the effectiveness of a project manager. Hence, the motivation for this study is to fill the existing gap in research by examining drivers, enablers, and challenges of effective project managers working in Malaysia in terms of knowledge, skills, usage of tools and techniques, and innovativeness. It is believed that soft skills and technical skills play in a vital role for a project manager.

Are soft skills and technical skills play in a vital role for a project manager? I believe this a hot topic which had been discussed from the past. If it was so important, will both soft skills and technical skills help to increase the effectiveness of a project manager? From the study by Alam, Gale, Brown, & Khan (2010), the proof that soft skills not only help project managers to be more effective but are also necessary to train the future project managers. On the other hand, the study from Wateridge (1997) indicates that both soft skills and technical skills are equally important.

Green & McCann (2011) argue for the need to develop “green skills” on project managers to enhance their ability to lead the team in a green economy. Similarly, Chen (2011) supports this. Is it true that environmental leadership are positively associated with green organizational identity and green competitive advantage?

There a are a number of studies agreed with tools and techniques that would increase the effectiveness of project managers but there are some contradict the point of view based on the research done by Rose, Pedersen, Hosbond & Kræmmergaard (2007). Another question raised that, can tools and techniques might help to increase the effectiveness and the competency of the project manager roles?

Therefore does it mean if a project manager has those characteristic eventually they will be more effective? It might not necessary as throughout his study, he also additional point out that traditional culture also plays in an important role in influencing the perception of the effectiveness of managerial behaviors.

There are a number of studies done with regards to the characteristics of an innovator such as thinking style, creativity, problem-solving, and decision-making. It will be important to identify the personal variable for project manager in detail and measure the characteristic to find a set of the significant personal variable. At the same time, the innovativeness of project managers’ needs to be identified. How is effectiveness measured? Base on the research done by Analoui, Ahmed, & Kakabadse (2010), they are proposing eight parameters of managerial effectiveness which they used to measure the effectiveness of a project manager.

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3. Research Objectives

The effectiveness of project managers is the main focus of this study, which seeks to examine the critical factors that affect effectiveness. The specific objectives are to determine the relationship between knowledge and skills, tools and techniques and innovativeness of an effective project manager.

4. Research Methodology

This study is descriptive research employing the survey method through the distribution of questionnaires. Apart from descriptive statistics, Pearson Correlation was also employed to establish the relationship between the variables. Cronbach's Alpha was also tested to check reliability and validity. Other than that, the correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis were also conducted to test the relationship between knowledge and skills, tools and techniques and innovativeness of an effective project manager.

This study covered the manufacturing sectors as manufacturing sectors was second largest of Malaysia income which contributes about 25% to Malaysia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) after services sector (Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by State, 2009). Based on the manufacturing industries' statistic from Department of Statistics Malaysia (Report on the Annual Survey of Manufacturing Industries, 2009), there are approximately 145,796 or 8.4% employees in the target population whereby they categories as managers, professionals, and executives in their statistics.

Based on the target population of 145,796 (Report on the Annual Survey of Manufacturing Industries, 2009), this study aims to collect a sample size of about 100 respondents using purposive sampling as the targeted sample need to be exposed to project management. The confidence level and confidence interval is set to 95% and 10%.

The questionnaires consist of six different sections. Section A is to focus on gathering information on the personal demographics such as education levels, current job role, type of projects involved, year of experiences and number of projects involved. While sections B, C, and D were mainly measured by the independent variables. After that followed by, Section E which measured the dependent variable.

Respondents are asked to indicate their perceptions of the effectiveness of project managers. The questionnaire is constructed with the five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. The questionnaires are enclosed with a cover letter to explain the purpose of the study.

When the questionnaires are ready to be tested, a pilot test was conducted on ten pre-selected, experienced project managers. Based on their inputs and feedbacks, the questionnaires are revised accordingly.

After the pilot test, all respondents have a short discussion to identify any difficulty faced during the survey. As a result, all of them are satisfied and have no doubt with the

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questionnaires. Therefore, the questionnaires are started to distribute as its original design to all of the respondents. A total of 138 respondents which comprised of project managers, participated in this survey.

5. Data analysis and Discussion

5.1 Response rate

Out of the total 250 questionnaires distributed, only 138 questionnaires were returned. However, 5 questionnaires were excluded because of incomplete of the questionnaires. Hence only 133 questionnaires were used for data analysis. Hence, the response rate was 53.20%.

5.2 Profile of Respondents

Majority of the respondents are male (62.4%) while the female only consists of 37.6%. Besides, majority of the respondents are in the age's group of 31 - 35 (38.3%) then followed by 26 – 30 ages group (36.8%). The rest is between 36-40 (21.9%) and more than 40 years old (1.5%). Since age is under, therefore, there are 2 respondents (1.5%) were did not fill up their age information.

From the collected information, there are 82% of the respondents are on Bachelor Degree after that follow by Master Degree which is 17.3%. As expected, the majority of the respondents are currently worked as a project manager, therefore, there are 59.4% are project managers. Besides, the working experiences on most of the respondents are in between 6-10 years (52.6%) then followed by more than 10 years (21.1%). Subsequently, most of the respondents have involved more than 10 projects (39.8%) then follow by 6-10 projects (37.6%) throughout their working experiences. With regards, Software (48.1%) and IT infrastructure (39.8%) are found to be the most frequent project the respondents deal with.

Their self-rating on their project management skills, the majority of them rate their self as reasonably experienced (48.1%) then follow by highly experienced (39.1%). The self-confident level was rated - reasonably confident (48.1%) and highly confident (39.8%).

5.3 Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's alpha is used to test the internal consistency of the variables. Therefore, the level of reliability of the variables is validated base on the value of Cronbach's alpha. Cronbach's alpha for all the variables is greater than 0.7, therefore, it indicates that the level of reliability for the variables is sufficient. Variable with the highest Cronbach's alpha is Tool & Technique: Planning (0.96) and the lowest is Knowledge & Skill: Technical Skill (0.90).

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5.4 Correlation Analysis

The correlation coefficient among the variables in Effectiveness (Dependent variables), and all independent variables (Knowledge and Skill, Tools and Techniques and Innovativeness) is ranging from 0.24 to 0.61 ($p < 0.01$). Soft Skill in Knowledge and Skill dimension and Planning in Tools and Techniques are highly correlated with the Project Manager's Effectiveness ($r=0.61$; $p< 0.01$). However, Adaptor in Innovativeness dimension is the least correlated project manager's effectiveness ($r=0.24$; $p< 0.01$) among other independent variables. There is no multicollinearity problem among all the variables. A rule of thumb for the existence of multicollinearity problem is a correlation coefficient greater than 0.80 (Ryu & Roh, 2007).

Table 3 Correlations Among Variables

	Effectiveness	Soft Skill	Technical Skill	Green Skill	Planning	Monitoring & Controlling	Innovator	Adaptor
Effectiveness	1							
Soft Skill	.610**	1						
Technical Skill	.397**	.234**	1					
Green Skill	.526**	.516**	.200*	1				
Planning	.610**	.607**	.436**	.425**	1			
Monitoring & Controlling	.553**	.430**	.372**	.559**	.462**	1		
Innovator	.318**	.414**	.326**	.265**	.434**	.333**	1	
Adaptor	.244**	.347**	.276**	.409**	.369**	.436**	.165	1
MEAN	3.82	3.60	4.30	3.17	3.77	3.46	3.86	3.17
Std. Deviation	.88	.77	.75	1.05	.95	1.03	.85	.91
Cronbach's Alpha	.967	.853	.982	.972	.958	.956	.957	.978

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

5.4 Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regressions are used to test the hypotheses in the present study. Table 4 illustrates the regression results for factor influencing the effectiveness of a project manager. The model tested H_1 to H_3 by regression independent variables on the effectiveness of project manager as the dependent variable.

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Table 4 Multiple Regression Analysis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	.454	.368		1.234	.220	-.275	1.184					
Soft Skill	.354	.093	.308	3.801	.000	.170	.539	.610	.322	.222	.522	1.917
Technical Skill	.184	.081	.156	2.283	.024	.025	.344	.397	.200	.134	.736	1.360
Green Skill	.151	.065	.179	2.321	.022	.022	.280	.526	.203	.136	.575	1.740
Planning	.244	.077	.263	3.186	.002	.093	.396	.610	.274	.186	.502	1.994
Monitoring And controlling	.205	.067	.239	3.066	.003	.073	.337	.553	.264	.179	.562	1.778
Innovator	-.077	.071	-.074	-1.090	.278	-.216	.063	.318	-.097	-.064	.738	1.355
Adaptor	-.164	.066	-.169	-2.472	.015	-.295	-.033	.244	-.216	-.145	.734	1.363

a. Dependent Variable: Effectiveness

Table 5 Summary of Hypotheses Results

	Description of Hypothesis	Remarks
H_1:	Knowledge and skills will positively affect the effectiveness of a project manager	Accepted
H_{1a}:	Soft skills will positively affect the effectiveness of a project manager.	Accepted
H_{1b}:	Technical skills will positively affect the effectiveness of a project manager.	Accepted
H_{1c}:	Green skills will positively affect the effectiveness of a project manager.	Accepted
H_2:	Tools and techniques will positively affect the effectiveness of a project manager	Accepted
H_{2a}:	Tools and techniques used in project planning will positively affect the effectiveness of a project manager	Accepted
H_{2b}:	Tools and techniques used in project monitoring and controlling will positively affect the effectiveness of a project manager.	Accepted
H_3:	Innovativeness of a project manager will positively affect the effectiveness of a project manager.	Rejected
H_{3a}:	Project manager with innovator characteristics will positively affect the effectiveness of a project manager.	Rejected
H_{3b}:	Project manager with adaptor characteristics will not positively affect the effectiveness of a project manager.	Rejected

6. Conclusions and recommendations

The key findings from this study demonstrate that the key driver for the effectiveness of project managers is the adaptor characteristic; of which, the project managers are concerned with accurately solving problems (in a detailed, structured, tried and understood ways or set rules) rather than finding them. This finding also suggests that innovator characteristic is not necessary for project managers who are ‘inherently' innovative based on their unique profiles (young age, highly experienced project managers on software projects, and highly confident).

The findings also reveal that in addition to technical skill, the key enablers for the effectiveness of project managers are the soft skill (including leadership skill and communication skill), green skill, tools, and techniques (for project planning, controlling and monitoring).

Hence, these driver and enablers are necessary to ensure the effectiveness of project managers. Thereby, projects have increased the probability of successful completion on time (efficiently) and on target (effectively) in terms of specifications and budget. So, for businesses that are undertaking projects should consider appointing project managers with strong adaptor characteristics, strong soft skill, embody green skill, strong technical skill and capability to use the relevant tools and techniques. Further, the findings also

suggest that in order to nurture an effective project manager, businesses should consider continuous training and educating young employees with the potential to inculcate the driver and enablers of effective project managers.

At the conclusion, this study reveals that the key driver for effective project manager is the adaptor characteristic; and in addition to the necessary technical skill via knowledge, tools and techniques (for project planning, controlling and monitoring), the key enablers for effective project managers are strong soft skill (including leadership skill and communication skill), and embody green skill for project sustainability in the economics, environment, and social contexts.

In order to acquire true input on the drivers, enablers, and challenges of effective project managers, future research should focus on project managers only; extend the population to include other countries; extend the population to include other industries; probably include elements of management style, business culture, and so on.

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