

Goal Clarity, Management Functions And Project Success Of The Construction Companies In Abu Dhabi From The Project Managers Perspectives

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Abstract

This study aimed at investigating the moderating effect of goal clarity on the relationship between management functions (planning, organizing, leading & controlling) and construction project success in Abu Dhabi. This study used a descriptive-analytical and inferential statistics. The study sample consisted of 97 project managers from 26 authorized large-construction companies in Abu-Dhabi. The instrument used was a structured questionnaire. Data was analyzed using Pearson correlation and multiple regression. The results showed significant positive relationships between four functions of project management and project success. Also, the findings showed that there are significant relationships between all four functions of management and goal clarity (MV) and also a significant relationship found between goal clarity (MV) and project success (DV). Moreover, the findings revealed that there is a significant effect of goal clarity together with the four project management functions to project success ($R^2 = .578, p < .001$). In conclusion, the findings revealed the moderating influence of goal clarity on the relationship between management functions and construction project success.

Keywords: *Management Functions, Goal Clarity, Project Managers, Construction Companies, Project Success.*

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I. Introduction

Project success is an essential topic in project management. Success or failure of the project may be determined by some factors based on some studies and investigation. Also, project management plays a very vital role in performing continuous development and achieving projects execution success which even been widely recognized specially in construction industry so it cannot be underestimated because it will greatly affect the stakeholders and the project at large (Hawah Taana & Raju, 2020). To achieve project success, delivering the project with high quality, in an efficient cost and timely manner will be very relevant to project management and will definitely increase the complexity of projects and demands of the client (Raziq, Borini, Malik, Ahmad, & Shabaz, 2018). That is why specialist management skills in project teams must be included and project managers have to be aware of their important roles in construction projects' success. Also, project success is significantly affected by the planning and adoption of the standard purpose and procedures related to the project lifecycle (Dosumu & Aigbavboa, 2018). Project management should include all management functions namely, planning, organizing, leading, and controlling to efficiently manage the project towards execution and completion.

It is a continuous process throughout the delivery of a project. The administrative and engineering planning process of the project has rules, controls, and indicators that must be followed to develop the plans for each project according to its circumstances, needs and level of importance (Urbański, Haque, & Oino, 2019). That is why adequate planning is essential and a must for any project to be successfully executed and completed, not to mention that it is very important to be budgeted and funded as well. Time spent on project planning, analysis, and implementation activities will reduce risk and increase project success. On the other hand, inadequate analysis and planning will lead to a failed project (Fraz, Waris, Afzal, Jamil, Shah, & Sultana, 2016). The failure of a project in any sector due to poor project planning and implementation practices carries two main reasons. The first reason is the poor management and engineering planning in construction companies. Secondly

is the waste of resources, finances and human efforts used in the execution (Naeem, Khanzada, Mubashir, & Sohail, 2018).

The importance of the project success varies by the contract of the project, type of project and individual role of personality in the project also (Nayeem, 2020). Project success comprises of two parts. First is the success of project management and other is the success of the project (Fraz et al., 2016). The Emirate of Abu Dhabi has become one of the most successful investment stations on the map of the world, where the real estate sector has shown significant growth over the last ten years, which has contributed to attracting investments from different countries of the world, The services and architectural facilities provided by Abu Dhabi are described by investors as both exciting and seductive, and there are still expectations of rising in extent of real estate investments in Abu Dhabi, and that is after projects costing billions of dollars contributed to the development of the real estate sector particularly the integrated infrastructure in this young Emirate (Morris, Wilkinson, Algeo, & Candusso, 2017).

Good feedback and reputation of Abu Dhabi has increased the responsibilities on construction companies in all of its kinds, starting from the commitment of these companies to the dates of delivery of projects and in accordance with the plans developed by the government and developers of real estate and construction and the execution of these projects with the highest quality and reasonable not-overpriced budgets (Johnson & Babu, 2018). In addition, all parties involved in the construction process are aware that delay in the delivery of projects in accordance with timetables set by the investors is the scourge that destroys the material and moral profits of these parties, because it causes money wastage to the investors and contractors and bad reputation to the governmental agencies that promote these projects. Delay in project completion puts contractors under pressure, leading them to implement at low levels of quality (Igwe & Ude, 2018). As a key feature of construction project success is to be completed on time, project managers have to avoid any delays in project completion. In the current study, the relationship between the four management functions and project success in Abu Dhabi construction companies will be studied, and the moderating effect of goal clarity on the relationship between management functions and project success will be investigated.

Problem Statement

The UAE market has a significant impact on Middle East region growth because it is considered one of the biggest developing markets in the world (Altarawneh, 2020). The construction industry requires a great attention in identifying critical success factors because in construction companies in Abu Dhabi suffers the most to meet deadlines and budgets. Gunduz & Yahya, 2018). In general, good project management is an important factor in ensuring project success (Nayeem, 2020). However, statistics showed a high percentage of construction projects are not properly managed (Gavrysh & Melnykova, 2019). The main reason to this is poor project management. Poor project management will not allow appropriate execution and control processes, or achievement of the project's targets (Irfan, Khan, Hassan, Hassan, Habib, Khan, & Khan, 2021). Also, poor management and engineering planning in large construction companies operating in Abu Dhabi is likely the main reason to delays in project completion through the lack of these companies to define their objectives accurately and development of the strategies, policies, plans and time programs needed for the implementation of the project stages (Naeem et al., 2018). The losses and costs incurred by Abu Dhabi construction companies has increased recently in 2019 due to delays and poor planning (Nayeem, 2020). This problem is due to failure to plan well, including budgeting, proper allocation of resources, proper administrative and engineering planning, which all play great roles in the success of the construction companies in completing their projects within the time specified. A construction project is termed successful, when it is completed on time, within budget, and according to specifications (Baban, Seneviratne, & Nielsen, 2020).

One of the reasons for this is that the project management and all party involved in the construction projects do not have a clear goal on the things they need to accomplish. In a particular project, everyone involved has his own goals to accomplish which differs from each other (Pirotti, Keshavarzsaleh, Mohd Rahim, & Zakaria, 2020). As goal clarity is one of the biggest problems facing Abu Dhabi construction companies, this problem affects the project management and every single party and area involved in the construction projects and it will negatively influence the project as a whole (Raziq et al., 2018). Moreover, recent statistics in Abu Dhabi proved that unclear goals for the parties involved in construction companies due to poor planning and management has affected overall projects' success and completion (Baban et al., 2020). This means that unclear goals in projects negatively effects the employees work or tasks to be done and the evaluation of the work achieved which is a huge waste of time and resources.

These issues of construction projects have created a need for conducting studies to investigate them. Furthermore, defining project success is not often easy, because the literature suggests that stakeholders have different perceptions of which factors contribute to project success, and this demonstrates a lack of agreement regarding the perceptions of project success factors (Hawah Taana & Raju, 2020). Therefore, the current study aims to fill the gaps and contribute more to the literature by investigating the relationship between all four

management functions and project success and their contribution towards project success as well as the effect of goal clarity on the relationship between the two variables.

Study Objectives

This study has three main objectives as follows:

1. To determine the relationship between management functions and construction project success in Abu Dhabi, UAE.
2. To determine the effect of goal clarity on the relationship between management functions and project success in Abu Dhabi, UAE.
3. To determine the contribution of management functions toward project success in Abu Dhabi, UAE.

1.3 Conceptual Framework

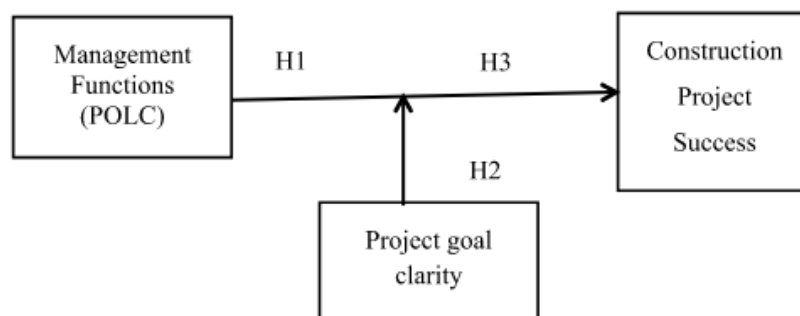


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the study

Goal-Setting Theory

Goal-setting theory is applied in the current study from organizational behavior to the study of project goals in the context of construction project teams. The project goal clarity relates to the extent of communication and understanding of a set of project mission and goals that guides the efforts of project managers and employees towards development (Aga, 2016). Locke came up with the goal-setting theory of motivation in the mid-1960s. The theory states that goal setting and task performing are essentially linked, it states that challenging and specific goals contributes to better task performance when put along appropriate feedback. This is because a goal indicates the direction given to employees and the amount of efforts required to achieve it. The most important features of this theory are: job motivation's main source is willing to work towards goal attainment, better performance and greater output are led by specific and clear goals. So, goals should always be realistic but challenging at the same time as the more challenging the goal the more reward and motivation and project managers should participate in setting goals because their participation makes goals more acceptable, but employees' participation is not always desirable for setting goals (Lunenburg, 2011). The current study supports the significant role of the management in setting clear goals to their employees. It is the role of management teams to set the goals and tasks to achieve those goals. Besides, it is their role to provide all the essential resources required to support the project teamwork. Therefore, the employees will be motivated to work hard and perform beyond their potentials to achieve the goals and complete their projects successfully on time, within budget, and according to specifications.

Management Functions

Project management includes a plan, organization, study, and control of all facets of projects. to achieve project goals, everything is included with motivation on cautious manner, within adhered schedule, budget, and performance standards. (Oke, Omoraka, & Ayeni, 2017). Thus, it is defined that project management is focused on performance, concerning short-term dimensions of the success of project- sticking to criteria of time, quality, and cost. Moreover, planning helps to provide a greater capacity for the organization and project management to adaptation and adjustment by pre-defining the best manners and methods of work in the light of what is likely to happen. It works to save costs and prevent waste of resources, because it sets goals and mechanisms of implementation in advance, in a scientific and rational manner, which contributes to increasing efficiency and effectiveness. The management carries out the full project planning before the project even starts, then plan out every stage in detail for the project before the start of any stage. The management ensures that they have appropriate resources, people, methodology and supporting tools for every stage so that the plan is possible to achieve and be delivered on time, budget, and acceptable quality level.

Management systems emphasize on projects delivery on setting stages and these stages run across common managerial processes. Also, these stages are significant, and they are where project managers do their work, they prepare the stage sequencing while ensuring delivery for each stage. Delivery for the stage is identified from the work breakdown structure. Preparation activities draft the work breakdown structure and then the project managers validate it. The approvers along with project managers sign off whenever a stage delivery at the end of that stage. Approvers can be the board of directors, sponsors or shareholders. The stage is complete every time the stage delivery is approved so that the project team can move onto the next stage. Every organization has its own project stages and the order of these stages, but most of the projects usually go through these stages at this order: project strategy, preparation, design, development and testing, training and business realization (Wideman, 2002).

Moreover, resource allocation and work coordination across various project areas are the main functions of project organization which requires leadership skills in the project manager to perform effectively. Manpower is the most important factor in the successful completion of any project. Productivity of projects can also be affected by not enough manpower of the existing labor force as they may need to work overtime. Lack of staff will then lead to poor construction productivity. Quality through quantity is needed. Providing proper and sufficient resources is a very important issue in project organization as well as all other management functions and are necessary to properly manage a construction project (Waal & Frijns, 2016).

Furthermore, it is very important to have a controlling command on project scope, cost, and potential troubles. It is extremely necessary for the project managers to control project time and deals with its risks and benefits cautiously and expertly. Reports need to be created and updated constantly to have a clear comprehensive picture of each stage processes, usually these reports are done through project dashboards. For team management, project manager is the one who manages the team, with everyone in the team brings specific skills unique perspectives in approaching project tasks, support, and training notwithstanding. Project managers will carry the responsibility of managing team members while processing other roles of their own simultaneously. This brings the point of communication, the manager has to be clear about responsibility of each team member through communication, there can also be third parties to help with specific goals and these parties are from outside so keeping strong communication with them is essential for the project to work and be delivered successfully (Matos, 2013). Also, leadership is an essential function of project management. Aga (2016) mentioned that transactional leadership, whereas leaders can keep the followers by having rewards and punishment and thus, making them motivated in short-time becomes an important factor to precondition for transformational leadership. But that just give a very little role in project success. Transactional leadership is a reciprocity based on the attainment of contractual obligations and might potentially be represented as setting up objectives and monitoring and controlling of results.

Project Success

Project success has been considered as one of the main topics in project management literature. From this point of view, it is clear to see how it is possible to have a successful project with unsuccessful project management, and vice versa. That is to say that project can be successful even though the project management is unsuccessful because it has achieved greater and long-term goals. The moment project management stops, short-term orientation can be ineffective yet for long-term goal it can be the reverse because set of goals are wider and satisfied than the narrow management that it consists of. Other than that, “iron triangle” and considering project management success, it is very likely to find vast non-identical approaches (Igwe & Ude, 2018).

There are various factors affecting project success that affect the contractual flexibility. Nevertheless, several studies have investigated the project success through work bulling, corporate reputation, emotional intelligence, entrepreneurial orientation, team learning, corporate reputation, innovation, and human resource practices (Naeem et al., 2018). In the current study, project success is evaluated through completion on time and according to the budget allocated. Also, project success is evaluated based on the best job of solving the problems for which the projects were developed. Additionally, it is evaluated by project specifications that are met by the time of handover to the target beneficiaries.

The Relationship between Management Functions and Goal Clarity

Project managers need to identify the main or general goal of the project at first. Then, they must determine the sub-goals for every party involved in executing the project. After that, planning will take place by identifying the steps and procedures needed to achieve the goals with all the resources and materials required for the project execution and completion. The process of planning through what's more, making unequivocal the targets, objectives, and procedures important to bring the project through its life cycle to a fruitful end when the project's item, management, or process assumes its legitimate position in the execution of project proprietor methodologies (Urbański et al., 2019). Project management could serve systematically to guide different parties involved in a project discipline in aligning project management processes with the organization's overall

objectives. Thus, project goals must be clearly identified before the planning step because the aim of planning is achieving a particular goal.

Project goals should be able to help individuals determine what actions are consistent or inconsistent with the overall project development goals. Project goals or targets define what the project is really about, so, without a goal, no point of conducting a project and waste time. Lack of shared project targets is also a major reason for disappointing performance. Thus, project goal clarity is necessary to set the objectives for project management and implementation and achieve project success (Haritha & Murali, 2019).

The Relationship between Management Functions and Project Success

Project management defines the requirements of work, extensions, organization of resource allocation, planning the execution of work, progress controlling and monitoring. It uses organizational structures, resources, tools and techniques to achieve the project success without adversely affecting the routing operations of the company. Effective management can reduce project delays and save on costs. Successful project management can help up project success. Project management and project success are linked and have a positive relationship. Project management success is one of the elements of project success because the latter is hardly achievable without the former (Radujković & Sjekavica, 2017).

The Relationship between Goal Clarity and Project Success

Construction companies meet their long term and short-term strategic goals through projects. The purpose of project brief development is to define the construction project goals and ensuring their alignment with the long-term strategic vision of the companies. Clarity of project goals is pivotal to project success. It is imperative to have active involvement of different types of stakeholders to develop the project brief (AL Mousli & El-Sayegh, 2016).

In any construction project, the scope and goals must be clear to all the key stakeholders of the project. Goal clarity is crucial to accomplishing anticipated performance levels. Meaning that when the goals are clear to the individuals and groups, this will lead to higher performance levels and therefore, will increase the potential of project success. However, when goals are not clearly communicated, individuals will not be clear on the direction and the purpose of the project. Thus, performance levels will be low as well as the project success level. The clear project goals and objectives help the project team to self-regulate their efforts towards their tasks, which helps them reach their targets. So, in a project environment, where the goals of the project and the requirements of the client and management are clear to the project manager and the team members, the project is likely to be successful (Raziq et al., 2018).

Research Design

The current study uses a descriptive-analytical and inferential statistics. Also, it is a correlational study to test the relationships between the independent and dependent variables in the study. A correlational study is used when relationships between two or more variables are being investigated. Research studies can also be classified according to how the data is going to be obtained. They can be categorized as an empirical, experimental, or case study (Ntabathia, 2013). It is correlational because the objective of the study is to find out the relationship between the four independent variables of the study which are planning, organizing, leading, and controlling and one dependent variable which is project success. Besides, this study uses regression analysis to identify the effect of the moderator variable i.e., project goal clarity on the relationship between management functions and project success as well as determining the contribution of management functions toward project success.

Sampling Method

The probability sampling method has been adopted for the current study in order to make generalization of the research findings to the study method using a sample of respondents. The study sample consisted of 97 project managers working in 26 construction companies in Abu-Dhabi. This sample size was selected based on Krejcie and Morgan (1970) who simplified the decision on sample size by providing a table that ensures a good decision model (Sekaran, 2006).

Research Instruments

This study used a structured survey instrument to test the hypothesized hypotheses and answer the research questions. The survey included scale of the management functions which include planning, organizing, leading, and controlling (POLC). Then, goal clarity scale and lastly, project success scale. The scales were partially adopted from different sources such as, Aga, 2016; Garg & Ramjee, 2013 and the Project Management Body of Knowledge - PMBOK (Project Management Institute). The adopted items were modified and refined so that it can be suitable for the context of the current research.

Reliability Test

The study data was collected from 97 construction project managers (i.e. study sample). Then, reliability test was run, Cronbach’s alpha was found for all 44 items of all constructs i.e. project management functions, goal clarity, and project success, which is 0.978, and also, reliability for each function of management was tested and they all have had a reliability of more than 0.70. Hence, all constructs are reliable (Nunnally, 1978). The details are shown in table (1) below:

Table (1)
The Reliability Test Result

Dimensions	Items	Cronbach’s alpha
Planning	21	0.964
Organizing	4	0.911
Leading	6	0.790
Controlling	6	0.946
Goal clarity	3	0.957
Project success	4	0.926
Total	44	0.978

II. Research Findings

The results of correlation analyses revealed that there was a statistically significant correlation between planning function and project success ($r = 0.691^{**}$, $n=97$, $p = 0.000$), organizing function and project success ($r = 0.632^{**}$, $n=97$, $p = 0.000$), leading function and project success ($r = 0.580^{**}$, $n=97$, $p = 0.000$), controlling function and project success ($r = 0.631^{**}$, $n=97$, $p = 0.000$). Then, the result showed the contribution of project management to project success is 50.1%. This indicated that construction project management contributes 50.1% to project success. This model is to predict the project success variable by project management variable ($R = .708$, $R^2 = .501$, $F(4, 92) = 23.137$, $p < .001$).

Then, regarding the moderation effect analysis, the results showed a positive relationship between the project management function, project goal clarity and project success and the relationships are found significant at a p-value of 0.000 as shown in table (2) below. Then, regression analyses have revealed that project management functions and project goal clarity variables significantly influences the project success. Moreover, the findings revealed that project goal clarity variable significantly moderates or have a statistically significant effect on the relationship between construction project management functions (IVs) and project success (DV) among project managers working in authorized large-construction companies in Abu Dhabi. This moderation effect was proven by the R Square Change which showed the increase in variation explained by the addition of the moderator variable, which is the project goal clarity variable (i.e., the change in R^2). The change in R^2 is reported as 0.128, which means that R^2 change = 12.8%. This percentage is the increase in the variation explained by the addition of the moderator variable.

Table (2)
Correlation between Goal Clarity, Management Functions and Project Success

	Planning	Organizing	Leading	Controlling	Project Success
Goal Clarity	.767**	.757**	.683**	.660**	.671**
Significance	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
N	97	97	97	97	97

III. Discussion

The findings indicated that the four management functions are necessary in project management for project success. Good project planning is the basic (planning). Followed by allocation of resources (organizing). Then, project managers have to lead people and parties involved (leading) as well as control the project’s budget and activities (controlling) to ensure that all the workers and engineers involved are doing the right things through out to project completion. Therefore, the results proved the significant relationships between the study variables namely, project management functions (IV) and project success (DV).

The findings revealed that the relationships between all four functions of management i.e. planning, organizing, leading & controlling (IVs) and goal clarity (MV) are significant. Also, a significant relationship was found between goal clarity (MV) and project success (DV). Also, the findings showed that the effect of goal clarity together with the four project management functions to project success is close to sixty percent and it was found statistically significant. These findings demonstrated that project goal clarity variable (MV) has a statistically significant effect on the relationship between management functions and project success. Therefore,

it can be concluded that project goal clarity does moderate the relationship between project management functions and project success.

These findings emphasised the important roles of construction project managers. Poor project management will not allow appropriate execution and control processes, or achievement of the project's targets. Also, poor management and engineering planning in large construction companies operating in Abu Dhabi is likely the main reason to delays in project completion through the lack of these companies to define their objectives accurately and development of the strategies, policies, plans and time programs needed for the implementation of the project stages (Shibieka, Raheem, & Hittini, 2019). Since the project manager is fully accountable for the success of the project, he is responsible for verifying that all planning processes are properly executed.

The overall success of the project lies on the hands of project managers in the construction field, which comprises delivering the owner's project within the constraint of time, cost quality and safety stipulation (Johnson & Babu, 2018). However, the construction project goals could be challenging to project managers. The goal-setting theory of motivation states that goal setting and task performing are essentially linked, it states that challenging and specific goals contributes to better task performance when put along appropriate feedback, because a goal indicates the direction given to employees and the amount of efforts required to achieve it (Pedersen, 2015). The most important features of this theory are: job motivation's main source is willing to work towards goal attainment, better performance and greater output are led by specific and clear goals, goals should always be realistic but challenging at the same time as the more challenging the goal, the more reward and motivation.

The project work is a team work that involves many parties. Team management is essential to fulfil the objectives and achieve project goals. For team management, project manager is the one who manages the team, with everyone in the team brings specific skills unique perspectives in approaching project tasks, support and training notwithstanding. Project managers will carry the responsibility of managing team members while processing other roles of their own simultaneously. This brings the point of communication, the manager has to be clear about responsibility of each team member through communication, there can also be third parties to help with specific goals and these parties are from outside so keeping strong communication with them is essential for the project to work and be delivered successfully.

IV. Conclusion

This study focused on finding out whether there are significant relationships between project management functions (planning, organizing, leading & controlling) and project in Abu Dhabi construction companies, UAE. In addition, the study has examined the moderating effect of goal clarity on the relationship between management functions and project success as well as the contribution of construction project management functions toward project success in Abu Dhabi construction companies. In conclusion, the results showed that there are significant relationships between the four functions of management and project success. This indicated that all management functions are necessary in project management for project success. Moreover, the findings revealed that the relationships between all four functions of management i.e. planning, organizing, leading & controlling (IVs) and goal clarity (MV) are significant. Also, a significant relationship was found between goal clarity (MV) and project success (DV). These findings demonstrated that project goal clarity variable (MV) has a statistically significant effect on the relationship between management functions and project success. Therefore, it can be concluded that project goal clarity does moderate the relationship between project management functions and project success.

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