

The Influence of Servant Leadership on Team Performance and Project Success in Agile Project Management: Insights from Project Managers in Certified Uae Firms

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Abstract

Effective leadership and the ability to manage culturally diverse teams are becoming more and more important factors in project success in Agile environments, especially in countries with diverse cultures like the United Arab Emirates. This study investigates the dual impact of servant leadership and cultural intelligence on project success, with trust and team cohesion examined as potential mediating factors. A mixed-method research design was employed, integrating survey responses from 68 Agile professionals with in-depth insights from 15 expert interviews. Reliability analysis confirmed the internal consistency of the constructs, while non-normal data distributions were addressed using Spearman correlation and regression analysis. The findings reveal that servant leadership ($r = 0.61$, $p < 0.001$) and cultural intelligence ($r = 0.64$, $p < 0.001$) significantly enhance project success, jointly explaining 62% of the variance. Surprisingly, trust and team cohesion were not found to be significant predictors, suggesting that leadership and cultural competence exert more direct influence in Agile settings. By expanding the application of servant leadership and cultural intelligence to multicultural Agile project environments, the study advances theoretical understanding. From a pragmatic standpoint, it offers companies doable suggestions for enhancing cultural intelligence, promoting flexibility, and fortifying servant leadership practices. The study extends leadership theory to multicultural Agile contexts and provides practical recommendations for strengthening servant leadership behaviors and cultural intelligence capabilities

Keywords: Servant Leadership, Agile Project Management, Team Performance, Project Success, Uae