

Assessing the Effect of Project Managers' Emotional Intelligence on Project Success

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Abstract

Emotional intelligence can be described as the ability to understand and manage one's emotions, as well as effectively navigate interpersonal relationships. When you bring it to project management, where collaboration, communication, and stakeholder engagement are paramount, the influence of emotional intelligence becomes key in team work. This research sought to ascertain and analyse the impact of project managers' emotional intelligence on project success, aiming to provide valuable insights into the interplay between emotional intelligence and project outcomes. The study used the exploratory mixed methods design to address the study question. In this study, the qualitative sampling method used was purposive sampling and the quantitative sampling methods were stratified random sampling as well as simple random sampling where 119 participants took part. Key informant interviews, Survey and in-depth interviews were used to collect primary while document reviews were used for secondary data. Qualitative data analysis was conducted using framework analysis while quantitative data analysis was done using descriptive data analysis. The data clearly revealed that the majority thought that the manager's emotional intelligence in line with communication and collaboration was good with 51.3% selecting that rate. The second rate was 'average' which had 34.5% selections. 13.4% chose the 'excellent' rate. Only one response (0.8%) thought it was poor. The majority of the respondents believed that the project managers reacted according to emotional triggers. 40.3% chose the 'sometimes' option which was the majority. 'Rarely' was second choice with 24.4% selections. Those who selected 'Usually' were 22.7 and those who chose all the time were 10.9%. the least choice was 'Not at all' with 1.7% selection. It was noted that the emotional intelligence of the project manager influences the performance of the members of staff. The members were either motivated or unmotivated to work because of the emotional triggers of the project manager. With a team that was lowly performing, the project's success was under threat. The study concludes to say that the project managers had to respect all the members of staff and show them how valuable they were to the project.

Keywords: Delegate, Emotional Intelligence, Project Manager, Success

1. Background of Study

Globally, Emotional intelligence (EI) has gained recognition as a crucial factor influencing the success of various endeavors, including project management (Goleman, 1995). As organizations navigate an increasingly dynamic and complex business landscape, the role of project managers becomes pivotal in ensuring successful project outcomes (Shenhar & Dvir, 2007). Traditionally, project management has been associated with technical skills, task-oriented competencies and adherence to timelines (Kerzner, 2017). However, the importance of emotional intelligence in project management has gained recognition as a key element in achieving project success.

Globally, Ruskat and Wolff (2021) raised an issue that most of the findings on the topic of emotional intelligence was on the impact on personal competencies. They equally raised a point that most tasks in organizations were all done by people regardless of the size. These people had to work together and for that to be possible, they had to use their emotional intelligence. Their other argument, was that the team emotional intelligence of the whole team was diverse and complicated when compared to personal emotional intelligence. This was because team emotional intelligence includes a collection of emotional relations as individuals and as teams (Aga et al., 2016).

In the Sub-Saharan African region, the study that was done in Nigeria on the role of emotions in achieving team performance, Jordan et al. (2002) studied the connection that existed between emotional intelligence and project performance. Their research investigated the concept that groups consisted of leaders with high emotional intelligence performed better than groups that had leaders with low emotional intelligence. From that study, in Africa, it is common to find successful projects among project managers with high emotional intelligence (Jordan et al., 2002). However, their study did not factor in causation.

Despite the recognized importance of project management skills in achieving successful project outcomes, contemporary research often places limited emphasis on the role of emotional intelligence (EI) among project managers. The conventional focus on technical competencies and task-oriented skills may overlook the interpersonal and emotional aspects that significantly impact project dynamics. The complexity of project environments, characterized by diverse teams and stakeholders, necessitates a deeper understanding of how project managers' emotional intelligence influences the overall success of projects.

While there is a growing body of literature acknowledging the relevance of emotional intelligence in leadership and teamwork (George, 2000), a comprehensive examination of its specific impact on project success remains underexplored. The absence of a structured framework for evaluating and integrating emotional intelligence into project management practices hinders organizations from harnessing the full potential of their project managers (Côté, 2014). Consequently, there is a critical need to bridge this gap in understanding by investigating the relationship between project managers' emotional intelligence and key success indicators in project management.

To assess the impact of project managers' emotional intelligence on overall project success.

The available literature studied does not address local contexts in terms of emotional intelligence in project management. There is no direct link between the emotional intelligence and the project outcomes. Despite literature showing the role of emotional intelligence in communication, motivation and conflict resolution, the ultimate impact is missing.

2. Research Methodology

2.1 Research Approach

This study employed a mixed-method approach to gain a robust understanding of the correlation between Project Managers' Emotional Intelligence (EI) and their effectiveness in managing successful projects. This method integrated qualitative data with quantitative data by using an interview guide and a structured questionnaire, which were created by combining two distinct validated research methods. This approach enabled the empirical quantification of EI in relation to managerial outcomes within the project management environment.

2.2 Research Design

The research design implemented in this investigation was an exploratory sequential mixed methods study. This design integrated both quantitative and qualitative approaches to comprehensively explore the relationship between project managers' emotional intelligence and project success within several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Lusaka, Zambia. This choice aligned with the pragmatic approach to research advocated by Creswell and Creswell (2018), enabling a more nuanced understanding of the research questions.

An exploratory mixed-methods study is typically a sequential mixed-methods design, where quantitative research is used to determine the extent to which the views reflected in the qualitative results are supported. This entails that it is conducted in phases, where the qualitative study is conducted first, followed by quantitative research. Quantitative analysis is based on the findings from the qualitative strand.

2.3 Study Site

The study was conducted in Lusaka city, targeting the organizations Healthy Learners and Restless Development. The selection of the study site was due to the diversity of the population in Lusaka and the quantity of projects done, hence a broader variety to choose from. The two organizations, Healthy Learners and Restless Development, were selected because they have numerous projects, and one has EI as a core value: Healthy Learners.

2.4 Target Population

The research targeted a specific study population drawn from the two non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operating in the service sector within Lusaka. These were people working on various projects as managers and just project officers who were affected by the manager's EI. These are grown-up people who are leading homes and have so many stressful things to attend to, and still have to report for work to see the project succeed. They had different moods and were affected

by team members either positively or negatively, depending on the mood.

2.5 Inclusion Criteria

The study included respondents who had served on a project for Healthy Learners and Restless Development between 1st January 2018 and 28th June 2024. This was regardless of whether the project was ongoing, cancelled, or concluded.

2.6 Sample Size

Sample size was determined using the prevalence formula as shown below.

$$SS = Z^2 * P * (1-P) / C^2$$

$$SS1 = SS / (1 + ((SS - 1) / pop))$$

Where: Z- Confidence interval of 95% (1.96)

P- Expected prevalence 8.5% (0.085)

C- Margin of error 5% (0.05)

Pop- Target population

SS- Infinite sample size

SS1- Finite sample size,

$$SS = 1.96^2 * 0.085 (1-0.085) / 0.05^2$$

$$SS = 119$$

The qualitative strand began with a minimum of four key informant interviews, two from each organization. It ended with 12 in-depth interviews when saturation was reached. These were based on gender, project and time spent on that project.

The qualitative sampling method employed was purposive sampling, where participants were identified based on specific characteristics that the researcher prioritized. The researcher needed to contact a former project manager, a current project manager, former project staff members, and current project staff members. The quantitative strand used a stratified random sampling technique to initially select the respondents from the population of project managers in service-based non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Lusaka, Zambia. Stratified random sampling involves categorizing the population into distinct strata based on relevant characteristics, such as project manager experience or specific project domains within the NGOs. Thereafter, simple random sampling was used to select respondents from the different strata. The three strata were the managers, the project officers and the drivers and supporting staff. This gave people in various strata an equal opportunity to participate.

2.7 Data Collection Method

The first strand of the study, which was qualitative, used the key informant interviews to collect primary data as well as in-depth interviews and document reviews for secondary data. Interviews were using a semi-structured interview guide in line with the objectives. The semi-structured interview guide was used to have all the participant have the same major question in addition to the probes

For the quantitative data, only primary data was collected. The study used a survey with closed-ended questions in the questionnaire that correspond to the particular emotional intelligence dimensions that were pertinent to project management. The dimensions in the questionnaire included the project manager's capacity to regulate emotions, manage stress, communicate proficiently, and cultivate a positive work atmosphere within the team. Project managers managing initiatives for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Lusaka, Zambia, were the primary participants in this exercise. They were asked to rate and comment on their own emotional intelligence and how they believed it affected project success.

2.8 Data Collection Techniques

There were two ways of conducting interviews in study: online and face-to-face interviews. Participants the phone call interviews were made to participants who were willing to participate and met the inclusion criterion but could not find time for face-to-face interviews. For the survey, since all the participants were literate, the questionnaire was printed and self-administered. Face to face in-depth interviews were collected using an audio recorder with a note taker taking notes of the interview.

The study successfully employed a sequential data analysis approach to assess the impact of project managers' emotional intelligence on project outcomes. The sequential analysis that was used was conducted in two distinct stages: the qualitative and the quantitative. The qualitative data was transcribed in verbatim and entered in word format for analysis with the use of NVivo. Quantitative data was entered into excel for analysis and presentation.

Qualitative data analysis was conducted using framework analysis. Framework analysis involves five phases in order to be done thoroughly as it includes sifting the data, charting it and sorting in line with the key issues and themes. These five stages are familiarization of data, identifying a thematic framework, indexing, charting and the last stage of mapping and

interpretation (Srivastava, 2009). The thematic framework developed in illustrated in table 1

Table 1: Thematic Framework Table

Objectives	Themes	Categories	Codes
To explore project managers' emotional intelligence and effective team communication and collaboration in project environments.	Difference in team composition	Different people Levels of education Informing the team Asking the opinions of the team Delegation	Jokes Quiet Slow Comprehension Age Education Interest of audience
	Identifying leaders in the team		
To analyse the role of project managers' emotional intelligence in resolving conflicts within project teams	Impartiality in conflict resolution	Listening to all parties Equal time to explain Pointing out both cases They are all valuable Stakeholders are important	Grievances Normal and expected Preferences Both parties have cases No special treatment Equality and justice
	Respect for all team members		
To assess the project Manager's emotional intelligence's influence on project outcomes	Team motivation on the project	Team building Temperaments Being professional Keep the team in check Hiding emotions	Temperaments moods Criticism Conflicts Resolve conflicts Attention to detail
	Focus on the objectives		

In the quantitative phase, descriptive analysis techniques were applied to the data gathered from the questionnaire. This analysis focused on calculating and summarizing measures of central tendencies such as means and standard deviations for normally distributed data and median and interquartile range for skewed data. The goal is to offer a thorough comprehension of the central tendencies and variances in respondents' perceptions of project managers' emotional intelligence. Ratios, probabilities and percentages were used to analyze and graphs and tables were used to present the data.

2.9 Ethical Considerations

In conducting this study, several ethical considerations were taken into account to ensure the safety, rights, and welfare of the participants. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and they were informed of the purpose of the study, their right to withdraw at any time, and the confidentiality of their responses. Participants' identities were kept anonymous, and their responses were kept confidential. Additionally, the data collected was only used for research purposes and will not be disclosed to any unauthorized persons or organizations. The study also adhered to the ethical standards and guidelines set by the American Psychological Association (APA) and the Institutional Review Board (IRB)

3 Research Findings

3.1 Manager's Emotional Intelligence and How it Affects Communication and Collaboration

Different Attributes in Team Members

Communication and collaboration on the project were dependent on the managers acknowledging the different attributes in team members. The manager had to learn on how to work with each member to bring out the best from that individual. They also had to understand the different moods of the team members in order to know. One project manager for 4 years, IDI_2, said

I have to understand that people are different. And these are adults going through a lot. When I am talking to them, I should mind their age and just moods. I am also human; I can get mad at times. They should understand me. But generally, I should be mindful how I treat them as individuals not as a team.

A driver who had been working on a project for 7 years, IDI_11, said

As a driver, I need to be given a programme on time. Before I sleep, I should know where we are going and make sure the car is ok. They have to tell me nicely if it is urgent and I am a human being, I will understand. If they are harsh, I wont drive well because I will be hurt.

The participants also emphasised on the manager knowing which team members got along with each other on the project for communication and collaboration. Not all team members would work well together and the manager had to identify that and help them understand each other. A project manager for four years, IDI_6 said

We can be talking about the manager looking out on the different people on the team but we ignore that these staffs should gel. They have to work together and understand one another. Of course, as manager, I have to understand them and help them

understand each other.

Another male participant had this view

I cannot just accuse or defend managers. For collaboration and communication, all of us should understand that we are different. The manager is human too. She has feelings. We just need to look out for each other as a team. The manager will bring us together but it is us to click. [IDI_5]

Identifying Leaders in The Team

Using emotional intelligence to communicate and collaborate, managers needed to identify members who could be leaders on the team and work with them. Team members were not to be viewed as enemies who would want to take the manager's role. They were members who would want to succeed. Therefore, the manager had to understand these members and use their strengths. IDI_5 emphasised to say

We all want to succeed. Even those who hate the boss want to succeed. The boss should just know who she can work with and ask them to help. There are a lot of muzungu anikonde [boss pleasers] in the team who can help her. She must know them.

A project manager for 9 years, IDI_12 had a similar view

I cannot say I am the most emotionally intelligent, but I can say I have learnt a lot working with different people. You cannot do it alone. In the team, there are always those who can lead, delegate to them. You have to be careful though, some of them may sabotage things on purpose.

There were views that were not in line with other views and one view was that project managers should know who was on their side and work with them. It was important to know who wanted the project to succeed and who wanted it to fail. There were also people who wanted the manager to succeed and those who wanted the manager to fail. It was up to the manager to know. IDI_1 said

You have to be careful. Emotional intelligence is about being careful. Not everyone wants you to succeed. Some are eyeing your position and working against you. Know them and know how to work with them. My advice is always work with those who want you to win.

IDI_6 had this to say

To some people, the project is very important. With such, communication is easy because they want the best out of the project. Those are the ones to work with. They are dedicated to work and whatever assignment you give them; they deliver. When managing a project, look out for such as use them.

3.2 The Role of Project Managers' Emotional Intelligence in Resolving Conflicts Within Project Teams

Respect for All Team Members

Conflict resolution was a common thing in project management. It was common to find members having conflicting views on the project and the manager has to solve it. It was easier for project managers to solve conflicts if they respected all members of staff. They had to take all members as an important part of the project. IDI_3, working on a project for two years said

I am still new on this project. I do have ideas and would want to share with other members of the team. Sometimes these old members are bullies and they do not want to listen to me. If the manager does not value my opinion, I will become less active. I can even stop going to the manager to settle my grievances.

Another, IDI_5 said

We fight. We have different moods. But the important thing that the manager should do is know that I am also a human being. I have a family she cannot talk to me like a little boy. I also will answer. She must just take me as an adult and I have reasons for my actions.

Conflicts would be between clients and project members. This would be due to miscommunication from the gatekeepers. All gatekeepers had to be respected and their views taken seriously. IDI_6, said

We once wanted to build a shelter somewhere and the headman gave us land. When we went to start building, another man came and claimed that the land was his. Turned out that he was right. We did not build and later he came and said he had given us the land to build. Be calm as a manager and respect everyone. Conflicts are resolved just like that.

IDI_2 said

Donors can be frustrating at times. They just want to see results and that makes it hard to work with them sometimes. But they are still donors. Even if they do not understand the project, because they are interested, you just have to respect them and explain nicely hoping they understand.

Impartiality in Conflict Resolution

Conflicts between team members needed emotional intelligence to resolve in order to avoid one member feeling had done with and back off from the project. Project managers had to avoid biases in conflict resolutions in order to get the conflicting parties to keep working together on the project. This meant that they had to listen to both parties equally. IDI_1 said

Conflicts where there are people are normal. Human beings are always in conflict and one has to compromise. Usually, one person talks too much and the other is a bit calm. If not careful, you can rule in favour of the wrong talkative one. No matter how stressed you are, give both an equal amount of time to present their story. Do not be too emotionally attached to one story, listen to both.

Sometimes the conflicts were between the manager and the members of staff or stakeholders. The manager had to listen

to the other party's point of view in order to resolve the conflict for the sake of the project. this was the most difficult as the emotions of the manager were put to test and either succeed or fail to resolve the conflict.

It is not that easy to divorce my emotions when I am resolving a grievance from someone who has an issue with me. But I have to listen to them and hear what they are not pleased with. It comes with the territory. IDI_3 said,

Respondents revealed that when resolving conflicts, managers had emotions attached to it. they tried to hide it but at times it would show that they were triggered by something in the conflict. IDI_4, said

Some conflicts affect the project and the manager gets upset. Once he is upset, he ends up scolding everyone and then he forgets. It is demotivating when you know you are right but you end up getting scolded because the manager is in a bad mood or is under pressure. But they are human and they also have feelings.

3.3 The Project Manager's Emotional Intelligence's Influence on Project Outcomes

Team Motivation on the Project

How the manager managed his/her emotions was said to be the biggest motivation to the team of how to behave during the project implementation. Managers who were almost always angry instilled fear in the members of staff and they lacked innovation for fear of the manager. The manager who was calm and always looked out for the members of staff had a motivated team to work on the project. one respondent, IDI_12 said

The manager can motivate or demotivate. No wonder we do team building. To get to know each other and understand one another. When the manager is all closed up, upset, shouting, we get scared and we do not think of what to do because we do not want to make a mistake...

Those emotions can motivate the team to work harder and smarter. It all depends on the team. The stick and the carrot? Some members need the stick and some members need the carrot. As manager, you have to know who needs what and use it nicely. But generally, a calm, social manager on projects gets the best out of the team. [IDI_2]

The consequences of a team that lacked motivation were said by a member of staff on a project for 4 years, IDI_12, who said

These are the people doing the job, it is sad when they are not interested in working and believe me you, there is nothing good they would do. Whatever they do is just according to what the manager said and there is no accountability among the members of staff. The chances of the project failing are higher when the team is not motivated. Managers out there, get to know your members and motivate them.

Focus on the Objectives

The respondents said that the emotional intelligence of the manager helped the manager to focus on the objectives of the project. It helped the managers to overlook the emotional triggers that would make them forget the objectives. IDI_3 stated that

I do not really know how to say this but emotions can affect the focus. The manager may end up venting instead of working. It is important to prioritise emotional intelligence in order to see the project through. I am not saying the manager should hide emotions but should know how to respond to every situation and remain focussed.

There are people who get so angry that they can quit at any time. Even managers. Keeping emotions in check would help them to keep pushing even when things are bad. The goal is to succeed and they have to do everything possible. Like that, the project goes on. [IDI_7].

Emotional intelligence can also help the manager to get the team to remain focussed on the project. The respondents revealed that there were times when they would be giving up and the manager would come through and get them back to focus on the project. IDI_6 went on to say

It is not always about the manager. Our energies finish sometimes. Imagine working on this project for years and it starts frustrating you. You do not quit because you need the money but it is draining you. The manager should notice that though. Come in and get you to see the bigger picture. We need constant reminders.

IDI_7 said,

Whether we like it or not. Our emotions get the better of us sometimes. We lose it and lose interest in the project. as a manager, one has to know what to do when people are losing interest and focus. Redirect them to the objectives and get them excited again.

What I can say is emotional intelligence is the tool that gets the project going. We can talk about money and what not, but to me, the project succeeds because of the manager's emotional intelligence and the ability to know how to handle the team, motivate them and keep them focused on the project [IDI_1]

3.4 Quantitative Analysis

The second phase of this study was the quantitative phase which was looking at how many shared the views from the qualitative data. These views came from 119 respondents who took part in the survey. Using descriptive analysis, graphs and tables were used to present the data in line with the study objectives.

Emotional Intelligence in Communication and Collaboration

The table below, Table 2, shows how people rated the emotional intelligence of the manager in line with communication and collaboration.

Table 2: Rate Of Emotional Intelligence in Communication

Practice	Frequency	Percentage
Excellent	16	13.4%
good	61	51.3%
Average	41	34.5%
Poor	1	0.8%
Non-existent	0	0

Table 2 clearly shows that the majority thought that the manager’s emotional intelligence in line with communication and collaboration was good with 51.3% selecting that rate. The second rate was ‘average’ which had 34.5% selections. 13.4% chose the ‘excellent’ rate. Only one response

The results show 33% thought on average, managers were awareness of their emotional intelligence. 23% thought that the emotional intelligence of managers was bad while 10% did not know if the managers were aware of emotional intelligence and the majority of the responses, 34% thought the emotional intelligence awareness among managers was good.

Emotional Triggers That Affect Collaboration

Detailed in Table 3 were responses on how emotional triggers affected collaboration in the team.

Table 3: Rating of emotional triggers

Rate	Frequency	Percentage
Not at all	2	1.7%
Rarely	29	24.4%
Sometimes	48	40.3%
Usually	27	22.7%
All the time	13	10.9%

The table 3 show that the majority of the respondents believed that the project managers reacted according to emotional triggers. 40.3% chose the ‘sometimes’ option which was the majority. ‘Rarely’ was second choice with 24.4% selections. Those who selected ‘Usually’ were 22.7 and those who chose all the time were 10.9%. the least choice was ‘Not at all’ with 1.7% selection.

Conflict Resolution

The results show that most of the conflicts in the projects were between team members. These accounted for 66% of the responses. The second common conflict was between the project managers and the stakeholders which received 19% of the responses. 14% said that the common conflicts were between the manager and the members of the team. A minority of 1% said the most common conflicts were between stakeholders and team members.

Favouritism in Conflict Resolution

The figure1. shows which group felt not favoured in conflict resolution, very few people, both males and females thought conflicts when solved by managers would be in their favour, 9 females and 3 males. Majority of males, 48, and very few females, 11, thought conflict resolution was done fairly with equal chances of being favoured. 21 males and 27 females claimed that resolutions were always against them.

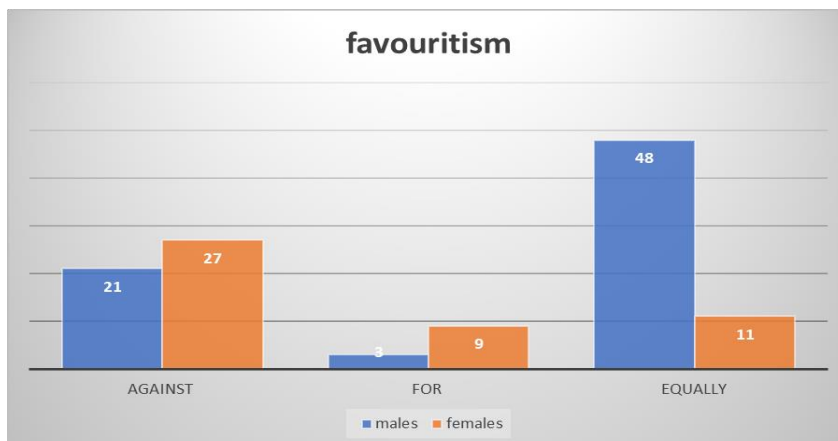


Figure 1: Favoritisms in Conflict resolution

Managers Using Emotions to Resolve Conflicts

From Table 4, the views were almost evenly matched. 24.4% said that managers rarely used emotions in conflict resolution while 21% said sometimes managers used emotions and the same percentage, 21% said managers never used emotions. 21.8% claimed that managers mostly used emotions and 11.8% said managers always used emotions in conflict resolution.

Table 4: frequency of managers using emotions to resolve conflicts

Use	Frequency	Percentage
Always	14	11.8%
Mostly	26	21.8%
Sometimes	25	21%
Rarely	29	24.4%
Never	25	21%

The Project Manager's Emotional Intelligence's Influence on Project Outcomes

Motivation to The Team

Table 5 shows how many thought the team was motivated by the manger's emotional intelligence. Table 4 has shown that 84.9% of the respondents strongly agreed that the emotional intelligence of the manager motivated the team. Meanwhile, 6.7% also agreed that emotional intelligence affected the motivation of staff. 5% disagreed and 2.5% strongly disagreed.

Table 5: motivation from manager's emotional intelligence

Number	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	101	84.9%
Agree	8	6.7%
Disagree	6	5.0%
Strongly disagree	3	2.5%

Motivation Influences Outcomes

The responses on how much motivation affects the project outcomes are tabulated in Table 6.

The overwhelming response shown in Table 6, is that 96.7% believed that the project outcome was affected by the motivation of the team. 2.5% said it somehow affected the outcome of the project and 0.8% claimed that it was not much.

Table 6: motivation influencing project outcome

	Frequency	Percentage
Very much	115	96.7%
Somehow	3	2.5%
Not much	1	0.8%
Never	0	0%

Influence of Emotional Intelligence of Project Success

Table 7: shows how the emotional intelligence of the manager influenced the project success.

	Frequency	Percentage
Very much	100	84.0%
Somehow	8	6.7%
Not much	5	4.2%
Never	6	5.0%

Table 7 has revealed that 84% of the people working on projects believed that the emotional intelligence of the manager affected the success of the project very much. 6.7% believed that it inly somehow affected. 4.2%, as seen in the table, said it had not much impact on the success of the project. 5% said there was no influence at all.

3.5 Discussion of Findings.

Communication and Collaboration

Emotional intelligence of managers may seem to be unrelated to communication and collaboration. The results in this study showed that emotional intelligence did have an influence on the way managers were communicating and collaborating with members of the team. One of the key findings in this matter was that managers had to appreciate that the members were different in terms of temperaments, age, beliefs and education. The manager had to appreciate these and consider them as they tried to work with the team on the project. From the manager's perspective, the results show that it was frustrating but understood. Therefore, the manager had to understand the individual differences in the staff

and know how to work with each one. The results show that the members of staff were happy when they were respected as individuals. The study's data, as revealed in the results as evidenced in figure 4.1, that most people thought manager could do better in terms of emotional intelligence. About 66% did not think managers had the emotional intelligence to collaborate with the team.

These findings are consistent with a study that was looking at the importance of communication in project management in Norway where they concluded that for effective communication, the individual differences should be known. Some individuals worked well with a manager who would explain everything at each step while others preferred a manager would tell them expectations and the members worked towards that (Marcela Castro et al., 2022). Another study, Bhatti et al. (2021) had different results as they concluded that the manager had to set the tone on how communication would be done in the team and all members had to adapt. They said that it showed leadership and that the members of staff would respect and follow such a manager. Our results, however, focus on how emotional intelligence can be used to get the team to work together. Our findings are accurate in terms of emotional intelligence and not leadership which was not considered in this study.

The study found that emotional intelligence can be used by the project manager to delegate duties to the right people. The study found that there were people who were on the project to do what the manager wanted them to do. And there were people on the project who wanted the project objectives to be met above anything else. The project manager had to identify these two types of people and delegate to them certain activities to collaborate well with the whole team. From the results, the managers preferred a team that was siding with them as they were vision carriers for the project. However, the team members preferred that they were led by people who were leaders and not loyal to managers.

An interesting study by Maqbool et, al. (2017), The impact of Emotional Intelligence, project Managers' Competencies and Transformational Leadership on Project Success: An Empirical perspective, revealed that when it came to project success, delegating duties was supposed to be prioritised to people with leadership abilities and understand the project. The minor difference between their findings and this study's results was that our study allowed the delegating of duties to people who were loyal to the project manager. This had repercussion on the project asked as evidenced by another study by Bond-Barnard et al. (2018) because people did not like working with people who were too loyal to the manager. This study concludes that the manager should not delegate powers to people based on personal attachments but based on leadership skills.

Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution was an emotional topic that required emotional intelligence to be the best attribute in project managers that wanted their projects to be completed successfully. The results show that the emotional intelligence of the manager had an impact of the conflict resolution ability. The study shows that it came with respecting all individuals on the project and appreciating their input even if the manager assumed that it was irrelevant. The show of respect to people was in showing them how valuable they were even when the manager thought they were dispensable. To show that called for good emotional intelligence.

These findings align with the findings of Maamari and Majdalani (2017) who said that the manager's EI was what drove them in decision making as it was key in that they understood people. Conflict resolution lies on understanding people and treating them as important people on the project. When the manager ignored certain people, they felt irrelevant and their grievances were never resolved. Another study agreed that in conflict resolution, emotional intelligence was important in order to make people feel valued and get them to continue contributing to the success of the project. (Bartool, 2013). This study looked at how those who felt disrespect interacted with the managers and found that they hardly reported their grievances and their frustrations affected the project outcome.

Colonado-Maldonado et al (2023) presented respected for everyone on the team as not related to emotional intelligence and that respect for people did not apply to settling disputes. They said that emotions and the leadership obligations were not to be mixed. A manager was not supposed to make people feel valuable all the time but they were supposed to be told the truth. However, when it came to resolving conflicts, the manager was supposed to resolve it regardless of what they felt. This study looked at how easy it was for people to turn to their managers when they felt respected and present their grievances. Colonado-Maldonado and friends looked at resolving a conflict that had been presented already (Colonado-Maldonado et al., 2023).

The study further shows that the women felt that they were not giving an opportunity to present their cases. Figure 4.3 shows that more than 55% of the females said that the conflict resolutions were against them. They were claiming not to be given enough time to present their cases. On the contrary, more than 55% of the males thought conflict resolution was fair. The majority of project managers were male which leads to the assumption that managers were not listening to females more. With the females being aggrieved by the conflict resolutions, managers were deemed to be partial in strategy. This made females to lose confidence in the conflict resolution skills of project managers. The study shows the importance of managers proving to be impartial in conflict resolution to maintain the confidence of the team.

Palmer et al (2001) found out similar results and attributed it to men not being as emotional as women. They said that when leading a group of both males and females, females would always be emotional and males would be understanding or would not care about it. as a manager, it is important to note this difference. Stoller (2021) said the manager should understand the team's emotions when resolving a conflict. Emotional intelligence is key in making people understand the resolution to their conflict.

Influence on Outcomes

The study found that the influence of the emotional intelligence of the project success was based on the motivation that the project manager was giving to the project staffs. The manager who was mean and inconsiderate always had an unmotivated team and the projects did not succeed most of the time. The case was different for managers who had a good emotional intelligence as they recorded good results. The emotional intelligence was key in motivating the team. A study by Bru-Luna et al (2021) agrees with the findings that the manager who showed emotional intelligence had a more succeeding team in terms of project outcomes.

The study found that the manager was affected by many emotional triggers but had to focus of the project objectives. The manager needed to balance between the feelings and the success of the project. This called for emotional intelligence that helped the managers to remain focused on the project hence producing the right outcomes. In studying how emotional intelligence reduces stress, Fteiha and awwad (2020) said that understanding your emotions can help the manager focus on a lot of things at once and succeed. This, according to the study is how the manager kept the team focused on the objectives leading to desired outcomes.

4 Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

This exploratory mixed-methods study examined how a manager's emotional intelligence influences project outcomes, using sequential qualitative and quantitative phases. The research adhered to all ethical standards, with university approval and organizational permissions obtained, and was conducted by a qualified researcher using scientific procedures. While the study met its objectives, its descriptive and framework-based analysis limited it to outlining prevailing conditions rather than establishing causation.

The findings revealed that a project manager's emotional intelligence significantly shapes team performance. Managers' emotional triggers either motivated or demotivated staff, directly affecting project success. Respectful engagement, effective communication, and appropriate delegation were identified as key behaviours that helped managers demonstrate the value of team members. Most managers acknowledged the importance of emotional intelligence in their project duties. Emotional intelligence was also found to be critical in conflict resolution, although female participants expressed dissatisfaction with how some conflicts were handled. Overall, project outcomes were closely tied to team performance, and since emotional intelligence influenced that performance, the study concluded that emotionally intelligent managers achieved better project results.

4.2 Recommendations

1. Managers should recognise team members' moods and respond appropriately while maintaining their own emotional control.
2. Leadership must be respectful and equitable, valuing every team member's contribution.
3. Conflict resolution should be impartial, avoiding any form of favoritism.
4. Managers should communicate frequently, know their team personally, and listen to their views.
5. They should remind the team of project goals and re-motivate members when focus declines.
6. Delegation must be fair and based on leadership needs, not preferences.
7. Emotional support should be continuous, with managers understanding and addressing individual emotional triggers.

4.3 Limitations of the Study

The study faced several limitations, the most significant being the reluctance of some organizations to allow staff participation due to fears of exposing project information, requiring the researcher to repeatedly explain the study's purpose, risks, and confidentiality measures. In one case, a manager initially insisted on being present during interviews but later permitted independent data collection after receiving formal assurances. Another major challenge was the limited availability of participants, many of whom were occupied with project duties, forcing the researcher to rely heavily on phone interviews. This constrained the ability to observe facial expressions and other nonverbal cues, thereby limiting the depth of probing, although efforts were made to gather as much detail as possible. Additionally, the exploratory sequential mixed-methods design required the study to be conducted in two phases, with the quantitative strand dependent on insights from the qualitative phase. Since the same researchers handled both data collection and analysis, they worked intensively to interpret findings while the information remained fresh.

4.4 Recommendations for Future Research

1. Quantitative study: there should be a study using quantitative methods to establish causation between emotional intelligence and project outcome.
2. Contribution to theory: the study that would critique the theories on emotional intelligence in relation to project management

Declaration of Competing Interests

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Ethical considerations

The article followed all ethical standards appropriate for this kind of research.

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