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From Variety to Victory: Impact of Diversity Management Practices on Project Success with moderating role of Power Distance

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Abstract:

This study explores the impact of diversity management practices on project success, with a particular focus on the moderating role of power distance in construction projects. The research is conducted in the construction sector of Pakistan and employs a quantitative and causal methodology. Data is collected from project managers through questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics, reliability tests, correlation, and regression analysis. The findings reveal that diversity management practices have a positive and significant effect on project success. Additionally, power distance is found to have a negative impact on project success and to moderate the relationship between diversity management practices and project success. The study highlights the importance of managing diversity effectively and addressing power distance to enhance project outcomes in the construction sector.

Keywords: Diversity Management Practices, Project Success, Power Distance, Construction Projects, Pakistan

Introduction:

Cross-cultural teams can bring a wealth of experience, diverse ideas, and innovative thinking which can significantly enhance organizational performance and competitive advantage. By leveraging the varied perspectives and approaches of cross-cultural teams, organizations can generate a wide range of ideas, leading to increased creativity and avoiding cognitive inertia (Shahid, 2020). Furthermore, developing cultural intelligence and global identity through

experiential learning approaches can help management students navigate the complexities of working in culturally diverse virtual teams, enhancing their ability to collaborate effectively across cultures (Erez et al., 2013). While, the cultural variations can be obstacles in the way of execution of culturally varied projects in global business community. The role of Project Managers should be vivid, critical and culturally sensitive in order to accomplish targets of different projects (Pikhart & Klimova, 2020).

Shin and Zhou (2023) are of the perspective that diversity plays a significant part in the achievement of different project groups, though it is always difficult to manage a diverse team for project manager. The intercultural dimension is of utmost importance in modern organizations. Employees working together with different socio, cultural backgrounds may bring new ideas, innovation and creativity in the projects implementation. Organizations may acquire new ways of collaboration and methods of problem solving. There are numerous basics of diverse groups that must be considered in cross-cultural project teams; such as the cultural differences subjective to age diversity, gender, religions' respect for the successful teamwork which is the very significant to success for a project team. Henderson and Stackman (2023) explained that the project management has remained a male dominated field since last five decades, however women have started to create their space in this field as scholars, practitioners and teachers from last decade. Hence, now the typical image of project manager has changed and gaining new image and both men and women are redefining this overall situation. The competition is hard and the skills need to be enhanced in order to function effectively in this rapidly changing advanced business world along with the new technology. Anbari *et al* (2022) has found that there are many kinds of benefits that can be attained by the project management teams while increasing the awareness and managing the diversity throughout the project.

Project manager has to solve the diversity management is one of the most sensitive and core issues. But if an organization deals it effectively then obviously it can be rewarding and in the great interest of the organizations and team members. (Nguyen, 2015). Moreover, the diversity is not mere a simple phenomenon as it may have a broader context like educational background, lifestyle, ethnicity, age, disability and gender (Mohammed, 2008). The diversity in team has been established to influence team, team members and organization in various ways. In global projects, the diversity in teams can be seen via different perceptions and ideas and even trade and business can be attracted which can develop team performance and boost work inspiration and contentment regarding work.

The significance of cultural intelligence in navigating the intricacies of working with diverse teams is emphasized in the literature. Cultural intelligence is related to the capacity to adapt to different cultural contexts making sound decisions and collaborating effectively across cultures. It is essential to develop cultural intelligence for project managers and team members to effectively manage intercultural dynamics within project groups (Ang et al., 2017). It is also important to comprehend the interplay between cultural backgrounds and project outcomes for successful project implementation in diverse settings (Popescu et al., 2024). It is essential to make the leadership accountable for project performance. Mir (2023) argued that if accountability procedures are in place it impact the behavior of project managers and team members. Perrigino & Jenkins (2023) argued that if leaders and managers are held accountable for diversity-related goals it can unlock the benefits of diversity in workforces.

International projects that use useful cross-cultural groups can give a resource of understanding and inventive opinions to improve the viable position of their organizations, and to solve potential communication hurdles. The idea of multicultural project has become widespread. Many projects are being completed successfully using multicultural groups. The role of project managers is very important as they must be culturally sensitive and creative as well in order to achieve the defined objectives of project and avoid potential risk. Simply when conflicts arise within a team or organization, it becomes hard and difficult and sometime impossible to produce positive results. The basic of this conflict is the poor communication and behaviors of the members of the team who do not share their expertise and knowledge with each other and in a result poor performance is emerged (Chua, Sun, & Sinha, 2023). Hence this research focuses on the factors that effectively manage diversity and moderation role of power distance.

The study of the impact of diversity management practices on project success with a focus on the moderating role of power distance holds significant importance in today's globalized and multicultural work environment. The findings of this study might guide organizations in developing more effective management strategies which can lead to overall project success. Secondly it might contribute to the literature on diversity by highlighting the need for culturally sensitive approaches in managing diverse teams.

Research Objectives

The study has the following main research Objectives:

- To determine the relationship between diversity management practices and project success
- To check the moderating role of power distance on the relationship of diversity management practices and project success

Research Questions

The study has the research questions

- Is there any impact of diversity management practices on project success?
- Is there any moderating role of power distance between diversity management practices and project success?

Literature Review

Impact of Diversity Management Practices on Project Success

Diversity management practices are essential for project success as they promote inclusivity, innovation, and efficiency within project teams. Research has demonstrated that effective diversity management positively influences project outcomes (Karim, 2016). Recognizing the significance of diversity management practices enables project managers to enhance team productivity and efficiency, ultimately leading to successful project completion.

Martínez-Perales et al (2018) highlighted in their study that management system certifications, often indicative of sustainability practices, can impact project success. They suggested that using

diversity management practices into project management can lead to project success. Battistella et al (2023) explored the impact of cultural dimensions on project management performance, and found that teams from diverse culture impact project performance.

Nuraini and Keban (2018) analyzed the role of diverse stakeholders and good governance in project success. They highlighted the importance of managing diverse stakeholder relationships for project success. Leaders and managers within institutes are mainly accountable for the achievement of diverse rules because they have to make sure that the rules are helpful and can be sustained. The discrimination on the basis of age, gender, ethnicity and education is the most important issues amongst the workforce diversity that needs to be addressed appropriately. When diversity is not dealt properly that means the overall performance of the team and the organization will be effected badly and it will damage the reput of the organization as well. Nancy (2014) found that it is essential for the project manager to find out different types of diversity in a team, the project manager has the ability to take advantage of on these individual differences in expectation of improving team success. Moreover the distinctive potentials of each individual have been recognized, a project manager has ability to encourage team members to appropriately use these unique qualities to achieve team goals, which further leads to successful completion of the project (Zein, 2016).

***Hypothesis 1:** There is a positive and significant relationship between diversity management practices and project success*

Moderating Role of Power Distance

Power distance, a concept originating from Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory, plays a crucial role in moderating various organizational dynamics. Several studies have delved into the impact of power distance on different aspects of leadership, employee behavior, and organizational outcomes. Wang & Guan (2018) explored the positive effect of authoritarian leadership on employee performance, highlighting the moderating role of power distance (Wang & Guan, 2018). Similarly Peng et al. (2020) investigated how power distance influences the relationship between environmentally specific transformational leadership and team pro-environmental behaviors (Peng et al., 2020).

Moreover, Lian et al. (2020) studied the impact of leader unethical pro-organizational behavior on employee unethical conduct, noting the moderating effect of power distance orientation (Lian et al., 2020; Duan et al., 2017) focused on the relationship between authoritarian leadership and employee silence, revealing that power distance orientation moderates this association (Duan et al., 2017). Additionally, Yang & Chau (2016) examined the influence of power distance orientation on proactive personality and career success (Sainburg et al., 2019).

Furthermore, research by Dai et al. (2022) shed light on the mediating role of fear of authority in the relationship between power distance belief and workplace communication (Yang & Chau, 2016; Yang et al., 2021) explored the impact of self-sacrificial leadership on pro-organizational unethical behavior, highlighting the negative moderating effect of power distance on the

relationship between inclusive leadership and team psychological security (Dai et al., 2022). These studies collectively emphasize the significant role of power distance in shaping organizational behaviors and outcomes.

Based on above discussion it can be concluded that power distance serves as a critical factor in moderating the relationship between various organizational practices, leadership styles, and employee behaviors. Understanding the nuances of power distance orientation can provide valuable insights into how different cultural contexts influence organizational dynamics and project outcomes.

Hypothesis2: *.Power distance moderates the relationship between diversity management practices and project success*

Framework of the Study

In this research study, the Project Success is dependent variable whereas the diversity management practices is independent variable. Power distance is moderating variable.

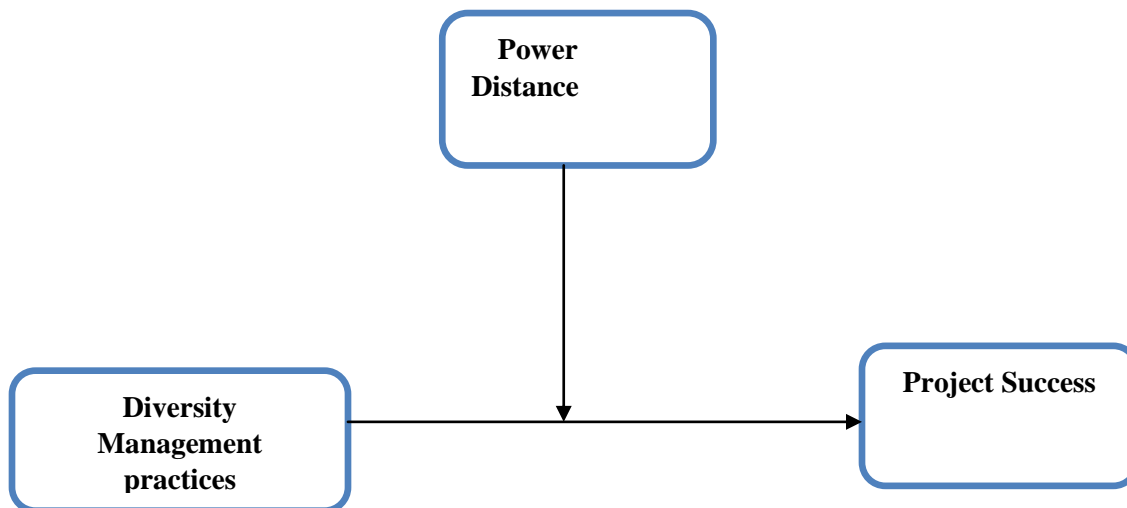


Figure A: Research Framework

Independent variable: Diversity management practices

Dependent variables: Project success

Moderator: Power distance

Type of Study:

The study is a quantitative and causal in nature where objective is to check the impact of diversity management practices on project success with a focus on the moderating role of power distance in construction projects.

Population and Sample Size:

The population for this study consist of project managers working on construction projects. Given the practical constraints of time and resources, a sample size of approximately 150 to 200 project managers will be targeted. This sample size is considered sufficient to provide reliable insights while ensuring manageability in data collection and analysis.

Sampling Strategy:

As there is no population frame available for construction managers working is Pakistani construction industry so convenience sampling has been employed to select participants for this study. This non-probability sampling technique is chosen due to its cost-effectiveness and ease of access to respondents.

Data Collection Tool:

Data has been collected through questionnaires. The questionnaires are adopted from previous researches as mentioned below in table 1.

Table 1.

Variable	Study
Project Success	Lavagno and Jennifer (2017)
Power Distance	Earley and Erez (1997)
Diversity Management Practices	Magoshi and Chang (2009)

Data Analysis:

The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics, reliability test, correlation and regression analysis. For check the moderation hypotheses PROCESS developed by Preacher F. Hayes was used. (Hayes, 2013)

Results:

Descriptive Statistics:

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness Statistic	Kurtosis Statistic
DM	141	2.6	4.9	3.844	0.4731	-0.331	-0.368
PD	141	1.25	3.75	2.584	0.5164	-0.02	0.279
PS	141	2.43	4.86	3.87	0.41803	-1.072	1.616

Where

DM = Diversity Management Practices

PD= Power Distance

PS = Project Success

This table presents descriptive statistics for three variables: Diversity Management Practices (DM), Power Distance (PD), and Project Success (PS), based on a sample of 141 respondents. The minimum score for diversity management practices is 2.6 and the maximum is 4.9, indicating a range of responses. The mean score is 3.844, suggesting that, on average, respondents perceive a moderate level of diversity management practices in their projects. The standard deviation is 0.4731, indicating that responses are somewhat dispersed around the mean. The skewness value is -0.331, suggesting a slight negative skew, meaning there are slightly more respondents scoring above the mean. The kurtosis value is -0.368, indicating a distribution that is slightly flatter than a normal distribution.

The mean score of power distance is 2.584, indicating that, on average, respondents perceive a moderate level of power distance in their projects. The standard deviation is 0.5164, showing some variation in responses. The skewness value is -0.02, indicating that the distribution is approximately symmetrical. The kurtosis value is 0.279 suggesting a distribution that is slightly more peaked than a normal distribution.

The mean score of project success is 3.87 suggesting that respondents generally perceive their projects as successful. The standard deviation is 0.41803 indicating that responses are relatively concentrated around the mean. The skewness value is -1.072 indicating a significant negative skew meaning there are more respondents scoring above the mean. The kurtosis value is 1.616 indicating a distribution that is more peaked than a normal distribution, with more values concentrated around the mean.

Reliability Analysis:

Table 3. Reliability Analysis

Variable	No of Items	Cronbach's alpha
Diversity Management Practice	10	0.747
Power Distance	8	0.655
Project Success	7	0.738

Table 3 presents the results of a reliability analysis for variables. The reliability of a scale is often measured using Cronbach's alpha, which assesses the internal consistency of the items in the scale. A higher Cronbach's alpha value indicates greater reliability. Generally, a value of 0.7 or above is considered acceptable for research purposes.

Diversity management practices is measured using 10 items. The Cronbach's alpha for this scale is 0.747, which is above the threshold of 0.7, indicating that the scale has acceptable internal consistency. This suggests that the items used to measure Diversity Management Practice are consistently capturing the underlying construct.

Power distance variable is measured using 8 items. The Cronbach's alpha for this scale is 0.655, which is closer to commonly accepted threshold. Project success variable is measured using 7 items. The Cronbach's alpha for this scale is 0.738, which is above the threshold of 0.7, indicating acceptable internal consistency. This suggests that the items used to measure Project Success are consistently capturing the underlying construct.

Correlation Analysis:

Table 4: Correlation Analysis

Variable	DM	PD	PS
Diversity Management Practice			
Correlation	1		
Sig. (2-tailed)			
Power Distance	-0.25		
Correlation	0.006	1	
Sig. (2-tailed)			
Project Success	0.387	0.063	
Correlation	0.00	0.441	1
Sig. (2-tailed)			

Where

DM = Diversity Management Practices

PD= Power Distance

PS = Project Success

Table 4 presents the results of a correlation analysis among three variables: Diversity Management Practices (DM), Power Distance (PD), and Project Success (PS). The Pearson correlation coefficient is used to measure the strength and direction of the linear relationship between these variables. The correlation coefficient between power distance and diversity management practices is -0.25, indicating a weak negative relationship. This suggests that as diversity management practices increase, power distance tends to decrease slightly, although the relationship is not strong. The significance value (p-value) is 0.006, which is below 0.05. This means that the negative correlation between variables is statistically significant.

The correlation coefficient between project success and diversity management is 0.387, indicating a moderate positive relationship between variables. This suggests that as diversity management practices increase, project success also tends to increase. This correlation is statistically significant at the 0.01 level ($p < 0.01$). The correlation coefficient between power distance and project success is 0.063, indicating a very weak positive relationship between PD and PS. The significance value (p-value) is 0.441, which is above the threshold level of 0.05. This suggests that the relationship between PD and PS is statistically insignificant.

Regression Results:

Table 5: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics		Durbin-Watson	
					R Square Change	F Change	Sig. Change	F Change
1	.387 ^a	0.15	0.144	0.38668	0.15	26.147	0	1.053

a. Predictors: (Constant), DM

b. Dependent Variable: PS

Where

DM = Diversity Management Practices

PD= Power Distance

PS = Project Success

Table 6. Regression Results

Model	Coefficients					
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	2.553	0.259		9.847	0.00
	DM	0.342	0.067	0.387	5.113	0.00

a. Dependent Variable: PS

DM = Diversity Management Practices

PS = Project Success

The R Square value is 0.15, meaning that 15% of the variance in project success can be explained by diversity management practices. The coefficient for diversity management is 0.342 with p-value of 0.00 indicating that the relationship between diversity management and project

success is statistically significant. This means that for every one-unit increase in diversity management practices, project success is expected to increase by 0.342 units, holding all other variables constant.

Moderation Results:

Table 7: Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	P
0.4224	0.1784	0.1465	12.3559	0.000

Table 8: Moderation Results

	coeff	se	T	p
Constant	3.8713	0.0321	120.674	0.0000
PD	-0.2451	0.0598	-4.0987	0.0477
DM	0.327	0.0782	4.1836	0.0000
Int_1	0.181	0.037	4.89189	0.0412

Where

DM = Diversity Management Practices

PD= Power Distance

PS = Project Success

Interaction Term = Diversity Management Practices * Power Distance

The results presented in Tables 7 and 8 are from a moderation analysis where the effect of Diversity Management Practices (DM) on Project Success (PS) is being examined, with Power Distance (PD) acting as a moderator. The interaction term (DM * PD) represents the combined effect of DM and PD on PS. The coefficient for power distance is -0.2451 with P-value is 0.0477, indicating that power distance has a statistically significant negative effect on project success. This could mean that in environments where there is less hierarchical distance between team members, communication and collaboration leading to successful project outcomes. The coefficient for diversity management is 0.327 the P-value is 0.0000, indicating that diversity management has a statistically significant positive effect on project success. This suggests that fostering an inclusive environment where diverse perspectives are valued can enhance creativity, problem-solving, and ultimately lead to more successful projects.

The coefficient for the interaction term is 0.181, with a P-value of 0.0412. This indicates that the effect of diversity management practices on project success is negatively moderated by power distance. This represents that the positive impact of diversity management practices on project success is more pronounced in environments with lower power distance. In other words, the benefits of diversity management practices in terms of project success are amplified when there is less hierarchical distance between team members, allowing for better communication and collaboration.

Hypothesis	Description	Results
H1	There is a positive and significant relationship between diversity management practices and project success	Accepted
H2	Power distance moderates the relationship between diversity management practices and project success	Accepted

Conclusions:

The study conducted in the construction sector of Pakistan aimed to explore the impact of diversity management practices on project success, with a particular focus on the moderating role of power distance. Based on the results, the following conclusions can be drawn:

The findings indicate that diversity management practices have a statistically significant positive effect on project success. This suggests that construction projects in Pakistan can benefit from implementing strategies that promote diversity and inclusion within project teams. Embracing diverse perspectives and skills can enhance creativity, innovation, and problem-solving, leading to more successful project outcomes. The results show that power distance has a statistically significant negative effect on project success. In the context of the construction sector, this implies that hierarchical structures and significant differences in power and authority among team members can hinder communication and collaboration, ultimately affecting the success of projects.

The study also found that power distance moderates the relationship between diversity management practices and project success. Specifically, the positive impact of diversity management practices on project success is more pronounced in environments with lower power distance. This highlights the importance of fostering a more egalitarian and inclusive work culture within construction projects to maximize the benefits of diversity management. In conclusion, the study underscores the significance of diversity management practices in enhancing project success in the construction sector of Pakistan. It also emphasizes the need to address issues related to power distance to create a more conducive environment for leveraging the advantages of diversity. Construction firms and project managers should consider these factors in their project management strategies to improve project outcomes and achieve greater success.

Future study recommendations:

While this study focused on the construction sector in Pakistan, future research could explore the impact of diversity management practices and power distance on project success in other sectors and industries. This would help to understand the generalizability of the findings across different contexts. Future research could explore other potential moderators in the relationship between

diversity management practices and project success. For example, factors such as leadership style, team cohesion, or organizational culture could also play a role in shaping the effectiveness of diversity management. Investigating the effectiveness of diversity training programs in reducing power distance and enhancing the positive impact of diversity management practices on project success could be a valuable area for future research.

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