



Emotional Intelligence as a Success Factor for Project and Project Manager

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ABSTRACT

This research paper examines the importance of emotional intelligence skills for project manager communication skills and project success. The main problem is that the number of complex projects has increased across different sectors such as aerospace and infrastructure. In addition, the projects are different in nature and each project requires certain skills and resources, and most companies focus on hiring people based on their experience or technical skills without paying attention to their soft skills. The research is based on gathering various data from primary and secondary sources. The primary data were collected through formal interviews with three managers in the ministry of health and prevention while the secondary data were obtained from different academic articles and e-books. The results showed that the ministry of health and prevention started focusing on emotional intelligence skills during the last few years only. Also, some managers consider it as an additional skill that can add value to project manager communication skills, and it is not an important factor for the project success. On the other hand, other managers from human resources department confirmed that recruiting a project manager with high understanding of emotional intelligence is important for them. Also, results showed that top-managers focus mainly on the organizational performance (50%). However, they must improve their listening skills which were represented by 35% of the sample size, and they should focus more on creativity and empathy to enhance their interrelationships.

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of Emotional Intelligence was first coined by Peter Salovey and John Mayer and later popularized by Dan Goleman in 1996. By definition, emotional intelligence refers to the act of understanding and managing one's emotions and being able to influence other people. (Lim and Kim, 2020; Salovey and Mayer, 1993) mentioned that project manager needs to understand emotional intelligence, because it helps people to understand and recognize feelings and emotions and use the same understanding in decision

making and actions (Deepa, 2013). In the same way, a project manager should have adequate knowledge in tracking schedules and budgets because this is the basis on project science and management. Therefore, for any modern-day project success, emotional intelligence is critical because it helps project managers define scope, schedule, budget and track quality project milestones (O'Connor et al., 2019). The uncertainties in project management requires effective emotional intelligence because it beget a

series of emotional activities which a project manager must handle (Batool, 2013). The ability to manage these emotions will determine the success or failure of the project. In addition, project managers with high emotional intelligence are aware of the emotional situations of others, and they interact with project team in a manner that draws them to the participant.

Managers can use emotional understanding to enhance strong relationships, lead a more fulfilling life and attain great success at work (Cherniss, 2000). In project management, emotional intelligence is made up of four characteristics namely social awareness, relationship management, self-management and self-awareness which promotes self-confidence and allows people to identify their strengths and weaknesses (Alshawabkeh et al., 2021)(Cuéllar-Molina et al., 2019). Alternatively, self-management is the ability to control impulse feelings and behaviors, manage emotions healthily, take initiatives, adjust to changing circumstances and follow through on commitments.

According to (Scott-Ladd and Chan, 2004), emotional intelligence is the ability to perceive, identify, comprehend and successfully manage emotions. Therefore, it is the effective management of activities and relationships. In addition, emotional understanding and skills impact the success and happiness in the work place besides, our personal lives (Kassem and Martinez, 2022; O'Connor et al., 2019; Ugoani et al., 2015). Moreover, project managers can direct emotional power to improve project team's satisfaction. Emotional intelligence grants the ability to be present and listen to somebody when they require the most. It is that sense of internal balance that enables one to maintain the composure, engage in good decision making, successfully communicate and enhance effective leadership even when he is under stress. In project performance, emotional intelligence adds value to cognitive intelligence merely turning good performers into stars (Hussain Rahim and Imran Malik, 2010; Louzi et al., 2022b). This research project is conducted to answer the following questions:

- 1- How EI skill is a necessity to project manager communication skills?
- 2- Are project managers with better EI skills are more successful project managers in delivering successful projects?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Emotional intelligence has been found essential for improving managers' communication skills. (Cuéllar-Molina et al., 2019) questioned 284 students to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and communication skills and he published that successful individuals must possess good communication skills. (Ghazal et al., 2021)(I. A. Akour et al., 2022; Al-Kassem et al., 2022; R. S. Al-Marouf et al., 2021a) stated that managers need communication skills to be able to initiate and mobilize resources for a project, and he indicated that a project manager spends at least 90 percent of his time communicating (Kurdi et al., 2022b)(Al-Awamleh et al., 2022; M. T. Khan et al., 2022). Therefore, effective communication skills are inevitable (Bawaneh et al., 2023)(Akour et al., 2023; Hani Al-Kassem, 2021). The manager must always be there for other members and make sure that they are in touch with the changes taking place in the project (A. Al-Marouf et al., 2021; Al-Marouf et al., 2022b). They need to communicate well with the team to be able to understand the emerging issues and know other project stakeholders point of views (Aityassine et al., 2022; Al-Kassem, 2017; Aljumah et al., 2023; Ahmad Ibrahim Aljumah et al., 2022a; Mohammed T. Nuseir et al., 2022; E Tariq et al., 2022). The author also observed that it is not enough to just speak and hear from people, rather understanding the complete message and acting upon it is vital (Nuseira and Aljumahb, 2020). The project manager must thus be able to convey the message using a specific an appropriate tone (Aljumah et al., 2020; El Khatib et al., 2021; El Khatib and Ahmed, 2020; M T Nuseir et al., 2022a). (Abudaqa et al., 2022; Ahmad Ibrahim Aljumah et al., 2022b; Alzoubi et al., 2019) stated that emotional intelligence (EI) play a critical role in modern-day's work setting. Emotional intelligence has been proposed as an important predictor in organizational outcomes (H. M. Alzoubi et al., 2022c)(Al-Kassem, 2014; Amiri et al., 2020; Gulseven and Ahmed, 2022). The success of managing a project lies in the ability of the manager being able to easily realize or recognize and effectively manage their emotions (Ahmed et al., 2022). They should be able to understand their emotions, discriminate between them and be in a position to use the information they get to guide their actions and thinking (Al-Kassem et al., 2013;

H. Alzoubi et al., 2020). This is the core of emotional intelligence that every other manager requires to be able to steer their projects to completion (Nadzri et al., 2023) (M. Alshurideh et al., 2023) (Muhammad Turki Alshurideh et al., 2022c; T M Ghazal et al., 2023a; Mat Som and Kassem, 2013). With proper emotional intelligence management skills, managers are able to successfully maximize the effectiveness of communicating with the team and the stakeholders and at the same time listen and consult on various issues surrounding the project (Al-Dmour et al., 2023; Blooshi et al., 2023; Lee et al., 2023; Varma et al., 2023). The author observes that most projects tend to fail because of project managers not being able to articulate the vision and success criteria of the project, and also lack the prerequisite communication skills. Powerful communication skills allow project managers to be effective in their work and more especially in situations that involve relationships with different members of the organization (M T Alshurideh et al., 2022; Louzi et al., 2022a). Emotional intelligence facilitates effective communication hence these two elements are intractably entwined (Al-Kassem et al., 2012; Muhammad Turki Alshurideh et al., 2022b). Therefore, with proper emotional intelligence skills, the project manager can easily communicate with the various stakeholders in the project and hence been in apposition to visualize the ultimate result so that they can work towards achieving it (H. M. Alzoubi et al., 2022e; A. Khan et al., 2022).

According to (Ahmed and Nabeel Al Amiri, 2022; Almasaeid et al., 2022), communication is an important tool in the management of organizations and a key determinant of their success. Managers in every organizations have always viewed communication as a key success factor (El Khatib et al., 2020b; M. El Khatib et al., 2021). Through effective communication, managers are able to add value to their organization. This is because communication enhance relationship through uniting workers, managers and decision-makers, and also helps to improve teamwork (T M Ghazal et al., 2023c; Taher M. Ghazal et al., 2023; Sakkthivel et al., 2022). However, to effectively communicate and use communication to enhance relationship between stakeholders, managers must possess emotional intelligence (El Khatib and Ahmed, 2018; Nuseir and Aljumah, 2022; Emad Tariq et al.,

2022). Emotional intelligence encompasses self-awareness and social-awareness. With those attributes, managers can effectively manage their behaviors in the manner in which they approach issues and situations in the organization. (Al-Marroof et al., 2022a; M. T. Alshurideh et al., 2023c) added that managing the feelings of different employees in the right manner is a display of proper management skills. The different feelings and emotions harbored by employees greatly determine the success of their performance and work (Alhamad et al., 2021; Nuseir and Aljumah, 2020). Happy employees will tend to perform well unlike the unhappy ones. According to (H. M. Alzoubi et al., 2020; Khatib et al., 2022; Khatib and Opulencia, 2015; Nuseir, 2020; Yasir et al., 2022), managers who are well equipped with the right emotional intelligence are most likely to perform well in as far as communicating with their employees is concerned, and this is important, because it brings synergy and cooperation among various stakeholders in the organization (Mounir M El Khatib et al., 2019; Nuseir and Elrefae, 2022; Nuseir et al., 2020). Therefore, hiring employees with excellent emotional intelligence is important, because it will improve their communication skills that are imperative in the modern-day world where managers must constantly share their ideas and organizational processes on a regular basis (Abudaqa et al., 2021; El Khatib et al., 2022; Khatib et al., 2016).

The success of a project depends on how well managers' report the progress of their projects to the concerned parties. Monitoring the progress with stakeholders in a precise manner is crucial, because it facilitates an understanding on how well the project is progressing. (Mubeen et al., 2022) demonstrated the relationship between leadership and emotional intelligence and its effectiveness in emotional intelligence. According to the author, the nature of many projects today needs project managers who possess the right emotional intelligence skills (Aziz et al., 2023; Farrukh et al., 2023). Since projects need a lot of interactions between different stakeholders, they need a manager who have exceptional emotional skills to be able to adapt different situations in the project as quickly as possible and offer guidance (H. M. Alzoubi et al., 2022a; El Khatib et al., 2020a; Nuseir, 2021). Once the project is completed, the managers is also required to deliver the status of the project

to the upper managers. (AlDhaheri et al., 2023; Gaytan et al., 2023) stated that emotional intelligence is the key to improve the performance of a project manager (M. T. Alshurideh et al., 2023a; Alzoubi and Ahmed, 2019; Nuseir et al., 2021). The study showed that emotional intelligence levels have been associated with better project performances than those with low emotional intelligence (A I Aljumah et al., 2022a; Muhammad Turki Alshurideh et al., 2022a; M. El Khatib et al., 2022). They are able to handle complex projects more effectively and with ease and hence they are likely to succeed (I. Akour et al., 2022; H. Alzoubi et al., 2022). Tasks that involve interpersonal actions such as communication is directly linked to emotional intelligence more than those that need cognitive abilities. In this regard, therefore, project managers must be equipped with adequate emotional intelligence because the role of project manager generally included communication and interpersonal actions that are critical to the completion of a project (Abudaqa et al., 2021; Aljumah et al., 2021a)(E. Khatib et al., 2021).

According to (M. Alshurideh et al., 2022; T M Ghazal et al., 2023a), at least 80% of the project failures that have so far been documented are related to the human elements of project management that mostly include personal skills, social intelligence, bad teamwork, inadequate communication, and poor leadership skills (M. T. Alshurideh et al., 2023b; Arshad et al., 2023). Managers might possess excellent professional and technical skills and knowledge, however, without adequate emotional intelligence skills, they might not be able to handle certain aspects of the project that are related to interrelationships and communication with members of the project team (El Khatib, 2015). In addition, work teams tend to collaborate more easily and smoothly when members are able to exchange knowledge and skills between them. In this regard, emotional intelligence is one of the most important skills that is attributed to increase the organizational performance (E. Khatib et al., 2022). Several studies have pointed out that emotions are an important facilitate when it comes to thinking processes, possetting high emotional intelligence raises the competencies of the manager in managing teams and solving conflicts within the organization.

High emotional intelligence levels tend to allow work teams to accommodate one another's feelings

and deal with them appropriately. Also, it makes them motivated to share their concerns and weaknesses that contribute to the overall success of the project (H. M. Alzoubi et al., 2022b). Emotional intelligence also helps to create an environment of trust within the workplace and this allows individuals to manage their emotions and anxiety when they encounter unexpected challenges or situations. High emotional intelligence enables team members to engage in productive discussions that help them address the various conflicts arising in the workplace.

(El Khatib and Ahmed, 2019; Nuseira and Aljumahb, 2020) mentioned that emotional intelligence has been found to contribute to leadership efficiency. Transformational leaders have been found to have high emotional intelligence that explain why transformational leadership in project management is associated with successful projects. Transformational leaders are more competent and able to handle difficulties in workplaces more effectively and because of their ability to recognize and manage emotions (Mounir M. El Khatib et al., 2019). In addition, transformational leaders are capable of developing and nurturing relationship between project team members that inspires and motives them to perform exemplary well in the project. (T M Ghazal et al., 2023b) stated that project managers are responsible of the ultimate success or failure of a project. To attain success, project managers must interact more frequently with stakeholders and project team members. Research indicates that about 88% of the project managers spend over half of their time communicating and interacting with project team members.

The frequent interaction throughout the course of the project requires managers to possess special skills and knowledge that will enable them manage conflicts on a regular basis through building and strengthening relationships to ensure success of the projects. Project managers must also possess teamwork skills to effectively lead the project teams in a project. In this regard, human skills are essential in project management and as a result, emotional intelligence is recognized as an important tool for workplaces because of its close links with outstanding job performance. Emotionally intelligent workers tend to perform better on projects as compared to managers with lower emotional intelligence.

(Kurdi et al., 2022a) noted that self-awareness and emotional consciousness are closely related. This implies that excellent project managers tend to understand their strengths and weaknesses and hence are aware of their emotions. They understand that the emotions have an impact on their decision-making process and perceptions as well as on team members. Excellent project managers possess the ability to assess themselves and manage their emotions in a manner that make it easier to perform various tasks. (Akour et al., 2021; H. M. Alzoubi et al., 2022d) explained that project managers need to improve their soft skills to build good relationships with their clients and staff, and to manage change properly. (A I Aljumah et al., 2022b; Aljumah et al., 2021b) noted that emotional intelligence skills are an important element for project managers, because it is an integration of self and social skills that managers rely on to make important decisions and judgments and also communicate effectively with team members. Organizations nowadays consider project management to be significant differentiator and determiner of success. Moreover, 70% of project success have been attributed to the ability of managers to apply emotional intelligence while managing their projects. The author also mentioned that at least 90% of the top performing managers have been found to possess high emotional quotient in addition to excellent technical skills that enable them to succeed in executing their projects (R. S. Al-Marouf et al., 2021b; T M Ghazal et al., 2023b; M T Nuseir et al., 2022b).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research is based on collecting qualitative and quantitative data from primary and secondary source. The primary data were collected through formal interviews with three managers in the ministry of health and prevention while the secondary data were collected from various academic articles and e-books. In addition, a formal questionnaire was distributed randomly among the selected departments in order to know employees' opinions about their managers' skills. Thus, a stratified sampling method was applied first then the random distribution method. The collected data were used as an evidence to support the research questions that have been mentioned earlier. There are various methodologies in project

management such as the Waterfall, Agile, Adaptive, Scrum, Lean, and Kanban methodologies. The Waterfall methodology was selected for this research project, because it provides a better understanding of project stages and it is simple and easy to make and measure. This research focused on managers' emotional skills and the hiring process in the ministry of health and prevention. Finally, the qualitative data were compared with the quantitative data to make the final interpretation of data

3.1. Collected Data

3.1.1. Qualitative Data

In order to develop better understanding of whether hiring a project manager who better understands emotional intelligence results in the project success, we interviewed three different managers from the Ministry of Health and Prevention in order to obtain their point of view pertaining the emotional intelligence trend. Therefore, we focused on the following questions:

1. What do you think of emotional intelligence trend?
2. How EI skill is a necessity to project manager communication skills?
3. Are Project Manager with better EI skills are more successful project managers?
4. Is EI an important factor for project success?

Initially, we started our interview with Mr. Munad who manages project managers specifically the public private partnership. Mr. Munad advised that understanding emotional intelligence is essential that adds value to the project manager communication skills but is not an important factor for the project success. Additionally, he confirmed that while hiring a project manager he focuses on the capability of the project manager to plan, schedule and execute the project rather than having a high understanding of emotional intelligence. Our second interview was conducted with Mr. Ayman from Human Resources who confirmed that based on the recent studies, human resources do focuses on recruiting a project manager with high understanding of emotional intelligence considering the importance of maintaining well relationships with all stakeholders involved within the project. Also, he confirmed that project success depends on having an effective relationship to ensure that all goals are met. Therefore, the human resources do focus on

the characteristics of the individual during the interview and observe how well they are as certain about dealing with their emotions and others. Furthermore, a project manager success is essential with way they deal with their team and engage them for better outcomes. The final interview was conducted with Dr. Abdalla – Manager of Medical Support Services, who agreed that a project manager with high emotional intelligence awareness is the key to deliver success since they are involved with decision making, building an effective team and managing them. For that, while hiring a project manager he does ensure the manager’s capability of having an effective communication skill as well as high emotional intelligence understanding considering that being an effective negotiator with all stakeholders involved will result in better outcomes. Additionally, he confirmed that people are the key

3.1.2. *Quantitative Data*

factor for any project, so having a project manager who is able to understand his team emotions and have the ability to manage them effectively will affect their achievements as well, because they are managed by a well oriented individual who can perceive the emotions of himself and others and understands how to deal with challenging situations. To conclude, with the different feedbacks received from three interviews held within the same workplace, we infer that there are different traits perceived for a project manager depending on the departments’ heads and work processes. Some advised that emotional intelligence is vital for any project manager to get his full capabilities within the project workflow, others confirmed that emotional intelligence does not verify the skills of the project manager and thus will not affect the process throughout the project.

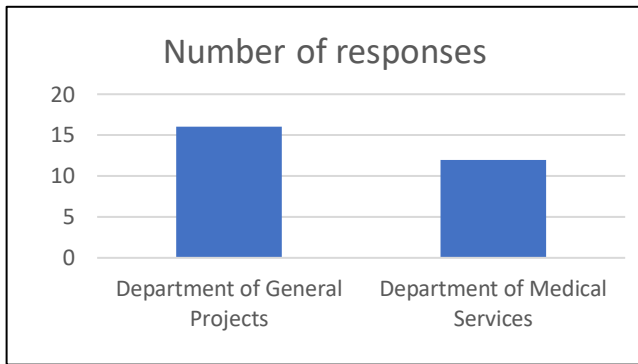


Figure 1 : Number of Responses

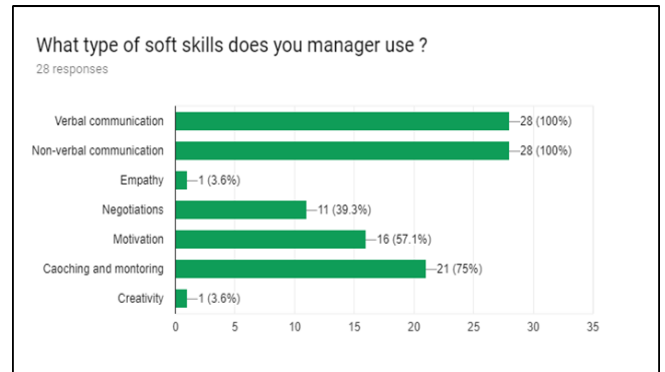


Figure 2 : Manager Soft Skills

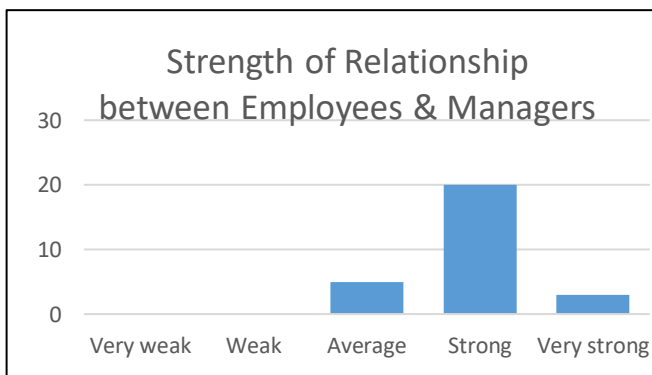


Figure 3: Focus of Management

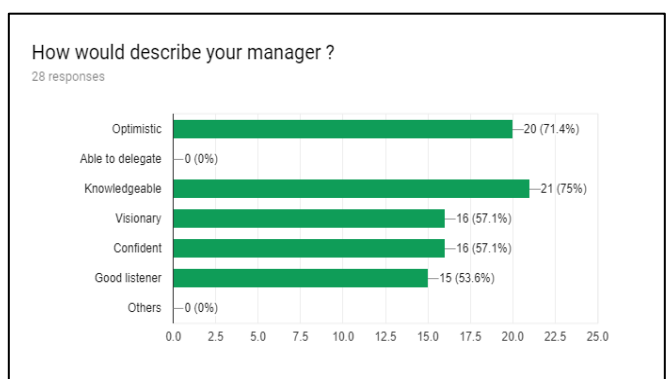


Figure 4: Manager Characteristics

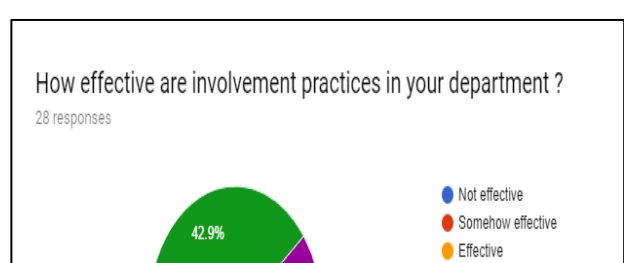


Figure 5: Manager Soft skills impression

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Based on findings, it can be concluded that the ministry of health and prevention started focusing on emotional intelligence skills during the last few years only. Also, some managers consider it as an additional skill that can add value to project manager communication skills, and it is not an important factor for the project success. On the other hand, other managers from human resources department confirmed that recruiting a project manager with high understanding of emotional intelligence is important for them. Also, they added that it is essential to maintain well relationships with all stakeholders involved within the project, and they assured that project success depends on having an effective relationship to ensure that all goals are met. Moreover, the manager of medical services agreed that a project manager with high emotional intelligence awareness is the key to deliver success since they are involved in decision making, building an effective team and managing them. Additionally, he confirmed that having a project manager who is able to understand his team emotions and have the ability to manage them effectively will positively affect the performance of his team. The quantitative data shows the number of responses in the department of general projects and medical services. The total number of responses was 28 responses.

The results indicated that both managers use various soft skills in the daily work. All of them agreed that their managers use verbal and non-verbal communication to interact with them, and 75 percent of them focused on coaching and monitoring. Also, 57% of them chose motivation as one the noticeable soft skills in their managers`

Figure 6: Relationship Strengt

attitudes while 39 % selected negotiations, and only 3% chose empathy and creativity. Thirteen employees showed that their managers have good soft skills, and only 4 of them consider their skills excellent. In addition, the results showed that 14 out of 28 employees selected performance as the main focus for the upper-management while the second group which consists of 10 employees showed that the applied management style of leadership is relationship-oriented, and none of them showed that is detail oriented.

Moreover, the percentages of the personal characteristics of the selected managers were as followed: knowledgeable (75%), optimistic (71%), visionary and confident (57%), and good listener (35%). The level of effectiveness of involvement practices and the strength of managerial support were examined based on five-point scale. 46% of the sample size showed that the applied involvement practices are effective while 75 % of participants showed that the managerial support is strong, and around 18% of them showed that the managerial support is average. However, the plot shows that the data are positively skewed which means that the managerial support has a positive effect on the employees which in turn will embrace their ability to deliver successful projects.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the different opinions sought from the interviewed managers within the Ministry of Health and Prevention, majority agreed the importance for a project manager to adopt emotional intelligence skills. For that, in order to adapt this trend, it is recommended that Human Resource department conducts a test for all new

joiners for “Project manager” position to obtain how well they are aware of emotional intelligence. Upon which the project manager within the Ministry of Health and Prevention will have a full understanding of emotional intelligence which is not only a factor of the project success, but also for maintaining a well-balanced relationship with all stakeholders involved within the project assigned either internally or externally. Furthermore, existing project managers should strive to improve their emotional intelligence skills, for that the organization should conduct a training session for the project managers and ensure a follow-up session is being maintained regularly with these managers to ensure that they utilize the key skills learned within their day to day duties and projects. Following which assessment to be conducted in order to verify if expected outcomes was achieved with managers who managed to utilize their emotional intelligence skills and whether it aimed to achieve the desired outcomes.

Our second advise for the Ministry is to focus more on creativity and empathy and conduct a peer review analysis to measure the team productivity who are involved within the project, considering that project managers should not only be capable of communicating properly with external partners involved in the project but how capable they manage their team by understanding the five main core categories of emotional intelligence which includes importance of social skills, motivation, empathy, self-awareness and relationship-management which may lead to project success if they are implemented properly.

6. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to determine whether hiring a project manager who better understands emotional intelligence results in project success. From the interviews that were conducted, emotional intelligence was found to be an important aspect for project managers with good communication skills. However, some managers conflicted on the impact of emotional intelligence on the success of a project. A survey was conducted in the department of general projects and medical services, and had a total of 28 responses. The results of the survey showed that most managers relied on both verbal and non-verbal communication methods to interact with their employees. However, only few managers

were reported to employ empathy and creativity while interacting with the employees. In terms of personal characteristics, managers were found to focus on being knowledgeable, optimistic, visionary, and confident, rather than being a good listener to the employees. These results showed that most of the managers lacked emotional intelligence, as their focus was on employee performance.

Despite these results, most of the employees felt that the managers were supportive enough. However, according to the study, managerial support was associated with high performance among employee. The study revealed that emotional intelligence contributed to the development of effective communication skills among project managers. This is evident where only a few employees stated that the style employed by the management was relationship-oriented or people-oriented. Most of the employees identified the management as supportive enough. The study revealed that the success of the project depends on the managerial skills of the manager. To sum up , it can be concluded that the null hypothesis which states that “ project manager`s EI skill is important for his communication skills ” and the alternative hypothesis which states that “ project manager`s EI skill is positively linked to project success” are both accepted .In addition , the upper-management should transfer its main focus to people, to build strong inter-relationships and improve the collaboration among project teams, in order to ensure a successful project delivery.

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Appendix

Topic: Project Manger`s Emotional Intelligence and Project Success				
<p>Hypotheses H1: Project manager`s EI skill is important for his communication skills. H2: Project manager`s EI skill is positively linked to project success.</p>				
Concept	Category	Elements	Sub - Elements	Attributes
Emotional Intelligence	Self-Management	Characteristics	Type	1. Optimistic
				2. Able to delegate
				3. Knowledgeable
				4. Visionary
				5. Confident
	Relationship Management	Soft skills	Type	1. Details
				2. Tasks
				3. Performance
				4. Relationships
				5. Others
			Employees` impression	1. Very poor

				2. Poor
				3. Good
				4. Very good
				5. Excellent
			Strength of relations	1. Very weak
				2. Weak
				3. Average
				4. Strong
				5. Very strong
			Effectiveness of involvement practices	1. Not effective
				2. Somehow effective
				3. Effective
				4. Very effective
				5. Extremely effective