# Developing Conceptual Leadership Model for Project Management in UAE Using Structural Equation Modelling Analysis

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## Abstract

Project management highly requires effective leadership in managing resources and people in high complexity projects. Despite extensive studies in the areas of project management and studies of leadership, the extent to which leadership influences project success has not been fully explored nor have the styles of effective leadership in project environments. Failure in managing projects is determined as the main challenge due to ineffective leadership in UAE. Therefore, the objective of this study is to develop a leadership model for effective project management. The research adopted a quantitative research approach along the research process. The study was carried out within UAE Abu Dhabi National Oil and Gas Company (ADNOC). The results for this study were based on questionnaires distributed to the 417 respondents which are employees in the project management department in ADNOC. the results for this study were based on questionnaires distributed to the 417 respondents which are employees in the project management department in ADNOC. the data have been gathered were then analyzed using Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) in Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). The results show that competency leadership, servant leadership, behavioral leadership has a significant impact on the success of project management, while situational leadership was found not significant in this study. Thus, the results from this study are benefitted the top management of ADNOC, to helps them in deciding on project management in an organization.

## Keywords
Behavioral leadership, Competency leadership, leadership, project management, Servant leadership and performance,

## 1. Introduction
In today's society, the economy persists due to multiple investments in projects of public as well as private sectors. According to Al-Ali et al., (2017), it accounts for heavy construction investment that rounds up to trillions of dollars annually. The subject matter of project management relies on comprehensive, result-oriented, and efficient planning (Kerzner et al., 2017). The success of project management heavily relies upon the usage of the time limit, budget, and capability to handle it. The project is considered fruitful if it is performed according to what it needs to be successful (Almatrooshi et al., 2016). In this perspective, the role of the project manager is highly critical to defined and shape the desired targets of project execution.

The features and the functionality of the project are defined by the stakeholders. However, project managers are responsible meet these functionalities and complete the project within the project timelines. Project managers are also responsible to keep the project within budget (Ramazani et al., 2015). A successful manager is generally judged on how he/she use the defined budget and executes the three factors to make an organization achieve its goals and targets. For making a project successful, the manager of the team needs to make them work efficiently and effectively. It requires the manager to have a clear vision and the skill to attract a brilliant and competent team. Consequently, the project manager's leadership support enhances the project's success.

In the project-related kinds of literature, numerous studies empirically examined and found the relationship between the project manager's supportive leadership styles and project success is positive. For instance, Walker (2011) studied project manager's authentic leadership styles on successful project delivery. Their study stated that the project delivery and the project manager's authentic leadership have a positive relationship. Chipulu et al., (2014) studied the effects of transformational leadership of a project manager on project success. They found that the transformation style of the project leader enhances the project's success. Aga (2016) empirically found that the relationship between the project success and the project manager's transactional leadership with a contingent reward approach is positive.

One of the unique ways through which a project manager supports project success is the project manager's leadership. The idea of inclusive leadership is relatively new in the literature and very few studies examined the effects of inclusive leadership in an organizational setting. For example, Javed, & Quratulain, (2018) examined the connection between inclusive leadership and the development of health care teams. The study was carried out with psychological safety playing a mediating role. They found an enhancing role of inclusive leadership both directly and indirectly through psychological safety for improvement efforts in health care teams (Dayan et al., 2017). Later on, Dwivedula et al., (2016) tested inclusive leadership effects on creative involvement where psychological safety has a liaising role. Carmeli and colleagues found the expected hypothesized relationships. Yin (2013) studied the direct and indirect effect of inclusive leadership on employees' voice behavior. The indirect was through psychological safety and leader-member exchange. Yin found supportive findings in all expected relationships. More recently, Parakandi, & Behery et al., (2016) empirically examined the effects on innovative work behavior because of inclusive leadership with psychological safety playing the liaising role. Their studies also found that innovative work behavior and inclusive leadership have a positive relationship directly through psychological safety and indirectly as well (Taher et al., 2015).

The focus of this work is to conduct a profound analysis of ideal leadership styles and evaluate attributes that add value to the productivity levels for a project manager. Project management consent and support that there is a need for effective leadership in managing resources and people in high complexity projects. Despite extensive studies in the areas of project management and studies of leadership, the extent to which leadership influences project success has not been fully explored nor have the styles of effective leadership in project environments. The major challenge is that projects continue to fail due to ineffective leadership in UAE (Harrison et al., 2017). Therefore, this study aims to develop a leadership model for effective project management with mediating role of work engagement in UAE.

## 1.1 Objectives
The research objective of this study is develop a leadership model for effective project management with mediating role of work engagement in UAE.

## 2. Literature Review
### 2.1 Project Management
It is widely recognized by academics and the community of practice that the management of people plays an important role in project management. Project management is common for many industries in different ways, from large infrastructure projects to small-scale projects. A project is independent, unique, and phased, in which content, duration, and costs are limited (Heagney, 2016). Additionally, the purpose of every project must be clear and have a direct connection to the strategic purposes of the organization (Kenny, 2003). The Project Management Institute established two basic characteristics of a project, temporariness, and uniqueness. The first one refers to a clearly defined beginning and ends in time, along with defined scope and resources. The second one refers to achieving a singular goal by people who do not usually work together (Project management institute, 2013).

Project management is used as a higher-level term that covers all the planning, monitoring, coordinating, and controls that are required when developing or redeveloping systems of processes, or in problem-solving. In contrast to project management, line management relates more to the ongoing business and the management of the relevant organizations" (Kuster et al, 2011).

## 2.2 Leadership

The leadership term can be used for the leadership of an organization or a company and the leadership of employees and running a project requires both (Kuster, et.al. 213). When using the leadership term in the sense of management it means securing the company's livelihood under the changing environment. In other words, it means creating the strategies, goals, and policies of the company. Employee leadership means intentionally influencing and motivating team members to achieve goals. The task of employee leadership also involves issuing, asking for, and correcting goal-oriented arrangements (Xenikou,2017).

There has always been a question if leaders are born or made. We get certain traits, behaviors, attitudes, and emotional responses when we are born and some of our characteristics we get from our upbringing, society, and culture. But, through education and training, we can change our profile to match better the context within which we are working. So, we can modify our profile that we are born with to a certain degree (Müller and Turner 2010). "Effective project managers have strong leadership ability, the ability to develop people, excellent communication skills, good interpersonal skills, and the ability to handle stress, problem-solving skills, and time management skills" (Sturm, & Crossan, 2017). As discussed earlier these are skills and competencies that one can develop through training and so on to improve one's leadership abilities.

## 2.3 Leadership and Project Management

The management of the workforce is the most laborious task of today (Espinoza & Ukleja, 2016). The task becomes even harder for the project-oriented organizations where the resources are unlimited but the nature of the employment is usually temporary, contract-based. The employees have to be motivated to maintain the quality of the organization (Dwivedula & Müller, 2016). Therefore, Leadership is required to cultivate the quality of work and the need to meet employers' requirements at all levels within the organization (Anvari, 2014).

Leadership ensures the appropriate kind of leadership (Kezar and Lester, 2010) that allows us to work towards social justice. There can be various hindrances that can make the phenomena of Inclusive Leadership tough (Jalil, 2017). The obstacles can be of the following type (a) the managerial approaches expertized (b) policies of the organizations Inclusive Leadership can ensure improved performance, enhanced innovation (Javed, & Tayyeb, 2017) as well as it can help to retain people with creative minds. while introducing an inclusive culture (Noel, & Jariwala, 2016). A Leader is the role model for setting new trends in inclusive behavior, listens to and seeks out the views of a variety of people, and takes account of this view, without bias, in the decision they make, they appreciate the subordinates for their vision and participation (Groysberg & Slind, 2012).

Leaders create more diverse and creative workplaces where employees feel connected to and supportive of one another (Javed & Tayyeb, 2017). The team members may have differences in terms of knowledge or they may have different values. The project leaders can leverage the differences of members and carefully manage the conflicts between groups hence improving the employee's performance. Inclusive Leadership can help to delineate the vital importance of diversity and conflicts by promoting the effective management of diversity and conflicts in workgroups for project success.

## 2.4 Leadership and Work Engagement

Leadership is a kernel for the promotion of the goals and missions of an organization (Nieto & Jackson, 2016). Organizations are benefitted from their leaders (Scanlan & Johnson, 2015), through innovations, diverse talent, and getting the best result for their organization. A leader who is a good listener creates trust amongst their team member, giving them the surety that he or she cares about them (Lloyd & Voelpel 2015). It has been concluded by researchers that listening is a 'key management skill', listening is critical to include and investigate in the wider framework of leadership theory.

Supervisors have a large impact on an employee's engagement with work and his choice to be a part of the same organization and job. Human resource (HR) professionals can provide better support for training and hold accountability from managers for any kind of retention. For managerial effectiveness at all levels, HR leaders should consider setting engagement levels for subordinates as a parameter of evaluation (Agarwal & Bhargava, 2012). Organizational effectiveness can be improved if managers encourage employees to speak about work-related issues, which can improve the work environment (Chang, Lu, Chang &Johnstone, 2013). A study by Tuckey, Bakker & Dollard (2012) indicated that when there is a need for autonomy, capability, and understanding which is supported by leaders, employees give response favorably by displaying high levels of work engagement in their projects. Employees' work engagement is positively linked with leadership. First, under the lens of social exchange theory, inclusive leaders who exhibit openness, accessibility, and availability provide beneficial resources to employees.

These resources tend to motivate employees to fully involve themselves in organizational work by giving their complete devotion in sense of emotional and physical efforts (Choi, & Park, 2015).

## 2.5 Work Engagement and Project Management

The most important aspect of project success is keeping your project team engaged (Costa & Bakker, 2014). Engaged workers dedicate their energy to achieving their organization's objectives (Albrecht & Saks, 2015). They are dedicated, passionate, trustworthy, and enthusiastic (Ibrahim & Al Falasi, 2014). Engaged employees are more productive, more profitable (Muñoz & Bakker, 2014) more focused on the customers, safe, and more urge to stay in the organization. Engaged employees are more likely to elicit engagement from key stakeholders, such as their internal and external customers. People want to be treated well, informed, and appreciated (Alfes & Gatenby, 2013). Project managers and executives should communicate a clear vision. Project managers must have zeal and zest and must be focused. If the project manager is energized about the project, the project environment will be accordingly for the members (Brière & Laporte, 2015).

According to Harvard Business Review, the organizations that have more engaged employees have success rates many times higher as compared to the organizations that have less engaged employees. Baker & Demerouti (2008) found out engaged employee's urge and dedication towards their work is more than the less engaged employees. The more engaged your employees are the more efficient and productive they become, lowering operating costs and increasing the profit margin of the projects. It is the responsibility of the organization to retain good employees. Satisfied and engaged employees are not job hoppers. Such attribute guarantees their loyalty to the company and improves the chances of success (Mehta, Kurbetti & Dhankhar, 2014). Such employees enjoy a strong connection with their managers which results in the growth and success of the organization.

## 2.6 Impact of Leadership on Project Management with Mediating Role of Work Engagement

It is observed in the past few decades that to achieve more success organizations need more useful information and creative ideas in their work field (Carmeli & Hardin, 2015). These are obtained by employee work engagement. Their work engagement is the key to the success of any organization and has been connected to better-quality individual outcomes, upgraded individual productivity, enhanced business turnover, improved managerial effectiveness, and better customer satisfaction (Blomme & Beasley-Suffolk, 2015). And on the other hand, their less engaged employees tend to decrease output, efficiency and lead to higher costs (Choi et al, 2015). Also, employee work engagement plays a vital role in organizational achievement (Blomme et al., 2015).

One of the most important factors influencing work engagement is leadership which is not only the source of satisfaction and motivation of employees and also makes a friendly atmosphere for employee work engagement (Choi, et al. 2015). However, some studies are especially conducted to examine the behavior of a leader, like authentic (Hassan & Ahmed, 2011), transformational (Ghadi & Caputi, 2013), and ethical (Hartog & Belschak, 2012), on employee work engagement. They are positively connected with employee work engagement.

Leadership shows accessibility, openness, and availability to their employees. It motivates the employees to participate fully in their given tasks and dedicate themselves mentally, emotionally, and their physical resources to the organization. Leaders also encourage their workers to work hard and contribute to their organizations at a higher level. Therefore, being accessible, openness and available to their employees' leaders creates more job satisfaction in employees and also a positive effect on work engagement. Furthermore, work engagement and employees bring innovative ideas to improve work performance leading to a greater likelihood of project success (Anitha, 2014).

Hoper & Janneck (2012) tested the mediating role of work engagement between leadership and project success based upon gender-sensitive data. They concluded that work engagement partially mediates between work engagement and project success. Bell (2010) also found the positive impact of work engagement on project success. Similar results have also been found in other studies which documented the positive effect of work engagement on project success (Bakker &Vergel, 2013).

## 3. Methods

This research was based on 750 questionnaires were sent to the employee in the department of project management in abu Dhabi National Oil company (ADNOC) oil and gas company in UAE. from the 502 completed responses received, only 417 were completely filled and useable which resulted 56% response rate. Incomplete questionnaire was eliminated from this study. More than 50% response rate are considered acceptable for running statistical analysis for this study.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1 Respondents' profile

Table 1 presents the respondents' profile which were participated in this study. The age distribution of the respondents shows that three-quarter is within the age ranges of 41-50 years old while only 9.1 percent are over 50 years old. About 15 percent of the respondents are aged between 21 years to 40 years old. The education qualification of the respondents shows that more than half (56.6 %) are bachelor degree holders, 29 percent are Master degree holders, 11.3 percent are Diploma/certificate holders while only 3.1 percent are PhD holders. In terms of length of service, about half of the respondents indicated that they have experience of more than five years. About 33 percent have length of service of 3-5 years. Exactly, 14.6 percent indicated a length of service between 1-2 years while only 2.9 percent indicated that they have less than a year experience on the current position/job. Majority of the respondents holds the executive positions (48 %) while slightly above a quarter (34.3 %) held manager/head of department position. The remaining 17.7 percent indicated that they are either general manager, directors, or chief executive officers in their respective organizations.

Table 1: Respondents' Characteristics

|  | Frequency (n = 417) | Percentage (100%) |
|---|---|---|
| **Age** | | |
| 21-30 | 36 | 8.6 |
| 31-40 | 29 | 7.0 |
| 41-50 | 314 | 75.3 |
| Over 50 | 38 | 9.1 |
| **Total** | **417** | **100.0** |
| **Education qualification** | | |
| Diploma/certificate | 47 | 11.3 |
| Bachelor degree | 236 | 56.6 |
| Master degree | 121 | 29.0 |
| PhD | 13 | 3.1 |
| **Total** | **417** | **100.0** |
| **Length of service** | | |
| Less than 1 year | 12 | 2.9 |
| 1-2 years | 61 | 14.6 |
| 3-5 years | 137 | 32.9 |
| Above 5 years | 207 | 49.6 |
| **Total** | **417** | **100.0** |
| **Position** | | |
| Executive | 200 | 48.0 |
| Manager/Head of Dept | 143 | 34.3 |
| General Manager/Director/Cheif Executive Officer | 74 | 17.7 |
| **Total** | **417** | **100.0** |

### 4.2 Analysis for developing conceptual leadership model for project management

After the unidimensionality, reliability, and validity of the research constructs were ascertained, the next stage of the analysis model is the entire constructs into a single structural equation model using Analysis of Moment Structure (AMOS). The reason for the pull-out is to display the causal effects between one construct and the other in line with the set hypotheses.

The exogenous and endogenous variables in the research assessment framework were arranged. The arrangement is stated with the exogenous variables intervening variable and the endogenous variable at the end. The connection between each construct is linked with the arrow in the hypotheses' direction as presented in Figure 1 However; the model has been used to analyze the multidirectional relationships within the entire research constructs.
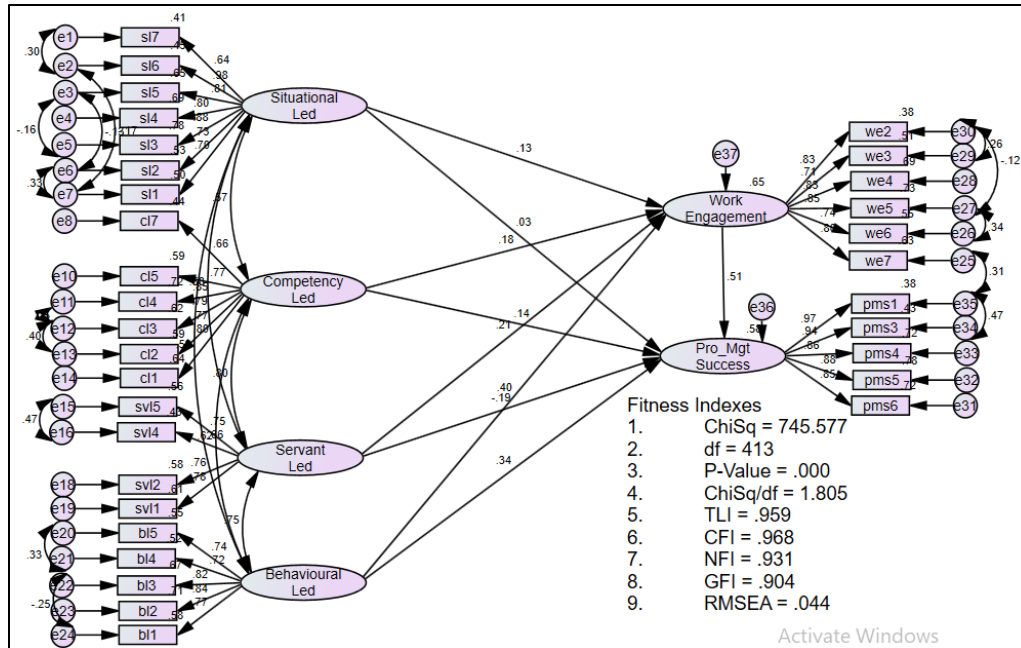
Figure 1; Initial structural measurement model for the entire research constructs and goodness-of-fitness for structural model

As shown in Figure 1, certain fitness indices for the structural measurement model do not reach acceptable levels for goodness-of-fitness (Awang, 2016). The observed factor loadings for all were above 0.5, although fitness indexes were sometimes below the recommended level. Therefore, modification indices were examined to identify redundant items and they were correlated with improvement of the model's goodness-of-fitness indices.

Table 2, the goodness-of-fitness for the structural measurement models presented in the figure show progressive improvement until an acceptable level is realized. The final structural measurement model provided an analysis of the causal effect (impact) for the multiple constructs in the path diagram. First and foremost, the fitness indices for the structural model reflect how fit is the hypothesized model; it was observed to be satisfied within the established acceptable level (Awang, 2015).

Table 2: The Fitness Indices of the structural model

| Name of Index | Level of Acceptance | Index Value | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| Chisq/df | Chisq/df ≤3 | 1.436 | The required level is achieved |
| TLI | TLI ≥ 0.9 means satisfactory | 0.934 | The required level is achieved |
| CFI | CFI ≥ 0.9 means satisfactory fit. | 0.939 | The required level is achieved |
| NFI | NFI ≥ 0.80 suggests a good fit | 0.824 | The required level is achieved |
| GFI | GFI ≥ 0.80 suggests a good fit. | 0.801 | The required level is achieved |
| RMSEA | RMSEA ≤ 0.08 mediocre fit. | 0.040 | The required level is achieved |
| Model is accepted | | | |

The standard regression weights indicate the estimated beta coefficient, which measures the impacts of the main constructs: exogenous variables on the intervening variable and endogenous variable. AMOS produced two types of textual output: standardized regression weights and unstandardized regression weights for the path analysis. The former is adopted to explain the relationships among all the constructs in the research model, and subsequently to test the hypotheses in the research, as it is easier to interpret (Awang, 2015).

### 4.3 Testing of research hypotheses

The comprehensive review of literature facilitated the earlier presented hypothesized research model in Figure 1. The hypothesized result in Table 3 outlined the outcome of every respected path in the structural measurement model.

Table 3: The summary of the tested hypotheses in this research

| | The main hypothesis statement in the research | P-value | Result |
|---|---|---|---|
| H1 | Situational leadership significant effect on project management success | .459 | Not supported |
| H2 | Competency leadership significant effect on project management success | .019 | Supported |
| H3 | Servant leadership significant effect on project management success | .013 | Supported |
| H4 | Behavioral leadership significant effect on project management success | *** | Supported |
| H5 | Work engagement mediates the relationship between situational leaderships and | .034 | Supported |
| H6 | project management success, | .123 | Not supported |
| H7 | Work engagement mediates the relationship between competency leaderships and project management success, | .002 | Supported |
| H8 | Work engagement mediates the relationship between servant leadership and project management success, | .169 | Not supported |

Table 3 shows the result of the hypotheses testing for the direct relationships between the predictors and the project management success as well as the Work engagement as mediation. The Table shows the path coefficients, the standard error, the critical ratio, and the p-value. As shown in Table 3 situational leadership has no significant effect on project management success ($\beta$ = .034; CR = .742; p =.459), hence the hypothesis is not supported. On other hand, the hypothesis that postulated that competency leadership has a significant effect on project management success is supported ($\beta$ = .150; CR = 2.352; p = .019). Similarly, servant leadership is found to have significant but negative effect on project management success ($\beta$ = -.212; CR = -2.482; p = .013) while behavioral leadership also indicated a positive significant effect on project management success ($\beta$ = .362; CR = 5.691; p < .05).

The mediating effect of work engagement in the relationship between situational, competency, servant, and behavioral leaderships with project management success. In testing the hypothesis, the bootstrapping method was used. The bootstrapping method of testing the mediation effect is considered the most effective method than the conventional Sobel Test (Hayes, 2014). Table 3 shows the result of the mediation analysis conducted via bootstrapping method. By re-sampling, the data to 1000 samples as recommended in Cheung and Lau (2008), the total effect, direct effect, and indirect effect estimates alongside their respective 95 percent Confidence Interval values, lower and upper limits as well as the two-tailed significant values were extracted as shown in Table 3.

The bootstrapping result presented in Table 3 shows that work engagement significantly mediate the relationship between situational leadership and project management success ($\beta$ = .065; 95% CI: .013 ~ .118; p = .034), thus supporting hypothesis H5a. Similarly, work engagement shows a significant mediating effect on the relationship between behavioral leadership and project management success ($\beta$ = .204; 95% CI: .130 ~ .294; p = .002) which supports hypothesis H5. On the hand, the result shows no significant mediating effect in the relationship between competency leadership and project management success ($\beta$ = .091; 95% CI: -.006 ~ .188; p = .123), and between servant leadership and project management success ($\beta$ = .108; 95% CI: -.020 ~ .241; p = .169) which indicated that both hypotheses H6 and H8 are not supported.

## 5. Conclusion

A new model of a leadership model for effective project management in the public organization was to propose a framework for an effective privilege approach thereby provided significant insight into how to improve the environment of work to achieve the organization objectives. The findings of this research contribute to the UAE government. With this new model, it is believed that the government can improve the employee productivity and performance of public organizations. SEM models provide a guide for a better understanding of these facilities and their interactive behavior. The study contributed to explore how a successful project manager must exercise a wide range of critical leadership characteristics and management styles to effectively succeed in project management. Most significantly, within the framework of the statistics, the model developed of this research drawn from existing theories satisfy all the conditions with the desired level of personalization in the data. This confirms the contributions in all respects. Conducting this study is therefore expected to be significant to various stakeholders in the organizations.

There are two areas that this study is expected to be quite significant, and these include academic realms and practical spheres.

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