

Mediating Role of Switch Leadership Between Dynamic Work Environment and Project Success

Riaz Ahmed, Bahria University, Islamabad, Pakistan*

Imran Qamar Khan, Bahria University, Islamabad, Pakistan

Simon P. Philbin, London South Bank University, UK

ABSTRACT

There is limited research on the mediating role of the switch leadership style between the working environment and project success. Therefore, this study aims to examine the mediating role of switch leadership between the dynamic working environment and project success. This study adopted an online survey instrument to collect cross-sectional data from 160 project managers and team members of telecommunications companies in Pakistan. The path mediation analysis revealed partial mediation of switch leadership between the dynamic working environment and project success. Finding suggests that the Pakistani telecommunications sector is susceptible to changes in leadership styles, and the chances of project being successful could be greatly improved if the switch style of leadership is adopted by project managers. Moreover, researchers need to continue identifying different leadership styles, and practitioners need to adopt different switch leadership styles not only to increase the chances of project success but also to counter the impacts of complexities found in IT projects.

KEYWORDS

Dynamic Working Environment, Project Success, Switch Leadership, Telecommunication

INTRODUCTION

Countering the effects of complexities and uncertainties can be a key issue for projects. The rapid change and advancement in the field of project management helps to overcome project complexities in order to achieve project objectives (Cleveland & Cleveland, 2020). In today's world, there is a growing concern that business as usual is not a viable option anymore in organizations and continuing with failing models of leadership is no longer suitable for projects in such organizations (Bierwolf & Kemenade, 2017). Indeed, trends for doing business are changing as high-performers are operating differently (Horth & Vehar, 2014) with adaptation of new strategies (Smith & Cockburn, 2014). Uncertainties and complexities of the project environment are not well taken into account in information technology (IT) projects (Poveda Bautista, Diego-Mas, & Medina, 2018), which has prompted a plethora of research and publications elaborating and creating an opportunity for

DOI: 10.4018/IJITPM.290422

*Corresponding Author

Copyright © 2022, IGI Global. Copying or distributing in print or electronic forms without written permission of IGI Global is prohibited.

investigating project complexity within the realm of project management (Rezende, Blackwell, & Gonçalves, 2018).

In the dynamic work environment, motivated and creative leaders are required who involve team members through effective communication in complex tasks to the increase likelihood of project success (Rezvani, Khosravi, & Ashkanasy, 2018). The changing dynamics of the working environment with evolving technology (Winter, 2012) during the last decade has not only effected the daily activities of individuals (Berman, 2014) but also the organizations operating in high-tech sectors (Mathias, 2017). These changes have a significant impact on traditional leadership styles (Jakubik & Berazhny, 2017). Despite the availability of skilled human resource, funds, latest equipment and project management standards, IT projects are failing to achieve the required standards. The on-time delivery, trust issues, frequent employee turn-over, uncertain government policies (Ebad, 2018; Ko & Kirsch, 2017) and fierce competition call for an investigation of why IT projects continue to fail.

Leadership skills of effective project managers can be developed to improve project performance (Doan, Nguyen, & Nguyen, 2020). Effective leaders understand and adapt behavior according to the situation that they face (Laufer, 2012). Whether, a situation demands conflict resolution, or exploiting opportunities by expanding the range of choices, the impression on subordinates about their competence and expertise is determined by the style of leadership for a given situation (Yukl, 2013). In some cases leaders use different leadership styles in different situations to enhance project performance and challenge the status quo of relying on a single leadership style (Blaskovics, 2016a; Maner, 2016). Leaders evaluate subordinates and their degree of compatibility to the required project task or their degree of readiness (Flynn, Blackman, & Ugyel, 2013). Moreover, these degrees of willingness vary significantly, urging a leader to continuously adapt a suitable leadership style in order to influence the subordinates and maximize overall effectiveness (Silverstone, 2001).

Situational leadership theory implies that in any given situation an appropriate leadership style is applied, which is contingent to the particular task or situation (Khan, 2016; Pan, 2015). As a project manager switches roles of leadership, a different focus towards managing the project team can be adopted (Maner, 2016). The term “switch” is, thus, an application of one leadership style, used during a period of time and suggests a completely different style either immediately before or following it. It is particularly useful during the implementation phase of an IT project to achieve schedule, cost and quality requirements of the project (Prabhakar, 2004). Switch leadership is a conscious effort to change from one style of leadership to another, with the aim to optimize the performance of project (Tahir, 2017).

A number of studies have been conducted to identify the different competencies of leadership (Ahmed, Philbin, & Cheema, 2020) but due to technological advancements in the IT industry, the Pakistani market has changed rapidly in last few years (Seymour & Hussein, 2014; Shahid, Muhammad, & Ahmad, 2015). Although during 2005-2008, Pakistan was ranked as a lucrative market for IT growth by Business Monitor International and attracted huge investments in the industry by telecom giants (e.g. China Mobile, Telenor, Orascom, Ehtisilat and SingTel), there are also a number of challenges. These include a lack of project management guides and procedures that incorporate the impact of uncertainties and complexities of IT projects (Poveda Bautista et al., 2018). Moreover, the IT project success ratio in Pakistan has been comparatively very low: approximately 20% of the projects fail right after inception, 20% of the projects fail because of delivering less than the expected ROI (return on investment), while about 45% fail because of the need for rework (Butt, 2017). This is because of various reasons, such as poor project planning, lack of communication, ineffective management, stakeholder dissatisfaction, lack of senior management support, inability to adapt, use of outdated technology, and a lack of monitoring and coordination between team members (Alinaitwe, 2013; GullaJ, 2012). In order to address these research gaps, this empirical study aims to examine the mediating role of switch leadership between the dynamic working environment and project success of IT projects functioning in the telecommunications industry of Pakistan.

17 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the product's webpage:

www.igi-global.com/article/mediating-role-of-switch-leadership-between-dynamic-work-environment-and-project-success/290422?camid=4v1

This title is available in e-Journal Collection, Computer Systems and Software Engineering Collection - e-Journals, Management Science and Organizational Research Collection - e-Journals, Operations, Logistics, and Performance Assessment Collection - e-Journals, Education Knowledge Solutions e-Journal Collection. Recommend this product to your librarian:

www.igi-global.com/e-resources/library-recommendation/?id=2

Related Content

Using Trigger That Instant Messaging to Improve Stakeholder Communications

Joan Richardson and Brian Corbitt (2010). *Journal of Cases on Information Technology* (pp. 1-17).

www.igi-global.com/article/using-trigger-instant-messaging-improve/49193?camid=4v1a

Reengineering the Selling Process in a Showroom

Jakov Crnkovic, Goran Petkovic and Nebojsa Janicijevic (2002). *Annals of Cases on Information Technology: Volume 4* (pp. 499-512).

www.igi-global.com/article/reengineering-selling-process-showroom/44527?camid=4v1a

Security and Privacy in Social Networks

Barbara Carminati, Elena Ferrari and Andrea Perego (2009). *Encyclopedia of Information Science and Technology, Second Edition* (pp. 3369-3376).

www.igi-global.com/chapter/security-privacy-social-networks/14073?camid=4v1a

Bb

(2013). *Dictionary of Information Science and Technology (2nd Edition)* (pp. 69-118).

www.igi-global.com/chapter/bb/76411?camid=4v1a