

# The Antecedents of Employee Engagement on Project Management Success: Empirical Evidence from the Libyan Construction Industry

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## Abstract:

Engaging employees fully at every stage of their careers is today's challenge, not just retaining talent. Employee engagement is a key driver of business success in today's competitive marketplace. Employee engagement measures an organization's success. Customer satisfaction, the company's reputation, and overall stakeholder value are all directly linked to employee engagement. Desperate for employee engagement and loyalty, organisations are turning to human resources. Using literature review concerning the topic, the researchers found many factors must be considered to achieve high employee engagement. Consequently, there is no universally applicable engagement strategy. Determining what constitutes effective employee engagement will vary depending on the company. This study's goal is to better understand employee involvement's impact on project outcomes. We were able to better understand employee engagement and project management success by examining other scholars' work. The literature review chapter provided a theoretical perspective and direction for this study. The researcher will conduct a survey to gather feedback from construction workers. After examining the impact of employee engagement on project management success, the study will examine the relationship between employee engagement and other factors such as rewards and compensation.

**Keywords:** Antecedents, Employee Engagement, Project Management, Success, Empirical Evidence, Construction Industry

## INTRODUCTION

A complex concept, employee engagement is influenced by a wide range of factors. As a result, there is no one "package" that will work for all organisations. Employee engagement may be described in a variety of ways by different organisations, but ultimately, the most effective method for each company will be the one that best suits their own unique needs (Thakur. P 2020). Employee engagement is a well-known topic in academic organisational conduct research, according to Karatepe and Demir (2020). There is a paucity of information on the potential snags that pioneers may run into when trying to raise their employee engagement scores (Markos. S 2020). An investigation into the reasons why some employees aren't enthusiastic about their work is necessary. Experts in human resources believe that the challenge of employee engagement has a great deal to do with how employees feel about their role in the company and how they are treated. It has a lot to do with the feelings that are generally associated with driving an organization's primary goals. Despite HR and line supervisors' best efforts, there will always be people who refuse to put forth their best efforts, but in general, employees must resolve to organisations because doing so fulfils an amazing and essential need in association with and contribution to something enormous (Bhawani.S 2018).

Prior studies have generally agreed that project managers have a significant impact on the success of a project (Kerzner, 2013). As a result, previous researchers have generally considered the term "project manager" to be one of the most important components in project management success (Loufrani-Fedida & Missonier, 2015). In

addition to increasing the likelihood of project success, a well-trained and effective project manager also helps to ensure that the project management process is efficient (Meredith & Mantel, 2021). Thus, project-based businesses have always been concerned with selecting, training, and retaining project managers who are capable of successfully managing projects in accordance with the company's vision, goal, and strategy. Consequently, these organisations have come to regard their managers as one of their most important resources. It's important to note that responsibilities for project managers can vary depending on a variety of factors, including factors such as type of project, stakeholder (whether public or private), and project orientation (whether interim or long-term) (Project Management Institute, 2021). As a result of these distinctions in the nature of the project, the complexity of the project, as well as the management of resources, time, and money, are all affected. The project manager's approach to applying knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to manage project activities with the ultimate goal of meeting project goals and stakeholders' expectations is known as project management (Project Management Institute, 2021).

For the construction industry, Deloitte (2020) reported a "nearly twice the average rate of all other sectors" in turnover. The construction industry's turnover rate is a constant concern, as it has grown at an alarming rate in recent years (Dusek et al., 2020). Karatepe and Demir (2020) stated that employee engagement is common in practitioner research in academic organisational behaviour research. Transformational leadership, according to Datche and Mukulu (2018), is the only factor that can be used to measure employee engagement in Kenya. One of the four independent variables that will be studied in this study was the focus of a previous study. As a result, this study will be conducted in Libya and use variables related to human resource practises in employee engagement and its impact on the construction of Libya, i.e CA, as the independent variable. According to previous research, the construction industry in India is an important industry to measure employee engagement (Gupta et al., 2018). On the other hand, Lee and Ok (2018) conducted a study in the United States that focused on the relationship between work engagement and employee self-assessment and organisational work environment.

Research by Nasurdin and Choo (2020) found that service-oriented corporate citizenship behaviour and human resource management practises are linked in Malaysia. Because the construction industry is a direct link between employee engagement and project management success in Libya, this study will examine factors that influence employee engagement in the Libyan construction sector rather than specific human resource practises. Indeed, project management success requires project managers' technical expertise and talents to manage the traditional project iron triangle in terms of time, quality, and cost to meet the project management success objectives. To succeed in a wide range of rapidly changing projects that meet the expectations of stakeholders in a global market who interact with an ever-increasing diversity of cultures, these requirements provide the leadership necessary (Sanchez, 2020).

In order to achieve greater project management success, it is imperative to recognise the importance of the project manager's role (Kerzner, 2019). As a result, there has recently been a resurgence of interest in the job responsibilities, skills, and qualifications of project managers, with a particular focus on the role of project managers and their ability to ensure the success of project management initiatives (Sanchez, 2020). A project manager's interpersonal skills are crucial to the success of a company or organization's project, and nowhere is this truer than in the management of a project. Therefore, project managers who have strong leadership abilities and who use these

abilities to build a project management team and openly guide the team in order to meet project management requirements during implementation are essential (Garel, 2019). Project management success in the construction industry can be improved by examining how engaged employees are with their work (CI).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### ***Rewards and Compensation and Employee Engagement***

The term "reward" encompasses all forms of compensation, both direct and indirect, as well as intrinsic and extrinsic, that an employee perceives to be of value as a result of their employment. Employers can use a variety of levers to keep their employees engaged, motivated, and happy, including pay and benefit packages, training, and the physical work environment (Armstrong, 2018). Rather than simply relying on salary increases, golden handcuffs, and the like, businesses can use reward to attract, retain, motivate, and engage their employees in a more effective and long-lasting manner. When you offer monetary compensation, you can include perks like incentives, bonuses, and performance bonuses. Employees who meet their employer's expectations are rewarded and recognised for their efforts. For example, a two-week paid vacation for two people could be a reward. Regardless of the size of the company, compensation management is one of the most challenging aspects of human resources. Employees' contributions to the company should be recognised and rewarded with the right compensation and benefits, according to human resources experts.

Pay and other settlements with monetary value are no longer the primary means of rewarding employees for their good behaviour. Instead, a wide range of factors can be considered as a reward for employees, including increased role responsibility, autonomy, access to more interesting work, and other factors that are directly related to the employee's well-being, such as a cash bonus or health care benefit. The most powerful management tool in the world is a reward system (Rehman, Khan & Lashari, 2020). If a company rewards a particular type of employee behaviour, whether it's good or bad, it can expect to see more of it in the future (Nelson & Peter, 2015). Every company has a reward system in place. As an example, people respond positively to verbal praise, and praise delivered at the right time can lead to loyalty and affinity (Ngala & Odebero, 2019). According to a United Nations Development Program (UNDP) report (2018), reward and incentive systems are essential in developing capacities and translating developed capacities into better motivation and engagements. Management talent can be attracted to an organisation with a reward and engagement-based policy that includes some monetary component, according to the paper. Profit sharing schemes, stock options, and recognition programmes are just a few of the ways in which these rewards can be given. Profit sharing, according to Lusthaus (2020), is a method of distributing a portion of a company's profits to its employees. Employees who contribute to a company's financial success will be rewarded under this plan.

A company's competitive advantage comes from having employees who are engaged in their work and committed to their organisations. As a result, organisations of all sizes and types have made significant investments in policies and practises that encourage employee involvement and commitment, according to Vance (2018). There are some commonalities among the various definitions of engagement. There are a number of factors that contribute to employees' sense of satisfaction and pride in their employer, such as the extent to which they believe that their employer appreciates what they have to offer. The more engaged an employee is, the more likely he or she is to "go

the extra mile" and deliver excellent project management results on the job. As a result of this, engaged workers may be more likely to stay with their current employer. Indeed, an organization's level of engagement and commitment could yield valuable business outcomes (Vance, 2018).

Workers' compensation insurance is required by law for employers. Compensation for lost wages and medical expenses are included in the benefits. These are paid in part, typically two-thirds of the employee's total compensation. The company should also sponsor a disability programme. Additional disability benefits should be available as a result. Donata (2011) suggests that some organisations should be eligible for social security disability benefits. To be eligible, you must have held jobs that provided health and welfare benefits. According to Wright (2020), these advantages can be divided into four distinct groups: perks related to one's personal safety and health, such as pension sick pay, life insurance, medical insurance, and loans; For example, a company car, vacation time, sabbaticals, or other job-related perks; There are a variety of family-friendly and social or "goodwill" or "life style" benefits, such as subsidised canteens, gym/sports facilities and discounts on dry cleaning and dry cleaning services. As an example, he mentions that benefits can be voluntary, allowing employees the option of using them in accordance with their personal and financial circumstances. If employees choose to purchase benefits like childcare vouchers, a loan from the circle-to-work scheme or life insurance, deductions tend to be made at the time of purchase. Employees may be eligible for tax benefits as a result of this. In some companies, project management success evaluation systems have been restructured to focus on employee development in the future. The promotion process considers the quality of one's work. Employees who perform well are more likely to feel a sense of accomplishment and self-worth when they receive a reward that isn't tied to money or pay (Allen and Kilmann 2016).

### ***Workplace Culture and Employee Engagement***

Today's employees face new challenges on a daily basis in an ever-changing business environment. Rather than being the exception, workplace change, and turmoil appear to be the norm. According to the majority of experts, successful organisations are better able to adapt to change than those that fail. The key to successfully managing change begins with the people who make up the organisation. "Make or break" an organisation can indeed be attributed to a positive, engaged work force (Lockwood, 2017). Employees and employers are often unable to maintain a strong relationship during turbulent times at work. Dissatisfactory employee attitudes and a negative work environment can have an enormous impact on the success of organisational change. An abundance of research has been done to address these issues at this time. Creating and maintaining an engaged workforce is the focus of a great deal of research (e.g., Avey, Wernsing, & Luthans, 2018; Bakker & Schaufeli, 2018; Marchington & Kynighou, 2021). An engaged workforce benefits from a positive workplace culture because it encourages its employees to succeed. Many aspects of a positive workplace culture are required to foster employee engagement. Improved employee engagement occurs when there are positive working relationships, employee input in decision making, and support for growth and development through learning opportunities (Siriusetti 2021). When Schaufeli and Baker (2020) looked at job demands and how they relate to engagement, they discovered that a measure of job resources that included support from coworkers was a good predictor of involvement. In addition, Saks (2018) found that organisational support predicted both types of engagement while noting a significant difference between job engagement and

organisational engagement. When it comes to employee engagement, his study looked at both the antecedents and the consequences.

This customary way of thinking and behaving is known as organisational culture, and it is shared by all employees of the organisation. Prior to joining the company, new employees must learn and adhere to this policy. This suggests that culture can be taught, shared, and passed down through generations. An organization's values and norms are expressed through a variety of symbols, language, and behaviour. Managers ensure that all employees have the same understanding of the organization's culture and are able to perform at the same level by transmitting the culture to all members of the organisation (Denisson, 2018; James, 2020). Organizational culture is reflected in a variety of aspects of work organisation. Objective emphasis, reward orientation, task support and social support are all part of these dimensions (Peterson, 2015). Increased competition, globalisation, alliances, and work optimization have increased the need for organisational culture because employees are seen as the greatest and most valuable assets in an organisation.

It has been studied in a variety of contexts to discover the many ways in which organisational culture affects its members and the organisation as a whole. Fewer studies have focused on the relationship between employee attitudes and behaviour, while the link between organisational culture and organisational effectiveness has been difficult to establish (Schneider, et al., 2021). (Odom, Boxx, & Dunn, 2020). Because a company's most valuable asset is its people, it's critical to know how the workplace culture affects employee behaviour and attitudes. It has been found that employees' perceptions of the workplace environment are linked to a number of theories. Involvement in the workplace is one of these factors. Employees who are involved in their jobs, similar to those who are engaged in their work, demonstrate an inner drive and dedication to their jobs (Hallberg & Schaufeli, 2018). An environment perceived to be safe, supportive, and meaningful was linked to increased job involvement and effort as well as a greater commitment of time and energy to the organisation by employees in Brown and Leigh (1996). Aiding employees improved their sense of purpose, their understanding of their job responsibilities, and their perceptions of how difficult their work was (Brown & Leigh, 1996). Thus, employees' attitudes and how they are connected to their work appear to be influenced by the context in which they work. Other researchers have also looked into concepts related to the cultural context of the workplace.

### ***Knowledge Management and Employee Engagement***

To put it another way, the term "knowledge management" is used to describe "the organisation, capture, utilisation, and analysis." There are many different terms for knowledge management, but the most common ones are "knowledge organisation" and "knowledge capture." In the corporate world, knowledge management is defined as having a knowledge base or a portal where specialised knowledge pertaining to the organisation is held. Individuals' thoughts, beliefs, and values all contribute to an organization's knowledge, which can be used to gain a competitive advantage (Ducker, 2020). There are no hard and fast rules. As a result, it can't be easily transferred from one person to another (Nonaka, 1994). "Systemic and organizationally specified process for acquiring, organising, and communicating both tacit and explicit knowledge of employees so that other employees may use it to be more effective and productive in their work" is what Sokhanvar, Matthews, and Yarlagadda (2020) define as knowledge management.

When management uses tools and approaches to create, acquire, refine, transfer, or share and utilise knowledge assets available to the company, it is their conscientious efforts (Mazdeh & Hesamamiri, 2020).

It is important to use existing human capital/intellectual assets to generate, capture, organise, and share knowledge relevant to the organization's mission, according to Mulyaningsih et al. (2020). For the industry to thrive in this dynamic environment, it provides the capability of the business structure (e.g., formal, informal), functions and processes (Allen, 2021; Wu & Chen, 2020). An effective knowledge management strategy can improve practises, procedures, development of employee engagement and achievement in projects, decrease the learning curve for new staff and tasks, improve customer service, and reduce costs in the long term (Garstenauer, Blackburn, & Olson, 2018). Employee involvement and commitment are not only to the organisation, but also to other bodies, such as professional family, direct supervisor, religion, etc. associated. Organizational commitment and professional dedication are both examples of commitment. There is a lot of debate about the nature of the relationship, the compatibility or conflict between two types of commitment (Matthew Zjak, 2020: 194-171.) Employee job satisfaction was found to rise in organisations with more employees sharing their knowledge and learning from one another, according to a study (V.S. Muralidharan, 2018). Employee engagement, reduced absenteeism and turnover, successful project management and increased productivity are all known effects of job satisfaction (R.M, Ryan, 1987). When a project is successful, these consequences encourage members of the organisation to engage physically, cognitively, and emotionally (W.A. Kahn, 2020). Additionally, knowledge management provides employees with solutions to the problems they encounter, in the event that those same problems have been dealt with previously and successfully. This creates a supportive work environment within the organisation (V.S. Muralidharan, 2018). Employee engagement is thought to be strongly influenced by a supportive work environment that meets their needs, such as providing them with the information and training they require to do their jobs well (Ryan, 1987). Thus, knowledge management provides a supportive work environment in which employees can determine their level of engagement.

### ***Learning Capacity and Employee Engagement***

The ability to learn, change, innovate, and continually improve has become one of the most important organisational resources. Learning capacity refers to an individual's (and an organization's) ability to recognise, absorb, and utilise knowledge (Asiyai, 2021). Increasing operational efficiency, fostering innovation, and enhancing organisational agility all depend on it (Adelowokan, 2021). A lot of this agility is based on the level of innovation in training and development, value and support, and systems (Bontis & Serenko, 2019). There is no capacity development without learning. Knowledge and skills can be gained through the process of learning. Individual expectations of career success are influenced by the learning capacity that is offered, which in turn influences the individual's beliefs about his ability and ultimately lead to career decision and goal attainment and high retention rates (Sosik et al., 2020). By offering challenging assignments, inspiring the protégé by serving as a role model, coaching for vocational skills, developing the protégé's identity, assisting employees in setting career goals, and assisting them in achieving work-life balance, management of organisations must encourage learning (Scandura, 2017). It's important to keep in mind that educational needs of the future may offer new options for enhancing the learning capacity of individual students (Bentley & Miller, 2020).

Because of the international nature of the company, it is imperative that employees stay up to date in order to provide an efficient and effective working environment (Newton, & Doonga, 2017). The knowledge economy and its workers are the primary drivers of rapid e-Training growth, while the company's primary weakness is its failure to align corporate business objectives with e-Training in order to track project management success and profitability. It's difficult to see how corporate eLearning's rapid expansion can be justified in the absence of adequate tools for assessing its quality. There has been a lot of interest in how job satisfaction and organisational commitment are linked. According to their findings, job satisfaction and organisational commitment were strongly linked (Top & Gider, 2021). Organizational commitment and willingness to go the extra mile to support and accept group goals are higher among employees who have received proper training (Kuznia, 2018). Regression analysis was used by Ozturan and Kutlu (2020) to examine the impact of gender, age, work experience, education level, job level, and eLearning interactivity level on employee satisfaction with eLearning programmes. Employee satisfaction can be predicted using regression analysis, with job level having the highest maximum impact on employees' happiness. It was found that employees who thought training was effective were more committed to their organisations than those who thought it was ineffective.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study is descriptive, and it is based on secondary data, which was gathered through a literature review from reputable sources such as journals and books on the construction industry as well as proceedings, reports, and other online materials related to the construction industry. The discussion mainly focusses on the theoretical foundation and related literature to shed the light on the studied topic.

## **DISCUSSION**

Mentoring has long been considered a human resource development programme or a source of personal learning in management literature (Ghosh, R., 2021). (Lankau, M.J, 2020). When it comes to mentoring, it's hard to tell the difference between terms like "advise," "counsel," and "teach." As a result of the mentor-protégé relationship, the unique feature of mentoring is to discuss the protégé's thoughts on future development (Bozeman, B, 2018). There are three types of mentoring: vocational support (Kram, 1985), psychosocial support (Kram, 1985), and role modelling (Kram, 1985). Mentoring helps protégés learn the ins and outs of their roles and prepares them for future advancement in the workplace. Support, exposure, guidance, protection, and challenging tasks are all provided by the mentor for the protégé's advancement within the company (Kao, K.Y, 2020). First and foremost, the protégé's mental stability is enhanced by psychosocial support. The mentor develops empathy for the protégé's personal issues and establishes clarity about the protégé's ego during the mentorship process. Counseling affirmation and friendship based on a sense of trust are part of this psychosocial mentoring programme (Shen, 2011).

Most Fortune 500 companies have formal mentoring programmes, according to the American Society for Training and Development (paywall) (ASTD). Olivet Nazarene University conducted a survey and found that only 37% of workers claim to have a mentor, which isn't as impressive as it first appears. Furthermore, Johnson's study found that companies benefit from mentoring because employees who participate in the programme become better, more engaged performers as a result of the experience. There are numerous advantages to these kinds of partnerships because the mentors are all

experts in their fields, rather than just one. For these "one-and-done" activities, busy mentors are more likely to be available. It's also a great way to build networks and break down silos because it stretches across the entire organisation rather than just one or two departments.

Mentoring programmes have a positive impact on employees' organisational commitment and lower turnover intentions, according to Joiner et al. (2020). Ragins et al. (2000) found that employees who were mentored were more committed to the company than those who weren't. In Chun et al. (2021), the researchers found that the mentoring relationship had a positive effect on both mentor and mentee. A detailed study by Hartmann et al. (2021) found that mentoring has a positive impact on protégés' emotional and normative commitment to their organisations. According to the results described above, South Korean companies have implemented both coaching and mentoring programmes simultaneously (Woo, H. 2018, Yang, I, 2018). Mentoring and coaching have a lot of similarities in the workplace because of their emphasis on continuous, one-on-one interaction. In this study, we focus on the possible confusion and interaction between these two practises when an employee simultaneously participates as a coach-coachee and as a mentor-protégé.

Employee engagement and mentoring relationships are examined by Rabiya S. and Srivasatava R.K. in 2021. When it comes to creating a positive work environment, organisations are looking for ways to encourage growth and expansion of knowledge. Mentoring programmes have played a large role in this, allowing employees to plan their career progression while also providing them with psychological support and a sense of stability. A sample of 170 Mumbai-based sales and marketing professionals was surveyed as part of the research project. People who had a mentoring relationship were found to have higher levels of employee engagement than those who hadn't. As a result, organisations that invest in a mentoring programme can expect to see a significant increase in employee engagement levels.

For a very long time, organisations have been interested in how employees feel about their jobs, as well as how much time and effort they are willing to put in. According to researchers, a high level of job project management success can be achieved through a high level of employee engagement (Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011; Kahn, 2020; Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2020). In the workplace, employee engagement is a motivating concept that can be shared by everyone. Motivational concept: Employee engagement is the active allocation of personal resources to the task of a work role (Christian et al., 2011).

It has been found that employee engagement has a positive impact on project management success. A positive correlation between employee engagement and project management success outcomes has been found employee retention, productivity, and profit. Organizational commitment, organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB), and an employee's intention to leave may all be influenced by their level of employee engagement (Bhatnagar & Biswas, 2020). Engagement is defined as "the simultaneous employment and expression of a person's preferred self in task behaviours that promote connections to work and to others, physical, cognitive, emotional and active, full project management successes," according to Kahn (2020) formally. An employee's engagement is best described as a multidimensional motivational concept reflecting the simultaneous investment of physical, cognitive, and emotional energy in active and full project management success. Engaged employees are those who have a positive outlook on the organisation and its value. It is easier for an organisation to achieve its goals when its employees are actively involved in their work. "(OCB)" stands for individual behaviour



that does not receive direct and explicit recognition through a formal reward system, which is what these kinds of actions usually fall under. Employee project management success and organisational efficiency are both supported by OCB. An employee's contribution to an organization's goals, both directly and indirectly, is measured by the total value of the employee's project management success (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997).

Task project management success, or in-role project management success, and contextual project management success, or extra-role project management success, are two components of job project management success. Task project management success is not the only factor that contributes to overall job project management success, according to several researchers, including Rotundo and Sackett (2020) and Viswesvaran and Ones (2000). (CWB). Opposing forces have been linked to each other. Because of the strong negative correlation between these two concepts, they may be considered "opposites" (Bennet & Stamper, 2016; Organ & Paine, 1999). Conversely, when CWB is decreased, OCB will be increased. However, theoretical research has linked employee engagement to job project management success even though Kahn (2020) did not explicitly outline this relationship. Engaged employees are not only physically committed to achieving their role-related goals, but they are also cognitively alert and emotionally invested in the effort (Kahn, 2020; Ashforth & Humphrey, 2018).

Individual and organisational success depends on the level of employee engagement. It predicts the outcomes of employees, organisations, and financial project management. Productivity and project management success, customer outcomes, employee retention rates, organisational culture, and advocacy of the organisation and its external image can all be influenced by employee engagement (or disengagement) (Schaufeli and Bakker 2018). Employee engagement is a powerful concept that can be used to improve many business functions, including safety project management success. There is a direct correlation between the six fundamental elements above and the level of employee involvement in managing their work processes, practises and activities and the level of employee engagement.

## **CONCLUSION**

To better understand the impact of employee involvement-centred Human Resource Management on job satisfaction and project management success, decisions should be made on an individual team level rather than at the corporate level. Project management requires a high level of employee involvement as well. An employer's competitive advantage is greatly enhanced when its employees are engaged and happy in their jobs. There is less turnover and absenteeism among employees who are more dedicated to their jobs. As productivity and profitability increase, customers' satisfaction and cost-savings will both rise. The success of a project does not depend on the success of the project's employees. Those who are willing to take on new challenges and open to new experiences are the best motivators. These people are receptive to new ideas, constantly seeking to improve, and hold everyone responsible for their work. It is because of this that low performers tend to be overlooked rather than addressed when problems arise. The selection of assessment tools and analytics should be expanded to include all stakeholders. A company's ability to adapt to changes in both its internal and external environments is critical even in a downturn in the economy. Investing in employee engagement pays off. Because a company's ability to make money is directly correlated to its ability to keep its employees engaged. It has been shown that employee commitment and project management success go hand in hand when it comes to building and maintaining customer loyalty and productivity. High-growth companies have more

engaged employees. Customer satisfaction is a direct result of customer engagement. In order for a project to be a success, an engaged employee consistently displays three general behaviours.

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