Project Manager's Competencies in Nonprofit Projects of Pakistan [1]

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ABSTRACT

According to the survey, 64% of donor-funded projects fail [1] and 50% of World Bank funded projects fail [2]. Very little research has been executed in the NGOs sector as compared to the private sector. In the extant literature, research is done on project management knowledge and its role in the NGOs sector is very rare. The research previously done on the subject was mostly in African and American region NGOs; that too rarely on World Bank funded projects. The method of research is quantitative in nature and data was collected through a standard questionnaire developed in Google doc form from 80 respondents consisting of Project managers, Project team members, Project Managers, Program Managers, Project Coordinators, Executive officer/director/board of governors. The data was collected from INGO, NGOs, and Community Based organizations (CBO). The current research has evaluated the project manager competencies and to what extent these competencies are practiced at different levels INGOs, NGOs and CBOs. Results confirmed that the identified 11 project manager competencies are practiced in all levels of NGOs.

Keywords: Project manager Competencies, INGO, NGO, CBO, Evaluation

1. INTRODUCTION

In non-government organizations, few studies have addressed the competencies of project managers, although in the private sector various studies have been conducted [3]. Success in NGO projects requires specific competencies, technical skills, and management and soft skills. Organizations require capable and skilled people who can work in the field with different cultures and sometimes in different conditions and complex environments [4]. In NGOs, the management style is explicit, because of the scarcity of the resources. Due to the decentralized environment in NGOs, everyone can give his or her opinion. The way of working is informal and due to fewer reporting levels, people work in a network [5,6]. Project managers play a pivotal role in engaging civil society in the development of numerous areas, e.g. economic growth, health, education, governance, gender equality, and agriculture [7, 8]. These competencies have not been

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Project Manager's Competencies in Nonprofit
Project in Pakistan
By Dr. Arif ud Din

judged in NGO projects. Project manager competencies are depicted as one of the key factors in project success. [9].

Mostly the NGOs projects in the world fail completely or partially despite huge funding for one or the other reasons. An independent evaluation group claimed that 39% of world bank projects were unsuccessful in 2010 [10]. World bank projects frequently fail to achieve their goals due to several problems that could be termed either managerial or organizational [11]. A recent MC Kinsey- Devex survey suggests that 64% of donor-funded projects failed [1]. The two major reasons were poor project planning and lack of managerial skills.

Several studies emphasized the need for carefully selecting the right manager and personnel (right people for the right job) to ensure project success [12,13,14]. The present research will identify the project manager competencies in NGO project setup' in International NGOs, CBOs, and National NGOs in Pakistan.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Gillespie (2002), NGOs consist of activists who are committed to working on particular issues within set values or beliefs. NGOs are private institutes working for the underprivileged people in the world; to relieve them from their sufferings, and community development, give them protection from environmental changes, promote the interest of the poor and provide basic social services to the needy. Prominent Researchers put project management skills into six areas; organizational, leadership, coping, team building, technological skills, and communication [15]. Effective administration rests on human, conceptual, and technical skills, and all these skills are developed independently and are interrelated [16]. According to study due to the special features of the international development project; the standardized project management tools and methods appear not suitable for IDPs [17]. Researchers describe that ID project management is specific due to four reasons [18, 17, 19, 20]. Firstly, ID projects are concerned with social transformation or poverty alleviation, are complex, have intangible project goals and a profit motive is also missing. Secondly, ID projects attract a complex web of stakeholders because it is operating in a social and political scenario. Thirdly, international development projects are surrounded by socio-political instability, culture, and geography. In ID, knowledge transfer is on priority in every phase of the project.

According to researchers [21], several studies have shown that the project manager role is critical to project success. In addition, researcher describes different types of projects that require different approaches to their management and procedures tailored according to the project needs [22]. For this reason, the project managers should be selected with the appropriate competencies.

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Project Manager's Competencies in Nonprofit Project in Pakistan

Featured Paper

By Dr. Arif ud Din

Researchers found seven important traits of effective project managers. These are the following; result in orientation, self-confidence, energy and initiative, perspective, negotiating ability, problem-solving ability, and communication [23].

According to Researcher project manager's leadership competence, management, and affecting competencies, measured as intellectual have a strong relationship with project success [24].

The current work depending on the research of Briere et al identified eleven competencies in international development projects across the world communication, qualities, knowledge, interpersonal skills, ethics, capacity building, leadership, change management, adaptability, local network, and knowledge [3]. Of these competencies, 10 are related to human and behavioral aspects. The research was qualitative in nature and interviews were conducted with more than 30 project managers. The data result explains 11 project manager competencies factors and each was contributed by several items.

3. DATA COLLECTION

In this research, the quantitative statistic method was used. The main source of information was INGOs, National NGOs, and community-based organization professionals. A structured questionnaire was developed on Google Docs which was administered to respondents via emails, through the Pak NGO home group which further circulated to the large number of NGOs professionals working in Pakistan in different regions. The design questionnaire was sent to 500 NGO professionals in Pakistan via email. The questionnaire was also sent through a prominent NGOs group named Pak NGOs Home. 80 responses were received and recorded. Of which 24 were from international NGOs professionals, 37 were from National NGOs and 19 were from community-based organizations/grass-root level.   The sample was collected from Local, National, and International organizations working in different sectors like education, health, agriculture, construction, DRR, and women's economic empowerment. The respondents have consisted of Project Managers, Program Managers, Project Coordinators, Project Team members, and Executive officer/director/board of governors.

The data was collected from 5 regions of Pakistan (Punjab, KPK, Baluchistan, Sind, Gilgit Baltistan & Kashmir). The design questionnaire is rated on a Likert scale from 1 to 5 (1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree) Judgment of respondents was rated on a Likert scale from 1 strongly disagree, 2 disagree, 3 (neutral), 4 agree and 5 strongly agree to measure the project manager competencies The research questionnaire was developed on Google doc and administered via email due to the nature of NGOs sector work and busy schedule of respondents. Although, the response rate of the online survey takes a

PM World Journal (ISSN: 2330-4480)   Project Manager's Competencies in Nonprofit
Vol. XI, Issue VIII – August 2022   Project in Pakistan
www.pmworldjournal.com   Featured Paper   By Dr. Arif ud Din

longer time to get responses and required several reminders. Primary data was collected through research questionnaires and secondary through published research papers, books, journals, etc. The Internal consistency for the project manager competencies data was checked through Cronbach's alpha which was 0.882.

Table No 1 Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	No of Items
.882	11

Researcher describes that alpha values higher than 0.7 are considered enough [25]. The result has shown excellent internal consistency for project manager competency. The data was analyzed on SPSS 24 version.

4. RESULTS

Ranking of Project manager competencies

Table No 2: PM competencies ranking

NO	PM Competencies	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
P1	Interpersonal Skills	4.55	.708	1
P2	Capacity building	4.51	.590	2
P3	Communication	4.49	.616	3
P4	Leadership	4.40	.680	4
P5	Networking & Local Knowledge	4.29	.678	5
P6	Span of Abilities	4.28	.781	6
P7	Ethics	4.23	.702	7
P8	Management Skills	4.20	.689	8
P9	Adoptability	4.20	.666	9
P10	Change Management	4.09	.805	10
P11	Personal Qualities	3.51	.562	11

The ranking of project manager competencies was executed based on their mean values. If the mean value is high, then the rank is also high and if the mean value is low then the rank is also low. The data analysis of questionnaire responses was produced and the mean values of the 11 project manager competencies range from 3.51 to 4.55. The mean

values show that 11 project manager competencies are considered by the respondents of the International, National, and local NGOs.

The highest-ranked project manager competence was Interpersonal skills (mean value =4.55), 2nd highest ranked competence was Capacity (Mean value: 4.51), 3rd ranked factor was communication (Mean value: 4.49), Leadership (mean value: 4.40) was considered 4th rated factor, 5th ranked factor was networking and local knowledge (Mean value: 4.29), and the personal quality is the ranked competence as judged by the respondents.

Project manager competence ranking at different levels NGOs

A project manager competencies comparison was conducted among these organizations. The six highest-ranked competencies in INGO were interpersonal (Mean value: 4.67), capacity building (Mean value: 4.62), leadership (Mean value: 4.42), change management (Mean value: 4.33), communication and management skills had the same Mean value (Mean value: 4.37) as perceived by respondents.

In National NGO the highest 5 ranked project manager competencies by respondents were Interpersonal skill (Mean value: 4.81), Communication (Mean value: 4.81), Capacity building (Mean value: 4.71), Networking and local knowledge, and Leadership (Mean value: 4.57), as perceived by the respondents.

PM World Journal (ISSN: 2330-4480)   *Project Manager's Competencies in Nonprofit*
Vol. XI, Issue VIII – August 2022   *Project in Pakistan*
www.pmworldjournal.com   Featured Paper   By Dr. Arif ud Din

Table No 3: PM competencies ranking at different levels of nonprofit organizations

INGO	Mean	NGO	Mean	CBO	Mean
Interpersonal Skills	4.67	Interpersonal Skills	4.81	Capacity building	4.58
Capacity building	4.62	Communication	4.81	Interpersonal Skills	4.58
Leadership	4.42	Capacity building	4.71	Communication	4.42
Communication	4.37	Networking & Local Knowledge	4.57	Networking & Local Knowledge	4.37
Management skills	4.37	Leadership	4.57	Leadership	4.37
Span of Abilities	4.37	Adaptability	4.52	Change Management	4.32
Networking and Local Knowledge	4.33	Span of Abilities	4.48	Management Skills	4.21
Ethics	4.33	Management Skills	4.33	Span of Abilities	4.21
Change Management	4.33	Ethics	4.19	Adaptability	4.11
Adaptability	4.25	Change Management	3.86	Ethics	4.00
Personal Qualities	3.54	Personal Qualities	3.76	Personal Qualities	3.58
Management skills	4.37	Leadership	4.57	Leadership	4.37
Span of Abilities	4.37	Adaptability	4.52	Change Management	4.32
Networking and Local Knowledge	4.33	Span of Abilities	4.48	Management Skills	4.21
Ethics	4.33	Management Skills	4.33	Span of Abilities	4.21
Change Management	4.33	Ethics	4.19	Adaptability	4.11
Adaptability	4.25	Change Management	3.86	Ethics	4.00
Personal Qualities	3.54	Personal Qualities	3.76	Personal Qualities	3.58
Valid N (listwise)	24		22		19

The highest 5 ranked project manager competencies in CBOs were Capacity building (Mean value: 4.58), Interpersonal Skills (Mean value: 4.58), Communication (Mean value: 4.42), Networking, and local knowledge and leadership (Mean value: 4.37) competencies as perceived by respondents.

5. DISCUSSION

In the finding of the results the project manager competencies were judged by all the 3 levels of NGOs (INGO, NGOs & CBO). The result in table 2 shows that the five highest-ranked competencies evaluated by the respondents were interpersonal, Capacity building, Communication, leadership, Networking, and local knowledge respectively (Mean value range between 4.55-4.29) ranked on the Likert scale of 1 to 5. The lowest-ranked competence was Personal quality (Mean value: 3.51). The results showed that these highest ranked competencies are mostly used by the project manager during managing projects and it also provides evidence that all these 11 competencies are considered by the respondents. It means all of them are being used; however, few are high in practice as compared to the lower ones.

According to the results, all three-level Ngo's competencies results are almost the same with slight differences. In the result of the INGO, the three highest-ranked competence was interpersonal, capacity building, and leadership with a mean value range between (4.67 -4.42) and the lowest-ranked competence was personal qualities (Mean value of 3.54). the three highest-ranked competencies in National NGOs were interpersonal skill, communication, and Capacity building the mean value range between (4.81- 4.71) and the lowest-ranked competence was Personal Quality (Mean value of 3.76) as judged by respondents. In a community-based organization the 3 highest competencies were Capacity building, Interpersonal and Communication mean value range between (4.58 – 4.42) and the lowest-ranked competence was personal qualities (Mean value: 3.58). Mostly competencies' mean value was 4 or nearer to 4. This showed that all competencies are considered positively by respondents and are important and the project managers in the NGOs sector are practicing these competencies.

6. CONCLUSION

In this research work, Project Manager Competencies were evaluated at three-level NGOs International, National, and CBOs in Pakistan. The soft Project Manager competencies were considered in this study. The key distinction was that project manager competencies were evaluated and different levels. This study concludes that leadership, capacity building, communication, and interpersonal are the most influential project manager competencies and the personal qualities were the least influential project manager competence, furthermore, the identified 11 competencies were considered by the INGO. National NGO and CBO. This research fills the knowledge gap in this important project management application area.

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PM World Journal *(ISSN: 2330-4480)*
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Project Manager's Competencies in Nonprofit
Project in Pakistan
By Dr. Arif ud Din

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Project in Pakistan
By Dr. Arif ud Din

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PM World Journal (ISSN: 2330-4480)
Vol. XI, Issue VIII – August 2022
www.pmworldjournal.com   Featured Paper

Project Manager's Competencies in Nonprofit
Project in Pakistan
By Dr. Arif ud Din

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