The Role of Project Human Resource Management in the Industrial Sector in the UAE

العربية الإمارات بدولة الصناعي القطاع في بالمشروع البشرية الموارد إدارة دور
المتحدة

by

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Abstract

Project human resource management is gaining popularity among scholars as they try to investigate its relevance in enhancing the success of a firm, especially those operating in highly competitive industries. The study focused on investigating the role of project human resource management in the United Arab Emirates' industrial sector. The data is collected from primary and secondary sources. The outcome of the study shows that there is a close relationship between effective project human resource management and the success of a company. An organization that understands how to manage its resources is capable of improving efficiency in operation. The competitive business environment is forcing many companies around the world to change the mode of their operations. Large tasks, such as the development of new products, are now conducted as a project. It means that instead of operating per department, as has always been the norm, the new task will be assigned to a specific team and a given amount of resources to work within a given time. The traditional approach made it impossible to track down the unit cost of operations and the real value obtained from a new product. However, this new approach makes it easy to have a clear understanding of the value of each new idea that is developed into a product or a strategy within the firm. The management will know the specific resources and employees assigned the task and the value realized out of it. When a project is undertaken, it is easy to evaluate areas of strength and weaknesses of the assigned team. The management will develop with ways of addressing such weaknesses to enhance the success of future projects. When different companies experience improved performance, the industry's performance will also improve.

مجردة

سيما لا ، الشركة نجاح تعزيز في أهميته في التحقيق يحاولون وهم العلماء بين شعبية البشرية الموارد إدارة مشروع يكتسب قطاع في للمشروع البشرية الموارد إدارة دور في التحقيق على الدراسة وركزت .التنافس شديدة الصناعات في العاملة تلك علاقة وجود الدراسة نتائج تظهر .والثانوية الأولية المصادر من البيانات جمع يتم .المتحدة العربية الإمارات في الصناعة على قادرة مواردها إدارة كيفية تفهم التي المؤسسة إن .الشركة ونجاح الفعال للمشروع البشرية الموارد إدارة بين وثيقة الآن يتم .عملياتها طريقة تغيير على العالم حول الشركات من العديد التنافسية الأعمال بيئة تجبر .التشغيل في الكفاءة تحسين ، دائمًا الحال هو كما ، قسم كل في العمل من بدلاً أنه يعني وهذا .كمشروع ، جديدة منتجات تطوير مثل ، كبيرة مهام إجراء المستحيل من التقليدي النهج جعل .معين وقت في للعمل الموارد من معين ومقدار محدد فريق إلى الجديدة المهمة تعيين سيتم من يجعل الجديد النهج هذا فإن ، ذلك ومع .جديد منتج من عليها الحصول تم التي الحقيقية والقيمة العمليات وحدة تكلفة تعقب تعرف سوف .الشركة داخل إستراتيجية أو منتج إلى تطويرها يتم جديدة فكرة كل لقيمة واضح فهم على الحصول السهل تقييم السهل من ، المشروع تنفيذ يتم عندما .منها تتحقق التي والقيمة المهمة بهذه المكلفين والموظفين المحددة الموارد الإدارة المشاريع نجاح لتعزيز هذه الضعف نقاط لمعالجة بطرق الإدارة تتطور سوف .المعين الفريق في والضعف القوة مجالات أيضًا. الصناعة أداء سيتحسن ، محسنًا أداءً المختلفة الشركات تشهد عندما .المستقبلية

Table of Contents

List of figures

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Background of Study

Project human resource management is increasingly becoming one of the critical areas of planning in the industrial sector. Huemann (2016) defines project human resource management as all activities involving organizing, managing, and leading a project team. The approach that companies in the industrial sector are using in their operations is gradually changing over time. Most of the important tasks are now conducted as project other than normal operational activities. It means that such tasks have project managers and their team assigned specific resources to facilitate their work within a specific time. According to Wang and Rafiq (2014), this approach of operation is becoming popular because of different reasons. First, it makes it possible to plan for the resources. The company will know the amount of time, money, and human resource needed to complete such tasks to the desirable level. Secondly, it enables a firm to set goals that should be achieved by the end of the project. If it is a new product that is being developed, the management will set goals regarding the quality of the product and unit cost of production. It makes it easy to understand whether the set goals have been accomplished and areas of adjustments needed to improve future performance. Finally, Singh (2015) explains that taking the approach of project management when undertaking most of the organizational tasks enables companies to eliminate workers who add little value to the company. The management will have a lean and effective workforce that is capable of delivering the best value to the firm.

Project human resource management focuses on how individuals assigned to lead various projects can manage workers to ensure that they deliver their best. According to Kogon, Blakemore, and Wood (2015), managing the human resource is a complicated process. Unlike tools and machines that can be controlled with ease, managing people require an understanding of issues such as mood, attitude, desires, and social factors that have a direct impact on the performance of the workers. When they feel mistreated, employees can rebel or deliberately fail

to deliver desired results as a way of expressing frustration. A team of highly motivated workers will register a better performance than those with low morale. A human resource manager must understand how to motivate the junior officers. Huemann (2016) explains that attractive remuneration is not the only way of motivating workers. It is necessary to ensure that they are assigned tasks based on their skills, experience, and interests. When a person is assigned to a wrong department where his or her skills and experience are irrelevant, it is not possible to achieve the best outcome even if the management is offering high payment. Successful managers also understand the relevance of making employees feel respected and cherished by the organization. In this paper, the focus is to investigate the role of project human resource management in the industrial sector in the United Arab Emirates. The study will give a special focus to Besix Group which has undertaken megaprojects in the country over the past few years.

1.2. Aim of Research

The aim of this paper is to establish the role of project human resource management in the industrial sector in the UAE. According to a study by Young (2013), many companies are yet to realize the importance of having a team of highly motivated workers. The United Arab Emirates has experienced a high rate of increase in the number of economic migrants, especially in the city of Abu Dhabi. In the country's industrial sector, immigrants constitute over 60% of the workers (Snyder 2013). Skilled experts come from North America, Europe, Japan, and China while semi-skilled and unskilled workers come from India, Philippines, Africa, and other parts of Asia. When these economic immigrants come to the country, they are often frustrated and willing to take any available job. However, with time they get affected negatively if the management fails to take care of their interests effectively. It means that whether a firm is employing host country or third-country nationals, effective management of workers is critical in enhancing their performance. Through this thesis, weaknesses will be identified in project human resource management and ways of addressing them. Also a guideline will be provided that local companies can use to ensure that their operations register impressive performance.

1.3. Research Question

The topic of human resource management is widely explored, and it is important to be specific when conducting a study in this field. Setting research questions makes it possible to possible to understand the specific area of interest in the study. Singh (2015) argues that by setting the right research questions, one can determine specific data that should be collected from different sources. The following is the primary research question that should be answered in this study:

What is the role of project human resource management in the industrial sector of the United Arab Emirates?

Data collected from both primary and secondary sources will be used to answer the above primary research question.

1.4. Research Problem

The economy of the United Arab Emirates is one of the most robust in the region. The government has been keen on promoting diversification of the economy as a way of reducing overreliance on the oil and gas sector. The industrial sector of the economy has been booming over the last few decades because of the massive investment that has been made by the government and private sector players. Majority of workers in the country are foreign nationals who are pushed out of their country because of the problem of unemployment (Alon, Jones & McIntyre 2013). When they come to the country, most of the employers think that once they are offered better salaries than what they get in their home country, they will be satisfied and hence will deliver on their assignments. That belief only holds true for the first few months of employment. Later, they get affected by maltreatment and lack of concern from the management for the social issues they face. Their performance at work will start to dwindle, and if appropriate measures are not taken, the firm will be adversely affected by the poor performance. Snyder (2013) explains that many companies in the UAE have been accused of violation of basic human rights, especially those dominated by foreign workers. Some of these employees claim that they

work under strenuous conditions and there is no one to champion for their rights. Instead, they are constantly threatened with deportation, a fact that lowers their morale (Young 2013).

It may be true that some of these sentiments are exaggerated. Others are complaining because of personal reasons that cannot be met by their employers. However, many studies are in agreement that local companies, especially those in the industrial sector are yet to embrace modern leadership skills that can keep employees satisfied and motivated even if they are not offered a pay rise (Andersson & Djeflat 2013). The inadequacy in human resource management may be affecting the profitability and productivity of some local firms. If these companies are operating in the global market, then their competitiveness will be affected by the dismal performance of their employees who are not happy at work. For companies that have embraced project management as a strategy for undertaking important tasks, having a team of less inspired workers is the last thing that should be experienced. The approach to running a large company, as Szutowski (2016) observes, means that greatest success is expected within the shortest time possible and using the least resources. In such highly demanding environment, it is necessary to ensure that each employee can deliver his or her best in the respective areas of assignment within the project. As such, local human resource managers must understand how to manage a highly talented and motivated team of workers.

1.5. Challenges

When conducting research, it is expected that some challenges may arise. Snyder (2013) advises that it is necessary to identify the possible challenges and find ways of dealing with them to avoid their negative consequences. One of the greatest challenges in this study was finding relevant literature on this topic developed in the local context. Most of the existing studies were conducted in North America and Europe. They do not provide a clear picture of the problem in the context of the United Arab Emirates. When collecting data from participants, it is possible that some participants may provide misleading answers. It is not easy for a manager to admit that he or she lacks adequate skills to maintain a team of highly motivated workers. Others may

provide misleading information because of the fear of possible retributions if it is realized that their opinion varies from that of the majority of those in power. In such a topic that is of public concern, some workers may opt to avoid participating to avoid getting involved in controversies. It means that some of the sampled participants may opt not to take part in the study to ensure that their views remain private. Most of the workers in the country's industrial sector are very busy. It is not easy to collect primary data from them within the time available for the study. I was able to overcome most of these challenges. The fact that the management of Basix allowed the research to be carried out amongst its workers of different works made it easy to collect primary data.

1.6. Structure of the Study

This paper has five chapters. Chapter 1 provides a background of the study, aim of the research, research question, the problem, and challenges encountered. Chapter two provided a comprehensive review of the literature. It focused on understanding the concept of project management, human resource management, project human resource management, and the industrial sector in the United Arab Emirates. It also provides a tentative research hypothesis. Chapter three looks at the research model approaches and the method used to collect and analyze primary data. Chapter four entails a comprehensive analysis of findings obtained from primary sources. The last chapter provides conclusion and recommendation. The paper also has an abstract which summarizes the entire paper and a list of sources used in the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this chapter, the focus is to review the existing literature in this field. Human resource management and project management are some of the most researched topics in the field of business (Audretsch, Link & Walshok 2015). However, this study focuses on a relatively new area within this broad field, which is the role of project human resource management in the United Arab Emirates' industrial sector. I am interested in investigating how effective management of human resource can increase chances of achieving success in megaprojects within the country's industrial sector. In this chapter, the focus will be to review what other scholars have found out in this field. Carvalho (2015) advises that it is important to conduct a review of the literature to avoid repetition of already existing information. The review helps in finding knowledge gaps that should be addressed to expand knowledge in a given field.

2.1. Project Management

Szutowski (2016, p. 56) defines project management as "the practice of initiating, planning, executing, controlling, and closing the work of a team to achieve specific goals and meet specific success criteria at the specified time." It must be a temporary endeavor that has a specific duration within which it has to be completed and resources needed to complete the set tasks. According to Jason Westland (2006) project management is tools, techniques, number of skills and management activities required to undertake a project successfully. It must focus on achieving specific goals within a given organization.

There are many definitions of a project among various studies. The Project Management Institute (2004) defines project as: "a temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product or service". The Cambridge dictionary explains projects: "a piece of planned work or an activity which is finished over a period of time and intended to achieve a particular aim". Every project has milestones at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end, following a path from initiation stage to completion to evaluation. The project life cycle is the sequence of stages through which the project will develop gradually. The model of Project Life Cycle (Developed by the Project

Management Institute (PMI)) consists of five stages: initiation, planning, execution, performance/monitoring, and project close (Fig.1).
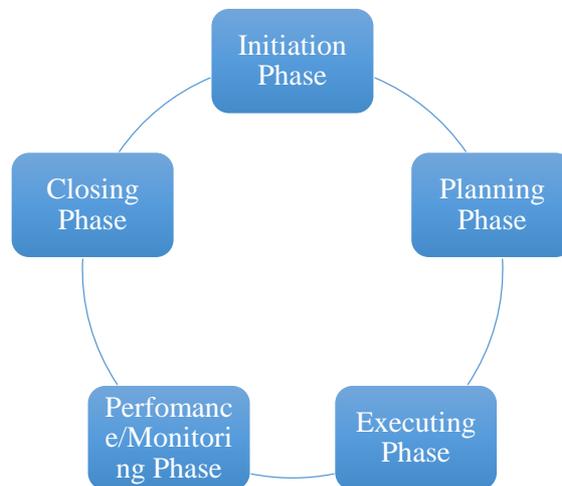
Figure 1: Project Life Cycle

Over the last few decades project management practices are becoming more important for the success of many organizations. According to the Economist Intelligence Unit survey executives from different developed countries discovered that project management strategies can significantly reduce risks, cut costs and improve success of the organization. Approximately 90 % of senior executives from various companies ranked project management activities as crucial in 21sr century to successfully achieve organizational goals, deliver valuable results and remain competitive on the market. The following are the five primary stages involved in project management:

Idea generation. The first step is to come up with an idea. Every project starts with an idea which is caused by a need that should be satisfied or a problem that should be solved. Project ideas can be generated through different sources such as employees or customers. Project manager can influence on people's creativity and he/she have try to enhance it. In addition, project manager analyzes the market and entire business environment. According to Bayard O.

Wheeler business environment is a mix of factors that influence a company's operations. The business environment that should be analyzed by project manager consists of 6 sectors: (economic, governmental, technological, socio-demographic sector, competition sector and the suppliers sector). Also project manager estimates the company's strengths and weaknesses in order to generate a huge number of ideas to improve the company's performance and solve or prevent problems. There are different times of techniques like attribute listing, brainstorming, which are useful for improving the creativity at different levels on different level (individual or group level). Also this phase can be called the initiation phase where the idea for the project should be explored and elaborated.

For companies in the construction industry such as Besix Group, the idea is always generated by a client. The client will define the kind of structure needed and the basic features. In case the idea is to be generated by the firm, the top managers are often responsible for coming up with new projects that would help the firm to move to the next level of success. Once an idea is generated, a team will be constituted that will be headed by a project manager (Hana 2015). The idea will be handed over to the team for further development.

2.1.1. Project plan. The next stage is to screen the idea and determine its viability based on the available resources and what it seeks to achieve in the firm. If it is established that the idea is viable, the team will move to the next step to develop a comprehensive plan for the project. According to the 4th edition of the Project Management Body of Knowledge (2008) planning process consists of those processes which are performed to define the objectives, establish the total scope of the project, and develop the list of actions required to achieve those project objectives. The stage of project planning is usually the most important and one of the most challenging phase for project managers, because it includes scheduling of all project activities, also an educated guess of the employees, resources and equipment needed to successfully complete the project. Moreover, the planning of communications with the clients, suppliers may be needed as well as planning of logistics and procurement activities.

David Pierce in his study "Project Scheduling and Management for Construction" emphasized that project planning stage involves not only the development of schedule and cost of the project, but also analysis of stakeholders' opinions and planning of resources. The planning stage involves proper identifying the required resources needed and steps that will be taken to accomplish all the tasks (Cankar, Tomi & Cankar 2013). The outcome of a project largely depends on the plan that is put in place by the relevant team assigned to complete the project.

2.1.2 Resources and tasks distribution. The next stage is the allocation of resources and distribution of task. Carvalho (2015) explains that it is one of the most important stages in project management. The team assigned to the project will implement activities as explained in the plan. The resources must be distributed effectively to meet the goals of the project. Cases of theft or waste of resources should be avoided as much as possible to ensure that the project is completed using the set resources.

Proper management of resources is an essential part of project management to complete tasks successfully according to the timeline and budget. Scheduling resources is a complex task which is consists of people, equipment, or facilities. Project scope, resource capacity, availability and effort are the main factors for proper allocating and scheduling. Resourse allocating includes determining the quantity required or the total effort needed to successfuly complete the tasks of the project. Over-allocating resources or under-allocating them can lead an organization into troubles and project failure. In addition it can impact profit of an organization, relationships with clients and employee trust. Many studies in management have shown that resource scheduling helps to solve problems associated with resource availability and work capacity.

2.1.3. Monitoring the progress against the plan.

The monitoring proccess includes systematic gathering and data analysis analysing that will help measure progress of the project. During the implementation phase, there will be another team that will be responsible for the evaluation of the performance of each activity conducted.

The project activities should be monitored against the plan to ensure that every activity is conducted according to the plan. The evaluators can suggest changes necessary to enhance the success of the project (Oxford Business Group 2014). Sometimes the project owner or top management may appoint a different independent team to be responsible for the evaluation. The team should work closely with the project manager to ensure that any relevant changes are made as would be appropriate.

2.1.4. Completion and handover. The last stage of project management is the handover ceremony. After completing the project, the project manager will invite the project owner to evaluate the outcome of the idea. The functionality of the product will be explained and any question that the owner may have answered (Cox 2013). In rare cases, the owner may suggest minor modifications during the handover phase to ensure that the product meets the expectation. That should be done using available resources. According to Aziz, E. E. (2015) «Project Closure involves handing over the deliverables to customers, passing the documentation to the business, cancelling supplier contracts, releasing staff and equipment, and informing stakeholders of the closure of the project.».

2.2. Human Resource Management

Human resource management refers to the coordination, controlling, and directing workers within an organization to ensure that the desired goals are achieved using available resources and within the right time. The main focus of Human Resource Management is employees that should be managed to achieve the best performance of an organization. According to Schwalbe (2015), human resource managers must have the capacity to understand the capacity and special talents of the workers to assign them tasks based on what they can deliver to the firm. Human resource management involves undertaking the following activities:

2.2.1. Recruitment. Recruitment is the first step in managing the human resource. The manager needs to identify, vet, and hire highly skilled workers who can undertake various tasks within the firm. Successful firms have come up with different strategies for identifying talented

workers with unique skills that can enable a company to achieve a competitive edge over its rivals in the market. Recruitment and selection form one of the most important parts of the central activities in the human resource management: specifically, the attraction, development and reward of employees. Kloppenborg (2015) advises that recruitment should be a continuous process instead of conducting it once every year. Foot and Hook (2008) viewed recruitment process from three different perspectives: legal, ethical and business. Moreover, the whole recruitment process should be in line with the human resources strategy. The strategy ensures that the firm has a constant pool of highly talented individuals at all times. The definition of recruitment is a complex by nature. According to Newell and Shackleton (2000) recruitment is "the process of attracting applicants who make a contribution of their skills, qualities and abilities that are needed to meet the job requirement for the particular organization".

2.2.2. Training and development. Once the right employees are hired, the next step is to take them through regular training to develop their skills. Most companies take newly recruited employees through induction to introduce them to their department and to make them understand the organizational culture (Lock 2014). Other than the induction training, it is important to have a regular training of the employees to equip them with relevant skills that can make them improve their performance in their respective departments. As Pica (2015) explains, the goal of such regular training is to ensure that employees are equipped with new skills that can make them improve their performance in respective departments.

2.2.3. Performance appraisal. Performance appraisal is a relatively new field in human resource management. Warburton (2013) explains that organizations are now keen on assessing the performance of their employees. After taking them through regular training, the final phase is to evaluate the outcome of tasks assigned to them. Performance appraisal is done for many reasons. Many companies use it to identify strength and weaknesses of the workforce to determine the right approach that should be taken when training them. The appraisal is also done to determine how to reward employees (Nicholas & Steyn 2017). Many firms are currently

rewarding their workers based on their value to the firm. In extreme cases, performance appraisal is meant to weed out perennial underperformers. Those who constantly appear at the bottom of the list in every evaluation may be eliminated from the firm if they do not add any meaningful value.

 2.2.4. Rewarding. Compensating employees is another important task of human resource managers. The task is often conducted in close coordination with the chief financial officer and the top managers. The human resource manager will advise the senior managers about how to retain top talents based on improved pay. There should be a system that ensures employees are rewarded appropriately based on their value to the firm.

2.3. Project Human Resource Management

 Project human resource management, according to Schwalbe (2015), is a complex process that involves selecting project team members and managing them in a manner that would enhance their performance. It goes beyond planning the financial resources and making tools and machines readily available for the project. It entails fine-tuning the right workers to ensure that they can deliver the best results in a given project. The main goal of the implementation of Human Resource Management practices within an organization and projects is to enhance the skills and improve knowledge of employees (Boselie, Dietzz, & Boon, 2005). The studies of Huselid and Wright & Boswell have shown that Human Resource Management practices affect performance and motivation of employees in a positive way within companies from different sectors. Project human resource management has four main stages as discussed below:

 2.3.1. Acquire project team. The first step in project human resource management is the acquisition of the right team members. Each project will require workers with different skills and experiences. As Warburton (2013) observes, some project will need a team of engineers, architects, and designers along with masons and unskilled workers. Construction companies such as Besix often require such a team. Other projects will need a team of financial experts to help in achieving the desired goal. The tasks to be undertaken often define the skills that the project

manager will look for when developing the team. In many case, project team members are taken from among the current employees of the company. They have to be redeployed from their current department to work on the project until such a time that their services will no longer be needed (Oxford Business Group 2014). In other cases, the project manager will have to engage the human resource manager of the company to help in hiring experts specifically for the project if the needed skills and experience is not available internally. Those who are hired to work on such project will form part of the team involved in various activities that will facilitate the success of the project.

2.3.2. Plan project team. Once the right team is constituted, the next step is to develop a proper plan for how the project will accomplish its goals. A successful project manager understands that all the team members should be involved in the planning process (Sergeant & Wieliczko 2014). The primary goal of the project should be outlined and the proposed means of achieving them stated. The team members, especially those assigned the role of team leaders, will be required to debate over the plan, and propose ways of enhancing its success. Each team leader will be required to analyze roles they will play and the ground officers they will be working with to accomplish the assigned tasks. If there is an issue, they should address it at the planning stage. It may be lack of proper resources, time, or skills needed to accomplish the task (Warburton 2013). The project manager should create an environment where all relevant issues can be addressed to find a possible solution as soon as possible. It will also be necessary for the team leaders to understand how they can remain coordinated throughout the project through the leadership of the project manager.

2.3.3. Develop project team. The next stage is to develop the team. Each project may have unique requirements. Whether the project manager is working with the current employees of the firm or outsourced workers, it is necessary to take them through some form of training or induction to understand what should be achieved (Zolait 2013). They need to understand project goals and how they should be achieved using the available resources. There should also be a

clear understanding of how different tasks will be conducted from the time the project is initiated to the last stage. According to Tuckman project team developing includes 5 stages (Fig. 1).
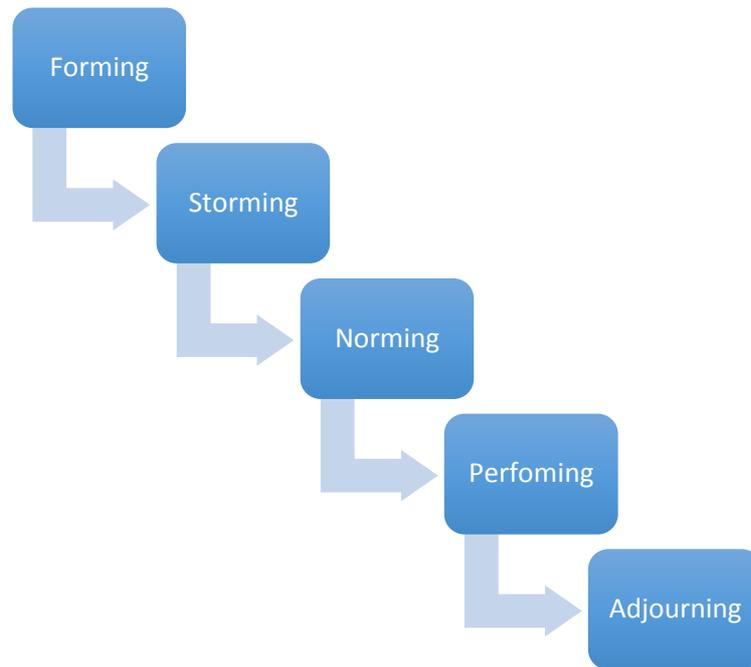
Figure 2: Model of Project Team Development (Tuckman, 1965)

The first stage is "Forming", this stage occurs when the team is just created. In this phase the main goal of project managers is to encourage the team to get to know each other. Usually during the first stage project goals, timeline, roles of employees should be discussed. Project managers should be able to successfully manage their team during each stage. Moreover, project manager must set the rules and provide all documents regarding responsibilities of each team member. For instance, if the project involves construction of a building, the project manager should ensure that each of the project members understand his or her role, from the stage where architectures are expected to come up with the appropriate design, to the construction stage, and finally to the stage when the building is prepared for the handover ceremony.

The second stage is "Storming", in this stage team members will become more open to each other and they will start expressing their points of view regarding the project. The goal of project managers during this phase is to listen project members and try to solve

misunderstandings that may occur. The next stage is "Norming", in this stage the team members acknowledge skills and experience that each member brings to the team as a result performance of whole team can be on a high level. In the "Performing" stage project manager still involved, but it is becoming noticeable that the team already developed into a high-preforming unit. The main goal of project manager in this stage is to continue paying attention to each project member in order to keep the team performance on a high level. The final stage called "Adjourning", in this stage most of the goals of the team have been achieved. The focus is on wrapping up final tasks and documenting the results of each project member. The aim of this stage is to achieve successful project closure on a positive note. (Tuckman, 1965)

2.2.4. Manage project team. The last and most challenging stage of project human resource management process is managing the team. Planning various activities in the project may be simple (Tan & Perleth 2015). Sometimes the team involved may be overambitious. However, when it comes to transforming the plan into real action, numerous challenges are expected. Project human resource management involves addressing each of these challenges as they come to ensure that the plan is implemented. According to Rogers (2016), one of the common issues that arise when managing the human resource is the inability of the current team to accomplish the assigned tasks within the specified period. It is at the implementation stage that the team realizes that tasks to be completed are not as simple as it appeared during the planning stage.

The project manager should address such challenges, and sometimes may be forced to bring in more people to address the deficit. Pica (2015) explains that at the implementation stage, one of the critical roles of project human resource management is to ensure that the team remains cohesive from the beginning to the end. In the United Arab Emirates, many companies have workers from different parts of the world (Azanza, Moriano & Molero 2013). These workers may find it challenging to understand the culture and social practices of their colleagues. It is the responsibility of the manager to find common ground for all the team members. They should be

trained to embrace the organizational culture that is common to everyone. Every team member should be tolerant and should avoid remarks that may create remarks. Whenever an issue arises among the employees, it should be addressed as soon as possible before it can have an adverse effect on the unity of the team.

Communication is critical in managing team members in a project. There should be a system that facilitates an open communication amongst all the stakeholders. Rogers (2016) explains that when a project is divided into stages where one stage has to be completed before moving to the next, the involved parties should maintain regular communication to understand areas that need adjustments and issues that need to be addressed to facilitate a smooth transition. The management of the company should also be offered relevant updates so that they can understand the progress made in the project. Many companies are now embracing the open-door policy to promote openness and facilitate speedy resolution of issues that arise in the project. This policy allows junior employees to reach out to the senior managers when they feel they have a concern that cannot be addressed by their immediate supervisors as would be appropriate (Oxford Business Group 2014). Similarly, the top managers can engage employees directly to ensure that they remain motivated and that they understand what they need to achieve in their respective departments.

2.3. The Industrial Sector in UAE

The United Arab Emirates' industrial sector is one of the most robust in the region. According to Pica (2015), this sector has benefited a lot from the government's initiative to diversify its economy. About two decades ago, the country's economy largely depended on the oil and gas industry. However, that is no longer the case, although the petroleum sector is still the leading income earner in the country, other industries have emerged to help support the economy. Hana (2015) explains that when compared with its neighbors, the United Arab Emirates has registered impressive growth in its industrial sector. The sector is currently worth almost $ 30 billion, and it is expected to register even further growth in the years to come (Tan &

Perleth 2015). Food and beverage industries constitute one of the largest sectors of the economy. Other notable sectors include primary mineral industries, refined oil products, the chemical industry, the metallic industry, and the real estate industry.

In this study, the real estate industry was given special attention because of the recent developments over the past one decade. According to Rogers (2016), the United Arab Emirates has experienced an unprecedented growth of the industrial sector over the recent past. The government has sponsored some of the most ambitious constructions in human's history. Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest building, is found in the city of Dubai. Palm Beach, the world's largest artificial island, is also found in the same city (Campbell & Göritz 2013). The government has also sponsored an ambitious growth of transport sector. The Dubai Metro is currently considered one of the most advanced in the world. It is fully automated and services most parts of the country. The roads infrastructure has also received significant growth over the past two decades.

According to Hana (2015), one company that has been at the center stage of this ambitious growth is the Besix Group. Headquartered in Brussels, Belgium, this company has been actively involved in some of the megaprojects in the country. The construction company is behind some of the biggest and most successful construction projects in the UAE (Tan & Perleth 2015). It was responsible for the construction of the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) headquarters in Abu Dhabi in 2014. Its most outstanding project is the construction of Burj Khalifa, a building that is 829.8 meters tall. It was completed in 2010. Other notable projects include Dubai Maritime City, Dubai Tram, Dubai Water Canal, Emirates Palace, Jumeirah Emirates Towers Hotel, Khalifa International Stadium, Sheikh Zayed Mosque, and Sheikh Zayed Bridge (Sheldon & Daniele 2017). One of the defining factors of these projects undertaken by this company is that they registered impressive success in their outcome. It is a strong indication that its management understands the concept of project management and what

17

needs to be done to achieve success in an organizational context. It was necessary to investigate this company's operations further in primary data collection.

2.3.1. Tentative Hypothesis

The review of the literature has provided preliminary information about the relevance of project human resource management in the country's industrial sector. It is clear that companies which have learned how to embrace effective project management strategies, such as Besix Group, register impressive performance even when undertaking megaprojects. It means that this new concept is worth emulating. The following hypotheses were developed based on the information gathered from the respondents.

H1: Project human resource management plays a critical role in enhancing the growth of the country's industrial sector.

H2: Project human resource management plays a critical role in promoting the competitiveness of individual companies in the local and international market.

2.3.2. Research Gap

Project human resource management plays a critical role in the growth of a country's industrial sector, as shown in the literature review. It was evident that most of the studies conducted in the field of project human resource management were based on economies of the west. Most of these studies were conducted in the United States and Europe. There was a knowledge gap in explaining how the country's industrial sector is affected by the successful implementation of the concept management. That is why it was necessary to investigate the role played by project human resource management in the United Arab Emirates' industrial sector. Primary data was collected from a company operating in the local market, making it easy to understand the relevance of embracing the concept of project management in enhancing a firm's success in the market.

Chapter 3: Research Methods

Chapter 3 focuses on the methodology that was used to collect and analyze data. Alsos, Eide, and Madsen (2014) argue that findings of a given study can only be reliable if the method used in data collection and analysis was valid. It is the reason why it is necessary to explain the design and analysis approaches. The study used primary and secondary data sources. Secondary data was obtained from books, journals, and reliable online sources. The literature review conducted in chapter 2 formed the basis of secondary data analysis. Primary data was collected from sampled respondents who were working at Besix Group at the time the research was conducted. This chapter will explain the method that was used to collect and analyze data from these respondents.

3.1. Research Design

According to Carvalho (2015), it is necessary to select an appropriate study design that is capable of answering the research question effectively to meet the goal of the project. The aim of this research was to investigate the role of project human resource management in the United Arab Emirates' industrial sector. The appropriate model is mixed method research. The design entails both qualitative and quantitative analysis. Using quantitative methods made it possible to establish if project human resource management has a significant relationship with a project's success. The method enabled me to determine if effective management of the employees can make it possible to achieve goals. Qualitative methods facilitated a direct response to the research questions. Participants shared their views and experiences about the role of project human resource management within the organization they were working for at the time of data collection. Using both qualitative and quantitative research methods is demanding, as Carvalho (2015) observes. However, it facilitates a comprehensive understanding of the issue under investigation.

3.2. Sampling and Sample Size

Sampling is often necessary when dealing with a large population from which data cannot be collected within a limited time. The United Arab Emirates' industrial sector employs a large number of workers. As academic research, it was necessary to collect data from a manageable sample. Stratified sampling was considered an appropriate technique for selecting participants for the study. The method was chosen because it was necessary to collect data from managerial and non-managerial employees. In each of the two groups, simple random sampling was using to identify specific participants of the study. Knight (2013) advises that when selecting an appropriate sampling technique, it is necessary to ensure that it will facilitate the identification of a sample that represents the entire population. Given that primary data collection was limited to a specific company, it was necessary to ensure that the participants effectively represent the entire population. A sample size of 150 participants was considered appropriate for the study. It included 55 managerial and 95 non-managerial employees of the company.

3.3. Instrument of Data Collection

The chosen research design entails qualitative and quantitative data analysis. Carvalho (2015) argues that quantitative data analysis can only be conducted when data is collected in a standardized format. Each question should be answered in a way that makes it easy to code it for mathematical analysis. A questionnaire was needed to facilitate the collection of data in s standard format. The questionnaire developed had three sections. The first section of the questionnaire focused on the demographical factors. Szutowski (2016) explains that issues such as age, gender, and nationality may influence the answer of respondents. For instance, sometimes foreigners may find it difficult adapting to local cultures and practices in the country. Some of the issues they are complaining about may be as a result of the challenges in embracing the local culture. Capturing the nationality of the respondents may help in explaining any form of bias that may exist in the answers they provide. Similarly, age is another important factor. A 49-

year old employee who has been working for the company for the last twenty years has experience that may make his response different from a 19-year old worker who has just been hired. Capturing the age of the respondents helps in determining if they have enough experience to make specific claims.

The second part of the questionnaire focused on the academic background of the respondents. According to Szutowski (2016), a respondent is often assumed to answer questions based knowledge and experience. As such, when such a person has a high academic qualification, their responses are often assumed to have some sense of authority. Their academic empowerment enables them to rise above common assumptions and stereotypes when answering research questions. It does not mean that the less-educated respondents are likely to provide misleading answers, as Knight (2013) observes. Sometimes what a question seeks to investigate depends largely on the experiences that one has had than the level of knowledge. The last section of the questionnaire focused on specific issues relating to project human resource management in the United Arab Emirates' industrial sector. Given that I chose mixed method as the appropriate design, questions used in this section of the questionnaire were both structured and unstructured. The structured questions facilitated the collection of data in a structured format that was used in quantitative analysis. The unstructured questions made it possible to collect data used in qualitative analysis. A copy of the questionnaire used is attached in the appendix of the paper.

After developing the data collection instrument, the next important phase was to use it to collect data from the respondents. It was desirable to collect data through a face-to-face interview. Carvalho (2015) argues that this method of data collection enhances response rate and reduces chances of receiving misleading responses from the participants. However, the limited time available for the study made it a less effective approach to data collection. Most of the participants, especially those in the managerial positions, are busy people who could not be tracked down and engaged in the interview within the limited time. As such, I opted to send the questionnaires to them so that they can answer the questions at their free time. Phone calls was

made to each respondent explaining to them how to answer the questions. The questionnaire was formatted in a simple manner to avoid confusion when answering the questions. They were requested to answer all the questions and send the document via e-mail once they completed filling it. Only two phone calls were made to avoid bothering the respondents. The first call was made to inform them that the questionnaire had been sent to their e-mail. The second call was made two days before the day of delivery to remind those who could have forgotten about it. They were given ten days to respond to the questions and e-mail it back to the me.

3.4. Primary Data Analysis

After gathering primary data from the respondents using the instrument, the final stage was to analyze it is response to the primary research question. Analysis was conducted in two different ways. The first approach involved the mathematical analysis of data. Information gathered from the respondents was analyzed mathematically to determine the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. The analysis was conducted using excel spreadsheet. Each question was analyzed independently and the output provided in the form of graphs and charts. These figures are easy for the readers to interpret. The second approach of analysis took the qualitative form. The respondents were allowed to explain their views about the role of project human resource management in the country's industrial sector. In the analysis, the interest was to compare various responses and shared views of the respondents on the issue. The analysis also involved capturing contradicting views and explaining the possible reasons for such contradictions. The two approaches enabled me to understanding of the relevance of project human resource management in the local companies. It was also possible to explain and why firms should give it a serious focus to enhance their competitiveness. It also made it possible to provide an informed opinion about what companies in this country should do to promote effective management of human resource assigned to undertake various projects.

3.5. Ethical Considerations

The primary data was collected from individuals who are working at Basix, one of the leading construction companies in the United Arab Emirates. One of the most important ethical requirements was to seek permission from the management to interview the firm's employees. A formal request was made to the management which was approved before interviewing the respondents. I explained to the participants that their participation in the study was voluntary, as Carvalho (2015) advises. It meant that they were at liberty to withdraw from the study at any time without having to justify reasons behind their decisions. Before data collection, I answered all the questions and addressed concerns of the participants. The aim of doing that was to ensure that respondents were comfortable being part of the research. The aim of the study and their role in it was articulated. It was important to ensure that the identity of the participants was protected. It is noticeable that some of the questions asked would yield different approaches. To avoid victimization because of the difference in opinion, the identity of the participants remained anonymous. It was the best way of protecting the interest of those who agreed to be part of the study.

Chapter 4: Findings

In the previous chapter, the focus was to explain the method that was used to collect and analyze primary data. This chapter presents that analysis of primary data that was collected from the respondents. The analysis will make it possible to accept or reject the hypotheses developed after the review of the literature. As explained in chapter 3, the primary data was analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The mixed method approach of analyzing primary data was considered appropriate in providing a comprehensive answer to the research question. The first hypothesis below focused on determining the relevance of project human resource management in enhancing a country's industrial sector. Figure 1 below shows the outcome of the analysis.

H1: Project human resource management plays a critical role in enhancing the growth of the country's industrial sector.
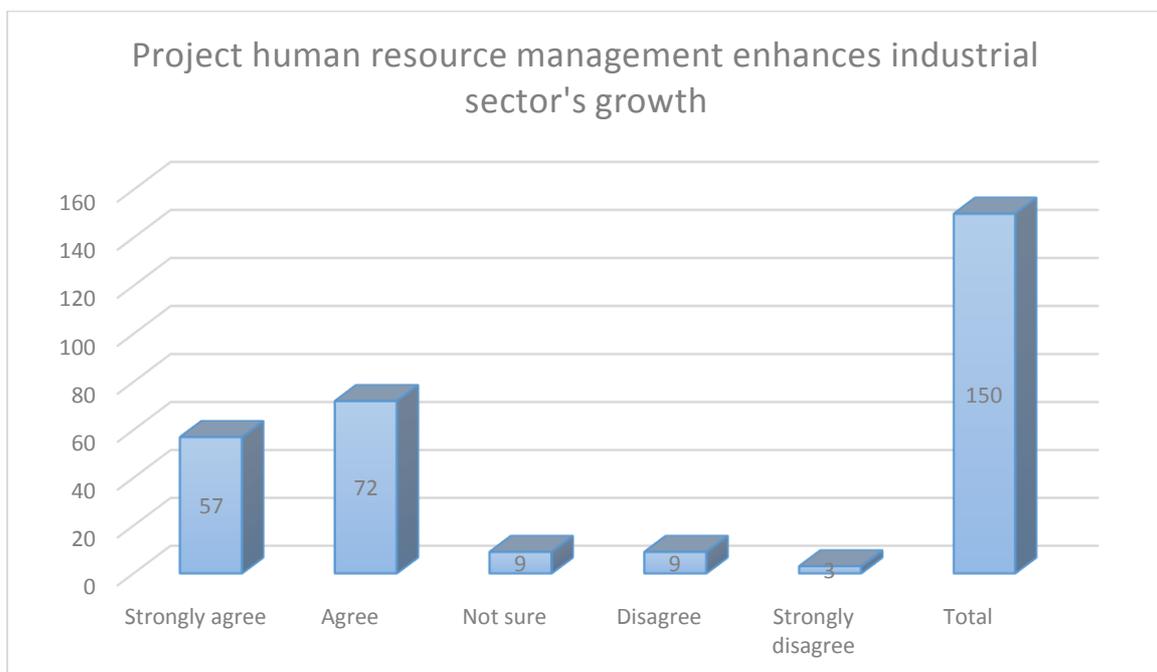

Figure 3: Human resource management enhances industrial sector's growth

Data were analyzed from 150 participants. The statistics show that 57 respondents strongly agreed with the fact that project human resource management enhances the growth of the country's industrial sector. 72 others agreed with the statement. It means that an overwhelming majority (86%) of the respondents believe that project human resource management can help improve growth of an industry if it is embraced. Only 8% of the respondents have a contrary opinion. Another 6% of the respondents stated that they are not sure. It means that the hypothesis above was accepted. The respondents believe that project human resource management plays a critical role in enhancing the growth of the local industrial sector. One of the respondents argued that if local firms can embrace best practices, they will register better performance than they are now, which would translate into an overall growth of the industrial sector. The second hypothesis focused on determining the benefits of project human resource management to an individual firm. Data collected from the respondents was analyzed mathematically and figure 2 below shows the outcome.

H2: Project human resource management plays a critical role in promoting the competitiveness of individual companies in the local and international market.
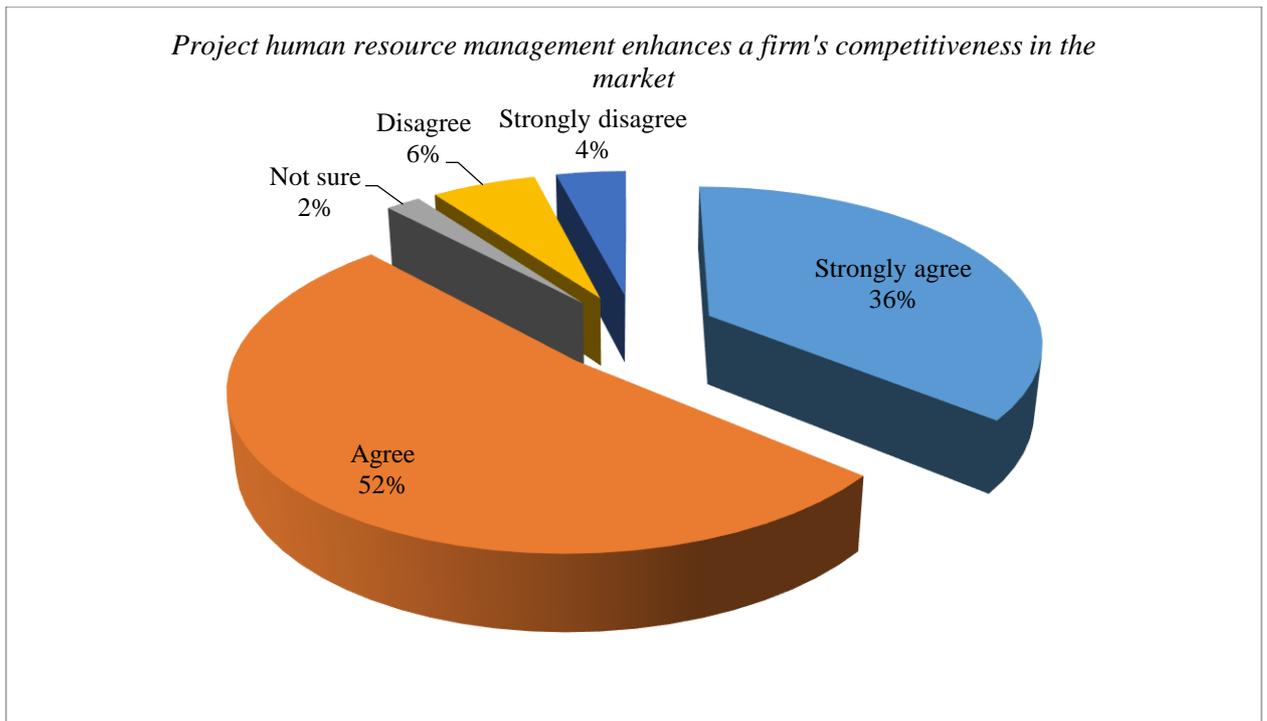
Figure 4: Project human resource management enhances a firm's competitiveness

It is evident from the primary data collected that an overwhelming majority of the respondents (88%) believe that project human resource management enhances a firm's competitiveness in the market. A company that can manage human resources effectively when undertaking various projects has a high chance of achieving success than that which does not. It will improve efficiency in its operations, lower its cost of production, and increase the production capacity. Such a firm can charge its products competitiveness compared with that which is yet to understand the relevance of project human resource management. 10% of the respondents had a contrary opinion while the other 2% were not sure. The second hypothesis above was confirmed. It was necessary to determine from the participants if there is a significant relationship between project human resource management and project success. Figure 3 below shows the outcome of the analysis of data obtained from the participants.
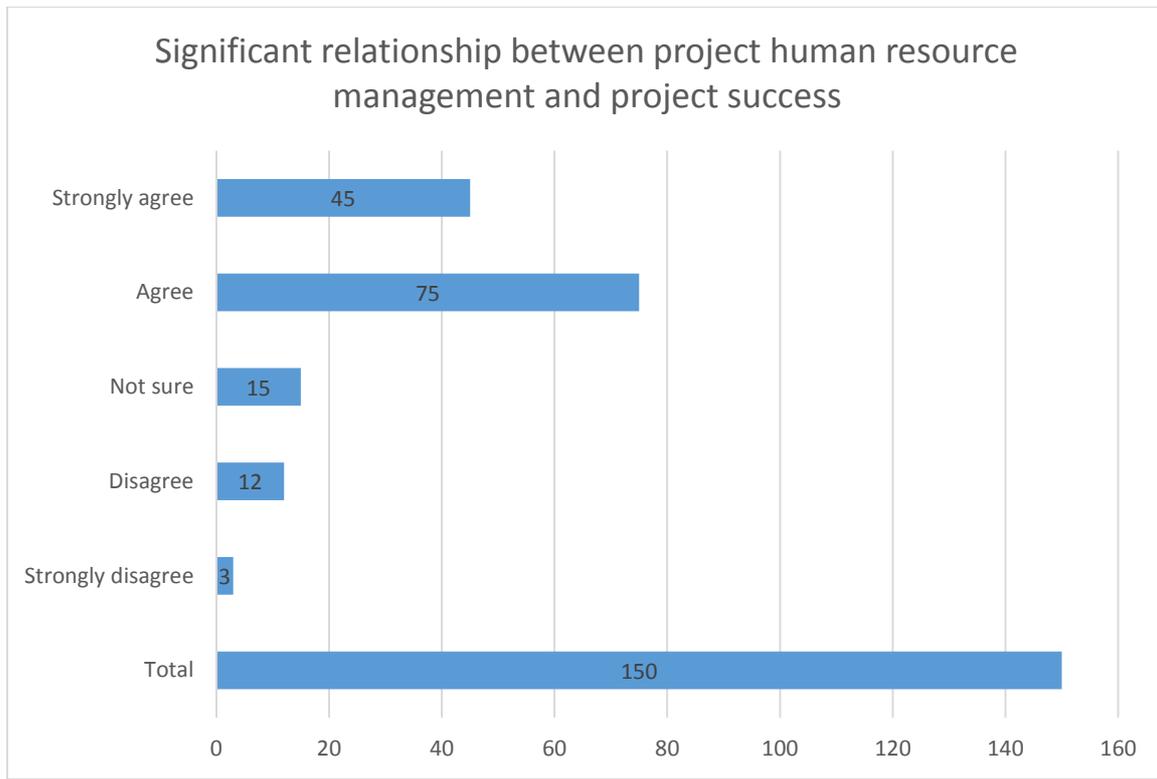
Figure 5: Relationship between human resource management and project success

The majority of the respondents believe that there is a significant relationship between project human resource management and project success. Only 8% of the respondents had a contrary opinion. The success of a project depends on the management approach that is embraced. If a firm understands how to manage its human resource, then it can achieve the desired success when undertaking different projects. When conducting this investigation, one of the factors that I was interested in determining was employees' morale. The primary goal of having an effective project human resource management is to ensure that the morale of all those assigned to the project is maintained. Issues that may affect their motivation must be addressed to should be addressed effectively. The following question was posed to the respondents.

What are the primary factors that affect employees' moral in your organization?

Varying answers were received from different respondents to explain how their morale is affected. It was observed that these respondents were speaking based on personal experiences they have had while working at this or other companies.

Respondent 7 stated, "My morale is often affected when the supervisor fails to reason out with me on issues that are controversial. When given instruction, I follow them strictly. However, sometimes changes are introduced, and then I get to be blamed for a mistake that is not mine. When they issue a command and start blaming me for such mistakes, I feel demoralized."

This participant felt that sometimes those trusted with the work of managing junior employees fail to understand them. They feel frustrated when their views are discarded, even if they have a valid point that they are trying to put across. An effective project human resource manager must listen to the junior employees. Whenever there is confusion, it is advisable to investigate the cause and the person responsible. When addressing such issues, there should be a mutual understanding of what needs to be done and how it should be addressed. If the mistake was not committed by the junior employee, it should be stated so in clear terms to avoid the mental torture. When asked the same question, another respondent provided the following answers:

Respondent 11 said, "It is not easy working with a supervisor who believes he or she is always right. We all make mistakes, and as such, we need to appreciate that sometimes we can fail in one way or the other. Blaming junior officers may be easy, but it is not always the best approach to take."

The sentiment of this respondent was echoed by several other workers who participated in the study. Construction projects are costly and very demanding. Sometimes mistakes are made by those issuing instruction. When the project engineer identifies a mistake during a regular check-up, it is easy for the supervisors to blame it on the junior employees. It is the easiest way for them to avoid the reprimand. What they fail to understand is that they make their employees feel less valued. The fact that all credits are taken by these supervisors while mistakes are blamed on them is frustrating. It is a major reason why some employees lose morale. The next question focused on establishing how human resource management personnel can improve their

performance to ensure that they maintain a team of highly motivated workers when undertaking various tasks within a larger project.

Based on your experiences as a human resource manager, how do you think you can be empowered to understand your role better?

Respondent 4 stated, "I believe we need to take regular training to enhance our interpersonal skills when handling employees."

The answer was also reiterated by non-management employees who felt that some of the supervisors lack interpersonal skills. Some of them feel that the best way of managing people is to make them scared and to issue commands without having anyone challenging it. Having such absolute authority may be desirable, but it is not the best way to manage employees. Managers with good interpersonal skills know that they can influence employees to act in a given desirable manner without making them feel scared. Regular training of these officers is the best way of equipping them with the necessary skills to manage workers from a diverse background. They also need to know how to control their emotions even when handling difficult situations. The respondents were also asked to state the importance of project human resource management in big projects

What is the importance of project human resource management in big projects?

Respondent 15 stated, "Project human resource management promotes cohesion and team spirit among employees of diverse backgrounds working on megaprojects. It also helps in maintaining employees' morale."

When handling megaprojects, a firm may sometimes be forced to outsource skills from other organization. Project human resource management helps in ensuring that there is cohesion within the team assigned to undertake the project.

Case Study: Project Human Resource Management at Besix Group

Besix Group S.A. is one of the leading construction companies in the United Arab Emirates. Founded in 1909, the company has grown to expand its operations to the global

market, with its headquarters being in Brussels. In the United Arab Emirates, this company has earned a reputation for its successful completion of megaprojects. According to Xu, Yao, and Lu (2014), the company's greatest success in the recent times has been defined by the projects that it has undertaken in the UAE. Most of these projects are of high costs and demand a lot of resources to ensure that they are completed. A case in point is the construction of Burj Khalifa, the tallest building on earth. It was an ambitious project that many construction companies avoided because of the complex nature of activities involved. There was no precedent, and the team had to ensure that they avoid making any mistake. It is necessary to investigate how this company manages its human resource when undertaking such megaprojects.

Acquiring project team that will be responsible for undertaking various tasks within the project is one of the most challenging tasks that the top management of this company always has to accomplish. When undertaking megaprojects, it may be necessary to subcontract some of the tasks. The primary goal is to have the right skills and experience that will guarantee the success of the project (Zolait 2013). Besix is known for its ability to work with other smaller companies to undertake megaprojects in the United Arab Emirates. It goes for companies specialized in specific areas. For instance, it can subcontract the work of electrification of a new building to a small company that has a track record of registering impressive performance in that area.

Planning project team was the next important face. Once the right team is assembled, it is considered part of Besix Group for the entire period that the project will be on course. The assembled team is always involved in planning the project. In the construction of Burj Khalifa, Besix had to work together with Samsung C&T Corporation and Arabtec (Huhtala, Tolvanen, Mauno & Feldt 2015). The three firms hired individual experts, and smaller companies specialized in various aspects of construction. All parties had to be involved in coming up with an effective plan. They had to understand their role in the project and how the activities will be coordinated. Some of the respondents present during the planning of the building's construction admit that it was not easy coming up with a plan that is universally accepted amongst all

stakeholders. In this case, the parties had to present their ideas and provide support using data and architectural/engineering facts to convince the rest of the group. Nothing was left to chance because of the sensitive nature of the project and the fact that such a building had never been constructed on earth.

Developing the project team comes after planning, as the respondents in this study confirmed. One of the respondents noted that it is often challenging to ensure that individuals who have never worked together are inducted to work as a unit. Sometimes the difference in organization culture stands in the way of ensuring that the needed cohesion is realized. It is the role of project human resource manager to ensure that such challenges are overcome. Employees working on a similar project must embrace the team spirit and understand that the success of the project depends on the ability to work as a unit and in a coordinated manner. Project team development also involves training of the employees on how to handle their tasks effectively and within the set time limit using the provided resources. They must understand how to avoid waste. O'Reilly, Caldwell, Chatman, and Doerr (2014) explain that one of the reasons why the cost of the project may exceed that in the budget is because of wastefulness. The management often trains its workers on how to use resources at every stage of the development to enhance efficiency.

Managing a project team is a continuous process that must be undertaken to ensure that goals set for the project are achieved. Managing project team members require an understanding of their needs and the ability to address issues that may emerge. Most of the megaprojects often require integration of employees from various companies. It means working with different people from different parts of the world. It requires the project team manager to understand how they can be coordinated effectively without making anyone uncomfortable. The success that this company has registered in the United Arab Emirates is a clear indication that it understands how to manage employees when undertaking megaprojects.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Project human resource management is a relatively new topic that has been attracting the attention of scholars over the recent past. Companies are shifting their operations from the departmental model to using project management model. Major tasks are now handled as independent projects with specific budget and resources. The approach makes it easy to specifically determine the cost of producing new products in the market and benefits that they bring. The study shows that when a company uses this model, it is easy to identify areas of strength and weaknesses so that necessary adjustments can be made. It is easy to implement change under such model because every project will be handled differently. The growing importance of project management makes it necessary to evaluate how human resource should be managed in such activities. It is not easy to achieve success when working with a team of employees who feel frustrated. The performance of workers is often influenced by their morale.

The ability of employees to go an extra mile to achieve goals set by the management is affected by how they feel about their supervisors and the organization. It is the reason who many organizations are now taking their junior managers through regular training to make them understand how to handle junior employees. They should know how to work with people from diverse background. Their position within the firm forces them to overcome personal biases and stereotypes that may cloud their judgment when handling their subordinates. Success of individual companies will always be reflected in the entire industry within the country. When firms in the United Arab Emirates' industrial sector register improved performance because of their ability to manage workers effectively when undertaking different projects, the industry will register impressive growth. When their performance is below expectations, the effect will be felt in the entire industry. The following recommendations should be taken into consideration based on the findings made in the study:

➢ It is important for local companies in the United Arab Emirates to conduct regular assessment of the performance of human resource managers. Their capacity to handle subordinates effectively should be determined. Any weaknesses should be identified and addressed effectively.

➢ When assessing the capacity of human resource managers, it is necessary to involve their subordinates. They are in the best position to explain the weaknesses that they have identified in their supervisors.

➢ Industrial sector firms should consider taking their human resource managers through regular training. They should be trained on how to handle subordinates from diverse backgrounds. The training should always be conducted with the primary goal of addressing weaknesses identified during assessment.

➢ The local firms should embrace performance appraisal as a means of determining the value of their employees. Human resource managers who register below average performance consecutively should be redeployed to other relevant departments.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Questionnaire Investigating the Role of Project Human Resource Management in the UAE'S Industrial Sector

Section 1: Respondents' Background and Demographics

1. What is your age?

   a) 18-24

   b) 25-34

   c) 35-55

   d) Over 55 years

2. Kindly state your gender?

   a) Male

   b) Female

3. Kindly select your race from the list provided below:

a) An Arab

b) European

c) African

d) American

e) East Asian

f) Other

4. What is your nationality?

a) Emirati citizen

b) Non-Emirati citizen

Section 2: Respondents' Academic Background and Experience

5. What is the highest academic attainment that you have?

a) Pre-High School

b) High School

c) College Diploma

d) Bachelor

e) Master

f) Doctorate

6. Do you have any specialized training on project human resource management?

a) Yes

b) No

7. How long have you worked as a human resource manager?

a) Less than 2 years

b) 2-5 years

c) 6-10 years

d) Over 10 years

Section 3: The Role of Project Human Resource Management in the UAE's Industrial Sector

8. Do you believe that there is a significant relationship between project human resource management and performance of firms in the UAE's industrial sector?

   a) Strongly Agree

   b) Agree

   c) Not sure

   d) Disagree

   e) Strongly Disagree

9. Do you believe firms in the United Arab Emirates understand the relevance of human resource management in their organizations?

   a) Strongly Agree

   b) Agree

   c) Not sure

   d) Disagree

   e) Strongly Disagree

10. Do you believe that local firms in the country are committed to promoting effective human resource management in project management?

   a) Strongly Agree

   b) Agree

   c) Not sure

   d) Disagree

   e) Strongly Disagree

11. Do you believe that foreign workers, especially those from developing economies, are not properly taken care of in the local companies?

   a) Strongly Agree

   b) Agree

   c) Not sure

d) Disagree

e) Strongly Disagree

12. Do you believe that the locals and highly skilled workers from Europe and North America are given preferential treatment in the country?

a) Strongly Agree

b) Agree

c) Not sure

d) Disagree

e) Strongly Disagree

13. What are the primary factors that affect employees' moral in your organization?

_____

_____

14. Do you believe local companies are keen on creating an effective environment for employees to explore their potentials?

a) Strongly Agree

b) Agree

c) Not sure

d) Disagree

e) Strongly Disagree

15. If your answer is yes (strongly agree or agree) to the above question, kindly explain?

_____

_____

16. Do you believe local employees understand the significance of their roles when undertaking different projects?

a) Strongly Agree

b) Agree

    c) Not sure

    d) Disagree

    e) Strongly Disagree

17. Do you believe local companies are embracing project management model of undertaking major activities to lower cost and improve the general performance?

    a) Strongly Agree

    b) Agree

    c) Not sure

    d) Disagree

    e) Strongly Disagree

18. Do you believe your company is committed to empowering its managers to understand how to use project human resource management to enhance their performance when assigned different projects?

    a) Strongly Agree

    b) Agree

    c) Not sure

    d) Disagree

    e) Strongly Disagree

19. Based on your experiences as a human resource manager, how do you think you can be empowered to understand your role better?

_____

_____

20. Based on your experience as an employee of this company, how do you think you can be empowered to understand your role better?

_____

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