The role of leadership traits in project success: A Systematic Literature Review

ABSTRACT

This systematic literature review (SLR) focuses on the role of leadership traits in project success. In synthesis of research papers, the review recognizes; transformational, transactional, servant and democratic leadership as core styles of leadership. Research insights distinguish between transformational leadership as the driver of innovation and team relationships, transactional leadership as the promotion of performance through structured and accountable reward systems. Servant leadership is concerned with the welfare of the employees and their loyalty by strengthening project leadership and team efficiency. Participation is an essential aspect of democratic leadership that fosters innovative work behaviors and the success of projects. The review also points to the fact that a plethora of contextual variables including organizational culture and team characteristics should be considered when discussing leadership practices. Mentions include methodological limitations and variation in study methodologies and designs, implying that more research can be done in the future in the contexts of leadership development theories that are still emerging and technologies in project management. The practical implications highlight the importance of the development of leadership training interventions that incorporate these various leadership competencies to enhance the performance of projects in organizations and encourage organizational learning.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This introductory chapter lays the foundation for understanding the role of leadership traits in project success. It begins with a detailed background on the intersection of leadership and project management. A clear research statement and question guide the systematic literature review. The aims and objectives of the study are outlined, followed by the rationale behind the research and its significance to both academic and practical realms. The chapter concludes with an explanation of the thesis structure, detailing how each subsequent chapter builds upon the initial insights provided here.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Leadership is commonly defined as the process of influencing others to achieve a common goal (Gehring, 2007). It involves directing and coordinating the activities of group members to accomplish objectives. Leadership traits are the personal qualities that an individual has that enable him/her to be a leader such as being honest and trustworthy and being able to make firm decisions (DuBois et al., 2015). Project management is the scientific application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to project activities to meet project requirements (Turner & Müller, 2005).

The significance of leadership in project management is critical. Leadership is one of the most critical elements of a project. Project managers play a central role in the process of steering the project team towards the accomplishment of project goals (Gehring, 2007). It has also been revealed that some leadership styles such as communication skills, problem-solving skills, and motivating employees are critical in ensuring project success (Strang, 2007; Aboramadan & Dahleez, 2020).

Leadership traits such as honesty, integrity and loyalty can compensate for many organizational deficiencies and make a significant contribution to the implementation of projects (Aziz et al. , 2022). A project manager with effective leadership capabilities can successfully manage the team to deliver the goal or even perform better than what the stakeholders had expected (DuBois et al., 2015).

There is evidence that leadership styles and characteristics are central to project success. For example, communication skills enable the leader to explain to the team members the project goals

and expectations in order to avoid conflicts (Zulch, 2014). Additionally project leaders who can display the ability to show flexibility and adaptability can manage through changes in project conditions and other occurrences (Carmeli et al., 2021).

The application of various leadership styles is also an important factor in the leadership of projects. Transformational leadership is also appropriate in project management since it is founded on the concept of inspiring and motivating employees to perform beyond what they would have ordinarily achieved (Kurzydlowska, 2016). On the other hand, transactional leadership which is more task oriented also helps in ensuring that tasks are completed on time and within budget (Barber & Warn, 2005).

There have been many studies that have been done concerning the correlation between leadership characteristics and project success. Research also reveals that the leadership style of a project manager is also one of the most critical factors that impact project success. For example, DuBois et al. (2015) emphasized the importance of personal characteristics such as responsibility, persistence, and the ability to work in a group for effective project management. They discovered that these traits along with professional knowledge are the key to project success. Also, Hassan, Bashir, and Abbas (2017) found that extraversion, agreeableness, and openness to experience are positive predictors of project success through transformational leadership.

Podgórska and Pichlak (2019) conducted a survey on leadership competencies and determined that emotional and managerial competencies are the most crucial and relevant competencies that can impact the success of a project. They pointed out that different kinds of projects require different abilities indicating that there is no direct correlation between leadership traits and project success. Adetola and Adetola (2023) also argued that integrity, communication skills, and problem-solving abilities are critical leadership competencies for project success, but that there is no best leadership style applicable for every project.

Oh, Lee, and Zo (2019) demonstrated that the effect of transactional and transformational leadership styles on project success varies across industries. The implication of the findings of their study is that transformational leadership would be ideal for private sector projects and transactional leadership for public sector projects. This is in agreement with the study by Noor et al. (2020) which attributed the success of small public construction projects to the impact of the conscientiousness and agreeableness traits of the workers.

Further, Aga, Noorderhaven, and Vallejo (2016) also demonstrated how team-building mediates the association of transformational leadership with project success. Their study also emphasizes the importance of structuring the teams in a way that will allow full realization of the positive impact of transformational leadership traits. Similarly, Awan et al. (2015) pointed out the significance of interpersonal skills in project management and revealed a significant correlation of interpersonal skills with various indicators of project success including cost and scheduling.

There has been a long history of leadership theories which includes such theories as the trait theory which asserts that there are people who are born leaders (Benmira & Agboola, 2021). This was followed by the emergence of the behavioral theory which is built on specific behaviors or actions that distinguish a leader from a non-leader (O'Sullivan, 2015). Contingency theory by therefore arose to explain that the success of leadership depends on the situation in which the leadership is implemented (Khan, Bhat & Hussanie, 2017). This was a major change from the concept of fixed traits to a form of leadership that is dynamic.

The transformational leadership theory further developed the concept by focusing on the role of leaders in helping their followers to reach their full potential and achieve higher levels of performance and growth (Rastogi et al. , 2019). This theory explains some of the behaviors such as individual consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and idealized influence (Benmira & Agboola, 2021). Aga, Noorderhaven & Vallejo (2016) have also stated that transformational leadership can result in greater levels of follower satisfaction, motivation and performance.

Project management as a professional discipline has passed through a number of stages from informal practices to highly structured and standardized practices. The history of project management dates back to the time when simple planning and execution methods were applied to large projects such as the building of the pyramids or the Great Wall of China (Pheng, 2018). The history of project management can be traced back to the mid-twentieth century when methodologies such as the Critical Path Method (CPM) and Program Evaluation and Review Technique (PERT) were developed (Khan, Bhat & Hussanie, 2017).

The establishment of professional bodies like the PMI in 1969 is a significant step towards establishing universal best practices and using professional certifications (Harrison, 2018). PMBOK is the essential framework in the field of project management and includes as a list of

processes and knowledge areas required for the project management (O'Sullivan, 2015). The second shift came with the Agile frameworks at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries when the focus of the project management became more on the adaptability, flexibility, and involvement of customers in the process as well as the incremental actions done in a project (Rastogi et al. , 2019).

According to Roe (2020), present, project management is one of the core activities in different areas and has the tools and accreditation that ensure that the professionals involved in such complex projects operate effectively. Project management software and the use of technology have also enhanced the way projects are executed and provided better tools for planning, allocating and communicating resources (Benmira & Agboola, 2021).

The modern project management has a more focus on leadership qualities such as flexibility, communication, and planning. Recent researches show that leadership is one of the principal aspects in coping with the challenges that contemporary projects present. More efficient project managers are able to change with the project environment and also have high emotional intelligence and flexibility (Wawak & Woźniak, 2020). Among the approaches that are used most frequently are the hybrid frameworks such as Scrum, and the project managers should be able to demonstrate leadership skills and implement the collective and dynamic working strategy (Mcgrath & Košťálová, 2020).

Moreover, leadership styles like transformational leadership that insist on the importance of motivating employees are also positively correlated with project performance. Transformational leaders promote many performance outcomes including innovation and creativity which leads to enhancing problem-solving and project performance (Podgórska & Pichlak, 2019). Organizational behavior also entails the communication skills and the ability to work better with the team members. The communication is equally important to ensure that the team members are aligned with the project goals and conflicts are avoided (Pretorius, Steyn & Bond-Barnard, 2018).

Project management frameworks also depend on the leadership styles used. For instance, leaders who comprehend knowledge management are able to utilize organizational knowledge to achieve project success (Alvarez-Dionisi, Turner & Mittra, 2016). The rising utilization of remote and hybrid working also demonstrates the leadership in holding the team bonding and productivity (Obradović, 2018).

1.3 RESEARCH STATEMENT

The purpose of this systematic review is to determine the relationship between leadership and project success. It focuses on those specific leadership styles that are beneficial in achieving project success. It synthesizes findings across multiple studies (Pacheco et al., 2023; Ahmed et al., 2020).

Several studies have linked emotional intelligence and transformational leadership to project success (Podgórska & Pichlak, 2019). The tendency of the project manager to use emotional intelligence helps in stress management and as well as creating a good working environment for the team leading to performance improvement of the project (Maqbool et al., 2017). Those styles of leadership which motivate the workers also lead to project success (Hassan et al., 2017).

In addition, project managers should have a high level of communicative competence. These competencies are used to articulate project goals and standards to team members in order to prevent misunderstandings and loss of time (Theophanus, 2020). The aspect of flexibility is the ability of the project manager to react in the best way possible to any changes that may be experienced in the project environment that is important to the success of the project (Awan, 2015).

This review contributes to the existing body of knowledge by systematically evaluating these traits and their direct impact on project success. By synthesizing recent empirical data, it offers new insights into effective project leadership and suggests practical applications for project managers to enhance their leadership skills (Adetola & Adetola, 2023; Krog & Govender, 2015).

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION

1. What are various leadership traits employed by the project managers?

2. How do these leadership traits affect project Success?

3. What best practices can be derived from the literature for effective leadership in project management?

1.5 RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this research is to systematically review and evaluate different leadership traits, styles, and approaches in contemporary projects and their impact on project success.

Objectives

1. To identify and analyze various leadership traits employed by project managers.

2. To evaluate the impact of these leadership traits on project success.

3. To derive best practices for effective leadership in project management.

1.6 RATIONALE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH

The significance of this study arises from the fact that leadership attributes are vital for project management success. These traits are essential because they affect the sustainability of a project, teamwork, efficiency, and overall effectiveness (Ahmed et al., 2023). Soft skills of management such as adaptability, self-efficacy, and relationship management are crucial for project managers to perform their role in difficult environments to achieve project success (Zheng et al., 2017).

Thus, leadership is very important in establishing the project environment that will foster the needed teamwork and collaboration which are crucial to success of the project (Grynchenko et al., 2018). Leadership capacities are also relevant for sustainability of projects as leaders tend to adjust to the changing conditions and carry on with the project (Zheng et al. , 2017). This is made possible by the fact that the team members are motivated and are positively contributing to the project hence improving the performance of the project as well as the performance (Ahmed et al., 2023).

A number of studies have indicated that the relationship between leadership styles and project quality or performance is particularly strong (Ahmed et al. , 2023). In contrast, transformational have been determined to improve project performance through creating a responsive and enabling environment (Zheng et al., 2017). This study also contributes to the literature that provides examples of the impact of certain leadership behaviours on project outcomes and gives recommendations to project managers and organizations that want to increase their leadership effectiveness (Grynchenko et al., 2018).

The importance of this review lies in the fact that it is set to provide a summary of the association between the leadership traits and the project performance. The said characteristics are of much importance as they influence sustainability, collaboration, effectiveness and efficiency as well as productivity in any work (Grynchenko et al., 2018). So, this study is an amalgamation of information from various researches to create a united overview of the current situation with project managing leadership (Krog & Govender, 2015).

This review facilitates the comprehension of the literature on characteristics of an effective project leader and emphasizes the major attributes of project leaders, including emotional intelligence, flexibility, and interpersonal skills (DuBois et al., 2015). These are the characteristics required for complex projects and for successful outcomes (Zheng et al., 2017). The findings of this study will be used in further researches and in enhancing the leadership development programs for the project managers.

The practical implications for the project managers and organizations are the chances to determine and improve the type that is likely to be favorable for the project success (Ahmed et al., 2023). The results of this research could be useful for the project managers in improving their leader skills that in return will positively affect the team and projects with higher quality (Podgórska & Pichlak, 2019). Leadership attributes should be the focus of training and development programs in organizations for effective leadership and team work (Maqbool et al., 2017).

Finally, this study has a probability of increasing the success rate of projects through the improvement of leadership traits in project management awareness and implementation. Aga, Noorderhaven and Vallejo (2016) noted that when the characteristics that contribute most to project success are identified, project managers and organizations can create more efficient leadership strategies, which in turn will result in better project outcomes and higher levels of project efficiency and effectiveness.

1.7 THESIS STRUCTURE

This dissertation has five main chapters. The first chapter is the introduction; it presents the basic idea about leadership traits and their effect on project success. In chapter 2, the research methodology is interpreted with the help of the research onion. It covers the decision over research philosophy, and the selection of research approach. This chapter provides justification for the use of a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) as the strategy to analyze secondary qualitative data. It explains the procedure for conducting the SLR, which involves keyword choice, selection of databases, and formulation of inclusion and exclusion criteria through PRISMA framework. Chapter 3 reports the findings of the SLR, which starts with a table of selected papers. It is divided into two parts: the first one reports descriptive of the papers, the second one does a thematic analysis of the papers, which identifies major themes and discusses the findings. Chapter 4 is the discussion chapter, where results are discussed and interpreted, taking into account their

implications for different stakeholders. The thesis is completed in Chapter 5, which presents recommendations based on the results. It also outlines limitations in the research and offers directions for future research.

CHAPTER 2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a method that was used to conduct a systematic literature review on the leadership traits and project success. It is also to suggest the goals such as to intend to offer the systematic and comprehensive review of the evidences and it is associated with the operation of scientifically identifying and selecting the papers based on the structured criteria. This particular research technique is positively related to the Saunders' onion regarding the layers of the research (Saunders et al., 2019). This chapter outlines the research philosophy, research approach, research strategy, and selection of research, data collection methods, techniques used in data collection, PRISMA, data analysis, ethical consideration and the summary of the chapter.
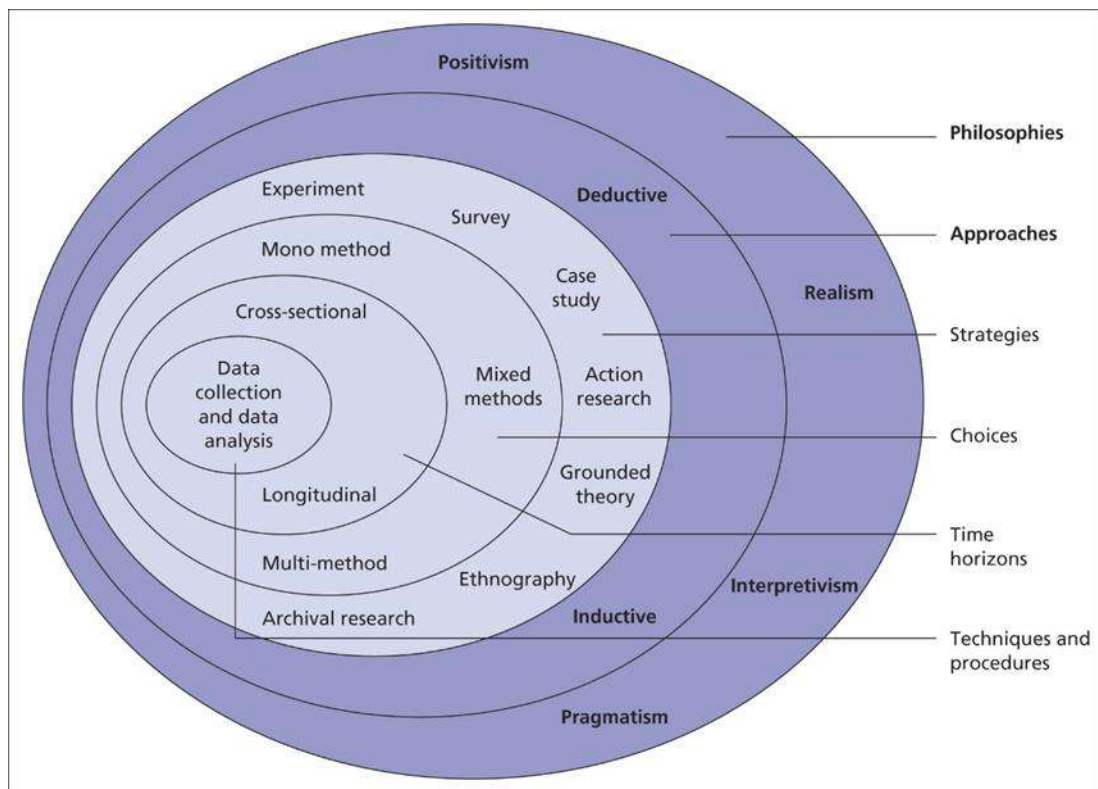

Figure 1: Saunders Research Onion (Source: Saunders et al., 2019)

2.2 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

The research adopted for this current study is under the interpretivism research philosophy. Interpretivism has its origin on the understanding of the sociology that embraces constructionism and relativism aiming at explaining behaviors and experiences among humans (Ryan, 2018). This is important when explaining such leadership qualities as well as the interaction between the qualities and success/failure of projects or undertakings since this philosophy gives a perspective of the intricacies of leadership in such settings (Xiao et al., 2019). Interpretivism enables the researcher to highlight the various meanings and contexts of behaviors thereby making the goal of the research to discover the practical experience of the various people involved in project leadership (Maxwell, 2013). In the case of qualitative data, this approach is helpful since it allows one to look for the constant and variations in patterns and themes across these settings and conditions. Interpretivism acknowledges that when different context or perception is applied, different insights are produced which makes the framework suitable to establish how specific leader characteristics affect the success of projects in different environments (Ryan, 2018).

2.3 RESEARCH APPROACH

This systematic literature review involves the use of a qualitative research design. Specifically, qualitative research methodologies are helpful in exploring numerous aspects that define the human experience including the relationship between leaders' characteristics and project success (Torres-Carrión, 2018). In contrast to the approaches that merely involve counting and percentages like surveys and experimentation, qualitative research goes further probing into the phenomenon, its efforts aimed at capturing people, what they do and why, and where and when they do it (Mwita, 2022). This approach enable the identification of pattern, theme and relevant factors that would have an impact on the results in the projects given the quantitative analysis of the textual data retrieved from various studies (Ryan, 2018). This qualitative research enables the researcher to discover how different leadership attributes influence the success of a project under different environments and circumstances. It enables the researcher to look at the different aspects of leadership behavior, and, ideally, to get a more extensive understanding of which behaviors lead to the increased successful project outcomes. However, it is important to understand that at this stage of the development of the identified leadership and project results interconnection, this

method occupies a special place in the formation of a deeper understanding of all the various dynamics (Moher, 2019).

2.4 SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW (SLR)

The research strategy used in this study is the Systematic Literature (SLR). An SLR gives a straightforward framework for defining, assessing and integrating qualitative and quantitative data on a topic of interest (Darby, 2019). Such factors entail the process of finding databases that contain information about the topic in question as well as using inclusion and exclusion criteria to conduct a systematic search of the issue at hand and critically appraising the information that was obtained during the study. They add credibility to the results, which in turn are increased because of the reduction of variations. Prejudices, and promoting the critical analysis of multiple opinions (Casas-Rosal, 2021). In this particular study, it is necessary to discuss the leadership traits which produce the successful result of a project, for which the SLR approach is appropriate as it integrates a wide range of material from several contexts and disciplines that make up a solid foundation for considering the nature of factors that contribute to the success of project outcomes.

2.5 RESEARCH CHOICE

Qualitative research method has been used as the approach towards the study in this research. This choice is in line with the goals of the current research where the collected qualitative data from previous studies is synthesized to develop the hypothesis on leadership traits and profile on one hand and on the project consequence on the other. Quantitative research is applied on variables while Leadership is an intricate construct which has many dimensions and therefore the most appropriate for this type of study is qualitative research (Hyde, 2000). The strategy enables the research to capture certain elements that qualitative characteristics, in this case, contextual, and subjective may hinder when adopting numerical data (Williams et al., 2021).

This is useful to maintain the coherence in terms of data collection and analysis since it presents a focused approach to the conduct of the literature review to the study. As mentioned earlier, there are tons of qualitative data that can be gathered and this permits consolidation of the same to provide a more comprehensive view of the leadership traits relating to the achievement of project success as noted by Woo et al., (2017). From this qualitative approach, the study may be able to achieve depth and width of information and be able to offer a panoramic view on how the aforementioned leadership attributes effects on the project performance.

2.6 DATA COLLECTION

2.6.1   SELECTION OF DATABASES AND KEYWORDS

The selection of databases and keywords is one of the most crucial decisions that should be made during the planning stage of the SLR. This process involves using a string of the right keywords in searching for literature by using the electronic databases. The justification of selecting the right databases and key words is to capture as much as possible literature in the research area. Proper and clear labeling of sources enables one not to miss essential research and is least likely to bring bias to the review process (Ryan, 2018).

For this study, the targeted keywords were used for gathering the preliminary data. These words include; 'Transformational Leadership', 'Transactional Leadership', 'Servant Leadership', 'Leadership Styles,' etc. and they were purposely used in the selected databases to search for relevant literature. This method made it easier to only select articles that focused on the leadership characteristics and project performance connection.

The use of Scopus resources provided coverage of various topics for different management and organizational studies, engineering, as well as biomedical sciences fields. Thus, Scopus was selected for its several peer-reviewed research articles and the subject of the given research (Torres-Carrión, 2018). It provided extensive coverage, together with the efficient search functions, that allowed locating a plethora of relevant studies on leadership characteristics as well as project completion, thus providing the necessary depth of the literature analysis (Tod, 2019).

Citation searching or reviewing of referenced publications involved ascertaining other potentially relevant publications from the list of sources cited in the particular articles of interest. It also helped to pay more attention to the literature that is relevant to the general subject or area of research (Bearman et al., 2012). Besides academic databases, grey literature searches were made so as to cover Reports, conference proceedings and other thesis and non-peer reviewed literature (Paez, 2017).This approach extended the data pool and reached collect data from varying sources and unpublished findings that are pertinent to the study (Bryman. 2016).

Articles were selected based on rigorous and standard criteria to ensure a systematic approach could be adopted. The evaluation process was conducted for each article to prevent the selection of misleading or irrelevant information for the research goals and to ensure the relevance of the

data for the given topic (Elo, 2008). The data on clinical effectiveness were retrieved and selected from the articles and then abstracted using a structured data extraction form. This form included the author details, the year of the publication, method used in the research, conclusions made within the area of leadership characteristics, together with project success and any other details that the synthesizing and analysis phase of the current review would require to be gathered (Goldkuhl, 2012).

2.6.2 INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION CRITERIA

One of the vital components in the SLR methodology is the specification of the reasons for including or excluding the studies under review. These criteria are based on the research questions and objectives and are crucial for establishing relevance, quality, and scope of the examined literature. It is essential to systematically look for studies to be included in the review in line with the set objectives of reducing biases and enhancing credibility of the review process (Siddaway et al., 2019). For this study, the following inclusion criteria and exclusion criteria (see Table 2. 1, below) were established:

Table 2.1: Inclusion criteria and Exclusion criteria for the study

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Studies that explicitly the different leadership traits, styles, and approaches in contemporary projects and their impact on project success.	Studies not directly related to the different leadership traits, styles, and approaches in contemporary projects and their impact on project success
Research published in peer-reviewed journals to ensure the quality and reliability of the findings.	Non-peer-reviewed articles, opinion pieces, and grey literature, to maintain a focus on high-quality, empirical research.
Studies published in English, given the language proficiency of the research team.	Studies published in languages other than English, due to the language constraints of the research team.
Research conducted within the last two decades to ensure the relevance and timeliness of the	Research focusing exclusively on decision-making in non-project management contexts,

findings in the context of contemporary project management practices.	ensuring the specificity of the review to the field of interest.

2.7 DATA ANALYSIS

The conduct of an SLR entails observation, interpretation and synthesis of data gathered from the selected studies. This process assists in identifying patterns, topics, relationships, and the gaps in the existing literature, which is crucial for defining the research subject robustly (Shaffril et al., 2021). For analysis and synthesis of data in this study, a qualitative thematic analysis approach is used. This involves grouping the data into themes and subthemes to facilitate identification of trends in the selected studies. It begins with the first and second go through of the literature with the aim of building an understanding of its content. These are the first set of codes emerged from the ideas or themes relating to decision making of project managers and project performance. These codes are continuously discussed and then aggregated into themes, which contain broader patterns of data. The synthesis entails integration of the information in these themes, comparison of the various perspectives found in the literature and examine the similarities and disparities.

On this basis, it is possible to justify the usage of thematic analysis since the method is flexible and enables the provision of a rich description of the data set and the analysis of different facets of the research topic (Nowell et al., 2017). This approach is appropriate for this study because it will enable the collection of detailed and nuanced information about the various and diverse nature of decisions in project management. Coding framework is relevant to the inductive research strategy because it can be used to bring out themes from the data rather than imposing categories or theories.

Furthermore, the qualitative synthesis of findings allows for making logical connections between the themes and the research questions and objectives. In this narrative synthesis, different leadership patterns, actions, and approaches to current projects and its relevance to project success in different situations and approaches are also presented. In this way, the study aims to contribute theoretically and practically to the subject under study and suggest further research directions.

2.8 PRISMA FRAMEWORK FOR RESEARCH

The PRISMA flow diagram for the systematic review was used which is a flow diagram that shows how articles passed through the various part of the systematic review (Zettel, 2023). According to Page et al. (2021) the PRISMA guideline is instrumental in shaping the flow of systematic reviews and means that nothing can be left unseen to show the efficiency and exhaustiveness of work (Page et al., 2021).

Identification

In the context of the identification stage of this SLR, the conceptual approach was used to stage the studies that referred to leadership characteristics and project success. Initially a SCOPUS Search was conducted where the papers which were included in the research area of interest with reference to the search term used displayed 180 articles. In addition to the above-mentioned articles obtained from the databases, the author also used 20 peer-reviewed and scholarly articles from other databases in conducting the literature review. Upon completion of the first search, the studies were screened for duplicates and removed through reference management software, leaving 100 articles for further assessment.

Screening

Third was the screening phase in which the identified articles were screened based on the relevance of the titles and the summaries of the 80 articles found. The reason for this sort of exclusion is that each article was screened to see if it was relevant to the study, which focused on the traits of leaders and success of projects. It is necessary to admit that up to 80 articles were evaluated, and 50 of these articles were excluded from research due to failure to meet the criteria.

Eligibility

The first evaluation criterion focused on the article abstract and eliminated 30 of the 50 articles, while the authors then reviewed the full texts of the 30 remaining articles. This step entailed a key process of evaluation in order to determine certain set of articles that were deemed to have specific standard in meeting comprehensive sets of criteria for evaluation. During this phase, it was made possible to practice the elimination of 10 articles as pointless or introduced with low compatibility to the goals of the research.

Included

Finally, after all the stages of filtering and exclusion 20 articles remained, which are the basis of this systematic review. The rationale for using these articles was based on the relevance and the approaches offered to the formulated question of leadership traits as an indication of project success. These articles were used by the authors of this study as they attempted to by data on the given research theme or subject matter.

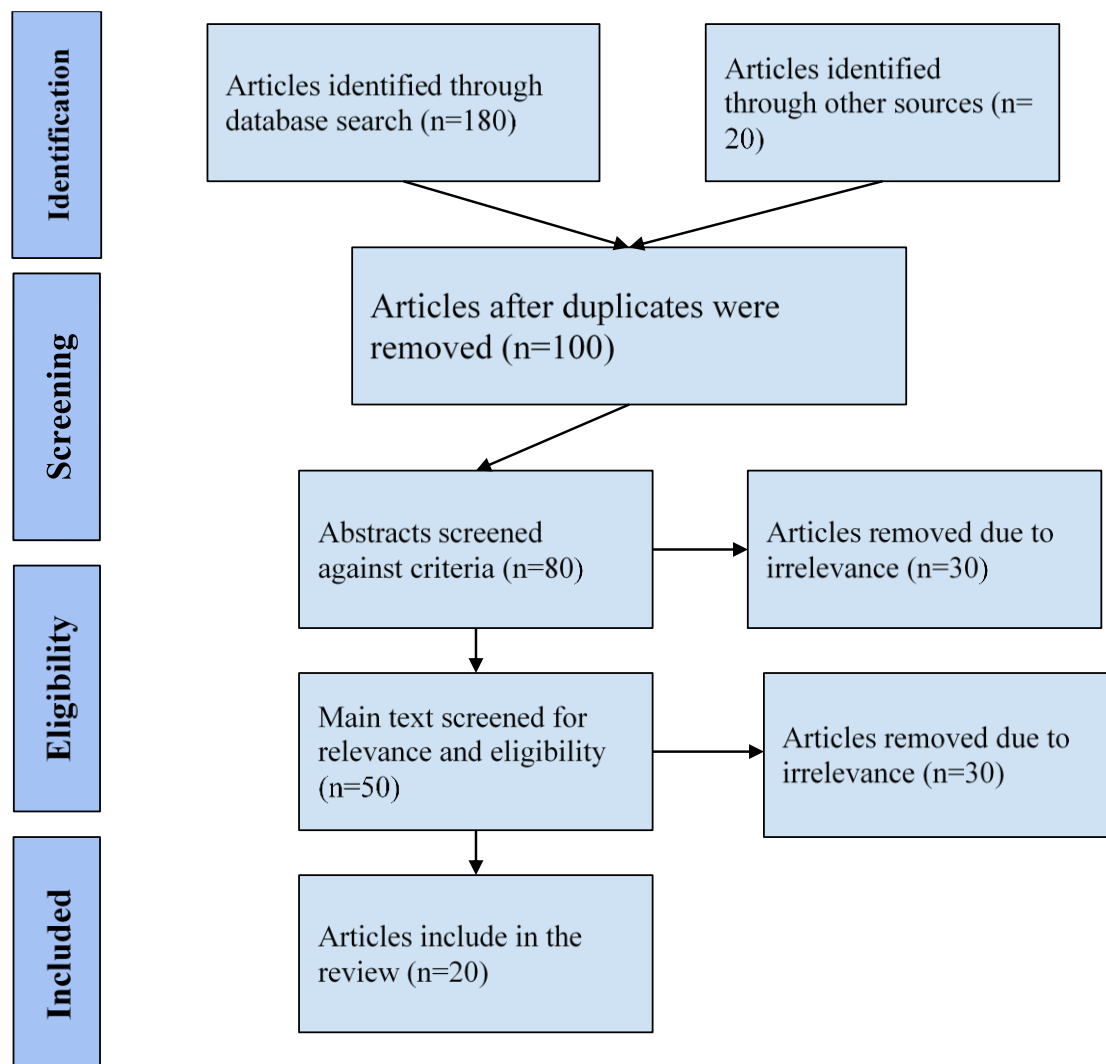**Figure 2.1: PRISMA Flow Chart**

2.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations are fundamental pillars in any research endeavor, maintaining professionalism, bias-free and respect of information. The first ethical concern involved in this

systematic literature review study was an aspect of reporting in terms of clarity and accuracy. Because there is a focus on the systematic review, everything was done to ensure that the presentation of the results and the interpretation of the literature were as accurate as possible. This entailed proper citation and referencing in order to prevent cases of plagiarism as well as to acknowledge previous research done (Martela, 2015).

As this research was a systematic review and synthesis of other works, there was no first-hand data collected from people. Thus, the researcher did not require an ethical clearance of the study from an IRB of an institute. This exemption is in harmony with generally acceptable ethical standards that call for such permission whenever human subjects are directly involved in the study particularly in data collection which may have an impact on their well-being, rights or liberties (Moher et al., 2009). It was stated that ethical review procedures were adhered to throughout the process of identification and review of literature. The selection criteria contribute to the operationalization of the research questions and the methodological quality of the published articles, thus minimizing the risk of bias and offering a systematic and exhaustive review of the literature (Podgórska et al., 2019).

While conducting the review, the authors were sensitive to the information and the conclusions drawn were in accordance with the articles reviewed (Strang, 2007). Besides creating awareness on ethical practices, this approach also increases on the reliability and credibility of the study findings. In that regard, it meets high ethical standards in the use of citations, sourcing, and guidelines that are followed in a systematic review.

2.10 SUMMARY

The present chapter has outlined the approach that has been adopted in the conduct of the systematic literature review with regards to the disposition of leadership traits for project success. This chapter details how the research will be constructed and performed by highlighting the research philosophy, approach, and strategy, plus choice, data collection methods, PRISMA framework, data analysis method, and ethical concern. The next chapter will briefly review the key points in the study and will emphasize the understanding of the effect of leadership characteristics on project success.

CHAPTER 3 SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter of the study aims at presenting and discussing the findings that were gotten from the systematic literature review (SLR). It starts with analyzing the distribution of articles chronologically and across different journals to identify trends, methods, and specific subject areas examined in current research. Also, it discusses various methodological approaches used throughout the selected studies and underlines the interdisciplinary of the research. Lastly, there is the summary of the chapter under discussion.

3.2 COLLECTION OF DATA

This part presents the distribution of the publications, the databases, and the type of journals that have dealt with the issue, as well as the methodologies employed in these investigations. This study aims at reviewing the chosen literature to sensitize the reader on the topics, trends, methods and focuses that have dominated this field. Table 3. 1 demonstrates the papers identified after the application of filters extracted from the PRISMA guidelines. The table is the first step towards synthesizing all the information that forms the basis of subsequent thematic analysis.

Table 3.1 Collection of Data

No.	Title of the Research Article	Authors	Year	Name of Journal	Aims and Objectives	Methods	Findings
1	Understanding the Impact of Transformational Leadership on Project Success: A Meta-Analysis Perspective	Zhao, N., Fan, D., and Chen, Y.	2021	Computational Intelligence and Neuroscience	To examine the impact of transformational leadership on project success using meta-analysis.	Meta-analysis	This study is focused on transformational leadership, finding it significantly enhances project success by fostering innovation and team cohesion.
2	Transformational leadership and project success: A mediating role of public service motivation	Fareed, M.Z. and Su, Q.	2022	Administration & Society	To investigate the mediating role of public service motivation on the relationship between transformational leadership and project success.	Empirical study	This study is focused on the mediating role of public service motivation, finding it strengthens the positive impact of transformational leadership on project success.
3	Enhancing the impact of transformational	Nauman, S., Musawir, A.U., Munir,	2022	International Journal of Managing	To explore how empowerment climate moderates	Empirical study	This study is focused on empowerment climate, finding it

	leadership and team-building on project success: The moderating role of empowerment climate	H., and Rasheed, I.		Projects in Business	the relationship between transformational leadership, team-building, and project success.		enhances the effects of transformational leadership and team-building on project success.
4	Transformational leadership and project success: serial mediation of team-building and teamwork	Ali, H., Chuanmin, S., Ahmed, M., Mahmood, A., Khayyam, M., and Tikhomirova, A.	2021	Frontiers in Psychology	To investigate the serial mediation of team-building and teamwork in the relationship between transformational leadership and project success.	Empirical study	This study is focused on team-building and teamwork, finding they mediate the positive effects of transformational leadership on project success.
5	Transformational versus transactional leadership styles and project success: A meta-analytic review	Abbas, M. and Ali, R.	2023	European Management Journal	To compare the impact of transformational and transactional leadership styles on project success.	Meta-analytic review	This study is focused on comparing leadership styles, finding transformational leadership more significantly impacts

							project success than transactional leadership.
6	The effect of emotional intelligence, intellectual intelligence, and transformational leadership on project success; an empirical study of public projects of Pakistan	Fareed, M.Z., Su, Q., and Awan, A.A.	2021	Project Leadership and Society	To investigate the effects of emotional intelligence, intellectual intelligence, and transformational leadership on project success in public projects in Pakistan.	Empirical study	This study is focused on emotional and intellectual intelligence, finding they, alongside transformational leadership, positively influence project success.
7	Examining linkage between transactional leadership, organizational culture, commitment, and compensation on	Nurlina, N.	2022	Golden Ratio of Human Resource Management	To explore the relationships between transactional leadership, organizational culture, commitment,	Empirical study	This study is focused on transactional leadership, finding it, combined with organizational culture, enhances work satisfaction and performance.

					compensation, work satisfaction, and performance.		
8	Project Managers' Leadership Styles and Their Effects on Project Management Performance	Thoha, N. and Avandana, I.M.N.W.	2020	Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities	To analyze the effects of different leadership styles of project managers on project management performance.	Empirical study	This study is focused on various leadership styles, finding that both transformational and transactional styles significantly impact project management performance.
9	Transactional leadership: Employee performance and organizational performance (literature review)	Febrian, W.D., Rajab, M., and AR, M.T.	2023	East Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary Research	To review the impact of transactional leadership on employee and organizational performance.	Literature review	This study is focused on transactional leadership, finding it positively influences both employee performance and overall organizational performance.
10	Determinant Organization Commitment and	Susanto, P.C., Agusinta, L., Setyawati, A.,	2023	Formosa Journal of	To analyze the effects of servant, transformational,	Empirical study	This study is focused on leadership styles, finding servant,

	Development Organization: Analysis Servant Leadership, Transformational Leadership, Transactional Leadership	and Panjaitan, A.R.P.		Multidisciplinary Research	and transactional leadership on organizational commitment and development.		transformational, and transactional leadership significantly enhance organizational commitment and development.
11	Servant leadership: a new perspective to explore project leadership and team effectiveness	Bilal, A., Siddiquei, A., Asadullah, M.A., Awan, H.M., and Asmi, F.	2021	International Journal of Organizational Analysis	To explore the impact of servant leadership on project leadership and team effectiveness.	Empirical study	This study is focused on servant leadership, finding it significantly improves project leadership effectiveness and team performance.
12	Does manager servant leadership lead to follower serving behaviors? It depends on follower self-interest	Wu, J., Liden, R.C., Liao, C., and Wayne, S.J.	2021	Journal of Applied Psychology	To examine the conditional impact of servant leadership on follower serving behaviors, based on	Empirical study	This study is focused on servant leadership, finding its effectiveness in promoting follower serving behaviors

					follower self-interest.		depends on follower self-interest.
13	Impact of the Democratic Leadership Style of Project Manager on Project Success: The Mediating Role of Innovative Work Behavior	Arshad, Q., Ashraf, S., and Pervaiz, U.	2023	Administrative and Management Sciences Journal	To explore the mediating role of innovative work behavior in the relationship between democratic leadership and project success.	Empirical study	This study is focused on democratic leadership, finding it positively impacts project success through innovative work behavior.
14	Leadership style: Is it autocratic, democratic or laissez-faire	Jaafar, S.B., Zambi, N.M., and Fathil, N.F.	2021	ASEAN Journal of Management and Business Studies	To compare the effects of autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire leadership styles on project outcomes.	Literature review	This study is focused on leadership styles, finding democratic and laissez-faire styles more beneficial for employee satisfaction than autocratic style.
15	Consequences of managers' laissez-faire leadership during	Lundmark, R., Richter, A., and Tafvelin, S.	2022	Journal of Change Management	To investigate the consequences of laissez-faire leadership during	Empirical study	This study is focused on laissez-faire leadership, finding it can lead to negative outcomes during

	organizational restructuring				organizational restructuring.		organizational restructuring.
16	Bureaucratic leadership, trust building, and employee engagement in the public sector in Ghana: The perspective of social exchange theory	Ohemeng, F.L., Obuobisa Darko, T., and Amoako-Asiedu, E.	2020	International Journal of Public Leadership	To examine the relationships between bureaucratic leadership, trust building, and employee engagement in the public sector in Ghana.	Empirical study	This study is focused on bureaucratic leadership, finding it enhances trust building and employee engagement through social exchange mechanisms.
17	The moderating effect of servant leadership on transformational, transactional, authentic, and charismatic leadership	Brown, S., Marinan, J., and Partridge, M.A.	2020	Journal of International Business Disciplines	To explore the moderating role of servant leadership on various leadership styles and their outcomes.	Empirical study	This study is focused on servant leadership, finding it can enhance the effectiveness of transformational, transactional, authentic, and charismatic leadership styles.

18	Project management and team performance: An applied transformational leadership perspective	Al Maalouf, N.J. and El Achi, S.	2023	Journal of Law and Sustainable Development	To apply transformational leadership principles to project management and team performance.	Empirical study	This study is focused on transformational leadership, finding it significantly improves project management and team performance.
19	Transformational leadership and project success: The mediating role of trust and job satisfaction	Fareed, M.Z., Su, Q., Almutairi, M., Munir, K., and Fareed, M.M.S.	2022	Frontiers in Psychology	To investigate the mediating roles of trust and job satisfaction in the relationship between transformational leadership and project success.	Empirical study	This study is focused on trust and job satisfaction, finding they mediate the positive effects of transformational leadership on project success.
20	Direct and indirect influence of project managers' contingent reward leadership and empowering	Ahmad, M.K., Abdulhamid, A.B., Wahab, S.A., Pervaiz, A.N., and Imtiaz, M.	2022	International Journal of Engineering Business Management	To analyze the direct and indirect influences of contingent reward and empowering	Quantitative study	This study is focused on contingent reward and empowering leadership, finding they directly and

	leadership on project success				leadership on project success.		indirectly enhance project success.

3.3 THEMATIC ANALYSIS: THEME DEVELOPMENT

Theme development is an important stages of thematic analysis as it enables the linear and specific investigation of the link between leadership characteristics and management strategies for projects' outcomes (Roe, 2020). After the data extraction was done, this study gave every identified study a code and grouped them according to themes found. This section presents the thematic synthesis that was arrived at when the 20 sampled articles were synthesized to convey the results on the adopted research question concerning the role of leadership in project management.

3.3.1 THEME 1: LEADERSHIP TRAITS AND PROJECT SUCCESS

The study results revealed that a project manager have the greatest impact on the project success with the transformational leadership style. One of the leadership styles that have been observed to yield positive results as far as project management is concerned is the transformational leadership style characterized by the ability of the leader to influence the members of the team. Zhao et al., 2021 conducted a meta-synthesis proving that the level of transformational leadership increases innovation and team cohesiveness for a higher success rate of project. To complement this argument, the article states that enthusiasm and vision in a team are critical elements that enable transformational leaders to achieve unbelievable results in the various projects.

In the same regard, a cross-sectional study conducted by Fareed et al. (2021) focused on analyzing the moderating factors of creating project success within Pakistani public project that includes emotional intelligence, intellectual intelligence, and transformation leadership. In their empirical investigation, they discovered that transformational leadership, in addition to the emotional and intellectual intelligence of the leaders, corresponds with project success. This also supports the notion that leaders should be able to appreciate and regulate their own emotions, as well as those of their staff, towards the performance of the undertaking.

In a study that used structural equation modelling, Ali and others (2021) examined the mediated moderation of team-building and teamwork on the transformational leadership and project success. According to them, organizational outcomes of projects can be improved by the use of transformational leadership behaviors that focus on team identification and teamwork. In this way, focusing on team-building activities and teamwork, transformational leaders can guarantee favorable conditions for the project.

In addition to the benefits of transformational leadership, Nauman et al. (2022) studied the moderating function of an empowerment climate. To their research, they established that an empowerment climate enhances the impact of transformational leadership, as well as team-building, on project success. If transformational leaders help to foster a culture that supports empowering ones team, even higher levels of project success can be attained.

The meta-analytic review of transformational and transactional leadership styles was done by Abbas and Ali in 2023. Their study found that whereas transformational leadership was found to have a large influence on project success, so too was transactional leadership. This holds the implication that the systematized and extrinsically motivated style of transactional leadership can enhance the application of transformational leadership towards the achievement of project objectives.

Nurlina (2022) also considered aspects such as the relationship between transactional leadership and organizational culture and commitment and reward and reliability and compensation and work satisfaction and performance. There was acknowledgement that while transactional leadership when used with positive organizational culture and commitment may lead to job satisfaction and workers' productivity. This supports the view that effectiveness of project initiatives is contingent upon the cultivation of an appropriate organizational culture by transactional leaders.

Positive organizational culture that is inspired by servant leadership that aims at benefiting the other and helping the needs of the members of the team has been noted to enhance project success. This approach is all about the growth of the people in the team which can lead to better productivity and actualization of project goals. In their study, Bilal et al. (2021) examined the roles of servant leadership as a moderator of project leadership and team performance. In their empirical analysis, they discovered that, indeed, servant leadership enhances the leadership of projects and teams. Hence in the best interest of the team members as well as in the creation of a good atmosphere, the servant leaders can be of a lot of help in providing the best outcomes on the projects.

Wu et al. (2021) investigated the role of self-interest in mediating the relationship between servant leadership and follower serving behaviors. They discovered that in their study, the need self-interest of the follower determines the extent to which servant leadership enhances the serving behaviors of the followers. This means that while servant leadership might be extremely effective,

such effectiveness can only be realized depending on the level of intrinsic motivation of the employees.

Another leadership behavior which incorporate people in decision making was also seen to have a positive impact on project performance. This leadership style ensures that the subordinates have positive attitudes towards the project and feel personally responsible for its success. In their study, Arshad et al. (2023) employed the independent variable of democratic leadership and the dependent variable of project success to examine the moderating role of innovative work behavior. These empirical papers established that democratic leadership enhances project success through innovation work behavior.

Lundmark et al. (2022) analyzed the consequences of leadership behavior, including the laissez-faire leadership style during change. They were also able to discover that due to the irrational leadership style, negativity is experienced when the organizations are restructuring. This means that although this leadership style is suitable in certain situations, it has to be effectively managed in such a way that it causes no harm to any given project.

For this reason, it is important to indicate that the combination of elements derived from various categories of leadership styles can be effective in the improvement of the projects' outcomes based on the utilization of each type's advantages. Susanto et al. (2023) stated that the impact of servant, transformational and transactional leadership on commitment and development of the organization. Based on the empirical analysis of their work the authors noted that all these styles have the positive impact on the organizational commitment and development. This means that the use of multiple leadership styles could help in the development of an integrated approach towards improving the completion of projects.

Brown et al. (2020) also examined the moderating effect of servant leadership with transformational, transactional, authentic and charismatic leadership. Their research that was published in their circulated journal showed knowledge that other forms of leadership could be enhanced by servant leadership. This confirms that the use of servant leadership alongside other forms of leadership enhances the influence of the latter on projects.

Ahmad et al. (2022) evaluated the context-dependent, main relationships between contingent reward and empowering leadership and project success. In a quantitative of study, they found that

these leadership styles do have a way, either direct or indirect, of influencing the project's success. This implies that there is a need for one to apply several leadership approaches when handling projects in order to get the best outcome.

Therefore, the leadership traits are rated among the most vital components impacting project success. Because transformational leadership implies inspiration and motivation of followers, it has developed into a style that fosters project performance. Nevertheless, the transactional, servant, democratic, and bureaucratic leadership styles also contribute to the accumulation of success in the projects through their own approaches. Hence, from the availability of these leadership styles, one is in a position to separate desirable practices from others due to nature of a specific project and a certain team that has been assigned to the project.

3.3.2 THEME 2: MEDIATING FACTORS OF LEADERSHIP ON PROJECT SUCCESS

When studying the relationship between the leadership qualities and the results of the project, one needs to consider the factors that influence this connection. These serve as the mediators by which leadership characteristics impact on project success, and therefore, provide a better understanding of the function of leadership in improving project success. This section delves into the primary mediating factors identified in the selected studies: Public service motivation, team formation, cohesiveness, cooperation, organizational trust, satisfaction, and empowering organizational content.

Along the same vein, Fareed and Su (2022) explored the mediating effect of public service motivation on the correlation between transformational leadership and project success. In their empirical research work, they demonstrated that public service motivation amplifies the impact of transformational leadership on project performance. Such type of leaders ensure that subordinates are more dedicated, committed and work at their optimum best thus enhancing project success rates.

The role on the part of team-building and teamwork as the moderating factors influencing leadership and project success intervention has been postulated. In their study, Ali et al. (2021) aimed to establish the moderation role of team building and team work in the link between transformational leadership and project success. As much as per their findings, they agree that better outcomes can be realized by embracing such leadership practices that enhance collaboration.

The findings show that the above mentioned team work is as a result of effective team building which is a crucial component of a project.

Nauman et al. (2022) extend this by examining the moderating effects of an empowerment climate. As stated in the study, the empowerment climate strengthens the effect of transformational leadership and team development on project success. This means that when the employees working in teams are encouraged and appreciated, then teamwork is enhanced and the outcome of a specific project is enhanced as well.

Although, leadership has a positive correlation with project success, trust and job satisfaction serve as the moderating factors. Fareed et al. (2022) investigated the mediating roles of trust and job satisfaction in the association between transformational leadership and project success. They found out that through transformational leadership, trust and job satisfaction of the workers is improved hence project performance is improved. On the other hand, trust enhances dependable and positive climate in the workplace and job satisfaction ensures that employees are committed to their tasks.

Empowerment climate is the last moderator which allows us to reveal the relationship between the leadership and the success of the project. Empowerment climate refers to the extent that the members of the team feel empowered to make decisions. Nauman et al. (2022) themselves assumed while conducting the study that an empowerment climate leads to an increase in the relationship between the independent variable, namely transformational leadership, and the dependent variable, namely project success. This implies that organizational environments can be controlled by leaders, and when team members feel empowered, they have better engagement and innovation, which in turn improves project performance.

Fareed et al. (2021) examined the moderating role of emotional intelligence and intellectual intelligence on the relationship between transformational leadership and project success in public projects in Pakistan. In their empirical analysis, they noted that these intelligences and transformational leadership enhance project success. Emotional intelligence allows leaders to regulate their own emotions and those of their subordinates, and intellectual intelligence enables leaders to think critically. Altogether, these traits improve a leader's efficiency in achieving project results.

Organizational culture and commitment are also other mediating factors to be considered. Nurlina (2022) investigated the transactional leadership, organizational culture commitment and compensation, work satisfaction and performance. The study was able to identify that transactional leadership when supported by positive organizational culture and commitment, improves work satisfaction and performance. High levels of commitment and positive organizational culture allow team members to be motivated and focus on the project goal.

In conclusion, the mediating factors of team-building, teamwork, trust, job satisfaction, empowerment climate, emotional and intellectual intelligence, organizational culture and commitment, follower behavior, and innovative work behavior play crucial roles in the relationship between leadership and project success. Thus, the knowledge of these mediating factors would mean improved leadership and consequently improved project performance.

3.3.3 THEME 3: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF LEADERSHIP STYLES AND BEST PRACTICES

The awareness of the various approaches that can be utilized by leaders and how they affect the completion of projects is an essential component in determining the right strategies in project management. Transformational leadership is therefore one that is mobilizing and encourages subordinates to go beyond their self-actualization for the benefits of a particular project or organization. Various research have pointed out how it enhances the chances of success in a given project. The authors Zhao, Fan, & Chen (2021) stated that project success increases by 11% with the application of transformational leadership that encourage innovation and team cohesiveness. Compared to autocratic leadership, this style invites creativity and problem solving, meaning more effective projects.

Moreover, as stated by Fareed et al. (2021), trust and job satisfaction can also mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and project success. Work satisfaction and trust help maintain a supportive atmosphere leading to organizational effectiveness and improved project results. Leadership has positive relations with project success, and this is because transformational leadership has other positive correlations with PSU and EC as discussed by Fareed and Su (2022) and Nauman et al. (2022).

Another type of leadership that is instrumental in project management is the transactional leadership that concerns the exchange between leaders and followers where predetermined

behavior is expected to be reciprocated with another behavioral equivalent. This study by Abbas & Ali (2023) involved a meta-analytic review of the differences between transformational and transactional leadership styles where the study revealed that although the transformational leadership has a more profound influence on the success of projects, the transactional leadership style is also beneficial in the enhancement of project outcomes. This implies that transactional leadership may work since it addresses structural and rewards based systems.

Nurlina (2022) reviewed the correlation of transactional leadership, organizational culture, commitment, pay, job satisfaction and productivity. The research identified an association between transactional leadership, organizational culture, and commitment and work satisfaction and performance. This suggests a positive relationship between the concept of transactional leadership and organizational environment.

Servant leadership encompasses focusing on the needs of subordinates, while working to meet those needs. It has been found out that this style of leadership greatly enhances the satisfaction indices of the project leaders and the performance of the teams. In their study published in 2021, Bilal and his colleagues examined the effect of servant leadership on project leadership and team performance, concluding that servant leadership improves team performance that results in successful projects. Here, it appears that fostering a stewardship culture and always putting the needs of the members first can help a servant leader improve project performance.

Thoha et al. (2020) examined the moderation effect of self-interest on the servant leadership and followers' serving behaviors. They further postulated that given the level of intrinsic motivation among the team members, servant leadership is effective in increasing the level of follower serving behaviors. This implies that any given servant leader who has knowledge that the subordinates require something will be in a better off position to increase productivity of commitment on the given project.

Democratic leadership entails involving employees in the decision-making process and acknowledging their contributions. Studies have also shown that this type of leadership enhances the success of a project through innovative WB. In the study conducted by Arshad et al., (2023) the mediating role of innovative work behavior in the relationship between democratic leadership and project success was examined and it was concluded that democratic leadership promotes innovative work behavior among employees. This way, the democratic leaders facilitate the input

of other team members and their inclusion in decision making ends up improving the final results of the projects.

In a study by Febrian et al. (2023), author investigated the impact of autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire leadership behaviors on the project performance and result, and identified that the democratic and laissez-faire leadership style were more effective for the employees' satisfaction than the autocratic style. This implies that leadership styles that seek to include the team members and empower them are likely to result in higher employee satisfaction and improved performance on projects.

In situations such as organizational restructuring, laissez-faire leadership where a leader avoids becoming directly involved by delegating responsibilities and keeping minimal supervision can have adverse effects. In their article published in 2022, Lundmark, Richter, and Tafvelin established that laissez-faire leadership during organizational restructuring has negative implications. This implies that though the laissez-faire leadership style may be effective in some situations, it is not ideal in periods of organizational transformation.

Leadership practices that are appropriate to the project and team play a crucial role in achieving the desired results on the project. The assessment of distinct types of leadership identifies several best practices relevant to optimizing the success of projects. For example, the transformational and democratic leadership styles promote creativity and innovation since the members of a team are encouraged to contribute to the decision making process. These styles foster new ideas' development and their application in projects, improving the project performance (Ohemeng et al., 2020). Another significant factor is trust and job satisfaction; the leaders foster organizational relationships and create an environment free from doubt, resulting in motivated employees. Promoting an empowerment climate to maximize employee authority increases the enhancement of transformational leadership and constructive teamwork, which leads to higher team success (Al Maalouf et al., 2023).

Servant leadership where the needs of the individuals in the team are given preference influences a high degree of loyalty amongst the personnel. Such leaders do not only motivate loyalty but they also get the teamwork that is crucial in attaining objectives that have been set down on projects (Aboramadan et al., 2020). Democratic leadership is characterized by implementing decisions through consultation and by valuing the input of all team members; this fosters team cohesiveness

and productivity. They also require more engagement of the members of the team hence resulting to proper addressing of the problem and improvement on project results (Adetola et al., 2023). Transactional leadership with its focus on specific structures and rewards help maintain order and responsibility within the team. This strategy is most appropriate where there is a need to undertake several activities and achieve several goals and performances (Alvarenga et al., 2020).

The integration of such best practices in leadership enables the project leaders to manage challenges and on the other hand, capitalize on team strengths and consequently, improve project performance. A review of the strengths and weaknesses of both leadership styles enables leaders to adapt to the challenges of a given task and ensure the sustainable achievement of organizational goals and objectives.

3.4 SUMMARY

The third chapter of the study focused on the findings and discussion of the moderating role of leadership styles on project success. The research aims at identifying and evaluating traits of leadership practiced by project managers, evaluate their effectiveness on the performance of projects and derive best practices in leadership and project management. Using concepts extracted from the literature review, the first codes included: These theories include transformational leadership, work in teams, emotional intelligence and organizational culture. Below are the major areas of focus for the research; Leadership traits, evaluation of the leadership traits and impact on project success and integration of leadership best practice.

CHAPTER 4 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter provides a detailed analysis and interpretation of the systematic literature review (SLR) findings, focusing on thematic areas identified in the study: Positivity of leadership behaviors towards projects success, the mediating influence of leadership in projects success, and Leadership and structural behaviors and best practices.

4.2 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.2.1 LEADERSHIP TRAITS AND PROJECT SUCCESS

Several empirical researches have pointed out the importance of leadership characteristics towards project success, with transformational leadership being the most influential. Adaptive leadership involves soliciting people and fostering their ownership in an organization (Zhao et al., 2021). These different meta-analytical studies have noted that transformational leadership has a positive effect on innovation, team integration and project success rates (Fareed et al., 2021).

Another study, by Ali et al. (2021), conducted on the Pakistani public projects also supports the conclusions indicating that both the transformational leadership and EII have favorable effects on project success. This opens up the challenge for the leaders to self-manage their emotion and manage to influence their subordinates effectively. Furthermore, Ali et al. (2021) note that team building and teamwork sequentially mediate the impact on project outcomes in relation to the transformational leadership with special emphasis placed on team integration in the accomplishment of the project goals.

Nauman et al. (2022) investigated the moderated role of empowerment climate in the relationship between transformational leadership and project success. They affirm that such an approach leads to motivation and commitment of the personnel, thus strengthening the effects of transformational leadership on the extent of project success. However, Abbas and Ali (2023) in their meta-analytic review argue that although transformational leadership has a significantly stronger relationship with project success, transactional leadership is also essential in facilitating the accomplishment of key tasks in accordance with the set schedule.

Other styles of leadership, such as servant leadership which focuses on the development of subordinates, are also effective for project success. Bilal et al. (2021) prove how servant leadership can improve the effectiveness of project leadership and, consequently, the performance of the teams involved. Wu et al. (2021) also condition the effects of servant leadership on follower behaviors to when leadership tactics are in congruence with the followers' self-interests.

Participative decision making and involving the team members in decision making enhances ownership and brings innovative ideas to the table enhances the success of the project (Arshad et al., 2023). Nonetheless, Lundmark et al. (2022) point out some disadvantages of this leadership style, such as its perils during organizational restructuring, suggesting that strong leadership engagement is a key to successful projects.

Drawing from transformational, transactional, servant, and democratic leadership patterns, it is possible to achieve the greatest results by using the advantages of each style (Susanto et al., 2023). Brown et al. (2020) have further revealed that servant leadership can complement other forms of leadership and recommended a combined approach to leadership in project management.

In conclusion, leadership characteristics and behaviors are crucial to the success of programs in as much as they affect motivation, delegation of responsibilities and coordination of other resources towards the achievement of program objectives. While transformational leadership looks quite effective in terms of its motivational and visionary components, other types of leadership also have significant value for projects due to their focus on teamwork, flexible decision making, and stakeholder management.

4.2.2 MEDIATING FACTORS OF LEADERSHIP ON PROJECT SUCCESS

There are several mediating factors through which leadership traits affect project success and failure. They act as means by which the actions and behavior of leaders affect the processes involved in teams and projects. Fareed and Su (2022) examined the moderating role of public service motivation in the relationship between transformational leadership and project success. Their study points out an important fact that through fostering team identification, transformational leaders establish commitment to public service and ensure high performance of the team, thus improving project performance. Public service motivation serves as a facilitator, ensuring that the collective efforts made by the teams are directed towards the achievement of the organizational goals and objectives concerning the particular project.

Ali et al. (2021) stress that team development and the focus on teamwork act as moderators between management and project outcomes. Team work is important in project accomplishment and leaders who adopt team building as a major activity enable the teams to work towards realizing the targeted goals. Group cohesion in terms of communication, collaboration and purpose improve the productivity of the project.

Nauman et al. (2022) also noted that the involvement of the concept of empowerment climate assists to mediate the relationship in between the use of transformational leadership and the success of projects. The elements of empowering climate are allowing the team members to work independently towards decision making as this creates commitment in the projects. The effects of transformational leaders are thus amplified in a situation where they support the development of an empowering organizational climate defined by stellar performance by subordinates.

Fareed et al. (2022) examined the moderating effects of trust and job satisfaction on leadership and project success. First of all, trust is earned through shared information, honesty, and following through with support, guiding subordinates and creating a healthy and constructive organizational culture. When team members are happy with their job, they have the morale to work hard to achieve the laid down goals and objectives of the project.

Fareed et al. (2021) explore the moderation model of emotional intelligence, intellectual intelligence, and transformational leadership on projects. Emotional intelligence in the workplace makes leaders appreciate and manage emotions, enhance interpersonal relation, and solve organizational conflicts. Leaders have the capacity to solve problems through critical thinking which further propels the probability of a project going well.

Nurlina (2022) looked into the effects of transactional leadership in relation to organizational culture and commitment on work satisfaction and performance. A positive organizational culture that entails such aspects as shared values, respect, and communication forms the basis of a great team, which is crucial in meeting project goals. It maintains focus and determination, bringing out the effect of transactional leadership by motivating team members when faced with hurdles on the project's success.

In conclusion, factors of mediating nature including the PSM, teaming, team work, Empowerment climate, trust, job satisfaction, emotions and intellect, organizational culture and commitment all

give the input on how traits of leadership are optimally channeled to achieve the goal of project success. In this way, knowing and utilizing these factors, leaders can maximize the beneficial impact that will help to create a proper climate for cooperation, increase the effectiveness of the team, and guarantee the permanent success of the project.

4.3 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF LEADERSHIP STYLES AND BEST PRACTICES

Project management is influenced by several factors, and one of these is the understanding of different leadership styles and related practices that are considered effective when managing projects. It is evident from Zhao, Fan, and Chen (2021) that transformational leadership has the potential of enhancing project success. Transformational leaders engage the subordinates to perform beyond their potential through articulation of a challenging vision, the encouragement of creativity, and the development of group unity. With the Shared Purpose and Commitment model, transformational leaders spearhead organizational growth and exceptional project performance.

In a meta-analytic review, Abbas & Ali (2023) have compared the transformational and transactional leadership styles. In particular, the results indicated that transactional leadership, where structures are well defined and incentives are tied to performance, has a positive effect on project performance. Transactional leaders focus on project delivery and setting expectations, which keeps a team organized and answerable.

Bilal et al. (2021) investigated the moderating influence of servant leadership on project leadership performance and team performance. Servant leaders embrace the well-being of the team members and always facilitate team cohesion and support. Some of the ways through which servant leaders support and nurture their team include trust, loyalty, and commitment which contribute to the overall success of the projects.

Arshad et al. (2023) suggest that democratic leadership involves the employees in decision-making process and is thus very inclusive. Democratic leadership involves other team members into decision making process and welcome new ideas and suggestions. By encouraging team members to take greater responsibilities and hold them accountable for the same, this leadership style fosters creativity and effective problem-solving mechanisms in project settings.

Jaafar, Zambi, and Fathil (2021) discuss the outcome of autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire leadership and state that the last of these leadership styles may give either positive or negative

results. Though it fosters independence and self-organization among the team members, it can lead to the absence of clear ownership and direction, especially during the restructuring of the organization or the implementation of a large-scale project, for instance.

So, by applying these considerations to leadership behavior, project managers can structure their activities to be compatible with project goals and team processes. By knowing the perks and drawbacks of each leadership type, leaders may adapt to such a style with readability, encouraging teamwork, originality, and suppleness in their groups.

4.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

As a literature review Chapter Four has synthesized empirical literature on leadership traits, leadership mediators and leadership styles comparison in relation to project success. Thus, the discussion reemphasizes the role of enhancing leadership skills, fostering positive team culture, and using best practice to enhance project success. These findings shall form the basis of the final chapter whereby implementation implications and recommendations on project management will be elaborated.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 CONCLUSION

This research sought to review literature on the effects of leadership on project success with specific reference to transformational and transactional leadership. In conducting the systematic literature review, various factors related to project management such as the leadership characteristics and the leadership behavior and their impact on project performance were examined. This research also examines the importance of leadership in ensuring that projects are well implemented and delivered.

Transformational leadership was identified as another more suitable approach as it has been seen to elicit enthusiasm, increased creativity, and dedication in the team. Managers who use this approach focus on creating visions, embracing innovation, and addressing all members of the team. It has been widely used and accepted to improve team performance, satisfaction, and overall project success. Transforming leaders foster improved climate within an organization that challenges employees to operate past their expectations hence producing enhanced output and superior quality projects (Aziz et al., 2022).

Transactional leadership, which is based on the focus on organized activity and the use of contingent positive and negative reinforcement, is also appropriate in managing projects. This style is beneficial in that it ensures that specific basics such as standards and time set by the group are met (Azungah, 2018). While the transactional leadership is rather practical and may produce short-time results due to the clear structure and established expectations, it is not as engaging and stimulating as transformational leadership. The review shows that blending both leadership styles is especially helpful when it comes to dealing with intricate tasks as stated in the review by Benmira et al. (2021).

The thematic analysis identified three major themes: Performance of project resilience, problems, and project success. Several aspects of project resilience in the context of project disruption and its impact on project continuity and success were identified: Sustainable projects may embrace constraints like an economic downturn, natural disasters, and pandemics so that they can continue to provide excellent value (Casas-Rosal et al., 2021).

The identified challenges in project management were established to fall under a comprehensive category that includes health and safety challenges, technological challenges, and material challenges. To eradicate these challenges and enhance the success of the venture, proper risk management measures must be put in place. Another major consideration for effective project management was the capacity to identify likely risks, establish some contingency plans as well as being versatile enough to work within a changing environment.

Project success consist of not only time, cost and scope criteria, but also satisfaction of the stakeholders, quality, financial, and sustainability aspects. The study clearly shows that there is need to correlate the objectives of specific levels of projects with the goals of the whole organization and the stakeholders. According to the literature, successful projects can be defined based on stakeholders' satisfaction, quality of deliverables, and financial and sustainable benefits (2018).

Leadership emerges as a critical factor in mediating challenges in project management for improved performance. The concepts of motivation and innovative leadership are major areas of concern and they are neatly captured in transformational leadership thus making it favorable to foster a good project atmosphere. Nevertheless, a mixture of transactional leadership features can also aid in improving the project performance. Thus, the intense focus on the project resilience, the issues occurring and the outcomes in relation to the strategic objectives of the organization enables the project managers to achieve the long-term and stable positive effects to the project (Kraus et al., 2020).

5.2 LIMITATIONS

Despite the insight that this study offers in terms of the effect of leadership on the success of projects, it has its limitations. The present study has certain limitations which should be taken into account while analyzing the results and their implications for real-life scenarios.

A major limitation of this study is that it employs only secondary data that was collected from various sources literature. This approach, however, is a systematic literature review and as such it is bound by the quality and range of the studies at its disposal. Some forms of bias could have come from the selection of studies used in the research such as the type of databases and the

inclusion criteria. A larger number of work-related sources could be used in further works taking into account more diverse opinions (Mwita, 2022).

Another potential limitation of the study is the risk of publication bias in the choice of the selected articles. One type of bias is the one stating that any positive outcome is more probable to be published along with significant effects as compared to no effects. This can distort the overall perspective of the impact of leadership on the success of projects. To avoid this bias, efforts such as the use of unpublished data or other gray literature could not be done for this review but should be considered for future research.

While it can be useful to differentiate on transformational and transactional leadership styles, other leadership styles that play a role in the success of projects may not be captured. For instance, servant leadership, charismatic leadership, and situational leadership are other leadership styles that warrant more research attention. Future studies could consider examining the validity of the presented types of leadership across countries in the context of project management contexts (Pacheco et al., 2023).

The generalizability of the findings is another issue of concern. Most of the reviewed studies are industry- or region-specific, which might reduce the findings' generalizability to other contexts. For instance, the use of some leadership practices may turn out to be more beneficial in the construction industry compared to the information technology industry, or vice versa, or in Western countries compared to the Eastern ones. More studies have to be conducted to establish the relationship between leadership behavior and project performance in various fields and organizations (Page, 2021).

Furthermore, owing to the fact that many of the investigations included in the review are cross-sectional in nature, the possibility of making causal conclusions is somewhat restricted. Still, there is a correlation between leadership styles and the success of projects, but more research must be conducted to determine causality. Qualitative research, specifically, those that follow up on projects for a long time can help in establishing the impact of leadership style at different phases of the project (Podgórska et al., 2019).

Lastly, the difficulty of evaluating success in projects is also a factor that is hard to measure. Success can include time, cost, scope, quality, satisfaction of stakeholders, and the benefits

evolving in future. A related issue is that many studies have established varying methods of defining and assessing project success. It could be beneficial to improve the compatibility of the metrics and success frameworks utilized in future research through further standardization or the creation of a framework for assessing project success (Rastogi et al., 2019).

However, it is pertinent to note the local limitations of this study in understanding leadership behavior and the possible success of projects. Preventing such limitations in subsequent studies can go a long way in providing a more inclusive understanding of the role of leadership to determine the success of projects. It is posited that by broadening the focus of research, investigating other forms of leadership, and using both longitudinal and cross-industrial methodologies, this study's findings can be used to strengthen the body of knowledge within the project management field.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the presented findings and mentioned limitations, the following recommendations can be provided to strengthen the role of leadership in project management and, consequently, facilitate the achievement of positive project results.

1. Embrace a Balanced Leadership Approach

Overall managers should try to have more of transformational leadership mixed with some of the transactional leadership. Transformational leadership leads to the generation of new ideas and motivation in a group while transactional leadership provides order and ensures that subordinates follow the right procedures in executing their work. One way of moderating dynamics of different project phases is to establish work-life balance to enhance short-term results as well as long-term outcomes (Theophanus, 2020).

2. Enhance Leadership Training Programs

Leadership training should be a core competency in organizations, and leadership development should focus on both transformational and transactional leaders. Communication, motivation, conflict, and risk should be included under training modules. The contingent leadership framework allows organizations to enhance the competencies of project managers in leadership and in turn enhance the performance of projects (Shaffril et al., 2021).

3. Foster a Culture of Resilience

Project resiliency is a critical aspect of mitigating risks during project implementation because of occurrences of unforeseen events. It has been found that organizations should cultivate organizational resilience through implementation of preventative measures for risks, training, and flexibility. As Wawak (2020) pointed out, training sessions about resilience work in association with effective contingency management can assist project groups in dealing with disturbances in the best way possible.

4. Focus on Stakeholder Engagement

Engaging all stakeholders is vital in ensuring that a project achieves its desired goals and objectives. This analysis means that project managers should always engage stakeholder in an open and frequent manner throughout the project life cycle. Stakeholder identification and the needs, expectations, and involvement of stakeholders can improve the satisfaction of the stakeholder and the support of the project. Stakeholder analysis and management concepts should be incorporated into project management learning and implementation tools and methodologies (Zettel, 2023).

5. Standardize Project Success Metrics

The establishment of norms for measuring projects helps make the results more consistent and comparable. Managers must set success factors that are more extensive in scope than the conventional quadruple constraints, namely time, cost, scope, and quality. Adding parameters associated with product and process quality, customer and user satisfaction, financial results, and sound environmental impact can result in a broader assessment of project success. Standardized metrics can also help with comparing results with other organizations and engaging in ongoing performance enhancement (Nauman et al., 2022).

6. Conduct Longitudinal and Cross-Industry Research

More future research should use methodological designs that follow projects over time to curate relationships of causality with leadership and project outcomes. Also, such cross-industry investigations can offer understanding of how leadership influence delivers projects in diverse sectors. The significance of appreciating the differences in leadership efficiency in different industries and cultural contexts is to enhance the specification of leadership training programs.

7. Explore Additional Leadership Styles

Hence, other leadership styles like servant leadership, charismatic, and situational leadership among others need closer examination. Studying these styles to determine their efficiency for various contexts related to project management may enhance the overall understanding of how specific leadership strategies positively affect project outcomes. Hence, organizations should continue to consider embracing pluralism for the introduction of other leadership approaches (Fareed et al., 2022).

8. Integrate Technology and Tools

Technology is an effective aspect that can be used in the improvement of project leadership to make it efficient and effective. Software solutions to assist project managers include tools for planning the project, managing risks, and communicating and cooperating. To support project management, organizations should acquire modern project management software and educate their project teams on how to use them.

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