

From Past to Present – the Development of Project Success Research

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Abstract- Project success research has been a field of importance for more than three decades. The research field has been developing along the passed the time; however, our understanding of this development is very limited. This study aims at understanding the longitudinal developments in the project success research field and discussing and elaborating further results based on previous studies. For this purpose, a literature study was conducted where the emergent research interests were identified. After that, two separate syntheses of success factors and criteria were developed for identifying the most often present ones (later termed weighty). The findings of this study present the evolution process of project success research. This directs one's attention to the nature of project success research, leading research questions, main targets, outcomes, and chronological presentation of the obtained results. In addition, this study led to interesting results concerning project success factors and criteria. The findings suggest that there are 65 factors contributing to project success, among which communication, top management support, project manager's competency, clear objectives and realistic obligation, monitoring and feedback, and risk management are the critical ones. Moreover, 13 frequently mentioned project success criteria in the literature were identified where meeting cost, meeting time, customer satisfaction, meeting quality, and business success are the top five ones. The findings of this study can be insightful for the research community and project practitioners to be aware of the development process of project success research.

Keywords: Project success criteria; project success factors; project management.

1. INTRODUCTION

Project success has been a popular research field during the last three decades. A large amount of research has been conducted to address different aspects of project success. For example, several studies have tried to define project success as clearly as possible (for instance, Baccarini, 1999; Jugdev and Müller, 2005; Shenhar et al., 2001). Some scholars have pursued to identify factors and criteria for project success (for instance, Andersen et al., 2006; Cooke-Davies, 2002; Chua et al., 1997; Pinto and Slevin, 1987; Pinto and Prescott, 1988). The efforts concerning identification of success factors and criteria can be divided into two main parts: success factors and criteria of general significance (for various types of projects) (for instance Aga, 2016; Cooper and Kleinschmidt, 1987; Chipulu et al., 2014; Davis, 2014; de Carvalho et al., 2015; Hussein et al., 2015; Ika et al., 2011; Lim and Mohamed, 1999; Malach-Pines et al., 2009; Müller and Jugdev, 2012; Mirza et al., 2013; Martens et al., 2018; Nanthagopan et al., 2019; Scott-Young and Samson, 2008; Serrador and Turner, 2014; Turner, 2004; Taherdoost and Keshavarzsaleh, 2016; ul Musawir et al., 2017), and success factors and criteria for specific project types or contexts, e.g., construction and IT projects (for instance Cozijnsen et al., 2000; Chua et al., 1999; Chang et al., 2013; Daniel et al., 2018; Espinosa et al., 2006; Engelbrecht et al., 2017; Fortune and White, 2006; Handzic et al., 2016; Müller and Turner, 2007; Rodriguez-Repiso et al., 2007; Standing et al., 2006; Sudhakar, 2012).

The nature of these studies on project success research, their motivations, and the gained outcomes can be seen as the main cornerstones of project success research development. Analyses such as mapping of the development of project success research have been addressed in a very limited manner. Moreover, this research effort, which is as comprehensive as possible, can provide new knowledge contributions by its overall analyses of the research results gained so far.

Such analyses can provide further understanding of the critical success factors on the resultant flourishing projects of various business contexts. This study aims at contributing towards the mentioned knowledge gaps through: (1) Mapping the development of project success research through describing its changing trends and obtained outcomes, and (2) Exploring the results of previous studies in a manner that is as comprehensive as possible.

This paper is structured into five sections. The first one is presenting the point of departure, which describes the conceptual background. The second section is about the research methodology and relating the research process. The third one presents the results of this study. The fourth one presents the discussions about the obtained results. Finally, the last one includes the main conclusions.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 DEFINITIONS

The project is considered an overall success if the project meets the technical performance specifications and/or mission to be performed, and if there is a high level of satisfaction concerning the project outcome among key people in the parent organization, key people in the project team, and key users or clientele of the project effort (de Wit, 1986). Success on a project

means that certain expectations for a given participant were met, whether owner, planner, engineer, contractor or operator. These expectations may be different for each participant (Sanvido et al., 1992). Project success as a concept can cover different aspects from achieving the project time and cost targets to the stakeholder satisfaction and business success (Baccarini, 1999; Martens et al., 2018; Müller and Turner, 2010). Baccarini (1999) defined project management success and product success as two distinct components of project success. According to another definition by Shenhar et al. (2001), the project success means different things for different people; an architect may consider success in terms of aesthetic appearance, an engineer in terms of technical competence, an accountant in terms of dollars spent under budget, a human resources manager in terms of employee satisfaction. Chief executive officers rate their success in the stock market.

Jugdev and Müller (2005) stated that success is an interesting word; the word connotes different things to different people and is very context-dependent. Trying to pin down what success means in the project context is akin to gaining consensus from a group of people on the definition of “good art.” Müller and Turner (2007a) defined project success factors and project success criteria as two components of project success. Mertens et al. (2018) stated that project success is related to the goals and benefits that are provided in a project for its organization as a whole, dealing with the effectiveness, objectives, and benefits that are provided by the project, and success in project management is related to the direct actions from a project manager, applying tools as determined by the scope, deadline, and cost of each project.

As can be understood, several researchers have defined project success. There are some common points, e.g., meeting time and cost, and customer satisfaction, among those definitions which can provide a basis for a more comprehensive definition. This study defines project success as a concept comprised of four components as follows:

- Project management success: meeting time, cost, scope, and quality
- Project execution success: meeting technical requirements and safety goals
- Business success: reoccurring business and meeting expected commercial success
- Stakeholder satisfaction: meeting various expectations of different project stakeholders

2.2 PROJECT SUCCESS FACTORS (PSFs)

In addition to the efforts for defining the project success itself conceptually, several studies have addressed the identification of the project success factors (PSFs). Success factors are the set of circumstances, facts, or influences that contribute to the result (Lim and Mohamed, 1999). Two studies carried out by Pinto and Slevin (1987), and Pinto and Prescott (1988) can be considered as pioneering efforts over project success factors. The first one showed which success factors have relevance in different phases of the project life cycle (Pinto and Slevin, 1987). The second one explained the critical project success factors resulting in nine factors such as clarity of goals and general direction, top management support, and client consultation (Pinto and Prescott, 1988). Then, other studies conducted by Chua et al. (1997 and 1999) tried to address success factors for specific performance targets in a project. As a result of these studies, different success factors for budget, schedule, and quality performances and also for general purposes (all objectives) were identified and presented. Project failure studies have also provided valuable results for explaining possibilities for successful projects (for instance, Cooke-Davies, 2002; Cozijnsen, 2000; LIM and LING, 2002).

In 2004 and 2005, a context-oriented approach, addressing specific project types and environments in which projects operate within, was formed toward identifying success factors of construction projects. Different studies were carried out to detect success factors of construction projects (for instance, Chan et al., 2004; Carù et al., 2004; Chileshe and Haupt, 2005; Nguyen et al., 2004; Phua and Rowlinson; 2004). Addressing success factors and causes of failures of specific contexts or project types were continued in the next years. For instance, Fortune and White (2006) conducted a study, which identified success factors of different attributes in the project such as goals and objectives, decision making, and environment. Moreover, other studies have paid attention toward identifying project success factors for other aims such as delivering results in time and cost and also success factors and barriers in construction and in information system projects (Agarwal and Rathod, 2006; Espinosa et al., 2006; Frödell et al., 2008; Koutsikouri et al., 2008; Rodriguez-Repiso et al., 2007).

From 2011 to 2018, research attention has increasingly been broader in terms of studying both general and specific success factors of projects. Accordingly, a few studies have provided evidence for generic success factors such as monitoring, coordination, training, clear definition of the project goal, communication, competent project manager and teamwork (for instance Berssaneti and Carvalho, 2015; Ika et al., 2011; Joslin and Müller, 2016; Jugdev et al., 2013; Müller and Jugdev, 2012; Mirza et al., 2013; Montequin et al., 2016; Rolstadås et al., 2014). At the same time, other studies have tried to discover specific success factors. For example, software development projects, construction projects, post-disaster housing reconstruction projects, BOT projects, time success, IT projects, petroleum industry and PPP (public partnership projects) success have been addressed by different researchers, and several success factors such as risk management, good coordination and communication, transparency, accountability and planning efforts have been identified (Alzahrani and Emsley, 2013; Ahmadabadi and Heravi, 2019; Almarri and Boussabaine., 2017; Doulabi and Asnaashari, 2016; Daniel et al., 2018; Engelbrecht et al., 2017; Gupta et al., 2013; Handzic et al., 2016; Heravi and Ilbeigi, 2012; Mišić and Radujković, 2015; Maqbool and Sudong, 2018; Mavi and Standing, 2018; Nguyen and Hadikusumo, 2018; Ophiyandri et al., 2013; Peetawan and Suthiwartnarueput, 2018; Rodriguez-Segura et al., 2016; Rezvani et al., 2016; Sudhakar, 2012; Sanchez and Terlizzi, 2017; Tsiga et al., 2017; Ullah et al., 2017; Wu et al., 2017 and 2018; Yamin and Sim, 2016; Zheng et al., 2014; Zuo et al., 2018). More details of the mentioned success factors in the literature are presented in the results section.

2.3 PROJECT SUCCESS CRITERIA (PSC)

In addition to conducting studies to address project success factors, several studies have also been undertaken to discover appropriate project success criteria for measuring project success. Criteria are the set of principles or standards by which judgment is made (Lim and Mohamed, 1999). The presented success criteria by Freeman and Bale (1992) can be considered as a starting effort in this subject. These PSC include seven components of which five of them have been more frequently mentioned than others: technical performance, efficiency orientation (meeting time, cost and quality), managerial and organizational implications (mainly customer satisfaction), personal growth and manufacturability and business performance. Shenhar et al. (1997) presented another PSC for measuring project success, which includes four components: project efficiency, impact on the customer, business success, and preparing for the future. After that, Lim and Mohammad (1999) introduced other PSC based on macro and micro viewpoints.

Macro viewpoint addresses the timely completion and satisfaction components, and micro viewpoints deal with completion of time, cost, quality, performance, and safety. Moreover, Agarwal and Rathod (2006) stated that meeting scope, time, cost, and customer satisfaction are the project success criteria. Another study conducted by Müller and Turner (2007b) presented a new set of project success criteria. This includes 10 components: end-user satisfaction, supplier satisfaction, team satisfaction, other stakeholder's satisfaction, performance in terms of time, cost and quality, meeting user requirements, project achieves its purpose, customer satisfaction, and reoccurring business. In two other undertaken studies by Lam et al., (2007 and 2010), meeting time, cost, quality, safety goals, and environmental friendliness were presented as project success criteria. After that, several studies were conducted by different researchers which mainly emphasized on time, scope, cost, quality, safety, satisfaction and meeting technical requirements as project success criteria (Al-Tmeemy et al., 2011; Albert et al., 2017; Davis, 2016 and 2017; Gomes and Romão, 2016; Koops et al., 2016 and 2017; Osei-Kyei and Chan, 2018; Rohman et al., 2017; Sebestyen, 2017; Pankratz and Basten, 2018). Findings of analyzing the mentioned success criteria in the literature are presented in the results section.

3. METHODOLOGY

The literature study behind this paper addressed as comprehensively as possible the previous research on project success. For this purpose, ScienceDirect and the Emerald databases were chosen to locate the relevant studies. The selection of the forgoing databases was carried out based on the data access possibilities. The following keywords were utilized for searching: project success, project success factor, and project success criteria. As a result of searches through the mentioned keywords and checking for their presence in the title, 114 papers were found. Next, abstract and content of all found papers were fully reviewed, and 19 papers were excluded in the results of this effort; because the purpose and result of those papers had no match to project success, and its supplementary concepts include project success factor and criteria. Therefore, 95 remaining relevant papers were analyzed for three main purposes, (i) describing the nature of project success research, (ii) discovering and depicting leading research questions, main targets, and outcomes over the conducted studies and subsequently mapping the evolution process of project success research, and (iii) addressing the mentioned success factors and success criteria in the literature.

As one of the main results, the evolution process of project success research was mapped through analyzing the nature of project success research, the leading research questions, the main targets, and the main outcomes. In addition, several success factors and success criteria were extracted from the previous studies. According to obtained project success factors and project success criteria, two matrixes of mentioned PSFs and PSC in the previous studies and their references were provided. Due to a few similarities among identified PSFs and PSC, two syntheses of them were developed with a ranking column based on the frequency of appearance (Appendices A and B). The development of those syntheses was conducted by identifying those project success factors or criteria which had very close or similar meaning or title. In this study, the identified success factors and criteria with more than one frequency of appearance were qualified as weighty ones, and those with only one frequency of appearance qualified as notable ones.

4. RESULTS

4.1 EVOLUTION MAP of PROJECT SUCCESS RESEARCH

The Figure 1 shows the evolution map of project success research. This map comprises five main components: the nature of project success research, the leading research questions, the main research targets, the main outcomes, and the chronological presentation of the outcomes. The following paragraph provides a detailed explanation of the mentioned components.

The first part of Figure 1 presents the nature of project success research. Basically, it seems that project success research has been interested in increasing the success chance of the project through an improved understanding of the project success concept and its different components. Hence, three groups of leading research questions have been adopted. These questions are related to the concept of project success, viewpoints on that, measurement of project success, and finally, success factors that would be useful and helpful for realizing project goals and benefits. In other words, those three groups of leading research questions account for understanding the definition of project success, project success criteria, and project success factors.

The nature of project success research besides leading research questions over conducted studies have created different research targets and also led to a growing trend towards the context-oriented studies, as pointed out in Figure 1. The main reason for this growing trend could be the fact that the specific contexts or project types have had to be addressed separately in terms of success, as it has been mentioned by different researchers such as Shenhar (2001). Due to the undertaken research in the area of project success, three main outcomes have been achieved, which are mentioned in the following:

- The increasing maturity of adapted definitions for project success and its components;
- Development of understandings towards expected common (general) and unique (context-oriented) goals and benefits of projects as a measurement way to judge project success;
- Identification of project success factors generally (for all types of projects) and particularly (for specific project type, context or target)

Additionally, the mentioned growing trend towards the context-oriented studies has consequently led to gradual customization of project success knowledge for specific targets and contexts, as can be understood from the chronological presentation of the outcomes. For instance, considerable improvements have been obtained in our understandings of the different aspects of success in the construction and information technology projects. The Figure 1 presents the evolution process of project success research.

| Nature of project success research: | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|---|---|--|---|--|---|
| To increase success chance of projects through improving understandings of project success concept, its different components and enablers | | | | | | | | | |
| Leading research questions | | | | | | | | | |
| What would be the appropriate definition of project success? What are the different aspects of project success? | | | What a project should deliver and how it can be considered as a successful maneuver? How can we judge the project success? | | | What can be helpful for a project to reach its goals and benefits? What are the enablers of project success? | | | |
| Main research targets | | | | | | | | | |
| A growing trend towards context-oriented research from past to the present | | | | | | | | | |
| Identifying success enablers over the stages of project life cycle (Pinto and Slevin, 1987; Pinto and Prescott, 1988) Starting point | Developing a universal framework to measure project success (Freeman and Bale, 1992; Shenhar et al., 1997) Significant step towards success measurement | Identifying success factor of construction project based on objectives of budget, time, and quality (Chua et al., 1997 and 1999) Starting point of context-oriented studies | Defining project success. (Baccarini, 1999) The only focused study to define project success | Addressing success enablers, way of judging success and causes of failure in general (Lim and Mohamed, 1999; Cozijnsen et al., 2000; and Cooke-Davies, 2002) Paying attention to failure causes | Identifying success factor in construction projects (Duy Nguyen et al., 2004; Chan et al., 2004) Growing interest | Assessing our evolving understanding of success factors and frameworks in the past 40 years (Jugdev and Müller, 2005) A Review | Identifying success criteria and as well as causes of failure in specific project types such as construction and IT (Standing et al., 2006; Lam et al., 2007; Al-Tmeemy et al., 2011) Increasing interest toward context-oriented studies | Addressing different aspects of project success in general and in specific contexts such as construction and IT projects (Alzahrani, 2013; Serrador, 2014; Almarri, 2017) Taking deeper in success aspects of construction and IT industry | |
| Other researchers such as Shenhar et al. (2001), Muller and Turner (2007) and Mertens et al. (2018) have also adapted other definitions of project success in their studies. | | | | | | | | | |
| Main outcomes | | | | | | | | | |
| Increasing maturity of adapted definitions for project success and its components | | | Development of understandings towards expected common (general) and unique (context-oriented) goals and benefits of projects as a measurement way to judge project success | | | Identification of project success factors generally (for all types of projects) and particularly (for specific project, context or target) | | | |
| Chronological presentation of outcomes | | | | | | | | | |
| Gradual customization of project success knowledge for specific targets and contexts | | | | | | | | | |
| Discovery of success factors in different stages of project life cycle | Adaption of several definitions of project success and identifying new success factors | Picture of different aspects of project success and showing the importance of post-project outcomes on its success | Identification of effects of leadership, competency and teamwork shortages in project failure | Highlight importance of satisfaction and business success in project success | Discovery of weighty factors of construction project's success such as enough funding and resources, | Clarification of contribution of some factors such as cultural differences and competent project manager on project success | Identification of specific success criteria in different project types such as, construction and IT | Identification of general and specific success factors for BOT, PPP, Petroleum and IT projects | Adaption of success criteria for specific project types and contexts such as PPP, information system and toll road projects |
| 1985-1990 | 1991-2000 | | 2000-2003 | | 2004-2005 | 2006-2010 | | 2011-2018 | |

Fig.1. The evolution map of project success research

4.2 WEIGHTY and NOTABLE PROJECT SUCCESS FACTORS

The weighty and notable project success factors were identified through analyzing the outcomes of the conducted studies, making a synthesis of 338 identified success factors, excluding similarities, and finally reaching to a final list of 132 success factors (Appendix A). Based on this list, there are 65 weighty success factors that contribute to project success more than the 67 notable ones. Among those weighty factors, there are six ones with equal to or more than 10 appearances in the previous studies, which were found to be the critical success factors for projects. These critical success factors include communication, top management support, project manager's competency, clear objectives and realistic obligations, monitoring and feedback, and risk management. Look at table 1 for their frequency of appearance and relating ranking. Appendix A presents the resultant success factors with their literature sources.

Table1. Top 10 weighty project success factors

| Project success factors | Appearance | Rank | Project success factors | Appearance | Rank |
|--|------------|------|---------------------------|------------|------|
| Communication | 17 | 1 | Stakeholder involvement | 6 | 8 |
| Top management support | 12 | 2 | Project size | 5 | 9 |
| Project manager's competency | 11 | 3 | Quality control | | |
| Clear objectives & realistic obligations | | | Teamwork | | |
| Monitoring & feedback | 10 | 4 | Design efforts | 6 | 10 |
| Risk management | | | Strong business case | | |
| Team competency | 9 | 5 | Economic risks | | |
| Adequacy of funding | 8 | 6 | Contractual aspects | | |
| Coordination | 7 | 7 | Commitment to the project | | |
| Planning efforts | | | Project complexity | | |
| Organization structure | | | Effective safety program | | |
| Political environment | | | Leadership | | |

4.3 WEIGHTY PROJECT SUCCESS CRITERIA

Analyzing the previous studies also resulted in identifying 257 success criteria. Due to a few similarities among found success criteria, a synthesis of them was created, and they were ranked according to their frequencies of appearance. Then, success criteria with more than one frequency of appearance were qualified as weighty ones. Findings show that there are 13 weighty project success criteria where meeting cost, meeting time, customer satisfaction, meeting quality, business success, and technical performance are the top 5 ones in the ranking (Figure 2, look at Appendix B for references).

| Success criteria/reference | Shenhav et al., 1997 | Freeman and Bale, 1992 | Lim and Mohamed, 1999 | Cooper and Kleinschmidt, 1987 | Shenhav et al., 2001 | Agarwal and Rathod, 2006 | Müller and Turner, 2007 | Lam et al., 2007 | Lam et al., 2010 | Ika et al., 2011 | Al-Tmeemy et al., 2011 | Chipulu et al., 2014 | Koops et al., 2016 and 2017 | Davis, 2016 and 2017 | Gomesa and Romão, 2016 | Rohman et al., 2017 | Osei-Kyei and Chan, 2018 | Pankratz and Basten, 2018 | Rank (based on appearance) |
|---|----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Meeting cost | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 1 |
| Meeting time | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | 2 |
| Customer satisfaction | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | 3 |
| Meeting quality | | | ✓ | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | | 4 |
| Business success | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | ✓ | | | | | | ✓ | | 5 |
| Technical performance | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | 6 |
| Safety | | | ✓ | | | | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | 6 |
| Meeting scope | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | | 7 |
| Preparing for the future | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 7 |
| Project specific political or social factors | | | | | | | | | | | | | ✓ | | | | | | 8 |
| Effect on the professional image of client organization | | | | | | | | | | | | | ✓ | | | | | | |
| Benefit to stakeholder group | | | | | | | | | | | | | | ✓ | | | | | |
| Meeting expectations | | | | | | | | | | | | | | ✓ | | | | | |

Fig. 2. The identified weighty project success criteria

5. DISCUSSION

The evolution map of project success research points out the nature of activities in this research field, leading research questions and main outcomes. It also shows the emerging interest for conducting target and context-oriented studies. The main reason behind the constitution of this interest is the widely distributed contingency thinking among the research community advocating that “one size does not fit all”; the contingency theory which was developed by Shenhar (2001) and stated that project type should affect the selection of project leaders, team members, and skill development needs. This mapped evolution process of project success research shows that general findings of project success have had limited explanatory power, mainly because of the uniqueness of the project that imposes many challenges and issues to project performance and subsequently its success, and general knowledge of project success is insufficient to overcome those challenges. Hence, customization of project success knowledge has been emerged as a requirement for each specific project type or context to overcome barriers and increase the success potential of projects. Accordingly, the contingency theory for projects developed by Shenhar (2001) can be developed; Project type not only affects the selection of

the project human resources and their required competencies but also requires defining specific criteria, for measuring project success, and identifying certain factors, for facilitating the realization of project success criteria. This is one of the most important implications of the mapped evolution process of project success research in this study. This contingency perspective could be extremely insightful for industry practitioners to spend enough time defining success measurement way as well as the factors facilitating the meeting of those success criteria specified for every single project at the beginning of the project. It can also be a valuable starting point for future relevant studies. The mapped process of project success research itself can also be insightful for the research community to know the past and recent research streams in the project success domain and to get idea for the future possible studies.

The mapped evolution process of project success research also reflects the evolution of the project management field in general. During recent decades, project management has been represented by a set of efforts to use proper knowledge, techniques, and tools for meeting project goals. These goals, generally, have been defined as completing projects on time, within budget, and in a satisfying level of quality. Meanwhile, considerable efforts have been made to figure out what can facilitate the meeting of the mentioned goals, and consequently, industry practitioners, together with the research community, have tried to find out what factors can contribute to project success and what kind of success criteria could be appropriate for projects. This explained evolution can be understood from the map. It can be stated that the identified nature of project success research, its leading research questions, and subsequent main targets, have supported the development of the project management profession in specific aspects. These aspects are increasing the maturity of understandings in project success by clearly defining project success, then finding reasonable measurement criteria for judging it, and finally looking for factors which can facilitate meeting the success criteria.

Furthermore, the analysis of project success literature led to another interesting outcome i.e., weighty project success factors. Consequently, it became clear that communication, top management support, project manager's competency, clear objectives and realistic obligation, monitoring and feedback, and risk management are the critical success factors for projects. These findings are in line with previous studies (For instance, Pinto and Slevin, 1987; Pinto and Prescott, 1988; Fortune and White, 2006; Sudhakar, 2012; Nguyen et al., 2004; Rolstad et al., 2014) and also standards of practice (for instance, PMBOK) which have emphasized the importance of factors such as communication, top management support and project manager's competency in project success.

6. CONCLUSIONS

This study aimed at understanding the longitudinal developments in the project success research field, and discussing and elaborating further results based on previous studies. It was carried out through mapping the evolution of project success research and identifying weighty project success factors and success criteria. The obtained results provide a basis for the following conclusions:

- Project success research has led to the constitution of interest to conduct context-oriented studies and customization of project success knowledge for specific targets, contexts, or project types.

- There are 65 weighty factors that contribute to project success, among which communication, top management support, project manager's competency, clear objectives and realistic obligation, monitoring and feedback, and risk management are the critical ones.
- There are 13 weighty project success criteria where meeting cost, meeting time, customer satisfaction, meeting quality, business success, and technical performance are the top 5 ones.

The gained findings are capable of explaining the nature and certain outputs of project success research in a novel manner. This includes the evolution map of project success research, weighty project success factors, and project success criteria. These findings can provide new insights for project managers, project team members, project owners, and other stakeholders of the project to increase the success chance of the project by explaining the weighty success factors and criteria. As the limitation of this study, it should be acknowledged that certain keywords were used in a couple of databases (ScienceDirect and Emerald) for literature review, which subsequently narrowed the scope of the study.

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Appendix A. Details of identified project success factors from literature

| Success factors and references | Appearance | rank |
|--|------------|------|
| Communication (Pinto and Slevin, 1987; Chua et al., 1999, Chan et al., 2004, Phua and Rowlinson, 2004; Fortune and White, 2006; Espinosa et al., 2006, Andersen et al., 2006; Young and Samon, 2008; Sudhakar, 2012; Ophiyaandri et al., 2013; Chang et al., 2013; Rolstades et al., 2014; Davis, 2014; Montequin et al., 2016; Wu et al., 2017; Zuo et al., 2018; Maqbool and Sudong, 2018) | 17 | 1 |
| Top management support (Pinto and Slevin, 1987; Pinto and Prescott, 1987; Andersen et al., 2006; Fortune and White 2006; Sudhakar, 2012; Rolstades et al., 2014; Davis, 2014; Berssaneti and Carvalho, 2015; Gomesa and Romaoa, 2016; Tsiga et al., 2017; Mavi and Standing, 2018; Maqbool and Sudong, 2018) | 12 | 2 |

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|--|----|----|
| Project manager's competency (Chua et al. 1999; Nguyen et al., 2004; Chan et al., 2004; Tuner, 2004; Fortune and White, 2006; Rolstades et al., 2014; Davis, 2014; Taherdoost and Keshvarzsaleh, 2016; Misic and Radujkovic 2017; Tsiga et al., 2017; Mavi and Standing, 2018) | 11 | 3 |
| Clear objectives and realistic obligations (Chua et al., 1999; LIM and LING 2002; Fortune and White, 2006; Scott-Young and Samon, 2008; Sudhakar, 2012; Mirzaa et al., 2013; Rolstades et al., 2014; Davis, 2014; Aga, 2016; Montequin et al., 2016; Maqbool and Sudong, 2018) | | |
| Monitoring & feedback (Pinto and Slevin, 1987; Chua et al., 1997, Chan et al., 2004; Phua and Rowlinson, 2004; Chileshe and Haupt, 2005; Fortune and White, 2006; Ika et al., 2011; Rolstades et al., 2014; Yamin and Sim, 2016; Tsiga et al., 2017) | 10 | 4 |
| Risk management (Chua et al., 1999; Cooki-Davis, 2002; Tuner, 2004; Fortune and White, 2006; Gomesa and Romaoa, 2016; Wu et al., 2018; Almarri and Boussabanie, 2017; Tsiga et al., 2017; Ahmadabdi and Heravi, 2019; Mertens et al., 2018) | | |
| Team competency (Andersen et al., 2006; Nguyen et al., 2004; Fortune and White, 2006; Espinosa et al., 2006; Young and Samon, 2008; Rolstades et al., 2014; Tsiga et al., 2017; Nguyen and Hasikusumo, 2018; Maqbool and Sudong, 2018) | 9 | 5 |
| Adequacy of funding (Chua et al., 1999; Nguyen et al., 2004; Phua and Rowlinson, 2004; Fortune and White, 2006; Ophiyandri et al., 2013; Gupta et al., 2013; Gomes and Romaoa, 2016; Maqbool and Sudong, 2018) | 8 | 6 |
| Coordination (Espinosa et al., 2006; Ika et al., 2011; Sudhakar, 2012; Ophiyandri et al., 2013; Davis, 2014; Yamin and Sim, 2016; Maqbool and Sudong 2018) | 7 | 7 |
| Planning efforts (Pinto and Slevin, 1987; Pinto and Prescott, 1987; Chan et al., 2004; Sudhakar, 2012; Doulabi and Asnaashari, 2016; Tsiga et al., 2017; Peetawan and Suthiwartnarueput, 2018) | | |
| Organization structure (Andersen et al., 2006; Chua et al., 1997; Chileshe and Haupt, 2005; Fortune and White, 2006; Young and Samon, 2008; Misic and Radujkovic, 2017; Tsiga et al., 2017) | | |
| Political environment (Andersen et al., 2006; Chan et al., 2004; Phua and Rowlinson, 2004; Fortune and White, 2006; Doulabi and Asnaashari, 2016; Tsiga et al., 2017; Maqbool and Sudong, 2018) | 6 | 8 |
| Stakeholder involvement (Andersen et al., 2006; Frodell et al., 2008; Sudhakar, 2012; Ophiyandri et al., 2013; Rolstades et al., 2014; Zheng et al., 2018) | | |
| Project size (Andersen et al. 2006; Chan et al., 2004, Fortune and White 2006; Alzahrani and Emsley, 2013; Tsiga et al., 2017) | 5 | 9 |
| Quality control (Sudhakar, 2012; Alzahrani and Emsley, 2013; Doulabi and Asnaashari, 2016; Tsiga et al., 2017; Maqbool and Sudong, 2018) | | |
| Teamwork (Frodell et al., 2008; Sudhakar, 2012; Doulabi and Asnaashari, 2016; Zuo et al., 2018; Maqbool and Sudong 2018) | | |
| Design efforts (Chua et al. 1997 and 1999; Phua and Rowlinson, 2004; Ika et al., 2011; Yamin and Sim, 2016) | | |
| Strong business case (Shenhar et al., 1997; Chileshe and Haupt, 2005; Fortune and White, 2006; Rolstades et al., 2014) | 4 | 10 |
| Economic risks (Chua et al., 1999; Phua and Rowlinson, 2004; Doulabi and Asnaashari, 2016; Almarri and Boussabanie, 2017) | | |
| Contractual aspects (Chua et al., 1999; Phua and Rowlinson, 2004; Tsiga et al., 2017; Wu et al., 2018) | | |
| Commitment to project (Nguyen et al., 2004; Andersen et al., 2006; Frodell et al., 2008; Taherdoost and Keshvarzsaleh, 2016) | | |
| Project complexity (Chan et al., 2004; Fortune and White, 2006; Carvalho et al., 2015; Tsiga et al., 2017) | | |
| Effective safety program (Chan et al., 2004; Phua and Rowlinson, 2004; Tsiga et al., 2017; Peetawan and Suthiwartnarueput, 2018) | | |
| Leadership (Fortune and White, 2006; Young and Samon, 2008; Zuo et al., 2018; Maqbool and Sudong, 2018) | 3 | 11 |
| Procurement method (Chan et al., 2004; Gupta et al., 2013; Ahmadabdi and Heravi, 2019) | | |
| Troubleshooting (ability to handle unexpected crises and deviations from plan) (Pinto and Slevin, 1987; Pinto and Prescott, 1987; Maqbool and Sudong, 2018) | | |
| Client acceptance (Pinto and Slevin, 1987; Pinto and Prescott, 1987; Sudhakar, 2012) | | |
| Technical tasks (availability of required technology and expertise) (Pinto and Slevin, 1987; Pinto and Prescott, 1987; Chileshe and Haupt, 2005) | | |

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|---|---|----|
| Government support (Ophiyaandri et al., 2013; Gupta et al., 2013; Ahmadabdi and Heravi, 2019) | | |
| Meeting budget goals (Shenhar et al., 1997; Frodell et al., 2008; Davis, 2014) | | |
| Meeting scope (Serrador and Turner, 2014; Gomes and Romaoa, 2016; Doulabi and Asnaashari, 2016) | | |
| Meeting time goals (Shenhar et al., 1997; Serrador and Turner, 2014; Davis, 2014) | | |
| Customer satisfaction (Shenhar et al., 1997; Davis, 2014; Berssaneti and Carvalho, 2015) | | |
| Trust (LIM and LING, 2002; Ophiyaandri et al., 2013; Rezvani et al., 2016) | | |
| Project manager's commitment (Chua et al., 1999; Young and Samon 2008; Montequin et al., 2016) | | |
| Availability of resources (Nguyen et al., 2004; Alzahrani and Emsley, 2013; Gomes and Romaoa, 2016) | | |
| Keeping project plans up to date (Cooki-Davis, 2002; Fortune and White, 2006; Rolstades et al., 2014) | | |
| Cooperation (Phua and Rowlinson, 2004; Tuner, 2004; Davis, 2014) | | |
| Client's experience (Chan et al., 2004; Phua and Rowlinson, 2004; Tsiga et al., 2017) | | |
| Institutional environment (standards and permits) (Ika et al., 2011; Yamin and Sim, 2016; Tsiga et al., 2017) | | |
| Training (Fortune and White, 2006; Yamin and Sim, 2016; Nguyen and Hasikusumo, 2018) | | |
| Development of project management (Misic and Radujovic, 2015; Berssaneti and Carvalho, 2015; Rodriguez-Segura et al., 2016) | | |
| Project environment (Rodriguez-Segura et al., 2016; Taherdoost and Keshvarzsaleh, 2016; Doulabi and Asnaashari, 2016) | 2 | 12 |
| Market impact and business opportunity (Shenhar et al., 1997; Gomes and Romaoa, 2016) | | |
| Reliability of output and accuracy of output (Sudhakar, 2012; Peetawan and Suthiwartnarueput, 2018) | | |
| Project mission (Pinto and Slevin, 1987; Pinto and Prescott, 1987) | | |
| Client consultation (Pinto and Slevin, 1987; Pinto and Prescott, 1987) | | |
| Cognitive ability (Espinosa et al., 2006; Zuo et al., 2018) | | |
| Cost management (Doulabi and Asnaashari, 2016; Tsiga et al., 2017) | | |
| Actually used by customer (Shenhar et al., 1997; Davis, 2014) | | |
| Project team background (Andersen et al., 2006; Taherdoost and Keshvarzsaleh, 2016) | | |
| Technological or industrial environment (Andersen et al., 2006; Chan et al., 2004) | | |
| Social environment (Chan et al., 2004 ; Tsiga et al., 2017) | | |
| Control meetings (Chua et al., 1997 and 1999) | | |
| Constructability (Chua et al. 1997 and 1999) | | |
| Project manager's experience (Chua et al., 1997 ; Chan et al., 2004) | | |
| Reduce ambiguity (Sudhakar, 2012; Maqbool and Sudong, 2018) | | |
| Project type (Chan et al., 2004 ; Tsiga et al., 2017) | | |
| Project nature (Chan et al., 2004 ; Tsiga et al., 2017) | | |
| Short construction period (Cooki-Davis, 2002; Gupta et al., 2013) | | |
| Learning from experience (Cooki-Davis, 2002; Fortune and White, 2006) | | |
| Maximize stability (Sudhakar, 2012; Maqbool and Sudong, 2018) | | |
| High public enthusiasm for project (Phua and Rowlinson, 2004; Koutsikouri et al., 2008) | | |
| Stakeholder management (Misic and Radujovic, 2015; Gomes and Romaoa, 2016) | | |
| Innovativeness (Koutsikouri et al., 2008; Mertens et al., 2018) | 1 | 13 |
| Project urgency (Pinto and Slevin, 1987) | | |
| Project uniqueness (Andersen et al., 2006) | | |
| Project manager's emotional intelligence (Rezvani et al., 2016) | | |
| To have a governing structure (Chang et al., 2013) | | |
| Job satisfaction (Rezvani et al., 2016) | | |
| Personnel(recruitment, selection, training) (Pinto and Slevin, 1987) | | |
| Meeting operational specifications (Shenhar et al., 1997) | | |
| Meeting technical specifications (Shenhar et al., 1997) | | |
| Fulfilling customer needs (Shenhar et al., 1997) | | |
| Solving a major operational problem (Shenhar et al., 1997) | | |
| Effective change management (Rolstades et al., 2014) | | |
| Project attributes (Taherdoost and Keshvarzsaleh, 2016) | | |
| Physical environment (Tsiga et al., 2017) | | |

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|---|--|--|
| Team turnover (Chua et al., 1997) | | |
| Expended money for controlling (Chua et al., 1997) | | |
| Company image (Alzahrani and Emsley, 2013) | | |
| Respecting cultural differences (Misic and Radujovic, 2015) | | |
| Opened a new line of product (Shenhar et al., 1997) | | |
| Developed a new technology (Shenhar et al., 1997) | | |
| Transparency and accountability (Ophiyandri et al., 2013) | | |
| Client and user (Rodriguez-Segura et al., 2016) | | |
| Site inspection (Chua et al., 1999) | | |
| Stakeholder expectations (Mavi and Standing, 2018) | | |
| Capability of contractor's key person (Chua et al., 1999) | | |
| End user's imposed restrictions (Mavi and Standing, 2018) | | |
| Client is credit worthy (LIM and LING, 2002) | | |
| Client does not contribute to project complexity (LIM and LING, 2002) | | |
| Client is not litigious (LIM and LING, 2002) | | |
| Facilitator capacity (Ophiyandri et al., 2013) | | |
| Appropriate reconstruction policy (Ophiyandri et al., 2013) | | |
| Waste disposal (Alzahrani and Emsley, 2013) | | |
| Private sector capability (Ahmadabdi and Heravi, 2019) | | |
| Project popularity (Zheng et al., 2018) | | |
| Pro-activeness (Mertens et al., 2018) | | |
| National environment (Carvalho et al., 2015) | | |
| Ethics (Doulabi and Asnaashari, 2016) | | |
| A mature scope change control process (Cooki-Davis, 2002) | | |
| Good partnering (Ahmadabdi and Heravi, 2019) | | |
| Suitable project metrics (Cooki-Davis, 2002) | | |
| Reducing cost (Maqbool and Sudong, 2018) | | |
| Availability of relevant and realistic information to make decision about business case (Wu et al., 2017) | | |
| Personal friendship between project firms (Phua and Rowlinson, 2004) | | |
| Good weather condition (Phua and Rowlinson, 2004) | | |
| Minimal government red tape (Phua and Rowlinson, 2004) | | |
| Agreed success criteria among stake holders (Tuner, 2004) | | |
| Owner interest in project performance (Tuner, 2004) | | |
| Contingent reward of transactional leadership (Aga, 2016) | | |
| Nature of client(public or private)(Chan et al., 2004) | | |
| Size of client organization (Chan et al., 2004) | | |
| Increasing efficiency (Maqbool and Sudong, 2018) | | |
| Client emphasis on time, cost and quality (Chan et al., 2004) | | |
| Client's ability to brief (Chan et al., 2004) | | |
| Decision making ability(client)(Chan et al., 2004) | | |
| Successful beneficiary identification (Ophiyandri et al., 2013) | | |
| Project management methodologies and tools (Misic and Radujkovic, 2017) | | |
| Cross functional project team (Scott-Young and Samon, 2008) | | |
| Achievement motivation skill (Zuo et al., 2018) | | |
| Virtual office usage (Scott-Young and Samon, 2008) | | |
| Conflict management skill (Zuo et al., 2018) | | |
| Shared values (Koutsikouri et al., 2008) | | |
| Research & development (Peetawan and Suthiwartnarueput, 2018) | | |
| Delivering strategic benefits (Davis, 2014) | | |
| Social support (Almarri and Boussabanie, 2017) | | |
| Turnover history (Alzahrani and Emsley, 2013) | | |
| Stakeholder endorsement of project plans (Andersen et al., 2006) | | |
| Well-structured and formal project approach (Andersen et al., 2006) | | |
| Understood and accepted project purpose (Andersen et al., 2006) | | |

Appendix B. Details of identified project success criteria from literature

| Project success criteria in the literature | | |
|---|-----------|------|
| Presented success criteria | Frequency | Rank |
| Meeting Cost (Al-Tmeemy et al., 2011; Agarwal and Rathod, 2006; Cooper and Kleinschmidt, 1987; Davis, 2016, 2017; Freeman and Bale, 1992; Lim and Mohamed, 1999; Shenhar et al., 2001; Müller and Turner, 2007; Lam et al. 2007 and 2010; ka et al., 2011; Koops et al, 2016,2017; Gomes and Romãoa, 2016; Osei-Kyei and Chan, 2018; Pankratz and Basten, 2018; Shenhar et al., 1997) | 18 | 1 |
| Meeting Time (Al-Tmeemy et al., 2011; Agarwal and Rathod, 2006; Chipulu et al., 2014; Davis, 2016 and 2017; Freeman and Bale, 1992; Gomes and Romãoa, 2016; Ika et al., 2011; Koops et al., 2016 and 2017; Lim and Mohamed, 1999; Lam et al. 2007 and 2010; Müller and Turner, 2007; Pankratz and Basten, 2018; Shenhar et al., 1997; Shenhar et al., 2001) | 15 | 2 |
| Customer satisfaction (Al-Tmeemy et al., 2011; Agarwal and Rathod, 2006; Davis 2016 and 2017; Freeman and Bale, 1992; Gomes and Romãoa, 2016; Koops et al., 2016,2017; Lim and Mohamed, 1999; Müller and Turner, 2007; Shenhar et al., 2001; Shenhar et al., 1997; Pankratz and Basten, 2018;) | 13 | 3 |
| Meeting Quality (Al-Tmeemy et al., 2011; Chipulu et al., 2014; Davis, 2016 and 2017; Koops et al., 2016 and 2017; Lim and Mohamed, 1999; Lam et al., 2007 and 2010; Müller and Turner, 2007; Osei-Kyei and Chan, 2018;) | 11 | 4 |
| Business success (Al-Tmeemy et al., 2011; Freeman and Bale, 1992; Shenhar et al., 1997; Shenhar et al., 2001; Müller and Turner, 2007; Osei-Kyei and Chan, 2018) | 6 | 5 |
| Technical performance (Freeman and Bale, 1992; Davis, 2016 and 2017; Gomes and Romãoa, 2016; Lim and Mohamed, 1999; Osei-Kyei and Chan, 2018) | | |
| Safety (Chipulu et al., 2014; Koops et al., 2016,2017 ; Lim and Mohamed, 1999; Lam et al., 2010) | 5 | 6 |
| Meeting Scope (Agarwal and Rathod, 2006; Chipulu et al., 2014; Gomes and Romãoa, 2016; Ika et al., 2011; Müller and Turner, 2007) | | |
| Preparing for the future (Cooper and Kleinschmidt, 1987; Shenhar et al., 1997; Shenhar et al., 2001) | 3 | 7 |
| Project specific political or social factors (Koops et al., 2016 and 2017) | 2 | 8 |
| Effect on the professional image of client organization (Koops et al., 2016 and 2017) | | |
| Benefit to stakeholder group (Davis, 2016 and 2017) | | |
| Meeting expectations (Davis, 2016, 2017) | 1 | 9 |
| Personal growth (Freeman and Bale, 1992) | | |
| Manufacturability (Freeman and Bale, 1992) | | |
| Sustainability (Ika et al., 2011) | | |
| The project team (Chipulu et al., 2014) | | |
| Functionality (Lam et al., 2007) | | |
| Environmental friendliness (Lam et al., 2010) | | |
| Contractor satisfaction (Pankratz and Basten, 2018) | | |
| Relevance/country (Ika et al., 2011) | | |
| Relevance/beneficiaries (Ika et al., 2011) | | |
| Impact (Ika et al., 2011) | | |
| Sustainability (Ika et al., 2011) | | |
| Organizational goals (Chipulu et al., 2014) | | |
| Leadership and decision making (Chipulu et al., 2014) | | |
| Improve the quality of life and community engagement (Rohman et al., 2017) | | |
| Provide peace of mind (Psychological needs, Present smooth traffic and regulation compliance environment) (Rohman et al., 2017) | | |
| Meeting functional requirements and Meeting non-functional requirements (Pankratz and Basten, 2018) | | |
| System is used by the end users (Pankratz and Basten, 2018), | | |