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THE EFFECT OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE
BETWEEN PROJECT STAKEHOLDERS ON
THE SUCCESS OF THE PROJECT

Survey research

Technology and Communication
2024

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This fast forward study process started in autumn 2022 and it has taught me a lot of patience, new management skills and ways to deliver more successfully under the pressure. I would like to acknowledge this great Master's degree program created by Vaasa University of Applied Sciences and all its teachers related, none of this would be possible without your great expertise.

Especially I would like to thank my thesis supervisor Dr. Adebayo Agbejule for his patience and excellent expertise and guidance through the process. I would also like to thank all my course mates about the great and supportive atmosphere through the studies.

I would also like to thank the case organization that they supported through my journey of studies and allowed me to develop my thesis in their organization.

Moreover, thank you to my wife Monta for endless support, patience, and encouragement through my studies.

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Espoo

March 10, 2024

TIIVISTELMÄ

Tekijä	Joni Kukko
Opinnäytetyön nimi	Projektin sidosryhmien tunneällyn vaikutus projektin lopputulokseen Kyselytutkimus
Vuosi	2024
Kieli	Englanti
Sivumäärä	42 + 1 liite
Ohjaaja	Adebayo Agbejule

Tämän opinnäytetyön päätarkoituksena oli tutkia, miten tunneälytaidot ja sidosryhmien hallinta liittyvät toisiinsa ja vaikuttavat projektin onnistumiseen.

Kiinnostus ja idea tämän opinnäytetyön aiheeseen sai alkunsa tekijän henkilökohtaisesta kiinnostuksesta tutkia ihmisten käyttäytymisen vaikutuksia projektin lopputulokseen. Tunneällystä on tullut yhä tärkeämpi ilmiö työympäristössä kaikilla tasoilla ja liiketoiminta-alueilla, koska yksilöiden välinen kommunikaatio on nostettu työmenetelmien hierarkiassa korkeammalle.

Tutkimusmenetelminä käytettiin kirjallisuuskatsausta opinnäytetyön teoreettisessa osassa ja kyselytutkimusta työn empiirisessä osassa. Tämä tutkimus on kyselytutkimus, jossa yksi yritys valittiin toissijaiseen analyysiin.

Tulos tuki hypoteesia ehdottamalla, että erinomaisella sidosryhmäanalyysillä yhdistettynä korkeisiin tunneälytaitoihin on mahdollista toteuttaa onnistuneempia projekteja.

ABSTRACT

Author	Kukko, Joni
Title	The Effect of Emotional Intelligence between Project Stakeholders on the Success of the Project Survey research
Year	2024
Language	English
Pages	42 + 1 Appendix
Name of Supervisor	Adebayo Agbejule

The main purpose of this thesis was to examine how the emotional intelligence skills and stakeholder management interrelate and affect the project success.

The interest and idea for the topic on this master thesis gained with the personal interest of the author to explore the human behaviours affect for the project outcome. Emotional intelligence has become more and more important phenomenon within working environment in all levels and business areas because the communication between individuals have been raised higher in hierarchy of the working methods.

The research methods used are literature review in theoretical part of thesis and survey questionnaire in empirical part of the thesis. This study is survey research where one company was selected for secondary analysis.

The result supported the hypothesis by suggesting that with excellent stakeholder analysis and combined with high skills of emotional intelligence is possible to deliver more successful projects.

Keywords	Emotional intelligence, stakeholder analysis, project success
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Aim of thesis

This Master`s thesis project explores the role of emotional intelligence and stakeholder management in project environment. The author`s personal interest and past work experience in this topic motivated this research. The author noticed a gap in the management literature regarding the emotional intelligence skills required for effective stakeholder management. Moreover, there are few publications that examine the impact of the project teams` and stakeholders` interpersonal emotional intelligence skills on the project duration and success. While many publications focus on the general aspects of project management, such as scheduling, planning, and budgeting, the human side of the project management, namely leadership, emotional intelligence, and cultural awareness, are often neglected. These are crucial factors for project managers to consider in their daily work. Another interesting research area is the influence of company cultures, work habits, and communication styles on the project outcomes, and how high-level emotional intelligence can enhance the project delivery.

1.2 Problem Formation and Research Questions

This thesis addresses a real and existing research problem. As mentioned in Section 1.1, there is an abundance of studies on the general project management practices from a hard sciences perspective, but scarcity of studies on the soft skills required and the challenges encountered from a stakeholder management perspective, such as emotional intelligence. Project management is becoming an increasingly popular mode of doing business. The Author believes that project managers, project team members, and all project stakeholders should have a better understanding of the emotional intelligence challenges that they may face during the project lifecycle.

The research questions are illustrated in Figure 1. The main research question “How emotional intelligence affects projects success?” – guides the direction of the research. The sub questions support the objectives of theoretical study: to explain the main themes of project leadership cultures and emotional intelligence among project stakeholders. The main goal of the theoretical part is to provide a background for the integration of emotional intelligence and project leadership cultures among stakeholders and how they influence project success. The interrelation and possible integration of these two main themes will be further analyzed in the empirical part through the questionnaire results.

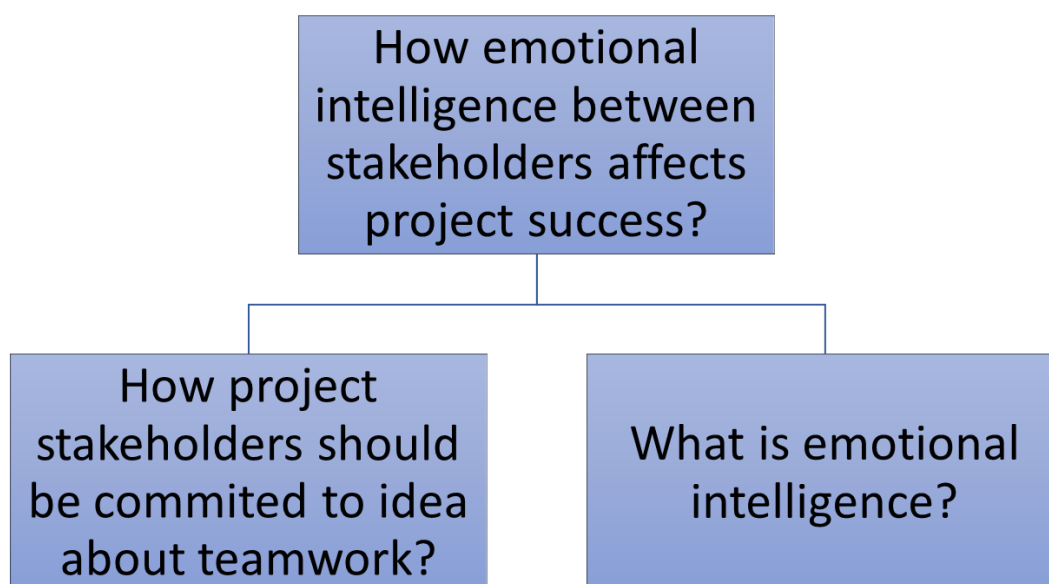


Figure 1. Research questions

People perspective:

What is emotional intelligence?

The first chapters of the theoretical part discuss the concept and meaning of emotional intelligence, providing background information about its history. The main goal is to define and explain what “emotional intelligence” (EI) means and how it relates to the project environment, answering the first sub research question.

Project leadership cultures:

How project stakeholders should be committed to idea about teamwork?

To answer the second sub-question, more theoretical study and data collection were conducted. Questionnaires were sent to project professional to gather information about their experiences and current project environment.

Synergy between emotional intelligence and project stakeholders' leadership cultures:

How emotional intelligence between stakeholders affects projects success?

The last part of the research integrates the two main themes: emotional intelligence and project leadership cultures. The goal the thesis examines the interrelation of these topics based on questionnaire data and the latest studies in the field. The aim is to determine how emotional intelligence competencies and project leadership cultures and styles influence each other and the project success.

1.3 Definitions

The following list explains and describes the main terms of the thesis shortly to provide for the reader a better understanding of the terminology used here. The ones without a source are based on the author's own work experience.

- Management = process of achieving organizational goals by planning, organizing, and controlling organizational resources (McManus 2006, 9)
- Leadership = motivating and guiding people to understand their potential, and to achieve more challenging organizational goals (Anantatmula 2010, 14)
- Emotional intelligence (EI) = ability to read, understand and manage oneself and one's relationships with others (Muller & Turner 2010b, 33)
- Consultant = a person who provides expert advice professionally.
- Stakeholder power = is the ability of stakeholder or stakeholders to influence the outcomes or objectives of an organization, a project, or issue (Keane, 2006)

- Emotional intensity = is a trait that involves feeling intensely and deeply about others, oneself, and the world (Keane, 2006).

1.4 Delimitations

This thesis briefly introduces main leadership theories to provide background of the emotional intelligence perspective. Leadership is a large research area and thus is not discussed in detail here. The characteristics of successful leadership are considered in the research, but they are not main focus, as the emphasis is not in those success factors. The thesis is related to the dynamics of project stakeholder's during the project and how their emotional intelligence affects to entire project. The questionnaire will show the comparisons between management and leadership styles. However, since there is only one case company, organizational culture may influence the results. The situation would be very different if the research included multiple case companies. This research is also specific about construction industry so the results may not be generalizable to other industries. The respondents of the questionnaires are mainly working in project management and project leadership roles in the consulting business in the construction sector, so they may have certain bias in their answers.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

This thesis covers three main themes in the theoretical framework: project success, emotional intelligence, and stakeholder management. The first part in the theory section discusses general leadership definitions, models, and styles, with the goal of explaining the background of different leadership clusters.

The main part and the author's focus is on emotional intelligence which is more about relationship and human skills; and how it influences the project performance among stakeholders.

1.6 Structure of Thesis

The thesis is divided in seven sections. Section 1 is an introduction for a topic of the thesis and the presentation of research problem and the aims of the research.

Section 2 is a literature review where the subject is dealt with in the light of existing literature and studies. It has an overview of studied elements of the project management environment and formulation of the research questions.

The Summary of the written literature review is in section 3. This section summarizes the findings of the literature review related to research questions.

In section 4 the chosen research method is presented. This section includes introduction of survey research as well, data collection and analyzing and evaluation criteria.

The Results and analysis of the research are presented in section 5, followed by discussion and conclusion, practical implication, and limitation and future research in section 6. Section 7 contains the closing words of the research.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review gives insights into key topics which are relevant to this thesis: stakeholder analysis, emotional intelligence, and project success. These topics also create foundation for the hypotheses of the thesis. The author has also noticed in his own work that key topics are taken in consideration but in practice people do not always think of them in as belonging together or that they make project environment work more successfully.

The author feels that often people in work environment can have knowledge about certain things such as emotional intelligence but in the daily work they often forget it or ignore it and continue the work in the ways that they have use to.

This thesis project began with the recognition that project leadership and emotional intelligence are both broad research areas that require careful delimitation for the thesis topic. The author had already observed in his own work that there is a limited number of publications on the emotional intelligence skills required for project managers.

2.1 Stakeholder Analysis

As PMBOK (2021) defines stakeholder is an individual group that may affect, be affected by, or perceive itself to be affected by decision or activity of project or program. Stakeholder analysis is a process where the interests, needs, expectations, and influence of the people and organizations involved in or affected by a project need to be identified and assessed. For management perspective it is important part of project management practices in a project, as it helps to ensure that the project meets the goals and expectations of all stakeholders and avoids or minimizes potential conflicts or risks.

Another study that handles stakeholder analysis is a publication by Youssra (2017, 39). He writes that stakeholder analysis synthesizes and summarizes information about all the people and needs in project. He also writes that this is the analysis of

stakeholder`s responsibilities, contribution, and commitment to the project. By specifying the interests, concerns, and needs of the various parties involved, the analysis is a great tool for helping decision making when different stakeholders have contradictory interests, when the resources are limited and when the needs of the actors involved in project needs to be finely balanced. All this related, a good way to analyze stakeholders is to make, the Power/Interest Grid. This instrument sheds light on the interest of possible actors in the project, and on the power or influence of an actor to move forward and to achieve the expected results. Below is shown an example of Power/ interest matrix.

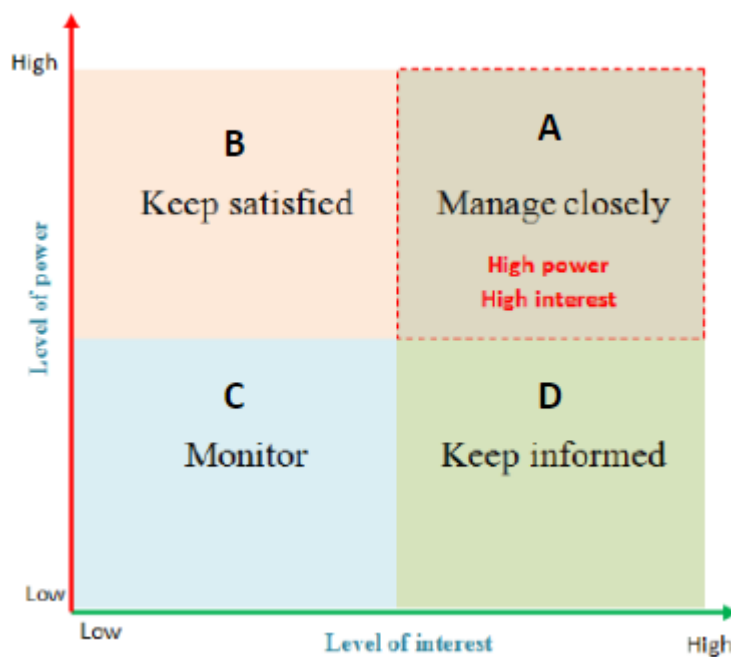


Figure 2. Power/interest matrix (Yousra, 2017)

Figure 2 classifies stakeholders in relation to the power that they hold and their level of interest in the project in general. It also describes the type of relationship, which the project manager will need to establish and maintain with each type of stakeholder, grouping is shown for each of the four zones.

- **Quadrant A: Manage closely**
Stakeholders have a high power and interest, and they can influence the achievements of project objectives.
- **Quadrant B: Keep satisfied**
These stakeholders need to be kept satisfied because they have influence to behave destructively, for example when they feel neglected or uninformed.
- **Quadrant C: Monitor**
Stakeholders in quadrant C are often monitoring and can feel unimportant but mostly they are cautious and have decided to wait before showing more interest.
- **Quadrant D: Keep informed**
Stakeholders are lacking power, but their importance come in the way that they often present the group who bring skills and dynamism that makes cooperation work. (Youssra, 2017).

Stakeholders can be divided in two groups, internal and external stakeholders. Cross & Victor (2020) made a study about project managers role in stakeholders management, and they described a difference of these two groups as follows. External stakeholders are those who are outside the project or organization, but are affected by its outcomes or activities, for example customers, suppliers, community, or government. Internal stakeholders on other hand are those who work within the organization or project such as project team members, employees, or managers.

In this thesis the focus is limited on internal stakeholders.

2.2 Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence is used to refer to people's communication and interpersonal skills. Emotion itself can be defined as a feeling such as love, happiness, fear, anger, or hatred, which can be caused by the people you are with or the situation

you are in and intelligence on the other hand is the ability to understand, think and reason instead of doing things by instinct or without consideration. (Harper-Collins, 2006).

Emotional intelligence has recently become a more discussed topic and it is all the time gaining more and more ground in most organizations but according to study of Bhattacharjee & Sahidur Rahman (2016) the term of “Emotional Intelligence “ was first used in management literature in 1990 by Salovey and Meyer and they define that emotional intelligence is a “subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one’s own and others feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide ones thinking and action”.

There are five components of measuring the emotional intelligence of an individual and they are listed in a following way, self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills (Bhattacharjee & Sahidur Rahman , 2016). People’s personalities are different; so, people behave and react differently to situations, and this is where the five listed components of competences help in developing people (Serrat, 2017). Serrat has explained the meanings of those five components.

- **Self-awareness:** is the skill to have an understanding on one’s emotion strengths, weaknesses, needs, and drive, and its effect on other individuals.
- **Self-regulation:** is component demonstrating accept ambiguity, and open to change, integrity, and trustworthiness, and refer the ability to keep impulses under control.
- **Motivation:** Emotionally intelligent leaders are highly motivated. They can drive change, optimism, and high organizational commitment. They also have ability to stay focused, and they are ready to accept changes to overcome failure rather than fear of failure.

- **Empathy:** represents feelings transmitted through non-verbal and verbal messages. Highly empathic leaders understand links between emotions and behavior of other people and knows how to provide support if it is necessary.
- **Social skills:** are important relationship building skill. They demonstrate the ability of a person to deal with a problem without degrading it negatively but is able to create cooperation and resolve conflict with diplomacy.

During the preliminary literature review, two significant studies about interrelation between project leadership and emotional intelligence. Preston et al. (2015) have investigated the relevance of emotional intelligence in project leadership. Their study dealt with leadership styles and how those styles are combined with emotional intelligence. Other interesting study found was one of Zhang et al. (2022). They researched the impact of project managers emotional intelligence on project performance. This study conducts a meta-analysis of large amount of observations based on 24 independent studies from 1990 to 2021.

2.3 Project Success

Project success is one of the most complicated to define because it has so many aspects. It is complex and subjective concept that can vary depending on context, stakeholders, and objectives of project. Project success is often defined as the satisfaction of stakeholder needs and expectations through the delivery of project outcomes that enable intended business value or other intended benefits (PMBOK 2021, 9).

Caccamase & Bragantini (2012) described that the success of project management is the ability of the project to deliver in scope, cost, time and quality but they also mentioned that meeting the criteria above requires an individual with motivation, but the available motivation is not infinite.

Atkinson (1999) argued that the cost, time, and quality are based only on the iron triangle concept that defines that project objectives are clear, fixed, and measurable and when these objectives are met, the project is successful. However, this point of view is often unrealistic and problematic because it ignores the complexity, uncertainty, and ambiguity that characterize projects and conflicting expectations and perceptions of different stakeholders.

Nowadays, in project management is not unusual for the final success criteria to differ from those which were established at the beginning of the project (Kerzner, 2019). Communication about success criteria with stakeholders before project execution is highly prevailed perception (PMBOK 2021; Kerzner 2019). There are three questions that key stakeholders and project manager should agree on as PMBOK states:

- What factors may impact success?
- What does success look like for this project?
- How will success be measured?

All projects cannot be successful. Organizations and companies that have a high degree of project success are mostly not working on enough projects and taking much risk. These types of companies are often becoming followers rather than leaders because for companies who want to be leaders, knowledge on how to turn around unsuccessful project is essential, according to Kerzner's study. (Kerzner 2017, 69).

2.4 Stakeholders and Project Success

It has been found out through scientific studies that Involvement of stakeholders and stakeholder management are an important part of project success. In the project life cycle, the involvement of stakeholders is required in every and each stage and it cannot be ignored at any cost. The major issues related to stakeholder's involvement are the following:

- Involvement of stakeholders in project planning.
- Keeping the track of the project progress without stakeholder involvement.
- Involvement of stakeholders in work breakdown structure.
- Scope statement development without stakeholders.
- Establishing the qualitative and honest communication with stakeholders.
- Involvement of all stakeholders.
- Carrying out thorough stakeholder analysis.
- Management support.

(Dwivedi, R & Dwivedi, P, 2021)

Stakeholders are important and helpful for decision making at project initiation, project planning and, project implementation because they make significant contribution related project recourses, project requirements, and budgeting the project. Creating a long-term relationship with stakeholders, keeping them involved in the project to ensure the customer satisfaction and developing trust and integrity results in a successful project that meets the end-user`s expectations. Customer and stakeholder satisfaction are crucial ingredients for project success. So, it is very important that stakeholders are kept engaged and clear and effective communication channels must be build and development of project updated with stakeholders periodically. (Dwivedi, R & Dwivedi, P, 2021)

2.5 Stakeholders and Emotional Intelligence

According to Keane`s (2006) study about the stakeholder`s emotional intelligence there are two important factors to explore, emotional intensity and stakeholder power.

Emotional intensity is a trait that involves feeling intensely and deeply about others, oneself, and the world. This is assessing where each stakeholder needs to

keep in mind about the project or the effect of the product on the public and make responsible and sustainable decisions. (Keane, 2006).

Stakeholder power is the ability of stakeholder or stakeholders to influence the outcomes or objectives of an organization, a project, or issue. There are different types of stakeholder power, for example:

- **Voting power:** Power of shareholders to approve major decisions, to elect board members, or change the policies of a business or organization.
- **Economic power:** Stakeholders power to affect profits or losses of a organization or business. Economic power can be exercised by lenders, creditors, customers, employees, unions or governments. It can be used to demand better working conditions, prices, service, quality, or social responsibility.
- **Political power:** This is the power which governments or other authorities are using to regulate, tax, or grant permissions to a business or organization. It can be influenced by voters, or activists who can sway public opinion or policy decisions.
- **Legal power:** Power of stakeholders to sue or be sued by organization or business. This power can be exercised by competitors, employees, customers, or other parties who claim to be grieved by against their business. It can be also used to seek compensation or damages.

As PMBOK refers, stakeholder power can have a significant impact on the success of the project. Therefore, is very important to manage stakeholders effectively and be sure that stakeholders are being heard and involved thorough project lifecycle. (Keane, 2006; PMBOK, 2021)

When the issue reaches a balance in stakeholder power, where none of the parties dominates and there is an attempt to reduce emotional intensity between stakeholders, there is the potential for a long-term policy solutions. (Keane, 2006)

2.6 Emotional Intelligence and Project Success

According to Zhang, et. al. (2022), over the past few decades the various studies have examined the effect of project manager emotional intelligence on project success and found a high positive, low positive, and one exceptive adverse significant effect linearly. The general believe of this study is that compared to traditional formal organizations, a project itself is a new organizational context, where emotional intelligence plays critical role.

Other project management literature suggests that the influence of project managers leadership varies across the different contexts. Muller & Turner (2005), for example wrote that project managers emotional intelligence positively relates to project success in high complexity projects while having small influence in low complexity projects.

The concept of project performance or project success emerged as project outcome. Project success is more comprehensive, subjective, and progressive approach to assessing project success. The success of the project focuses more emotional intelligence issues as people issues, such as team related criteria and external stakeholders` satisfaction, and emphasizes organizational and business success, opportunities and long-term benefits generated by the project. The existing reported effect with the relationship between project success and emotional intelligence ranges from negative to positive. (Zhang, et. al., 2022)

3 SUMMARY: STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT, EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND PROJECT SUCCESS

Evidence has been found through scientific research that the correlation is positive between stakeholder management, emotional intelligence, and project success. Montenegro et al (2021), wrote in their study that the emotional intelligence of construction project managers significantly influences the project success, and that external and internal stakeholder relationships play a vital role as mediators among them. In their study they also conducted meta-analysis and found out that the project manager's emotional intelligence has a significant influence on project performance, moderated by project complexity.

An article from Sposito et al. (2023) showed that emotional intelligence correlates strongly with team cohesion and project success, and they are more effective in interactions with clients and other stakeholders.

El Khatib et al. (2021) wrote in their research that emotional intelligence is a key competency for project managers, as it helps to understand and manage emotions between stakeholders and team members, and to foster trust, satisfaction, and collaboration. In addition, referring to their study, they found out that stakeholder management is also crucial for project success, as it involves identifying, engaging, and communicating with all the relevant parties who have influence or interest on the project outcomes. By combining emotional intelligence and stakeholder management, project managers can increase the possibility of project to be successful in terms of efficiency, impact, sustainability, and relevance. (El Khatib et al.,2021).

Based on the above discussion, the following hypothesis is suggested:

Emotional intelligence will have a positive effect on the relationship between stakeholder's internal relationship and project success.

When all relevant stakeholders' needs are taken in consideration, the project will have much larger possibilities to be successful. The second suggestion is that

strong stakeholder analysis combined with emotional intelligence tools should be implemented into the project when the project team is gathered together to avoid power struggles or other problems and create healthy relationships with all parties.

4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This thesis is a quantitative research. The term “quantitative” has many different meanings. The idea of quantitative data refers often to an idea to have large amounts of data, but this is only part of the truth. In fact, most quantitative data require a data set of decent order to work properly. Small amounts of data can often lead to insignificant, inconclusive, or flawed results because the mathematical procedures involved in quantitative analyses require a certain amount of data in order to work properly. Nevertheless, the main characteristics of quantitative data is that it consists of information that is in some way or other measurable. For example, we assume to be interested whether speakers in group A are more likely to drop /h/ than speakers of group B. Quantitative research is deductive based on already known theory what we develop hypotheses, which we then try to prove in the course of empirical investigation. (Rasinger, 2013, 9, 10, 11). In this thesis the aim is to question large enough a group of people to get enough data to analyze and show the results.

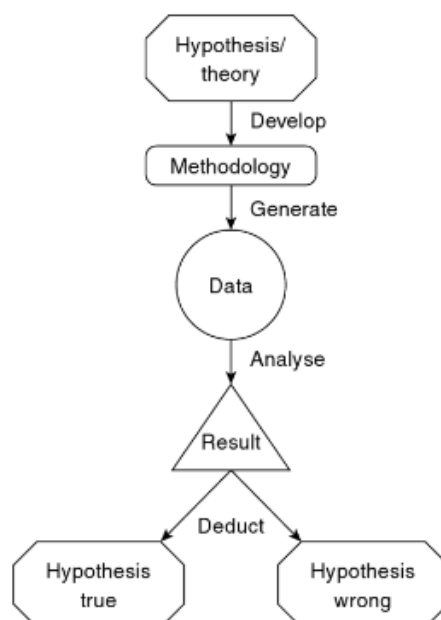


Figure 3. Typical characteristics of quantitative-deductive approach (Rasinger, 2013, 11)

4.1 Theory and Quantitative Research

As was mentioned in chapter 4 the quantitative research is based on theory. At the beginning of the quantitative-deductive process stands the hypothesis or theory. As outlined above, a hypothesis is a statement about a particular aspect of reality. The hypothesis is based on findings of previous research, and the aim of study is to prove or disprove it. Based on a precisely formulated hypothesis, or research question, is developed a methodology, that is, a set of instruments which will allow to measure reality in such a way that the results allow us to prove the hypothesis right or wrong. (Rasinger, 2013, 9, 10, 11, 12)

4.2 Survey Research

A Survey research is one of the most common types of quantitative, social science research. In this kind of type research, the researcher selects a sample of respondents from a population and administers a standardized questionnaire to them. The survey can either be a written document that is completed by the person or the group being surveyed or a face-to-face interview or a telephone interview. By using this research method, it is possible to collect data from large or small populations. The survey research does not belong to anyone in field, and it can be employed most likely by any discipline. (Barribeau, et al., 1994-2024)

Survey researchers have a strong preference to collect large number of random samples because they provide the most accurate estimates of what is true in population. Most survey researches are nonexperimental, and are used to describe single variables for percentage of voters for presidential candidate. (I-Chant et al, 2020)

4.3 Selecting Research Frame

The research frame can be described as an action plan. For survey research a clear research question is needed that defines what is being researched. Based on that

question the exact target group needs to be determined who are wanted to participate in the survey. The target group is a specific group of people to study on. The group can be very broad or relatively narrow. However, survey should aim to produce results that can be generalized to the whole population which means that is important to carefully define exactly what kind of group is wanted to draw conclusions about.

There are also common research biases that can rise if the survey is not generalizable, particularly sampling bias and selection bias. The actual presence of these biases has a serious effect on the validity of surveys results. From there we can get to samples and as we know it is very difficult to survey the entire population of the research – for example it would be very difficult to get response from every person in Finland and that is why in a survey usually uses a sample of specific group of population.

There are various sampling methods that allows to generalize the survey. The larger and more representative the sample, the more valid will be the conclusions. (McCombes, 2023)

4.4 Single Survey Research

When we are limiting our survey research to a specific group, we are talking about single survey research, and this is also the goal of this thesis, so the sample group was chosen to be internal stakeholders, meaning the employees of Sweco PM Oy.

Single survey research is a type of research design that involves collecting data from a single group of respondents at one point in time and it is often used to describe the characteristics, behaviors of a population, opinions or to examine the relationships between variables. Examples of single survey research are: Political opinion poll, mental health survey or customer satisfaction survey. (McCombes, 2023; Converse, 1987)

4.5 Evaluation Criteria of Reliability and Validity

Always, when doing research, mistakes should be avoided, but nevertheless validity and reliability of results vary. That is why it is important to always evaluate the reliability of the study in every research. (Mohajan, 2017)

Reliability means the stability of findings which means that the research can give non-random results. Validity is represented as the truthfulness of findings which means the ability of research method to measure just exactly that what it should measure. Reliability and validity decrease opportunities for researcher bias in research and increase transparency; without assessing validity and reliability of the research will be difficult to describe the effects of measurement errors what comes to theoretical relationships that are measured. (Mohajan, 2017)

A researcher can enhance the validity and reliability of the collected data by using different types of methods to collect data and to obtain that the information is true. (Mohajan, 2017)

In this thesis, surveying people group with different status in the organization and various sources of information when conducting the theoretical review have also brought depth to this study. The researcher was familiar with the working principles of the case company which reduced problems in carrying out the survey with the right group of the peoples. However, the survey was made in English and the researcher noticed that it possibly decreased the number of responses slightly.

4.6 Measurement of Variables

In this chapter a measurement of variables of the survey questionnaire are shown divided into three main topics of the thesis: emotional intelligence, stakeholder analysis, and project success.

4.6.1 Emotional Intelligence

The dimensions of emotional intelligence were adapted from Naseer, Saeed-ul Hassan, Fazalur, and Nabi, (2011). The dimension was evaluated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The following items were used: (1) I understand my own emotions; (2) I have a good understanding of my feelings; (3) I am a good observer of others emotions; (4) I am sensitive of feelings and emotions of others; (5) I am self-motivated person; (6) I am able to control my temper; (7) I am able to control my temper in difficult situation; and (8) I calm down quickly when I am very angry.

4.6.2 Stakeholder Analysis

The questions on stakeholder analysis were taken from existing literature which written by Muller, Drouin, & Sankaran, (2019) and written by Mazur, (2014). The dimension was evaluated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The following questions were used: (1) Whenever I attempt to establish relationship with a person I need to work with, I am successful; (2) I enjoy establishing relationships with those who I work with; (3) I feel competent and fully able to establish a relationship with people I work with; (4) I feel that my personal characteristics are well suited to establishing work relationships; (5) Whenever I attempt to maintain a relationship with a person I work with, I am successful; (6) I find it easy to maintain relationships with people I work with; (7) I feel competent and fully able to maintain relationships with people I work with; (8) I trust the people I work with; (9) I am committed to people I work with; (10) My feelings towards those I work with are positive; and (11) All in all, I am satisfied with my relationships with those people I work with.

4.6.3 Project Success

The dimensions of project success were adapted from Malik, Sarwar, & Orr, (2021) and Muller, Drouin, & Sankaran, (2019). The dimension was evaluated on a five-

point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) and few questions were also used which were multiple choice, but they were not in a good use for data analysis, so they were removed. The following questions were used: (1) In my organization, the deliverables to our clients are most often outcomes of a repetitive production process / a unique project; (2) In my organization project management is explicit project; (3) In my organization decisions are made in the best interest of the shareholders and owners of the organization and their return of investment or decision are made in the best interest of the wider stakeholder community (incl. employees, local communities etc.) (1-5); (4) The governance of projects in my organization favors prioritization of methodology compliance over people`s own experiences in doing their work or prioritization of people`s own experiences in doing their work over methodology compliance (1-5); (5) The way we govern the management of our projects will not or will punish project manager for poor project results; (6) Usually our projects are successful in terms of quality of the project outcome; (7) Usually our projects are successful in terms of scope and requirements of the project being met; (8) Usually our projects are successful in terms of timeliness of project completion; (9) Usually our projects are successful in terms of cost and efforts being under budget or within estimates; (10) I believe that active usage of project plan has a significant positive impact on project performance.

4.7 Data Collection and Analyzing

The research data was collected by survey questionnaire which was sent by email to the sample group and as stated earlier to limit the research the target group was internal stakeholders from Sweco PM Oy in Finland 241 personnel in total with 73 responses received and giving roughly 30% response rate. Originally the idea was to send the survey for a larger group and possibly outside of the organization but due to timelines and possibly too large a sample of data, a decision was made to limit data collection to employees of the own organization. The survey questionnaire was made by using the Google Forms – platform and after that the link for the survey was sent by e-mail to participants as an online survey.

Next the data was converted to an Excel – file and after that to an SPSS form which is a program used for data analyzing. The survey consisted together of 40 questions about emotional intelligence, project success and stakeholders and the response data were analyzed by using a cluster analysis to see a correlation of these variables between correspondents.

The demographics variables of the respondents are presented in Table 1, Table 2, Table 3, and Table 4.

Table 1. Education of respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<i>Valid</i>	Doctor	2	2,7	2,7	2,7
	Bachelor	31	42,5	42,5	45,2
	Master	37	50,7	50,7	95,9
	Professional school	3	4,1	4,1	100,0
	Total	73	100,0	100,0	

Table 1 highlights the educational level of the respondents. The majority of the respondents have gained their degree on Master´s level 50,7% and on a Bachelor level 42,5%, followed by small group who have been getting their education at Vocational school 4,1% or on the doctorate level 2,7%.

Table 2. How long time you have been working with Sweco PM?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<i>Valid</i>	10-20 years	17	23,3	23,3	23,3
	5–10 years	23	31,5	31,5	54,8
	Below 5 years	29	39,7	39,7	94,5
	Over 20 years	4	5,5	5,5	100,0
	Total	73	100,0	100,0	

The analysis observed that the respondents who have been in service for Sweco PM less than 5 years responded more to the survey representing 39,7% of all respondents, followed by the group of 5 to 10 years and 31,5%, as indicated in table 2.

Table 3. Current responsibility of respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<i>Valid</i>	Sales	1	1,4	1,4	1,4
	Development	3	4,1	4,1	5,5
	Management	13	17,8	17,8	23,3
	Others	8	11,0	11,0	34,2
	Projects	48	65,8	65,8	100,00
	Total	73	100,0	100,0	

Table 3 above shows the respondents' current organizational roles. As the table highlights, majority of respondents 65,8% are working with projects, followed by management roles of 17,8%, and minority of respondents are working in development 4,1% or sales department 1,4%.

Table 4. Gender of respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<i>Valid</i>	Missing answers	1	1,4	1,4	1,4
	Female	20	27,4	27,4	28,8
	Male	52	71,2	71,2	100,0
	Total	73	100,0	100,0	

As Table 4 above indicates, 20 females, making 27,4% of all respondents were responding to the questionnaire and 71,2% of the respondents; (52) were male respondents. There was also 1 respondent who has not indicated the gender.

5 RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

This chapter explains the results and analysis of collected research data from the survey and shows step by step what kind tools were used to analyze gathered information and also explains the meaning of the results.

5.1 Descriptive and Reliability Statistics

The questionnaire on Emotional intelligence, Stakeholder analysis and project success was taken from existing literature to establish content validity. Existing theories that were reviewed suggested that there is a strong correlation between the three variables.

The descriptive and reliability statistics is presented in Table 5 below. The reliability of the variables is assessed using the Cronbach alpha. The results of the Cronbach alpha presented in Table 5, ranges from 0.63 to 0.70, indicating adequate reliability. The data indicates the emotional intelligence importance in a work environment with a mean value of 3.48 by meaning that emotional intelligence is a determining variable for stakeholders and project performance.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics and reliability measures

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Standard deviation	Cronbach Alpha
Stakeholders	71	3.00	5.00	4.36	0.54	0,69
Emotional intelligence	71	2.56	4.22	3.48	0.33	0,70
Project success	71	2.67	5.00	3.98	0.49	0,63

5.2 Cluster Analysis

Cluster analysis a multivariate statistical tool that is used for detecting groups and patterns in a data set. Hierarchical and nonhierarchical are the most common types of cluster analysis. (Agbejule & Lehtineva, 2022)

(Hassan, 2024) wrote that cluster analysis is a statistical technique used in data mining and machine learning. Its purpose is to group objects or data points in way that those within the same group (cluster) are more similar to each other than those in other groups.

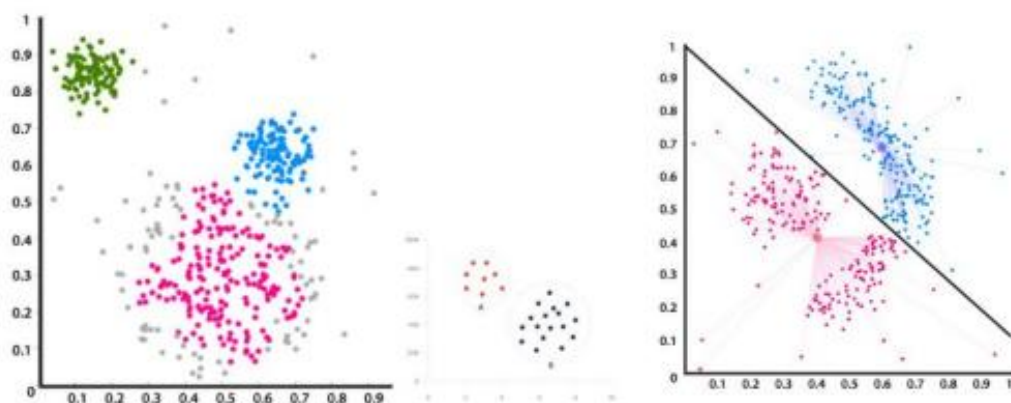


Figure 4. Sample of grouping of objects or data points (Hassan, 2024)

K-mean clustering reduces the data dimension by finding appropriate representatives or centroids for clusters, or groups, of data points. (Agbejule & Lehtineva, 2022).

In this thesis, the nonhierarchical clustering, also called k-mean clustering was used to identify how emotional intelligence between internal- and external stakeholders affects projects success.

5.3 Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesis testing is presented in this chapter and the hypothesis is tested by using cluster analysis. The description of cluster analysis is explained above in section 5.2.

The results of the cluster analysis are presented in Table 6 below and the explanations of each cluster after that.

Table 6. Cluster analysis

Variables	C1 (39)	C2 (13)	C3 (15)	F-test	P
SA	4.30 (2)	4.90 (1)	3.94 (3)	17.88	0.001
EI	3.54 (2)	3.70 (1)	3.09 (3)	25.00	0.001
PS	3.70 (3)	4.48 (1)	4.15 (2)	24.32	0.001

Cluster 1:

The first cluster (C1) in the analysis tells that a good stakeholder analysis and management (4.30) but a low level of emotional intelligence (3.54) leads to poor project success (3.70).

Cluster 2:

The second cluster (C2) indicates that high emotional intelligence (3.70) with a good stakeholder analysis and management (4.90) leads to excellent project performance (4.48). This cluster also proves the hypothesis of this research correct and shows the strong correlation between three main topics of the research.

Cluster 3:

The third cluster (C3) describes that average stakeholder analysis and management (3.94) with poor level of emotional intelligence (3.09) leads to good or average project success (4.15).

6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The thesis researched three main topics (emotional intelligence, stakeholder analysis and project success) and their correlation to successful project delivery. The main reason for the author to make a research for this topic was his own interest to know how projects stakeholders' individual behavior is affecting the project performance and how the projects stakeholders could be made to work better as a team for a communal goal to deliver project successfully.

The author's own experience from project environment in the construction field played a big part, as well perception that in construction projects the hard project management skills for example planning, budgeting, and scheduling are much more appreciated than soft skills what emotional intelligence presents, as was mentioned before in section 2.2; self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, and empathy are these skills.

As it is mentioned in section 2.2, Bhattacharjee & Sahidur Rahman (2016), referred to the study by Salovey and Meyer study in 1990 where they wrote that emotional intelligence is a "subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guild ones thinking and action".

This also come to the author's attention in the way that we need to understand what circumstances stakeholders stand when they are participating a project. What are their goals? What can they impact? What are their needs? How can they participate in decision making? What they feel? This is, in other words stakeholder management and by looking closer into the emotional intelligence skills and stakeholder management, we are able to see the strong correlation between them and the impact on the project to be more successful as it is shown in Table 7 above.

The hypothesis for the research was created for understanding the underlying mechanism which is connecting emotional intelligence, stakeholder analysis, and

project success. The research hypothesis was tested by using the data that was collected with an online survey questionnaire from Sweco PM`s personnel. 73 responses were gathered from total 241 colleagues. The hypothesis testing is shown and explained in section 5.3 and as was mentioned above the results suggest that emotional intelligence and stakeholder analysis communicates hand in hand and can have a significant effect on project success.

6.1 Theoretical Contribution

A wide range of literature review which had been conducted for earlier research gave more details for the topic as indicated in Chapter 2. By understanding how stakeholder analysis and project success links to emotional intelligence we have a better understanding how the project performance can be improved.

As discussed earlier in section 2.5 (Stakeholders and emotional intelligence), how emotional intelligence and stakeholders correlate together. By keeping internal and external stakeholders satisfied; not only with hard project management tools but also with skills of emotional intelligence (self-awareness, empathy, motivation, self-regulation, and social skills), we are able to build a strong foundation for a successful project.

Excellent emotional intelligence skills (section 2.6) or other words people skills plays a critical role because the project is seen as a new organizational context rather than traditional organizational context. (Zhang, et al., 2022). To simplify the meaning of this, the stakeholders of the project are the new project team who maybe have not worked together before and to understand what kind of personalities you work and what their ways of working are have a significant impact on the project delivery.

6.2 Practical implication

The research preferred practical implications after analyzing the results of research data with carefully collected information from the literature review and the

survey that was made. The following actions and suggestions are recommended to take in consideration in Sweco PM Oy to make project outcomes to be more successful in the future.

6.2.1 Emotional Intelligence

In the organization of Sweco PM, emotional intelligence is a strong determinate and as this research has shown with the analyzed results, there is a strong correlation between emotional intelligence, stakeholder analysis and project success.

Given the research outcomes and the characteristics of emotional intelligence, it is recommended that the organizational management should foster emotional intelligence awareness among the employees of the company. According to Harper & Collins (2006) and Serrat (2017) studies in section 2.2, the emotional intelligence encompasses personal emotions that may often be challenging to quantify, as an individual's feelings are influenced by numerous internal and external elements. Anyway, it is possible to enhance emotional intelligence, and regular training of emotional intelligence initiatives within an organization can facilitate this process.

The regular trainings of emotional intelligence would also improve the relationships between colleagues in an organization because the deeper understanding of one's and other's personality's, feelings and ways of working would make the daily practices in work smoother.

6.2.2 Emotional intelligence and stakeholders

According to Keane, (2006) study and literature review (section 2.5) findings there are two important factors to explore, emotional intensity and stakeholder power. Project managers in Sweco PM should be aware of the emotional intensity of their stakeholders and how it affects their perception of the project and its outcomes.

They should try to balance stakeholder power and ensure that no one is dominating or being ignored in the decision-making process. To communicate effectively with their stakeholders, they should use emotional intelligence skills, such as empathy, conflict resolution and, active listening and by these skills they should also seek the ways to understand emotions and motivations of their stakeholders and following that address their expectations and concerns.

Stakeholder analysis combined with emotional intelligence skills carry out the better possibilities to succeed in projects. As mentioned in 2.1 is, stakeholder analysis is a tool for making decisions in projects and it helps to identify the different parties who have a stake in the project, what they care about, and how they will be affected by project. One method and suggestion that Youssra (2017) offers to conduct a stakeholder analysis is the power/interest grid (see Figure 2 on page 16). This method helps to understand the level of interest and power of each stakeholder in the project.

The author's suggestion based on the findings is to use emotional intelligence skills combined to power/interest grid at the beginning of the project to secure best project outcome.

6.2.3 Emotional intelligence and project success

Based on literature review and the survey made for this thesis, the following practical implications were made.

As the PMBOK (2021) and Kerzner (2019) mention, communication about success criteria with stakeholders before the start of the project is critical because the meaning of successful can difference between the stakeholders. So, it is highly recommended that in the case organization the three questions which PMBOK (2017) suggests would be discussed through with the stakeholders: What does success look like for this project? How will success be measured? and What factors may impact success?

As Sposito et. al. (2023) and El Khatib et. al. (2021) wrote in their studies, the emotional intelligence and project success are correlating strongly together because it makes project manager be more effective interactions with all the stakeholders.

To summarize it is suggested for the case organization to improve emotional intelligence skills inside the organization, use it as a tool to make a better stakeholder analysis. This would lead most often for a good business relationships and more higher project performance across the organization.

6.2.4 Limitation and future research

There are a lot of articles and research done that are investigating emotional intelligence between multiple different topics but not much information available how to improve emotional intelligence skills. As was mentioned before, the regular trainings of emotional intelligence skills would be recommended to organize.

The survey got successful response rate 30% but the larger response rate would obviously give a better view for analysis about the status of the organization related to thesis topic.

This thesis research was limited to focus on internal stakeholders in the case company. Looking forward the future research and what has been learned in this research, it would be very interesting to see the results and analysis if the research and survey were made for much wider group of peoples, taking into consideration all the stakeholders, internal and external. The survey results would most likely be very different considering that now all the respondents were from the one company and one industry and that obviously as well is affects the result.

6.3 Closing words

Emotional intelligence and project success as definitions are complex things to define clearly because there is multiple angles and ways to look at the topics. This

thesis tried to find correlation between them and the stakeholders to improve the case companies project performance. Thesis gave suggestions and tools what to improve in daily work and at this point it is company's decision are these suggestions relevant enough to bring in practice in the organization.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 : Survey questionnaire

Emotional intelligence between project stakeholders affects project success - Survey

The essence of this survey is to investigate emotional intelligence, stakeholders and its effect on project success.

The purpose of gathering this information is to seek opinion from employees within Sweco PM Oy with regards to the above thesis topic to identify relations with stakeholders emotional intelligence to project succession.

The information received will be analysed solely for the purpose of the thesis.

The survey questionnaire is tailored for the topic, hence it omitted personal information of the employees for privacy purpose.

This survey is strictly anonymous, and responses are treated as private

I understand my own emotions

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

I have a good understanding of my feelings

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

I am a good observer of others emotions

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

I am sensitive of feelings and emotions of others

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

I am self motivated person

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

I am able to control my temper

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

I am able to control my temper in difficult situation

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

I calm down quickly when I am very angry

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

Whenever I attempt to establish a relationship with a person I need to work with I am successful.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

I enjoy establishing relationships with those who I work with.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

I feel competent and fully able to establish a relationship with people I work with.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

I feel that my personal characteristics are well suited to establishing work relationships.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

Whenever I attempt to maintain a relationship with a person I work with, I am successful.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

I find it easy to maintain relationships with people I work with.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

I feel competent and fully able to maintain relationships with people I work with.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

I trust the people I work with.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

I am committed to people I work with.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

My feelings towards those I work with are positive.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

⋮

All in all, I am satisfied with my relationships with those people I work with.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

What is the major risk to the project's success?

- Delay of the project
- Overcosts
- Stakeholder relationships
- Quality of the service
- Change for the projects scope

In my organization, the deliverables to our clients are most often outcomes of a repetitive production process / a unique project.

	1	2	3	4	5	
A repetitive production process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	A unique project

In my organization project management is explicit process.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

In my organization...

	1	2	3	4	5	
Decisions are made in the best interest of the shareholders and owners of the organization and their Return on Investment (RoI)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Decisions are made in the best interest of the wider stakeholder community (incl. employees, local communities etc.).

The governance of projects in my organization favors...

	1	2	3	4	5	
Prioritization of methodology compliance over people's own experiences in doing their work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Prioritization of people's own experiences in doing their work over methodology compliance

The way we govern the management of our projects...

	1	2	3	4	5	
Will not punish the project management for poor project results	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Will punish the project manager for poor project results

What is the most valuable asset for project to be successful?

- Project manager experimene & leadership
- Project team commitment
- Communication among all project participants
- Client`s involvement & monitoring

Usually our projects are successful in terms of quality of the project outcome

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

Usually our projects are successful in terms of scope and requirements of the project being met.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

Usually our projects are successful in terms of timeliness of project completion.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

Please indicate your age

- 20 - 29
- 30 - 39
- 40 - 49
- Over 50

Please indicate your gender

- Male
- Female

Education

- Professional school
- Bachelor
- Master
- Doctor

How long you have been working with Sweco PM?

- Below 5 years
- 5 - 10 years
- 10 - 20 years
- Over 20 years

Team member

- Yes
- No

Current responsibility

- Projects
- Management
- Development
- Sales
- Others

Duration in current responsibility

- 0 - 2 years
- 2 - 5 years
- 5 - 10 years
- Over 10 years