Do emotionally Intelligent Managers handle conflicts more effectively for Project Outcomes: Case of Construction and Design Industry

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Abstract

The study aims to investigate the effect of relationship conflict and task conflict on project success. Determine if these conflicts are suggestively correlated with project success, between conflicts verify the moderating effect of project manager's emotional intelligence on relationship of conflict and project success and connection of project manager's emotional intelligence and project success. A theoretical model was advanced and structured questionnaire survey was conducted with 200 professionals. The structural equation exhibiting technique was used to analyze the data. The results showed the relationship conflicts and task conflict has significant negative impact on project success while project manager's emotional intelligence has significant positive impact on project success. All types of conflicts play a destructive role in achieving project success. While emotional intelligence makes this effect weaken and lead to a successful project. Different types of conflicts may mutually transform to extent certain degree. However, this study did not address the potential influence of PMEI on project success. This study reveals the effect of conflict on project success which provide a useful reference for project stake holders to avoid the negative effect of conflicts. This study provides a better understanding to the relationship between conflicts, project success and PMEI in project and reliable references to project manager how to effectively deal with this related research. Few studies have investigated the effect of conflict on PMEI and project success. This study provides significant theoretical and practical insight to project management and conflicts management and provides a reliable reference to achieve project success.

Keywords: Relationship conflict, Task conflict, Project manager's emotional intelligence, Project success.

Introduction

With the advent of globalization, diverse and multifaceted processes in construction and design industry resulted in number of conflicts. With technological advances, diverse workforce, increasingly complex construction mechanics and evolving industry of designs, tasks to scheme success are different and multifaceted (Wu, Zhao, Zuo, & Zillante, 2018).

Mintzberg (1973) recognized conflict management as one of the primary roles of a manager. Lax and Sebenius (1986) maintained that managing is a process of ongoing negotiation and that conflict styles are integral to the role of management. Managers believe that dealing with conflict is one of

their most challenging tasks (Skjorshammer, 2001). Fostering a cooperative working climate and positive employee relationships is in the best interests of the employees and the entire organization. In the series of project, research got different factors of success and brought numeral success standards. It's a sum of independent and particular processes (Müller & Judgev, 2012). Drawing on research findings in the areas of emotion, intelligence, psychotherapy, and cognition, we suggested that some people might be more intelligent about emotions than others (Mayer & Salovey, & Caruso, 2008). We paid attention to people's problem solving in areas related to emotion: recognizing emotions in faces, understanding the meanings of emotion words, and managing feelings, among others. We argued that, collectively, such skills implied the existence of a broader, overlooked capacity to reason about emotions: an emotional intelligence (Cacioppo, Semin, & Berntson, 2004; Haig, 2005) Cattell- Horn-Carroll or "three-stratum model" (McGrew, 2009)

If emotional intelligence is a discrete intelligence, we need to make the case that there has evolved a distinct reasoning capacity to understand emotions. In fact, there is some evidence to support this idea. For example, Heberlein and colleagues showed that the brain areas responsible for perceiving emotional expressions—happiness, fear and anger—are to a degree distinct from the brain areas for perceiving expressions of personality—shyness, warmth and unfriendliness (Heberlein, Adolphs, Tranel, & Damasio, 2004; Heberlein & Saxe, 2005).

Management scholars have examined emotional expression as one factor of the overall work experience and have found that emotions are significantly related to job satisfaction, job behavior, and job performance (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1989; Staw, Sutton, & Pelled, 1994) and that EI has a positive relationship with job performance (Dulewicz, Young, & Dulewicz, 2005).

We are living in an era of progressing economy in which different projects are running day and night. Which includes from a minor to a major (mega) one. Projects success plays an important role in our financial condition. Scholars are trying to increase project performance and the capability of team participants and rising new tools and techniques (Sirisomboonsuk, Gu, Cao, & Burns, 2018). Managing in all likelihood involves scheming contract the project owner and one or more service provider which plays a role to handle it (Wu , & Zhang, 2020).

In this study we investigate the factors which make projects successful or unsuccessful. Traditionally, emotions in the workplace have had a negative connotation and were expected to be concealed (Putnam & Mumby, 1993). A more realistic viewpoint is that emotions have a direct impact on individual choices and decision making, and thus should be acknowledged for their part in crossing relationships and human interactions. Emotions can be helpful mechanisms for individuals to manage their relationships with others (Kennedy-Moore & Watson, 2001).

There has been an increasing interest in the role that emotions and emotional intelligence (EI) play in organizational sceneries over the past few decades. EI is the capacity to understand our emotions and manage them effectively, and to understand and effectively manage the emotions of others (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002; Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 1997).

The role of emotions in work conflict situations is especially significant to understand as conflicts are emotionally charged (Jones & Tremblay, 2000). Allred (1999) noted, "It seems ironic that conflict, which is among the most emotion-arousing phenomena, has been predominantly studied as though those emotions had no bearing on it" (p. 27). Emotions have a thoughtful impact on how a person intellectualizes the conflict, and on their decision-making capacity, ultimate choices and behaviors to indorse those choices. "Conflict is an emotionally defined and driven process, and

recognizing this fact fundamentally alters one's approach to conflict management" (Bodtker & Katz Jameson, 2001, p. 263).

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationships between emotions and conflict management in the workplace. Specifically, this research will explore the connections between EI abilities and different styles of managing conflict. This is a significant focal area given the omnipresence of conflict at the workplace

Emotions play an important role as mediators of the intellectual process on conflict-related behavior (Betancourt, 2004).

Conflict is a disingenuous sword that may produce positive outcomes such as innovation (Jehn, 1997) as well as negative outcomes such as animosity (Jehn, 1995). Kinds of conflict management are not necessarily rational thought processes but rather incorporate emotional states (Syna Desivilya & Yagil, 2005).

Identifying the relationship of emotion to organizational conflict provides opportunities for managers to manage conflict effectively. Leaders who manage conflict effectively may reduce deleterious emotions and enhance team performance (Ayoko, Konrad, & Boyle, 2012). People with an overreliance on their emotional framework in conflict management are not only less effective in handling the conflict but also realize a negative impact on their job satisfaction and performance (Jehn, 1997). Baron (1991) testified that when strong negative emotions are involved in a conflict situation, the individuals involved will more likely lessen their capability to resolve the conflict. Acuities of irreconcilability can produce emotions which influence the conflict process. Research on the effects of affect in conflict has found that positive affect is typically associated with pro-social behavior and results in cooperative styles of conflict management while negative affect may result in competitive behaviors with limited opportunity for joint outcomes (Bell & Song, 2005). Different styles of conflict management have been directly related to task conflict, relationship conflict, and stress levels (Friedman, Hastie, & Tibshirani, 2000). The use of the assimilating conflict management style reduced task conflict, relationship conflict as well as stress; and use of the presiding and avoiding styles of conflict management increased task conflict, relationship conflict, and stress. The integrating conflict management style is perceived as the most effective and appropriate style; the avoiding is seen as ineffective and inappropriate; and the dominating style is viewed as inappropriate when used by others but effective when used in tandem with the integrating style (Gross & Guerrero, 2000). Two supplementary styles of conflict management, compromising and obliging, are superficial as neither effective nor ineffective.

Brackett, Palomera, Mojsa-Kaja, Reyes, and Salovey (2010) state that regulation of emotions is most effective when individuals are able to assess their feelings precisely and adopt approaches to change negative feelings. Since emotions play a key role in cooperative behaviors, an individual's ability to understand and regulate their own emotions can be of vast help in building quality relationships with others (Lenaghan, Buda, & Eisner, 2007)

Literature Review

Project Success

Müller and Jugdev (2012) describe project success as "predominately in the eyes of beholder" meaning one stakeholder may consider a project successful, where another stakeholder would consider it a failure. The classification of a project as a success or a failure is, to a degree, subjective

(Ika, 2009). To reduce the subjectivity relating to project success, a mutual understanding is required. To achieve this, success criteria should be defined in the initial stage of the project (PMI, 2013, p. 51). According to Morris and Hough (1987) success criteria is the measures used to judge the success or failure of a project; these are dependent variables that measure success. Project success criteria have advanced from simple quantifiable time, scope, and cost measures (iron triangle), which primarily are related to project efficiency (Bryde, 2005), to measures that have a longer-term perspective directly relating to effectiveness and organizational impact (Belout, 1998; Judgev & Thomas, 2001; Shenhar, Dvir, Levy, & Maltz, 2001). Project success is a multidimensional construct where stakeholders can select a number of project success criteria, they believe are important to judge on success. It is worth mentioning that even with comprehensive definitions for project success criteria, some project criteria remain subjective by nature, for example, product usability or the acceptance of new processes. The methods and techniques aimed at quantifying subjective measures reduce subjectivity. However, when subjective criteria are mixed with objective criteria, which collectively determine whether a project is considered a success, projects with diverse groups of stakeholders are unlikely to reach unanimous agreements (Ika, 2009).

Since understanding stakeholder perceptions and expectations is necessary for defining project success, and projects are by definition unique, it makes sense that there is not a single definition of project success or a universal set of criteria that one can use to predict project success or the associated skills that lead to it.

Relationship between Relationship Conflict, Task Conflict and Project Success

Clashes usually occur in projects, due to opposite or different project aims and purposes (e.g., quality, schedule, cost and safety) among the holder, the contractor and other project contributors throughout project implementation (Barki & Hartwick, 2004; Buckley, 2016). Different ranks and types of conflicts include both interactional and intermingled relationships, and can bring out the alteration under certain circumstances. Huang (2010) plotted 529 staff followers from 120 research and expansion (R&D) squads and determined that approaching conflict management with a goal alignment moderated the relationship between task conflict and relationship conflict. Wu, Zhao, Zuo, & Zillante, (2018) proposed that different types of conflicts can be transformed, and affect project network value differently. De Dreu & Weingart, (2003) found that relationship conflict, process conflict and task conflict is all positively correlated. Wu, Hu, Zheng, Zhao, and Zuo (2021) found that relationship conflict has a negative relationship with team success, whereas task conflict has an inverted U-shaped relationship with team success. Therefore, this study specified project conflict in the construction setting as task conflict and relationship conflict.

H1: relationship conflict has significant negative effect on project success.

H2: task conflict has significant negative effect on project success.

Relationship between PMEI and Project Success

The study investigated the relationships of emotional intelligence of project manager to subordinates' ways and strategy of controlling conflict: problem solving and bartering for making a project successful. Data (N = 200) for this study were collected with questionnaires from students and project managers in Islamabad. Psychometric properties of the measures were tested and improved with exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis and analysis of indicator and internal consistency reliabilities, and the hypotheses were tested with a structural equations model.

Literature generally acknowledges the inadequacy of intelligence as a predictor of leadership effectiveness. Sternberg (2004) suggests that "the predictive value of intelligence may have been flagged in various studies because these studies examined and measured aspects of intelligence that, however effective they may be in predicting academic and certain other kinds of performance, are not effective predictors of leadership performance" (p. 9). Traditional conceptualization of intelligence is generally concerned with the analytical or academic aspect of intelligence, but an adequate conceptualization of this construct comprises other aspects as well.

Studies on intelligence over many years focused mainly on the adaptive use of cognition, but in recent years' theorists such as Gardner (2015) and Sternberg (2004) have suggested more encompassing approaches to conceptualizing intelligence. Sternberg suggests that there are other dimensions of intelligence—social intelligence, emotional intelligence, or practical intelligence or what scholars refer to as "street smarts"—which indicates that an individual is not limited simply because he or she has a below average academic intelligence or IQ. Although Gardner did not use the term emotional intelligence (EQ). His concepts of intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligences provided the basis for the conceptualization of EQ, whereas intrapersonal intelligence is the ability to understand one's own emotions, interpersonal intelligence is one's ability to understand the emotions of others.

H3: project manager's emotional intelligence has significant positive effect on project success

Moderate Effect of PMEI

Relationship conflicts arising from interpersonal problems, friction and personality clashes cause contracting parties to work less effectively and may negatively influence project success (Wu, Zhao, Zuo, & Zillante, 2018). Different types of conflicts have different impacts on project success (Puck & Pregernig, 2014). Senaratne and Udawatta (2013) concluded that both process and relationship conflict have disruptive effects on construction projects. Brockman (2014) found that relationship conflict weakened project success. Wu, Zhao, Zuo, and Zillante, (2018) proposed that relationship conflict and process conflict were negative effects on construction projects. Conflicts are usually perceived as destructive to projects.

H4: PMEI moderate's relationship of relationship conflict and project success such that relationship conflict and project success will be weak when PMEI is strong.

H5: PMEI moderate's relationship of task conflict and project success such that task conflict and project success will be weak when PMEI is strong.

Theoretical Framework
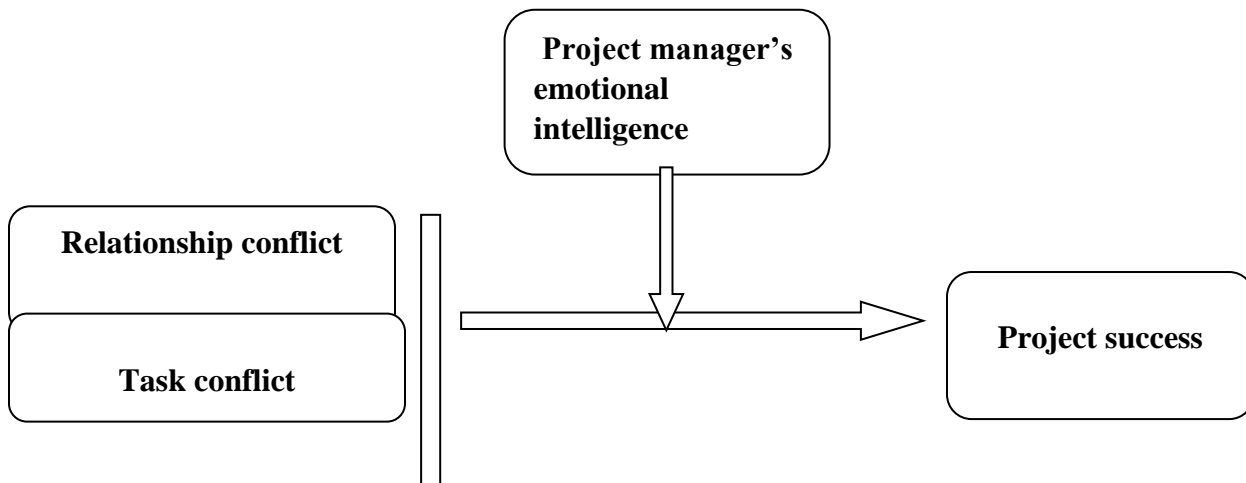
Methodology

Sampling and Data Collection

Data collection is an important step for the validity of research process. The main objective of this study is to investigate the impact of relationship conflict, task conflict, and PMEI on Project Success. Data is collected from targeted sample of different private and public sectors project base organizations in Pakistan. More over data is obtained via self-made questionnaire, 200 questionnaires were distributed among targeted areas and 140 respondents were received which were useable for further analysis. A Cover letter was attached with a questionnaire, which represents the confidentiality and purpose of research. Participation was unspecified to have an unbiased opinion. Marital Status of employee rete single response were 44% and married 66% out of all 79.9% respondents were male and 21.1% were female. Age of 41.8 % respondents was 24 to 40 years. Moreover, 61.8% had an above age.

Data Collection Method

Questionnaires are being furnished to Project base organization in Pakistan and middle level and high-level employees of organizations and ration has been set to half of total from each. 200 respondents are approached 140 employees. The mode of response collection is hard copy distribution of questionnaires.

Relationship Conflict, Task Conflict

These are independent variables in the current study and 5-item scale is used for measurement of relationship conflict, and 6 item scale is used for measurement of task conflict. The relationship conflict and task conflict scale were designed using relevant literature (Wu, Zhao, Zuo, & Zillante, 2018) Sample items for these variables are respectively as "There are many personality clashes between your party and the other party", "There is much conflict about ideas for the project design and construction". In this study, Cronbach's alpha for these scales were 0.865, 0.747.

Project Success

The project success scale was developed using the following literature (Lopez Del Puerto & Shane, 2014; Eduardo Yamasaki Sato & de Freitas Chagas Jr, 2014). Sample items for these variables are respectively as "This project progress follows schedule" and "This project is within budget".

Emotional Intelligence

The Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) (Wong & Law, 2002) is applied to measure the emotional intelligence of project managers. Sample items for these variables are respectively as "I have a good sense of why I have certain feelings most of the time." And "I have learned significantly from the training which I attended".

Analysis and Results

Table 1. Correlation and Description

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Mean	S.D
Gender	1							3.1378	.88924
Age	-.384	1						3.1625	.90563
Education	-.218	.246**	1					3.1878	1.01852
RC	-.021**	-.162*	.272**	1				2.9544	1.17551
TC	-.217	.155	.505**	.339**	1			3.5467	.75667
PMEI	.264**	.136	.323**	.144	.324**	1		3.1378	.88924
PS	-.256**	.095	.231**	.251**	.213**	-.082	1	3.1625	.90563

Note: PS= Project Success, RC= Relationship conflict, TC= Task conflict, PMEI= Project manager's emotional intelligence.**p<0.01, *P<0.05

Results indicate that there is a significant negative degree of association among relationship and project success. Similarly, task conflict has also a significant negative correlation with organizational commitment. However, PMEI has correlation with organizational commitment.

Table 2: Moderated Regression Analysis

Predictor	Project Success		
	β	$_R2$	ΔR^2
Step 1			
Relationship conflict	-.131*		
Task conflict	-.141*	.133**	.111**
Project managers emotional intelligence	.245**		
Step 1			
PMEIxRC	-.109**		
PMEIxTC	-.922**	.255**	.221**

In the light of result, relationship conflict and task conflict have significant negative impact on the Project Success which means hypothesis 1 and 2 are supported. And project manager's emotional intelligence has a significant positive impact on Project Success (β=-0.142, p<0.05, β=-0.131, p<0.05 and β=0.245, p<0.01) indicating support of hypothesis 2, 3. Furthermore, moderated regression analysis results indicate that PMEI moderates the relationship of relationship conflict with Project Success (β=-.922, p<0.01) which supports hypothesis 4. Moreover, Also, PMEI moderates the relationship of task conflict with project success (β=-.109, p<0.01) which supports hypothesis 5.

Discussion and Conclusion

The effect of association conflict was the paramount influential and was negatively related to project success. Higher levels of relationship conflict would change the attention of the project to the personal relationships between constricting parties, and this would, in turn, restrict their rational functions and aggravate opponent behaviors. This can additionally negatively affect the

successful delivery of the project. In conventional construction projects, it is easier to form a collaborative atmosphere because there are fewer stakeholders. Thus, the project conflicts may be constructive or purposeful to project success (Wu, Zhao, Zuo, & Zillante, 2018)

Emotional intelligence – enhances positive work approaches and the relative and task performance of managers engaged in a public sector setting. This study advances the literature concerning to emotional intelligence by empirically representative the importance of emotional intelligence for developing positive work-related arrogances and contextual and task performance. Skills of managing people are of unique importance for the creation of effective management and leadership, and emotional intelligence as "the subset of social intelligence" (Salovey, Mayer, Goldman, Turvey, & Palfai, 1995) may be the most serious component of this class of skills.

The outcomes suggest that executives higher on EI are more likely to achieve commercial outcomes and be considered as effective leaders by their assistants and direct manager. Regression analysis revealed that EI, especially the capacity to perceive emotions, was able to predict effective leadership.

Emotional intelligence was found to be significantly completely correlated with project success. This is in line with the previous studies of Mount, Ilies, and Johnson (2006) and Geoghegan and Dulewicz (2008). According to Boyatzis, Goleman, and Rhee (2000) emotional intelligence subsidizes positively to individual and organizational success. Project managers' emotional intelligence was found to be significantly positively connected with project success.

Practical Implications of the Study

In this study, we have examined the impact of emotional intelligence, project managers' competencies, and transformational leadership on project success. The results imply that Pakistani construction firms must look to hire the expressively intelligent managers, along with looking for cognitive intelligence and expertise in uncompromising managerial skills. Moreover, the existing workforce must also be trained to enhance their emotional intelligence through undergoing professional courses. As a result, the emotionally intelligent workplace will prevail and will contribute better toward mutual and organizational success. The study also suggests that construction companies must pursue managers who are more transformational front-runners and able to lead their teams well.

Furthermore, firms must enlist four top competencies for hiring the project managers, which includes effective communication, conflict management, teamwork, and attentiveness. The findings also suggest that organizations should struggle to train their existing labor force in emotional intelligence and desired competencies in order to ensure organizational success. Limitations and Avenues for Future Research Although this study was conducted in one nation due to the limitations of resources and time, its findings can be generalized to those areas where socio-economic conditions are similar to those in Pakistan. The same model can also be used in other countries and in international settings to measure the accurate relationships between project managers' soft skills and project success. In upcoming studies, it may be advantageous to integrate cultural practices in the model, (for example, as moderators in relationships between project managers' soft skills and project success). We cannot expect the results in different industrial projects to be the same as those in construction projects. One might argue that project managers maybe more effective in more competitive and supportive work environments.

Future Recommendations

1. Conduct further research to explore the relationship between association conflict and project success in different industries or sectors. This will help in understanding whether the negative impact of association conflict is universal or specific to certain contexts.
2. Investigate the effectiveness of conflict resolution strategies in managing association conflict and improving project success. This will provide valuable insights on the best approaches to handling conflicts and promoting positive outcomes.
3. Explore the role of emotional intelligence in mitigating the negative effects of association conflict on project success. This can involve examining how emotional intelligence skills such as empathy and relationship management can be leveraged to improve team dynamics and collaboration.
4. Investigate the impact of emotional intelligence training programs on project managers' emotional intelligence and project success. This research can evaluate the effectiveness of such programs in enhancing project outcomes and provide recommendations for designing effective training interventions.
5. Examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and other factors that contribute to project success, such as communication effectiveness, team cohesion, and stakeholder management. This will help in understanding the broader influence of emotional intelligence on project outcomes and identify areas for improvement.
6. Investigate the long-term impact of emotional intelligence on project success, including its influence on team morale, employee retention, and overall organizational performance. This research can provide insights into the sustained benefits of emotional intelligence in project management.
7. Explore the relationship between emotional intelligence and specific project outcomes, such as client satisfaction, cost control, or schedule adherence. This research can provide a deeper understanding of how emotional intelligence contributes to different aspects of project success and identify specific areas for improvement or focus.

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Dear Respondent,

The undersigned will conduct research entitled, "Impact of relationship conflict and task conflict on Project Success with moderating Role of project manager's emotional intelligence".

This study will attempt to determine the positive and negative impacts of relationship conflict and task conflict on Project success. There are no right or wrong answers as long as you did it honestly that your answers to this questionnaire will be treated with utmost confidentiality. The survey result will be analyzed for academic purpose. Thank you for your kind cooperation in the conduct of this study. Your responses will contribute to this academic research.

We once again thank you for your assistance and cooperation in this academic pursuit.

Regards and Jazakallah

Appendix: The Measurement Items

The following statements concern your perception about yourself in a variety of situations. Please write a number from 1-5 against each statement in provided blank, to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with that statement by using the following scale.

Relationship conflict Section: 01				
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

Please encircle your choice:

1	There are many personality clashes between your party and the other party	1	2	3	4	5
2	There are many disputes between your party and the other party	1	2	3	4	5
3	The other party often withholds information necessary to attain your party's Tasks	1	2	3	4	5
4	There is a significant personal friction between your party and the other party	1	2	3	4	5
5	There is much emotional conflict between your party and the other party	1	2	3	4	5

Task conflict Section B

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

Please encircle your choice:

1	There is much conflict about ideas for the project design and construction	1	2	3	4	5
2	There are always significant conflicts about ideas for the project goal setting	1	2	3	4	5
3	There are significant conflicts about the task between your party and the other party	1	2	3	4	5
4	The other party often disagrees with opinions regarding the work being Undertaken	1	2	3	4	5
5	The other party often has disagreements about the task of the project you are working on	1	2	3	4	5
6	The other party often has conflicting opinions about the task of the project you are working on	1	2	3	4	5

Project success
Section C

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

Please encircle your choice:

1	This project progress follows schedule	1	2	3	4	5
2	This project is within budget	1	2	3	4	5
3	The project deliverable meets the client's objectives	1	2	3	4	5
4	This project has qualified acceptance and successful delivery	1	2	3	4	5
5	The project can solve most problems encountered during the project execution	1	2	3	4	5
6	The project process is satisfactory	1	2	3	4	5
7	This project creates positive impacts for end users	1	2	3	4	5
8	This project creates positive impacts on ecological environment	1	2	3	4	5
9	We are optimistic about the success of this project	1	2	3	4	5
10	We are likely to cooperate with the other party again in the future	1	2	3	4	5

Emotional intelligence Section C				
Strongly Disagree	**Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
1	2	3	4	5

Please encircle your choice:

As a Trainer I...

1	I have a good sense of why I have certain feelings most of the time.	1	2	3	4	5
2	I have learned significantly from the training which I attended.	1	2	3	4	5
3	I really understand what I feel.	1	2	3	4	5
4	I am a good observer of others' emotions.	1	2	3	4	5
5	I am sensitive to the feelings and emotions of others.	1	2	3	4	5
6	I always know whether or not I am happy.	1	2	3	4	5