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Impact of Inclusive Leadership on Project Success

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Abstract: This study tries to investigate project success through inclusive leadership role along with self-efficacy. Data sets were collected using adopted questionnaires of previous studies from employees working on the metro bus project, their supervisors and passengers of metro bus service from Rawalpindi to Islamabad route in Pakistan. This study is measuring the effects of inclusive leadership on project success through self-efficacy which makes it causal in nature. The time lag data collection method was adopted. In order to reach correct findings, potential biases were controlled by theoretical and statistical controls. Exploratory factor analysis was used to test structural modelling, average variance and composite reliabilities using Smart PLS. SPSS 21.0 was used for regression analysis, bias correction measures were also considered. The study revealed that inclusive leadership is associated in a positive manner with project success. The mediating role of self-efficacy in the relationship of inclusive leadership and project success was also supported. In addition, theoretical and practical implications in the context of this study are discussed in detail.

Keywords: Inclusive leadership, self-efficacy, project success.

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1. Introduction

A football team with consecutive loses starts winning by the change of captain. How does a single person affect the performance of the 11-member team? A leadership role cannot be ignored in everyday life as well as in projects (Banihashemi et al., 2017). Historically, the leadership base was established in the west by the work of Plato (380 bc), Machiavelli (1532), Hobbes (1651), and Locke (1700) (Collinson, 2005). Researchers believed that there were four groups of behavioral competencies, which were common among leaders, namely cognitive, behavioral, emotional, and motivation (De Vries and Florent-Treacy, 2002). Leadership literature has been vocal on testing several types of leadership style (Aga et al., 2016; Crowne, 2019; Dimitriou and Schwepker, 2019).

Among other leadership styles, inclusive leadership (IL) is a prominent style with significant impact found by researchers in the field of management (Lin and Shek, 2019). Carmeli et al. (2010) found IL affecting creativity and psychological safety. Javed et al., (2019) found IL impact on Islamic work ethics with project success.

Leadership on a project level is more complicated than at an organizational level. Project employees are bonded for temporary time and scope is limited therefore, fewer motivation employees can easily lose focus. Leaders need to encompass employee needs and want to keep them motivated. A motivated employee will perform better and work towards attaining firm goals effectively. A positive way to induce motivation in the employee on work is through self-efficacy.

Bandura (1961) through his bobo doll experiment presented his idea of self-efficacy to the world. He explained the learning process of young children by watching. In that experiment reward and punishment with doll enactment were made available to observe how humans respond to that. He explained self-efficacy through verbal persuasion, vicarious modeling, enactive learning and personal mastery (Lent et al., 1994). Self-efficacy gets energy arousal from within, it can be positive or negative in direction. Performance is found to be significantly affected by self-efficacy (Robbins et al., 2004). A good performing employee increases the productivity of the team which leads to the desired outcome of the project. A project which is not successful can lead to a big loss of money and a bad reputation (Stanley and Uden, 2013). Successful projects are always welcomed by managers because it is the primary objective of every project manager (Howsawi et al., 2011).

Project success is a complex term to understand with no fix standards to achieve. Creasy and Anantatmula, (2013) argued that after all these studies of project success its definition is still missing. Scott-Young and Samson, (2008) suggested success measuring factors can be named as ‘success factors’. Söderlund, (2011) found factors that lead to the completion of projects are called critical factors excluding them will lead to failure. Project management literature highlight success factors for projects which are

key to the completion of projects on stakeholder requirements (Müller and Turner, 2010). A good manager plays an important role in making a project successful (Banihashemi et al., 2017). A project can be successful even if it does not fulfill cost or time constraints (Zwikael and Smyrk, 2011). Toor and Ogunlana (2008) found customer satisfaction along with other stakeholders is pivotal to success. Irimia-Diéguez et al., (2015) criticized cost, time, budget to be insufficient measures of success. Serrador and Pinto (2015) found projects lay the foundation for the economic growth of countries. Müller and Jugdev (2012) found success can be achieved through better data management of the project. Chileshe and Kikwasi (2013) found salary and information delivery can cause success in a project among other factors. Joslin and Müller, (2016) found methodology and holistic approach can lead to the successful completion of projects. Hence, it is safe to conclude that there is no fix success parameter it varies industry to industry and owner/stakeholders of the project. This study will use time, cost and budget parameter for measuring success as suggested by Archer and Ghasemzadeh (1999). As the model includes soft skills such as leadership theoretical support is found in social and psychological theories supporting the construct of this model.

Several theories are found relevant for laying the theoretical base for this study such as self-determination theory clarifying human motivations and character encapsulating intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to task performance. Social exchange theory is a cost-benefit exchange among individuals having a social and psychological base. The leader-member exchange theory explains the management division of employees in two distinct groups i.e. in the group a relatively closed group and out-group contrary to in-group.

As per studied literature on this subject mediating mechanism of self-efficacy between project success and inclusive leadership is not tested in the Asian context. This study is important for project managers because in the cultural context of Pakistan, autocratic leadership is found primarily in project literature (Paracha et al., 2012). On the contrary, there are other successful projects without autocratic leadership.

Pakistan is a country in the developing stage. Its economic growth is dependent on agricultural production mainly. The construction segment these days is under a lot of pressure due to lack of energy, the government is trying to manage the supply of electricity through independent production units to control the energy crisis. The construction sector in Pakistan carries allot of risk (Urbański et al., 2019). The construction sector in Pakistan due to poor waste management face many issues in project management (Ali et al., 2019). Among all intangible factors, management competence plays an important role in the construction industry of Pakistan (Khattak and Mustafa, 2019). According to researchers during the crisis in the construction sector of Pakistan role of leadership becomes more important (Fragouli and Lazaridou, 2019). According to Khan and Rasheed (2015), work on the Pakistan construction sector, Islamic work ethics is important for project success.

Marshall (2015) in his book refers to the unique connection of inclusive leadership with religion in schools of America. Pakistan is another country with rich religious values. According to popular religious sentiment, people under managers are not allowed to be suppressed, they are required to work willfully. People with inclusive skills have the tendency to follow such religious methods suggested by religion in the Pakistani context. Researchers propose that nationwide cultural values impact organizational culture (Hofstede, 2011). There is a possibility of successful outcomes of projects under inclusive leaders in the Pakistani context. This study will try to test this myth through statistical analysis of data provided by the people working on metro projects.

Table 1. Project success criteria

Author/s	Criteria of success
Avots, 1969; Atkinson, 1999	If project fulfills criteria against which it was made it is successful.
Atkinson, 1999; Archer and Ghasemzadeh, 1999	Time, budget, schedule triple constraint
Kwak (2002)	Stable government, less law change, good controls
Khan et al. (2003)	Good planning, execution and better controls
Bryde and Robinson (2005)	Client–contractor working relationships
Struyk (2007)	Minimum resource constraint and availability of leader
Khang and Moe (2008)	Environment and leadership support
Ogunlana (2010)	Customer satisfaction and friendliness
Vaskimo (2011)	Implementation of plans
Creasy and Anantatmula (2013)	Personality traits of project managers
Irimia-Diéguez et al. (2015)	Financial management
Joslin and Müller (2016)	Proper project governance and comprehensive method
Kissi et al. (2019).	Monitoring and evaluation of project

The following research questions are identified for study.

1- What are the effects of inclusive leadership on project success?
2- Does self-efficacy mediate an inclusive leadership-project success relationship?

In line with the research questions above the following hypothesis are made for empirical testing.

H1: Inclusive leadership has a significant positive effect on project success.

H2: Self-efficacy mediates between inclusive leadership and project success.

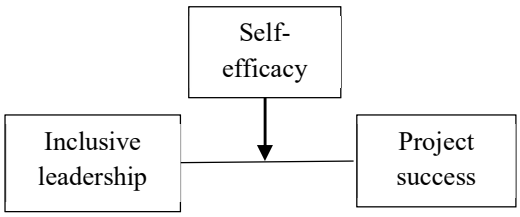

Fig. 1. Theoretical framework

2. Method

A collection of primary data was carried out during this research. The population selected for the study was employees working on the metro bus project, their supervisors and users of the metro bus service from Rawalpindi to Islamabad route in Pakistan. The reason for selecting this population was that the author was directly involved in this project and after Motorways, this was one of the largest projects completed by the government of Pakistan. Due to increased market competition and technology flow countries are pushed to adopt innovative solutions to mass transit systems such as bus rapid transit systems which are rapidly adopted all around the globe (Xerri et al., 2009). Collecting data was still a daunting task and due care was taken for control of bias such as desirability (answering in a way that people like to response). In order to collect data author in person went to each respondent and collected responses one by one. The author went to groups and data is confidential and will be used for research purposes only and all responses collected will be anonymously used.

Data were only collected from those employees who were observed to be efficient and performing more tasks than their assigned job description. All the employees' envelopes were marked from inside with codes A to M, so that the employee group could be identified later on for further analysis. After collection of T1, T2 was distributed after a gap of three months to supervisors of employees who were selected for further analysis. The supervisor was given questions of project success while employees had inclusive leadership and efficacy (Time period 2). Data collection spread method was used so that the common method bias issue was minimized (Podsakoff et al., 2003; Lindell and Whitney, 2001). Later, the same process was repeated and code was of two alphabets like AA, AC cover letter was requested to be read twice before filling. After this phase road users who were daily commuters of the Rawalpindi-Islamabad route were given a questionnaire for project success so that a diverse view of success can be taken in.

After excluding incomplete, non-consent, issue, remaining responses were used which were 203 out of 300 a response rate of 67% was attained, this response rate is good and on the higher side but studies suggest that in Asian context where responses are collected by hand it is normal (Khan et al., 2018; Abbas et al., 2014; Raja et al., 2004).

2.1. Scales and Measures

Data used for this study were collected using adopted questionnaires from past valuable studies including inclusive leadership, project success and self-efficacy. All variables under study are measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree=1 to strongly agree=5. i.e. 5= strongly agree 4= agree, 3= neutral, 2=disagree, 1= strongly disagree, with supplementary demographic readings measuring subject respondents Gender, Age, Qualification and Experience.

To measure the project success scale of Mir and Pinnington (2014) was used. One item from the scale is "The outcomes of the project are likely to be sustained." To measure the inclusive leadership scale of Carmeli et al. (2010) to assess the three dimensions of inclusive leaders: openness, availability, and accessibility were used. The sample item includes, "The manager is open to hearing new ideas." To measure the self-efficacy scale of (Chen et al., 2001) was used. The sample item includes "I will be able to achieve most of the goals that I have set for myself."

3. Results

The correlation was measured between study variables by SPSS 21.0, Structural equation modeling using Smart PLS was performed for CFA. The study model Anderson and Gerbing, (1988) was adopted which is based upon three latent variables a combination of fit indices was used for the model fitness test. χ^2, Normed Fit Index (it is the analysis of the discrepancy between chi-square of the hypothesized model and null model), Comparative Fit Index (analyses the discrepancy between hypothesized model and data), Non-Normed Fit Index, root mean square error of approximation was observed. Not in significant range χ^2 predicts a good model fitness, for CFI, NFI, NNFI 0.95 and overhead reflects as acceptable fitness predictor (Kline, 2010; Hu and Bentler, 1999), whereas the findings of RMSEA was under .05 representing acceptable model fit (Kline, 2005). The discussion model proves significant model fit: χ^2 60.50 $p>.05$; NFI= 0.90; NNFI= 0.93; CFI = 0.94; error of approximation was 0.05. These confirmatory factor analyses made a perfect case for discriminant validity. Details of values in a sequential manner are appended below in table 1. Besides, all the scale items were loaded with their respective latent factor and results found that they were loaded within a single factor with a value range of 0.71-0.92.

Data included 163 males and 40 females a relatively higher rate of men is due to the fact that data is collected from the construction sector which is a male-dominated sector and in Asian context females are few in number compared to other sectors of work. The age bracket of 26-33 was dominant with 51.2% responses coming through it. This was because Asian countries have a higher number of youth around. The highest 44% of respondents were master's degree holders a few with double degree cases were also unique. A maximum of 6-10 years of experience with 36.9% of data was found.

Table 1. Measuring model

Model	χ^2	df	RMSEA	NFI	NNFI	CFI
	60.50	73	.05	.90	.93	.94

RMSEA = Root mean square error for approximation, NNFI = Non-normed fit index, NFI = Normed fit index, CFI = Comparative fit index

Convergent and Discriminant validities were established through Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Composite Reliability (CR) average variance extracted and composite reliability test through Smart PLS (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). As per research findings of Bagozzi and Yi (1988) if CR is >0.6 and AVE>0.5, then the convergent validity is recognized, so in this study, the relationship was established and all latent variables had AVE more than 0.50 and CR of above 0.70 was found which is detailed in Table 2.

Table 2. Average Variance Extracted and Composite Reliability

Variables	Inclusive leadership	Self-Efficacy	Project Success
AVE	0.82	0.91	0.61
CR	0.79	0.83	0.76

Table 4. Path analysis

Structure details	Coefficients (β)
IL to PS	0.22
IL to SE	0.38
SE to PS	0.12

Table 5. Indirect effect

Bootstrapping	Indirect effect	Bias correct with 95% CI
IL-SE-PS	0.07**	(0.46, 0.39)

5,000-bootstraping sample; CI = Confidence interval.

Table 3 explains Mean, Standard deviation, Correlation & Reliabilities of the study variables. The effects are shown in Tables 4 and 5. Hypothesis 1 quantified inclusive leadership related to project success. Empirical findings maintained the association shown in the regression test (β = 0.22, p<0.05). H2 identified that SE mediates the relationship between IL and PS. Three preconditions for mediation are required to be accomplished so that to support the H2. Foremost, IL must be positively related to SE; subsequently, IL have to be positively linked with PS; finally, when we regress SE on both IL and PS, PS should be positively associated with SE and earlier significant relationship between IL and PS should go insignificant. Our outcomes established that IL was positively linked to SE (β = 0.22, p<.001), IL was positively correlated with PS (β = 0.40, p<.001). When SE was regressed on both IL and PS, the earlier regression coefficient among IL and PS decrease in size (β =0.07, p<.001). This predicts that SE partly mediates the association between IL and PS. Hence, Hypothesis 1 was fully supported while Hypothesis 2 was partially supported.

4. Discussion

The specific focus of this study was on inclusive leadership and project success through self-efficacy. The findings are congruent with research questions i.e., there is a positive effect of inclusive leadership on project success and self-efficacy mediates the relation. The study argues that inclusive leadership predicts organizational performance which leads to success (Carmeli et al., 2010). According to Wageman (2001) leaders have an influence on their teams they induce project success through the motivation of team members. The study found full support for inclusive leadership effects on project success H1, while partial mediation effect from self-efficacy was found which predicts that there is the probability of intervening variables other than these present between inclusive leadership and project success (Zhao et al., 2010). Some likely justifications for this partial result are outlined under.

4.1. Theoretical Implications

In theory, this study contributes in many ways, inclusive leadership to project success through self-efficacy is a new contribution to literature. The study suggests that inclusive leadership is a factor that positively affects employee behavior and shapes it towards performance which is a predictor of success. We can conclude that inclusive leadership also encourages performance by concentrating on both the features of a leader and leader–followers relationship (give-and-take) (Hollander, 2009).

Table 3. Mean, Standard deviation, Correlation & Reliabilities

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	5	6	7
1-Gender	1.21	0.41			
2-Age	2.32	0.98			
3-Qualification	3.86	0.78			
4-Experience	2.06	0.13			
5-Self-Efficacy	3.72	0.29	1 (0.79)		
6-Inclusive leadership	3.52	0.34	0.65**	1 (0.83)	
7-Project success	3.64	0.39	0.48**	0.63**	1 (0.76)

N = 203; *=p<.05 and **=p<.01. Correlation is significant at 0.05 levels (two-tailed); Correlation is significant at 0.01 levels (two-tailed); αlfa reliabilities are marked in parenthesis.

The indirect effect of self-efficacy on inclusive leadership and project success in addition to the already available literature. This study point to that inclusiveness is crucial in providing leadership backing for employees, since it nurtures exchange associations. It is a vibrant social-emotional tool that generates circumstances where people sense harmless to convey thinking, voice beliefs, and to question (Baer and Frese, 2003; Nembhard and Edmondson, 2006). This study is in line with the social exchange view theorists (Blau, 1964).

4.2. Managerial Implications

The study helps manager level employees in promoting an inclusive leadership style by stressing availability, openness, and accessibility to form circumstances for workers to express new thoughts. Consequently, it is essentially imperative for leaders to mix and initiate teaching courses to encourage a close connection with workers. In this viewpoint, some workers are generally interlaced and others are socially aloof. Generally, interlaced workers agree to take innovative variations; conversely, socially aloof workers favor the existing state of affairs and hate new changes. Managers on projects need to take care of this fact that projects are temporary in nature and employee stake is limited hence, self-efficacy can be a handy tool to engage employees for attaining the desired goal.

4.3. Strength, Limitations and Future Directions

Method of data collection was given due consideration in order to avoid potential bias of common method. Time lag data collection gave strength to this study, predictor and mediator data was collected from employee and criterion was collected from multiple sources to inculcate 360 views of success. Secondly, respondents were selected on purpose due care was taken to ensure that if any conflict of interest is found data set was not adopted for result purpose.

Keeping in view this study here are a few confines which upcoming research fellows should take care of. Firstly, inclusive leadership is tested in this study new research fellows can look into other styles of leadership like transformational leadership, ethical leadership, transactional leadership. The mediating effect was tested with self-efficacy researchers can use self-efficacy as moderator and mediating factors can be changed to motivation or double mediation or moderation could be tested. Researchers can use more than one moderator as well to see any possible changes in the subject model through moderated relationships. During the study a possible mediation effect of empowerment was observed theoretically researchers can dig more literature on this variable and empirically test. Furthermore, the data was limited to the Punjab province of Pakistan researcher can improve the data collection process and procedure through including more sources and geographical areas.

5. Conclusion

Dissecting the model by social-exchange viewpoint inclusive leadership delivers positive socioeconomic effects to workers such as openness, availability, and accessibility. Workers respond through work engagement, industrial emotional condition categorized by dedication, vigor, and immersion (González et al., 2002). More involved workers are revealed to be extraordinary in commitment towards the organization (Choi et al., 2015). Job retention and job satisfaction of employees make people positively attracted towards work assigned through the leading role of inclusive leaders (Brimhall et al., 2014) efficient teams are born by this which support performance (Srivastava et al., 2013) and work engagement (Carmeli et al., 2010). Employees who are engaged are least likely to be attracted to turn over hence, they remain attached to their employer (Taneja et al., 2015). As inclusive leaders give more autonomy to workers therefore, it is rational to the hypothesis that employee empowerment may be an additional possible mediator between inclusive leaders and project success. Below are highlights of the theoretical implications of this study's findings.

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