Human resource management practices and project success, a moderating role of Islamic Work Ethics in Pakistani project-based organizations

Adeel Sabir Khan *, Farooq Rasheed

Department of Project Management, SZABIST, Pakistan

Abstract

Research on the relationship amongst "HR practices" and perceived "project success" in project-based Pakistani organizations is stimulating. Islam deliberates on ethics as a vital factor in day to day life. This study builds direct and moderating hypotheses for the relationship between four selected HR practices (Employees Recruitment & Selection, Employees Training & Development, Employees Performance Appraisals and Employees Compensation System), "project success" (PS) and "Islamic Work Ethics" (IWE) in project-based Pakistani organizations. The hypotheses have been confirmed using survey data collected from "4" major cities of the country using cross sectional design. The findings suggest that less "ETD" all other three HR practices influence PS in project-based Pakistani organizations; moreover, they reveal moderating effects of IWE only on the relationship between practice of "Employees Recruitment & Selection" and PS as perceived by employees in the organizations. The significance, implications and limitations of results have also been deliberated for further research.
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1. Introduction

Project management and its relevant efficacies have gained focus of research in the past decade or so, mainly because of their importance as rewarding organizational activities in contemporary organizations Kaulio, 2008. Since project management is a complex activity and concerns with the application of ideas, so accordingly "Project Management Body of Knowledge" (PMBOK) divides it into "42 processes" and "5 groups" as published by Project Management Institute (2008). Not surprisingly, a continuous quest is in progress by researchers around the globe to elaborate the concerned phenomena. Thus far, these researches have been least rewarding because in-spite of a lot of research on ingredients of project success (Judgev and

Muller, 2005), the number of successful projects is alarmingly small (Flyvbjerg et al., 2009). The reason can be attributed to the fact that the basic constituents that institute the success of a project are flexible (Judgev and Muller, 2005) and cannot be numerated as guidelines in a standard template. These constituents of project success can be based on external or internal environments of concerned organizations, however, obvious categorization amongst these factors can be recognized on two types of successes related to projects and they are project success and success of project management (Cooke-Davies, 2002). Project success is related to attainment of strategic targets through pertinent businesses thereby is relevant to products or services of the organizations, whereas the success of management is the attainment of targets related to budget, quality and relevant conventional methods for the control of the project (Müller and Turner, 2010). These two broad classifications of project success evidently have one thing in common that is the all-important dependency on Human Resource (HR) because

* Corresponding author at: Department of Project Management, SZABIST, Sector H-8, Islamabad, Pakistan.
  E-mail address: adeelsabirkhan34@gmail.com (A.S. Khan).

the former facet of success draws its strength from the latter. Furthermore, since "Employees Recruitment & Selection (ERS), Employees Training & Development (ETD), Employees Performance Appraisals (EPA), and Employees Compensation System (ECS)" along all other relevant issues involving any employee in an organization also clutch relation with project manager and his team so relevance of these HR practices with project success (PS) is obvious. Human resource management (HRM) practices are in vogue since decades and their effects in writing the success story of an organization was one of the favorite areas of researcher in past decade or so. Conclusions drawn from these researches generally consent that there is an affirmative connection of HR practices with an organizations' recital (Dyer and Reeves, 1995; Guest et al., 2000). Relevant literature clarifies HRM as a practical approach to ensure presence of a prescribed structure within the frame work of an organization for appropriate factors like recruitment & selection, training & development, performance appraisal, career planning system, employee's participation and compensation system (Masood, 2010). However in-spite of popularity and importance there is no consented definition of HRM which can be universally quoted or accepted, mainly because of the variance in approach or focus of scholars as per their individual perspective.

Taking Pakistani conditions and circumstances in view, the importance of project based organizations cannot be overlooked. Interestingly, HRM roles in emerging economy of Pakistan go back to early sixties when government concentrated on the institutional development. Lots of problems have been faced by the country during this development and accordingly the pace of improvement as regards the development of successful organizations has been surely slow. There can be many attributing factors for this slow pace but one factor can be lack of focus on giving due importance to Islamic Work Ethics (IWE) in Muslim country like Pakistan. Researchers have found that religious inspirations on HR practices are very significant but are a neglected area in research (Hashim, 2010). The inspirations of Islam in relation to HR practices in peculiar scenario of Pakistani project-based organizations are an area of interest where a lot can be done.

The people and organizations who want to do business in Pakistan such as multinational organizations can also benefit by reviewing the impacts of HR practices on project success with reference to effects of IWE (if any) in Pakistani project-based organizations, consequently, in this back drop this study was planned.

2. Literature review

2.1. Discussion on IVs, DVs and MVs

HRM appeared as methodical style of management in the later half of the last century (Armstrong, 2003). The core pivotal fields of HRM are precise values, thoughtful implementations of specific practices, extracting spirited roles of concerned executives and a collection of techniques for inculcating occupation related associations (Storey, 2007). Accordingly; in HRM filed the number of models and studies indicates an enriching connection between effectiveness of HRM practices on organization performance. Many researchers found that spending on implementation of these practices ultimately assists in achievement of improved results in the context of organizations (Datta et al., 2003). Similarly, Wright et al. (2003) also opined that the success of an organization is related to the commitment of its employees. Since "organizational commitment" is a function of HR practices (Pfeffer, 1998) so evidently these HR practices have an association with project success in a project-based organization. Lim and Mohamed (1999) in their study suggest that "satisfaction" and "completion" are two essentials of project success. Pfeffer (1994) advocated that adoption of certain HR practices results in modifications of prevailing processes in the organizations and thus can improve the organization's performance thereby leading them to success. Pfeffer included ERS, ETD and ECS in those practices. Huselid (1995) also supports the positive impact on organizational success by adoption of HR practices. His study describes the organizational success in the context of increments in profit percentages. Becker et al. (1995), in their famous study based on 740 firms, established an index of organizations' HR system describing the extent to which an organization had installed the high performance work systems (HPWS), and observed that those organizations who were high in value on this index had economically and statistically greater levels of firm performance. Singh (2004) found that ERS, ETD, EPA and ECS are positively related with the success of the organization. On similar grounds, an interesting finding as consequence of a study by Fey and Bjorkman (2001) narrates that HR practices are effective for all types of employees in an organization and accordingly impact the final outcome of an organization. Wright et al. (2005) also found the positive influence of HR practices on organizational success. They based their findings on regression analysis and concluded that selected HR practices were positively related to the success of organizations. In back drop of aforestated premise, it is evident that HR can be used for sustainable competitive advantage by organizations through adoption of HR practices and by this ensuring judicious employment of HR Barney and Wright, 1997.

In project management research it has also been established that PS is linked with the success of respective organizations (Cooke-Davies, 2002). In-spite of temporary nature of projects the project-based organizations do have permanent establishments such as "project management offices" and "portfolio groups" (Gareis, 2005). However, the viewpoint as regards HR practices in the project-based organization is relatively dubious in comparison to literature of general management, because HRM is toughly outlined in focus of larger organizations (Huemann et al., 2007). Projects are by definition unique and time-bound efforts (PMI, 2008), so requires more focused attention as regards HR. In-spite of the fact that "PMBOK" has a complete chapter published in recognition of importance of HR, the strategies in project-based organizations still require a lot of improvements. Accordingly, to achieve PS the foremost importance is of defining the management process in terms of projects and then apply processes to achieve success through HR (Gareis, 2010). Since, application of all these processes requires HR and thus the relevance of HR practices and PS

is consistent in literature. Keeping in line with "Universalistic Perspective" particular set of HR practices can positively influence the organizational success (Tzafrir, 2006), so it holds good for project success as well. Accordingly a set of HR practices including ERS, ETD, EPA and ECS out of "Harvard Model" has been selected for this study being more relevant to project management as well as in line with "Universalistic Perspective". The concept of utilization of "Universalistic Perspective" has been supported by various authors and has also been advocated by Delery and Doty (1996). Dwelling upon these four selected HR practices in preview of published literature leads to certain interesting relevant facts which are individually narrated in preceding paragraphs. ERS is aimed at a fair procedure of guaranteeing small budget besides not compromising on value of intake of employees (Masood, 2010). Accordingly, Chapman and Webster (2003) explain the process of ERS in terms of "advertising of posts, getting applications, preliminary short listing and final selection". "ASA framework" as conceived by Schneider et al. (1998) provides the necessary basis of selection which apparently differs as per the requirements of respective organizations. Hogan et al. (1997) while giving a detail account of "Big Five Model" also highlighted the importance of "Person–Organization Fit Theory" as was also purposed by Verquer et al., 2003 through a study based on meta-analysis. Since ERS is the HR practice which relates to the processes involved for finding the right person for the job its efficacies in project success are obvious. Another important factor which is relevant to ERS is the correct "Job Design" before the start of ERS. "JCM Model" is explained by Kulik et al. (1987). This was further explained through a study based on meta-analysis in terms of organizational performance by Fried and Ferris (1987) showing significant relationships.

H 1. "ERS" influences "PS" in project-based organizations of Pakistan.

The sole purpose of ETD is learning for enhancing skills of employees. Skill enhancement is a function of both training and development however, the difference exists in orientation. Ruekert (1992) indicates that training is with short term orientation while development tends to focus on long term. Masood (2010) highlights that there are research findings which narrates negative relationship of training with organizational performances. Since projects are short term efforts so for the purpose of learning, the main focus is on training than development in project-based organizations. Classical Conditioning Theory, Operant Conditioning Theory and "The Social Learning Theory" are three accounts of learning conditions explained by Ormrod and Davis (2004) in their book for the purpose of imparting training. All or any of these conditions can be relevant to a project-based organization, thereby, impacting the learning of employees and accordingly drawing the relation amongst ETD and project success. "Training transfer model" developed by Baldwin and Ford (1988) also explains the efficacies such as environments and design of respective organization which can implicate the training requirements of employees in project-based organizations. Keeping in line with constraints of limited budget

of projects (PMI, 2008) and the fact that training entails a massive and lavish arrangement as found by Tobias and Fletcher (2000), the argument is built that ETD may not have an influence on PS in project-based organization.

H 2. "ETD" doesn't influences "PS" in project-based organizations of Pakistan.

The third HR practice chosen for this study is EPA. Every employee wants fairness, equity and justice and these are the basic features of EPA. The method that is applied for EPA should commensurate with the culture and dictates of flair of respective organizations (Ebrahim, 2005). "General System Theory" presented by Von Bertalanffy (1950) forms the basis of working hierarchy of an organization where organizations are taken as system and HR practices are subsystems to achieve success. These systems cannot work properly to achieve the level of excellence if "Gratification" of employees is not rewarded as explained by Maslow (1943) in his "Hierarchy of Need Theory". Evidently, in order to achieve success in projects rewarding "Gratifications" of employees is imperative, which can be fairly assessed through strong EPA.

H 3. "EPA" influences "PS" in project-based organizations of Pakistan.

ECS can be explained in terms of "The prospects Theory" as presented by Kahneman and Tversky (1979), because humans are loss aversive by design so they require compensations for maximizing the prospects. "Cognitive Evolution Theory" as explained by Weiner (1972) is also an account of compensation emerging from motivation and reward. Since the motivation and reward are directly linked with the success of an organization so evidently ECS is linked with project success in a project-based organization. In an organizational perspective Ortín-Ángel and Salas-Fumás (2007) find that compensations differ on the merit of education, knowledge and training but in an individual perspective "The Side Bet Theory" as purposed by Becker (1960) finds that the individual's performance varies on the merit of gains. Interestingly, in line with "General System Theory" both perspectives lead to this fact that ECS impacts the success of a project.

H 4. "ECS" influences "PS" in project-based organizations of Pakistan.

Pakistan being a developing country can do a world of good to herself by adoption of best HR practices for ensuring optimal utilization of available human resource which is over 170 million including 49.19% of female population as reported by World bank (Khanum, 2013). Since development entails a lot of projects and HRM is regarded as fundamental practices of the project-based businesses (Huemann et al., 2007), so it is important to evaluate the impacts of above short listed HR practices following "Universalistic Perspective" on project success in Pakistani project-based organizations. Pakistan is the second largest Muslim country in terms of population in the

world (Rai et al., 2007). Research demonstrates that employees positively respond to environments of the organizations when a good match is available amongst their personality and the physiognomies of the environment. A mismatch would result in poor performance of individuals (Holland, 1996) and ultimately affects the success propositions of the organization.

The famous study of Hofstede (2006) highlighted the importance of culture as moderator existing in environments of respective organizations and impacting the organizational performances. The sample of his study included employees from Pakistan as well besides the 39 other countries. Study being a mile stone in research amply highlights the importance of Pakistani culture in influencing the success or failures of particular Pakistani organizations. The presence of various cultural elements in environments of Pakistani organizations is affirmative but going in to their details is out of scope of this study. Out of these environmental factors in the context of Pakistan only "IWE" has been selected as moderator to see the presence of its influence on the relationship of selected HR practices and project success. Marri et al. (2012) find strong positive impact of IWE in agriculture sector of Pakistan in organizational working, on the contrary Budhwar and Sparrow (1997) find that the impacts of "IWE" on outcomes of organizations differ in different environments.

IWE has been used as moderator by Yousef (2001) and has found its significance in his studies in the framework of an organization. Work ethics are generally related to values drawn from religion (Othman et al., 2004), so IWE relates to ethics drawn from Islam. Research suggests that in the framework of an organization the HR practices are influential in terms of "organizational commitments" (Hashim, 2010), similarly the latter is related to "IWE" as well (Marri et al., 2012). The findings of Pettijohn et al. (2008) can be of great consequence in the context of IWE effecting in an organizational setting, where they advocate that every individual employee distinguishes between success and failures in his/her own perspective as regards the prevailing working ethics in respective organization. Accordingly, to find whether or not IWE has any influence in PS in relation to four selected HR practices the following hypothesis has been developed:

H 5. The relationship of "ERS" and "PS" is moderated by IWE in project-based organizations of Pakistan.

H 6. The relationship of "ETD" and "PS" is moderated by IWE in project-based organizations of Pakistan.

H 7. The relationship of "EPA" and "PS" is moderated by IWE in project-based organizations of Pakistan.

H 8. The relationship of "ECS" and "PS" is moderated by IWE in project-based organizations of Pakistan.

2.2. Conceptual framework

The following model depicted in Fig. 1 was tested in order to predict the impacts of four selected HR practices on PS with
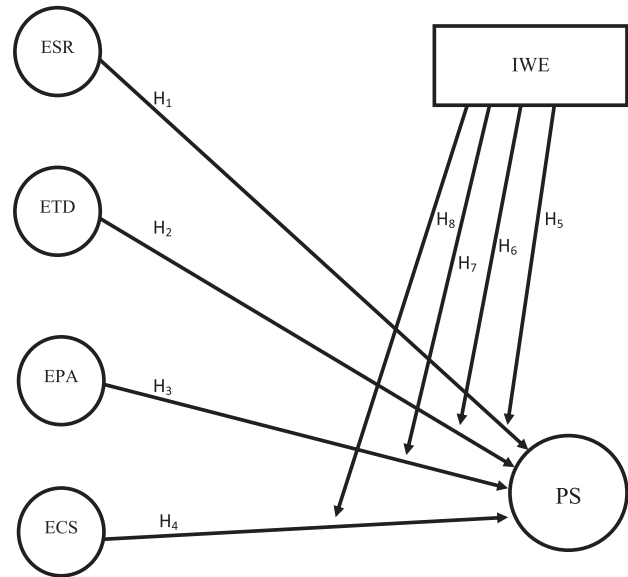

Fig. 1. Conceptual framework.

and without moderating role of IWE in Pakistani project-based organizations.

3. Research methodology

The research was aimed to explore the impacts of "set of four selected HR practices" on project success and the moderating effects of "IWE" on the relationship. We adopted quantitative method of research for empirical testing of data. Firstly, we investigated the impacts of HR practices individually on project success in project based Pakistani organizations. Secondly, we investigated the moderating effects of "IWE" on the relationship of the four HR practices and project success. Accordingly, hypotheses were tested basing on existing theories.

3.1. Research design

In conducting the study, we collected the data on cross-sectional basis. Cross-sectional design was adopted to get a fair description of current situation of Pakistani project-based organizations for appropriate recommendations. Seven project-based organizations of Pakistan were our cross sections. Precisely, employees were asked to provide their opinions about the "four HR practices" on their perceived project success in respective organizations. These employees were also asked to answer questions about "IWE" in the context of environments prevailing in organizations. In addition, we also collected the demographic details from study participants which included their gender, organization employed, age, work experience (years), educational qualification and project size they have been handling.

Since these organizations accounts for diversity due to variance in genders, styles of leaderships involved, dimensions of personalities of employees and difference in external/internal environments, thus for the purpose of general-ability it was

supportive to assess the impacts of HR practices on perceived project success in project-based Pakistani organization.

3.2. Population

The population of interest in this research consisted of employees of project-based Pakistani organizations; accordingly targeted population was restricted to organization located at four major cities of the country that is Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Lahore and Karachi. Cities were selected to ensure wholesomeness of study due to expected variances in responses because of difference in cultures and working environments of cities. Another reason for the selection of these cities was that being the provincial and country capitals these cities also base most of the main stream public and private sector project based organizations. The goal was to study the perception of employees of Marketing, Finance, HR and Security departments. Study was not restricted to the employees of HR department only because the input from other departments was equally important in the context of PS and IWE.

3.3. Description of sample

Convenience sampling technique was used in this research. Sample size is about 21% of the targeted population of 1287 individuals from seven project based organizations that are considered enough according to the standards of Gallup International (Marcovitz and Snyder, 2004). Survey questionnaires were administered to 437 employees, however only 270 responses were retrieved. Study participants included employees from both genders and also supervisory or non-supervisory staff. They varied in academic qualifications and also the work experience they had. Employees including both genders were the respondents for data collection. Due to difference in the nature of jobs apparently the environments of organizations did have a difference of working styles, working hours and level of gender mix.

3.4. Description of the instrument

In this study questionnaire survey was used as instrument. Survey instrument is employed to collect the reliable samples for generalization over a large population as purposed by Kerlinger Fred and Lee Howard (2000). Accordingly relational type of survey approach has been adopted to find relation amongst variables through empirical testing of data obtained (Rungtusanatham et al., 2003). The first instrument used for the study was Survey based on Survey questionnaires used by Snell and Dean (1992), Singh (2004) and Masood (2010) for finding the impacts of four selected HR practices in the framework of an organization. A total of thirty seven items were used to measure the practices with nine items each for "ERS, EPA and ECS" and ten items for "ETD".

Narrative of questionnaire was adapted to suit own study's framework. All these constructs were measured on a 5 point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree". For the assessment of "project success" as perceived by employees, questionnaire proposed by Mueller and Turner (2008) has been adapted and used. This questionnaire on "PS" comprised of 8 items.

The responses were measured on a 5 point Likert scale. The third instrument used for the study was Survey based on Survey questionnaires used by Ali (1992) and Rokhman (2010) for finding the effects of "IWE" in the framework of an organization. This questionnaire on "IWE" comprised of 11 items. Narrative of their questionnaire was adapted to suit own study's framework. All these constructs were measured on a 5 point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree". Since samples included employees of both genders, variance in qualifications and difference in other demographic factors, so their response to survey accommodated rationale for variance on account of difference in perception about project success due to HR practices in an Islamic work environments.

3.5. Unit of analysis

Employees as individuals of five public sector project-based organizations and two private sector organizations were the participants for the research. Individuals of all organizations were briefed prior to survey with the permission of requisite authorities and anonymity was promised to respect the privacy of participant. Efforts were made to increase confidence level by targeting individuals from all age groups, genders, appointments held and obvious social status.

3.6. Pilot testing of instrument

Pilot testing of instrument was carried out to ascertain the reliability of the instruments adapted. A total of 60 sets of questionnaires were distributed amongst the employees O-6 and O-7 for the purpose of pilot testing, however, their responses were not used in final data analysis of sample. Since the survey was personally administered and requests were rendered for filling of responses so 33 responses were retrieved in a time span of approximately 6 h in each organization. Results of the pilot testing are appended below:

Pilot test evidently determined the reliability of instruments adapted. The reliability was determined through the value of Cronbach's alpha for all four variables and because the value of alpha was greater than 0.70 so the standards for reliability of the questionnaires were ascertained.

3.7. Data collection method

Primary data based study method was adopted. All seven project-based organizations under study were personally visited by the researcher (me), however prior coordination was made with the administration and managers of respective departments for selection of appropriate time when maximum number of employees were present in offices. Accordingly, sets of questionnaires were distributed amongst the employees and the responses were collected the same day. In order to facilitate certain respondents who were more comfortable with computers rather than simple paper and pencil, the same set of questionnaire was also floated through Goggle Doc via internet

medium and social media such as face book, accordingly Email was also used for retrieving of requisite responses. The reasonable response rate (61%) was achieved due to personal visits of researcher and also personal retrieval of questionnaire sets from respective organizations. In addition the selection of appropriate time as regards the availability of maximum number of employees was an aiding factor too.

3.8. Statistical tests used for data analysis

3.8.1. Reliability test

Cronbach's alpha test was employed to determine the reliability of the instrument. Cronbach's alpha test was also applied on all the six variables namely ERS, ETD, EPA, ECS, PS and IWE.

3.8.2. Regression analysis

This study was developed on four independent variables in the form of HR practices selected for this study and one dependent variable in the form of project success. Linear regression analysis was used to ascertain the effects of ERS, ETD, EPA and ECS on PS. The study also investigated the moderating effect of variable IWE on the relationship between IVs and DV.

3.8.3. Pearson's correlation

Pearson's correlation was used to measure the linear correlation between various variables. Pearson's correlation was also employed to spot the association between different demographic variables and PS.

3.8.4. Software used

Data acquired through the instrument has been entered and analyzed using SPSS version 20.0. Statistical tools applied to test the hypothesis have been explained in preceding paragraphs.

3.9. Ethical considerations

Participation in the research was voluntary and privacy of responses was ensured by not recording the name and departments of the respondents, furthermore, informed consent was ensured through proper briefings and all out efforts have been made to avoid any influences/biases while recording the data by researcher.

4. Data analysis and results

4.1. Demographic analysis

4.1.1. Frequency analysis

Demographic data was collected from all respondents to perform descriptive statistics, questions were pertaining to gender, respective organization name, education level, age group and job tenure in respective organizations. "N" was 270. Efforts made were reflected in data where by an equal opportunity has been rendered to employees of all participating organizations for avoiding biases. Data reflected that the majority of the respondents were graduates or above in various

disciplines. This is mainly because the departments understudy requires at-least a corresponding education level. The sample specifies that approximately 50% of participants falls within the age bracket of 25–35 years, Moreover, the sample also indicates that approximately 50% of participants falls under the service/tenure bracket of four years or less and the rest are putting in more than four years. An interesting fact also was revealed while studying the tenure data that approximately 24% of the respondents had tenure of more than 8 years in respective organizations, the reason can be that in public sector the jobs are more of permanent nature or experience is worth gold on construction related projects. Even in private sector there were employees who had job tenures more than 8 years. Data reveals approximately 29% of the sample consisted of female employees.

4.1.2. Cross tabulation

Descriptive analysis of Table 4 pertaining to organization name and ages of employees reveals that in both public and private sectors employees are distributed amongst all age group, furthermore, in-spite of temporary nature of projects the mix of young/energetic and middle aged experienced employees is the practice in vogue. (See Tables 1–3.)

4.1.3. Cross tabulation of organization and gender

Cross tabulation of organization name and gender suggests that employees of both genders are present in project-based Pakistani organizations. Data also suggest that although the female employees are present in both public and private sector organizations apparently they are more prone to public sector jobs because of their presence in higher percentages in public sector.

4.1.4. Cross tabulation of organization and education level

Cross tabulation of employees' education levels and respective organizations suggests that in project-based organizations specific to four departments under study minimum graduate level is the preferred qualification which is required by employees. Especially in IT/telecomm related project-based organizations where computer handling is of great essence so requirement of higher level of educational qualification is even more pronounced.

4.2. Relationship between PS and predictors and four HR practices namely ERS, ETD, EPA, ECS and IWE

Table 7 suggests that PS is positively correlated with all four IVs (HR practices) and moderator IWE. (See Tables 5 and 6.) (See Table 8.)

Table 1
Reliability test of instrument — pilot test.

Variable	Response (N)	No of items	Cronbach's alpha
ERS (IV)	33	9	0.928
ETD (IV)	33	10	0.892
EPA (IV)	33	9	0.856
ECS (IV)	33	9	0.715
PS (DV)	33	8	0.897
IWE (MV)	33	11	0.745

Table 2
Questionnaire distributed and retrieved.

Organization	Population	Sample selected/ questionnaire distributed	Questionnaire received	Percentage
O-1	71	49	35	71
O-2	89	47	26	55
O-3	41	30	27	90
O-4	47	37	21	58
O-5	413	122	74	60
O-6	257	58	37	63
O-7	369	94	50	53

4.3. Hypothesis testing

Multiple linear regressions were carried out on PS as DV and four HR practices in line with Universalistic Perspective namely ERS, ETD, EPA and ECS as IV. Since, Kerlinger Fred and Lee Howard (2000) advocate that in relational perspective, multiple regressions relate to a single DV in a linear combination of two or more IVs so it was supportive for my statistical model. The other facet of multiple regressions is the output in the form of coefficient of determination, R^2, it expresses how much variations in independent variables explain the variations in dependent variable. Unstandardized coefficients (β) are the values for the regression equation for predicting the dependent variable from the independent variable. These are named unstandardized coefficients because they are measured in their natural units. Standardized coefficients (Beta) are the values for the regression equation for predicting the dependent variable from the independent variable obtained after standardizing all variables in the model.

Table 3
Frequency of occurrence of variables gender, name of organization, education level, age group and job tenure in organization (N = 270).

		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	193	71.5
	Female	77	28.5
Name of organization	O-1	35	13
	O-2	26	9.6
	O-3	27	10
	O-4	21	7.8
	O-5	74	27.4
	O-6	37	13.7
	O-7	50	18.5
Education level	FA/FSC	11	4.1
	BA/BSC	126	46.7
	MA/MSC/MBA	131	48.5
	Others	2	0.7
Age group	Less than 25	56	20.7
	25 to 30	78	28.9
	30 to 35	67	24.8
	35 to 40	46	17
	More than 40 years	23	8.5
Tenure	Less than 2 years	50	18.5
	2 to 4 years	88	32.6
	5 to 7 years	66	24.4
	8 to 10 years	51	18.9
	More than 10 years	15	5.6

Table 4
Cross tabulation between organization and age group.

Name of your organization * age of respondent cross tabulation

Count

		Age of respondent					Total
		Less than 25	25 to 30	30 to 35	35 to 40	More than 40 years	
Name of your organization	O-1	6	6	12	7	4	35
	O-2	2	9	9	3	3	26
	O-3	8	10	5	3	1	27
	O-4	9	4	3	4	1	21
	O-5	7	18	25	16	8	74
	O-6	8	12	6	8	3	37
	O-7	16	19	7	5	3	50
Total		56	78	67	46	23	270

The regression analysis confirmed acceptance of five hypotheses (H_1, H_2, H_3, H_4 & H_5) whereas, the rest of the three hypotheses (H_6, H_7 & H_8) were rejected. Regression analysis results highlighted the importance of only selected HR practices in project success due to peculiar nature of project-based organizations, whereas practice with long term orientation was found to be irrelevant. The moderating effects of IWE on the relationship of four selected HR practices with project success were also tested and were found to be insignificant less amongst the relationship of ERS and PS, where it showed significant moderating effects in Pakistani project-based organizations.

4.4. Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to examine the relationship amongst four selected HR practices on PS independently and under the moderating effects of IWE. Furthermore, in this study data pertaining to the demography of respondents was also collected to carry out demographic analysis, the reason for demographic data collection was to control its effects in the model where needed during regression analysis. The analysis of demographic data did lead to certain incidental findings. Demography revealed that approximately 50% of employees had job tenures of less than 4 years which is indicative of temporary nature of jobs in this sector because of temporary/time bound nature of projects (PMI, 2008). Data also revealed that most of the correspondents were graduates or above which highlighted

Table 5
Cross tabulation between organization and gender.

Name of your organization * what is your gender? cross tabulation

		What is your gender?		Total
		Male	Female	
Name of your organization	O-1	28	7	35
	O-2	18	8	26
	O-3	24	3	27
	O-4	16	5	21
	O-5	54	20	74
	O-6	23	14	37
	O-7	30	20	50
Total		193	77	270

Table 6
Cross tabulation between organization and education levels.

Name of your organization * please indicate which of these qualifications you have? cross tabulation

		Please indicate which of these qualifications you have?				Total
		FA/FSC	BA/BSC	MA/MSc/MBA	Other	
Name of your	O-1	2	15	18	0	35
organization	O-2	0	14	12	0	26
	O-3	0	14	13	0	27
	O-4	0	4	15	2	21
	O-5	0	38	36	0	74
	O-6	0	22	15	0	37
	O-7	9	19	22	0	50
Total		11	126	131	2	270

the importance of educational qualifications in project-based Pakistani organizations. Female employees were found to present in all project-based organizations but with comparatively in higher percentages at telecomm/IT based organizations showing their preferences of jobs. Analysis of descriptive statistics revealed that employees had the most diverse point of views regarding "EPA" because of the highest range of responses on scale that is 1.67 to 5. These responses are in line with the concepts of Fundamental Attribution Error (FAE) and Self Serving Biases which are subcomponents of Attribution Theory (Kelley, 1967). The descriptive statistics also revealed that the responses about "PS" had the highest standard deviation that is 0.69437 around the mean of 4.0362, this shows that project success is perceived in own takes by employees. These individual perspectives can be variant because of variance in perceptions of project success/failures (Baker et al., 1988). Similarly Chan et al. (2004) also advocate importance of causation in project success' perception which can be different in different circumstances.

Interestingly, the highest mean in data of responses amongst variables was of "IWE" that is 4.1865. This means that most of the employees responded in an affirmative manner to the questions, which is understandable in a Muslim country like Pakistan. This is in line with the research findings of Haroon et al. (2012) in which they found that Pakistani nurses responded in a positive manner about IWE. Similarly, Yousef (2000) in

his study at UAE also found that amongst variables of his study the variable IWE's respondents' data had the highest mean.

Regression results of the study showed acceptance of five out eight hypotheses, thereby suggesting significant relationship between the IVs (ERS, EPA & ECS) and DV (PS). Each of these HR practices was found to have positive and significant relationship with PS in Pakistani project-based organizations, and was in line with the research by Belout and Gauvreau (2004) where they advocate the importance of HR practices in the context of project success and is in contrast to the study of Pinto and Prescott (1988), where they advocate the importance of "personal factor" rather than HR practices in the context of PS. Interestingly, as regards ETD as IV and its influence on PS as DV it was found that it has no significant impact. This finding is in line with the study of Pinto and Prescott (1988) as described earlier as well. The absence of influence of ETD on PS also confirms the temporary and unique nature of projects (PMI, 2008), thus neglecting the long term oriented activities. Porter's (2008) arguments regarding saving of cost for gaining "competitive advantage" are also in favor of non-influential effects of ETD on PS in Pakistani project-based organizations. Another reason for non-significance of ETD is that it's the type and requirements of organization which dictates the requirements of business strategy so unlike orthodox organization the ETD is of less consequence in project-based organizations (Hobday, 2000).

Employment of ETD entails extra costs and expenditures which project-based organizations tend to be safe because of limited budgets available for projects (PMI, 2008), accordingly it makes ETD insignificant as is displayed by the results of regression analysis, but its insignificance has imprints on environments/culture of the organizations understudy, as Aguinis and Kraiger (2009) found that "training and development" can be beneficial in refining the environments of the organizations.

Taking the discussion forward, it was surprisingly found that in-spite of the highest mean of responses about IWE it was only found significant as moderator in case of relationship of ERS and PS. The moderating effect of IWE on relationships of ETD, EPA & ECS with PS was found insignificant. The description of this data analysis can be given in light of Social Exchange Theory (Homans, 1958) where it is advocated that it's only cost–benefit analysis which matters rather than anything else.

Table 7
Table for demographic variables of gender, age and indexes of ERS, ETD, EPA, ECS, PS and IWE.

		Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.	Gender	0.29	0.452	–							
2.	Age	2.64	1.226	0.221 **	–						
3.	ERS	3.8053	0.67801	0.207 **	0.313 **	(0.864)					
4.	ETD	3.502	0.67053	0.132 *	0.56	0.669 **	(0.852)				
5.	EPA	3.7222	0.75362	0.179 **	0.235 **	0.567 **	0.616 **	(0.809)			
6.	ECS	3.5381	0.56038	0.103	0.170 **	0.475 **	0.480 **	0.5830 **	(0.754)		
7.	PS	4.0352	0.69437	0.203 **	0.329 **	0.581 **	0.565 **	0.630 **	0.571 **	(0.868)	
8.	IWE	4.1865	0.57275	0.121 *	0.282 **	0.488 **	0.492 **	0.446 **	0.451 **	0.657 **	(0.858)

N = 270; Cronbach's alpha presented in parenthesis.

** $p < .01$.

* $p < .05$.

Table 8
Regression analysis.

Coefficients[a]

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	T	Sig.	R^2 (adjusted)
	B	Std. error	Beta			
(Constant)	.161	.178	–	.902	.368	
ERS_INDEX	.503	.066	.490	7.640	.000	
ETD_INDEX	.054	.059	.052	.905	.367	.672
EPA_INDEX	.247	.073	.205	3.376	.001	
ECS_INDEX	.240	.054	.194	4.451	.000	
ERS × IWE	.895	.317	.874	2.818	.005	.716
ETD × IWE	.498	.341	.481	1.462	.145	.594
EPA × IWE	.295	.264	.243	1.114	.266	.671
ECS × IWE	.121	.463	.098	.262	.794	.542

[a] Dependent variable: PS_INDEX.

Same is also the essence of argument of "Protestant work ethics" (PWE), the concept conceived by Weber (1958) that financial benefits are of greater essence. This leads to an interesting finding that similarities exist in "IWE" and "PWE". This is also in line with few researches that find devotion, ingenuity and honesty common in "IWE" and "PWE" (Yousef, 2001), however, it is contrary to the work of Naqvi (1981), where he argues that in Islam, ethics dominates all financial benefits not the vice versa.

The reason for the significant moderation effect of IWE on the relationship of ERS and PS can also be linked with financial gains through employment of skillful employees and ultimately resulting in PS. These significant moderating effects within the framework of organization are also consistent with the research work of Marri et al. (2012), where they checked moderating effects of IWE on other organizational variables and found it to be significant. Rice (1999) finds that IWE has bearings on success or failures of businesses, but in the absence of moderating role of IWE, purely in the peculiar context of Pakistani project-based organizations, it is established that employees of organizations under study take religion as a private matter between them and God, which reveals consistency with western civilizations (Rice, 1999). Here the impacts of demographic variables in organizational environments along with certain contingency factors are evident which are playing moderating role between IVs and DV, but their discussion is out of scope of this study.

5. Recommendation and conclusion

5.1. Managerial implications

5.1.1 Empirical evidence sustenance the fact that selected HR practices impact perceived PS, however the moderating role of IWE is only supported in the relationship of ERS and perceived PS in this study. Managers of Pakistani project-based organizations need to clarify the concept of PS to employees for effective utilization of HR practices and implementation of golden principles of Islam in the shape of IWE.

5.1.2 Managers are required to make determinations of contingency and environmental factors which nullify the impacts of "IWE" in their respective organizations. After determinations appropriate measures were devised for improvements in PS indexes.

5.1.3 As per Hofstede (2006) culture plays significant role in defining the success of an organization. Managers in Pakistani project-based organizations should draw more relevance from Pakistani culture for improving the PS indexes.

5.1.4 All HR practices are not relevant to project-based organizations. Managers must adopt only selective HR practices, which draw positive bearing on PS in project-based organizations.

5.1.5 Managers must adopt a managerial approach (HR practices) which corresponds to "IWE" for ensuring employees' growth and relatedness in line with ERG theory; this will ultimately increase the index of PS.

5.1.6 Managers should avoid biases in performance appraisals as evident in data collected from respondents pertaining to EPA. The Agency Theory in the perspective of organizations as explained by Eisenhardt (1989) dwells upon the fact that managers cannot remain biased due to various non-job related issues, so the remedy is adoption of the latest systems such as "HRIS" and "HPWS" for fair and free appraisals. This will assist in increasing the PS indexes.

5.2. Academic implications

5.2.1 This research can be used by social scientists for dwelling upon the social factors that negatively moderate the relationship of HR practices and PS.

5.2.2 In this era of global economy, this study can be used by researchers to ascertain the bundle of HR practices which suits best in Pakistani environments in particular and project-based organizations as general.

5.2.3 In order to increase the facet of general-ability the same study can be conducted separately for private and public organizations, which may lead researchers to some new findings in the context of Pakistan.

5.2.4 The findings of this research show similarities and differences on adoption of certain HR practices amongst conventional and project-based Pakistani organizations, so this provides a reference for further research as comparative study of two types of organization.

5.3. Limitations of the study

5.3.1 First limitation is due to paucity of time. The academic calendar and also the semester schedule do not allow enough time for testing of impacts of all thirteen types of HR practices on PS in project based Pakistani organizations, hence the study was restricted to find out impacts of only "four selected HR practices" on PS.

5.3.2 Second limitation is due to adoption of instruments for measurements. That is, even though the instruments did serve as good measures of IVs, DV and MV and their reliabilities were also confirmed through Cronbach's alpha tests yet they may have varied impacts in conditions other than peculiar environments of Pakistan, since the instruments were originally developed foreign to Pakistani environments.

5.4. Future research

5.4.1 Future research is recommended with same model separately for public and private sector project-based organizations. This may lead to certain conclusions different from this study.

5.4.2 Future research should focus on the development of more accurate instruments that embody further precise measures of HR practices, PS and IWE. In addition, a research may be planned in the same model with variation of IVs, in that present IVs be replaced with other HR practices and accordingly the impacts may be studied with or without moderating variable of IWE.

5.4.3 A replication study of this research may be carried out with even bigger sample size to reassess the efficacies pertaining to the general-ability of findings of this study.

5.5. Conclusion

This research focused on highlighting the importance of selected HR practices for project success in project-based organizations. It was also concluded that the role of IWE is not very significant in the context of Pakistani project-based organizations, moreover; interestingly it was found that IWE and PWE have commonalities in their concepts in-spite of apparently present huge differences. Lastly the research effectively communicates the fact that every employee has his/her own perception of PS which needs to be standardized with the development of uniform measures of units to be developed by experts.

Conflict of interest

It is certified that there is no conflict of interest in publication of this paper.

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