

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PROJECT MANAGEMENT,
SOFT SKILLS AND PROJECT SUCCESS: CASE OF YOUTH
TO SENIOR TEAM PROJECT PREPARED AND FUNDED BY
MUSANZE FC. 2017/2020**

Uwihoreye Ibrahim

Scholar, University of Kigali

Dushimimana Jean de Dieu (PhD)

Lecturer, University of Kigali

ISSN 2277-7733

Volume 10 Issue 4,

March 2022

Abstract

The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between project management soft skills on project success in Rwandan football industry. It had the following specific objectives which are: To determine the relationship between conflict management skills and project success of youth to senior team project of Musanze FC, To investigate the relationship between negotiation skills and project success of youth to senior team project of Musanze FC,..And it has also to test the following hypothesis. They are namely: HO1: there is no relationship between Conflict management skills and project success of youth to senior team project of Musanze FC, HO2: there is no relationship between negotiation skills on project success of youth to senior team project of Musanze FC. It basically used the descriptive research design in carrying out the study and in selecting the respondents, random sampling were undertaken to 52 respondents. Data were analyzed using statistical tools such as frequencies, percentages, weighted mean, standard deviation, correlational analysis. Findings of the study revealed that there is significant relationship between project management soft skills and project success in Rwandan football industry. there is positive and significant relationship between conflict management soft skills and project success of youth to senior team project of Musanze FC as indicated by statistics ($r=.866, p<.005$), there is positive and significant relationship between negotiation skills and project success of youth to senior team project of Musanze FC as shown is statistics ($r=.865, p<.005$).The study recommended government, stakeholders and project managers the following: During recruitment and selection activities for project managers, candidate soft skills also need to be given attention by big institutions.

Keywords: *soft skills, project management, conflict management skills and negotiation skills*

As project managers encourage all the possibilities to increase chances of success in their projects, they need to focus on improving technical skills while maintaining the importance of soft skills which are often overlooked by many organizations (Petter & Randolph, 2009, p. 45)., Meanwhile research places minimum attention on the topic of soft skills in comparison to hard skills, this study attempts to fill in the gap as seen in published literature on this topic. In order to accomplish this, this proposal discusses soft skills as it pertains to project management discipline by incorporating soft skills into the fundamental concept of the project cycle.

Despite the belief that soft skills are identified as an art (Belzer, 2004), and critical for a project's success, projects continue to have a significant failure rate,

PROJECT MANAGEMENT, SOFT SKILLS AND PROJECT SUCCESS

especially in the football industry. Despite large financial investments (40 million every year) in English youth football (soccer) Academies, only 25–30 English players aged 23 years or under enter the English Football Premier League each year (“Next Rooney”, 2007). Consequently, concerns are raised about the thinning supply of talented English football players, increasing the pressure on academy directors, managers, and coaches to produce more top English players. At the same time, young players in these academies experience pressure to produce top performances and to be selected to the Premier League. They encounter a range of personal and interpersonal challenges that can affect their experiences and personal development (Richardson, Gilbourne, & Littlewood, 2004). They must, therefore, learn to cope effectively with the stressors if they are to pursue a professional football career (Holt & Dunn, 2004), or else their sporting performance and subjective well-being can be impaired (Lazarus, 2000; Sagar, Lavallee, & Spray, 2009).

Furthermore, on a club level, funding and acquiring financial resources remain a problem. Although, TV deals and league sponsorships have eased the situation in the KUT countries to some extent. Yet, while the revenues remain low compared to leagues in Northern and South Africa, poor governance in clubs and on the level of football associations in KUT countries has detracted much of their benefits. Particularly in Uganda, the poor financial state of clubs in the elite league has negatively affected the stability in its structural composition: a number of clubs that qualified for the first-tier level could not last and disappeared after a short time (Onwumechili, 2019).

In Kenya and Tanzania, the situation is a bit better where sponsorships allow some clubs, such as Gor Mahia FC and AFC Leopards FC from Nairobi or Simba SC and Young Africans FC from Dar es Salaam, to invest in lasting structures and pay players decent wages. On one hand, this may account for the reason why these clubs attract migrants from other countries of the region and, to some extent, from other parts of the continent. On the other hand, however, better funding has not impeded mismanagement and the general decline of professional football in the two countries (Njororai, 2019).

Accordingly, the popularity of the game has produced high expectations to the national teams and clubs to perform well in international competitions. But these expectations have continuously been frustrated by the ongoing disappointment to succeed. Moreover, they have become part of national shame among football enthusiasts, as the region has produced world class athletes in other sports such as athletics, boxing, and rugby (Chepyator-Thomson & Ariyo, 2017) which seemingly receive better results with fewer resources but better management. Therefore, in KUT and beyond, the image of East African football has repeatedly been associated with disillusion and incompetence, not least by East Africans themselves (Njororai, 2019). Despite the recent qualifications of the KUT countries for the AFCON 2019 tournament, overcoming this depressing state seems to be almost impossible in the near future as structural improvements,

PROJECT MANAGEMENT, SOFT SKILLS AND PROJECT SUCCESS

coordinated on national levels, are not in sight. Moreover, and given the lack of incentives to promote long-term strategies that eye on talent and personnel development, the misery of East African football is likely to continue (Rintaugu et al., 2012).

In Rwanda like any other country, football has evolved in 21st century and provided job for many Rwandan who are in that industry where we have 16 teams that play in 1st division(Primus national league). Some of these teams are Rayon Sport Club, Musanze F.C, APR F.C, AS Kigali and Mukura among others. Improving soft skills attributes for project managers might appear as a necessity to improve methodologies of project management in order to increase the success of football projects. In addition, it is not within the goals of this study to encompass all possible soft skills factors that might have an effect on project success. However, factors considered in this study set up a frame of reference and conduct an analysis necessary to validate the presented model, as well as, the concept of the existence of the saturation points. Primary evidence has been derived from the quantitative analysis; also, it has been supported by qualitative analysis through two case studies, from which emerged another supportive model for the main model. As conclusion, competition in today's markets has made organizations focus greatly on innovative workers and managers to meet up with dynamic market demands, which forms the bedrock of human capital theory as discussed by Crăciun (2015). As part of human capital theory, managers' skills are the subject of this proposal in relation to football project management in Rwanda.

Research hypothesis

There is no relationship between Conflict management skills and project success of youth to senior team project of Musanze FC? And there is no relationship between negotiation skills on project success of youth to senior team project of Musanze FC?

Conflict management skills

Conflict is a natural part of any workplace, especially in those with many people of varying responsibilities and personalities who must work together. You can find conflict between groups, individual employees and even between members of management. It's important to manage conflict so the workplace can continue to be a positive and collaborative environment where employees are happy and productive at work. Conflict management skills are abilities that help you manage how conflict affects you, those you work with and the workplace as a whole. Knowing that conflict is inevitable, conflict management aims to make conflict a productive part of the workplace, and if you have the skills do to so, you can contribute to an environment where conflict is accepted, managed and used positively. There are skills you can build to become successful at managing conflict in the workplace. The most effective conflict management combines many of these skills. Here are six conflict management skills you can use to keep all conflict from negatively affecting the workplace

Negotiation skills

According to Rubin and Brown (1975), negotiation refers to a process in which individuals work together to formulate agreements about the issues in dispute. This process assumes that the parties involved are willing to communicate and to generate offers, counter-offers, or both. Agreement occurs if and only if the offers made are accepted by both of the parties (Neale & Northcraft, 1991).

Negotiation involves several key components including two or more parties to a negotiation, their interests, their alternatives, the process and the negotiated outcomes (Neale & Northcraft, 1991). These elements are described in the following discussion. A party to a negotiation comprises a person or a group of persons (Thompson, 1990). Although the focus of this research is upon two-party or dyadic negotiation, negotiation can occur between any number of individuals representing their own or others' issues. However, usually the greater number of people involved, the more complex the negotiation process becomes and the more difficult it is to reach an agreement (Bazerman, Curhan, Moore & Valley, 2000; Thompson, 2001).

The negotiation process can be characterised by the strategies, tactics and the events that take place in a negotiation. Strategies within a negotiation refer to the approach negotiators select to pursue their objectives. For example, a negotiator may choose to adopt a cooperative bargaining strategy as opposed to a competitive strategy and as such may be more inclined to share information and to make concessionary offers. The more discrete elements of the strategy, such as information sharing, are referred to as tactics (Carnevale & Pruitt, 1992). On a more micro-level, the process includes the verbal and the non-verbal behavior that is elicited during the negotiation (Thompson, 1990). The current research is directed at this level. Through an examination of negotiator behavior, and in particular their communication behaviour, a greater understanding can be obtained about the way negotiators perceive events and reach decisions as the negotiation unfolds. An analysis of behavior at this level can also offer important insights into the cognitive processes of negotiators that underpin the outcomes that they achieve (Donnellon & Gray, 1989).

At the outset of a negotiation, each party corresponds to its own set of interests or preferences about the way the dispute should be settled (Rubin, 1994). Interests, in negotiation contexts, essentially refer to the underlying needs of the parties (Thompson, 1998). For example when football team and player or head coach want to terminate their contract, Negotiationskills play key part to meet and satisfy the needs of each side.

Methodology

The target population consists of all members of a people or objects to which we generalize the results of investigation. A single member of a population is referred to as a sampling unit. Our population includes President of the club(1 person), vice president (2people), secretary general (1), finance officer (1), coaching staf(5), medical staff (2) , team manager (1), football players (32) fun club representatives (8), stadium

PROJECT MANAGEMENT, SOFT SKILLS AND PROJECT SUCCESS

employees(10) belonging to Musanze F.C in Rwanda. The whole population is made up of 63 people. The researcher used Morgan sample size determination which is scientific (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). Sample size is 52 people.

Findings

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of conflict management and project success

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std.
The conflicts are dealt well in Musanze F.C which led to its success toward attainment of goal.	52	2.00	5.00	4.2115	.80041
Use of mediation and reconciliation method help in resolving the conflicts in spark in case they arise.	52	2.00	5.00	4.3269	.73354
In Musanze F.C as football team, the conflict management help to reduce disagreement between managers and co-workers	52	1.00	5.00	4.1346	1.20504
In In Musanze F.C as football team, they use creative peace building method to ensure reduction of disagreement among workers.	52	3.00	5.00	4.5577	.63904
In Musanze F.C as football team, you use compensation method to be applied for failed party in compensating winning party in helping to reduce misunderstanding among the workers.	52	3.00	5.00	4.6346	.52502
In Musanze F.C as football team, the rules and regulation are set to ensure the management of conflict which also assists in enhancing the project success.	52	2.00	5.00	4.2500	.76376
Negotiation method of conflict resolution is applied in Musanze F.C and also lead to the achievement of its goal and success in general.	52	2.00	5.00	4.2885	.82454
Avoiding the conflict is a style which is applied in Musanze F.C's conflict management hence lead to its success contribute to your acquisition of livestock for long term purposes	52	1.00	5.00	4.1923	.92965
Collaborating is one of the method of conflict resolution which is applied in Musanze F.C.	52	1.00	5.00	4.3269	.92294
Conflict management skills lead to the success of Musanze F.C	52	3.00	5.00	4.3654	.74172
Overall mean & Std	52			4.3288	0.80856

Note: Strongly Disagree = [-1]= **Very Low mean**; Disagree= [-2]=**Low mean**; Neutral= [-2-3]=**moderated mean**; Agree= [3-4]=**High mean**; Strongly Agree= [4-5]= **Very High mean**

The results in table 8 indicated that the majority of respondents strongly agreed that the following factors influence project success, they are namely: The conflicts are dealt well in Musanze F.C which led to its success toward attainment of goal ($\mu=4.2115$ and $STD=.80041$), Use of mediation and reconciliation method help in resolving the conflicts in spark in case they arise($\mu=4.3269$ and $STD=.73354$), In Musanze F.C as football team, the conflict management help to reduce disagreement between managers and co-workers($\mu=4.1346$ and $STD=1.20504$), In In Musanze F.C as football team, they use creative peace building method to ensure reduction of disagreement among workers($\mu= 4.5577$ and $STD=.63904$), In Musanze F.C as football team, you use compensation method to be applied for failed party in compensating winning party in helping to reduce misunderstanding among the workers($\mu=4.6346$ and $STD=.52502$), In Musanze F.C as football team, the rules and regulation are set to ensure the management

PROJECT MANAGEMENT, SOFT SKILLS AND PROJECT SUCCESS

of conflict which also assists in enhancing the project success($\mu=4.2500$ and $STD=.76376$), Negotiation method of conflict resolution is applied in Musanze F.C and also lead to the achievement of its goal and success in general($\mu=4.2885$ and $STD=.82454$), Avoiding the conflict is a style which is applied in Musanze F.C's conflict management hence lead to its success contribute to your acquisition of livestock for long term purposes($\mu=4.1923$ and $STD=.92965$), Collaborating is one of the method of conflict resolution which is applied in Musanze F.C($\mu=4.3269$ and $STD=.92294$), Conflict management skills lead to the success of Musanze F.C($\mu=4.3654$ and $STD=.74172$). the overall results indicated the respondents strongly agreed that conflict management influence project success ($\mu= 4.3288$ and $STD=0.80856$).

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of negotiation skills and project success

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std.
Essential communication skills is used a way of negotiating in Musanze F.C to enhance the project success.	52	3.00	5.00	4.3846	.63102
Musanze F.C as football team, Active listening skills are also used for understanding another's opinion in negotiation.	52	3.00	5.00	4.5577	.66902
Emotional intelligence is used as a way of negotiating in Musanze F.C on their project success.	52	2.00	5.00	4.2692	.86581
In Musanze F.C as football team, Expectation management as a way of negotiation.	52	3.00	5.00	4.4615	.67043
Rather than seeking a quick conclusion, negotiators often practice patience to properly assess a situation and reach the best conclusion for their players.	52	2.00	5.00	4.4231	.72345
Adaptability is a vital skill for a successful negotiation in Musanze F.C as football team.	52	1.00	5.00	4.2885	.82454
The ability to influence others (Persuasion) is an important skill of negotiation in Musanze F.C to attain its project success.	52	2.00	5.00	4.1731	.87942
In Musanze F.C as a football team, negotiation requires planning to help you determine what you want to achieve the project success.	52	1.00	5.00	4.2885	.80041
Integrity, or having strong ethical and moral principles, is an essential skill for negotiations in Musanze F.C.	52	2.00	5.00	4.6154	.69038
Negotiation requires the ability to see the problem and find a solution in Musanze F.C.	52	1.00	5.00	4.1731	.94394
Overall mean & Std	52			4.3634	0.76984

Note: Strongly Disagree = [-1]= **Very Low mean**; Disagree= [-2]=**Low mean**; Neutral= [-3]=**moderated mean**; Agree= [3-4]=**High mean**; Strongly Agree= [4-5]= **Very High mean**

The results in table 9 indicated that the majority of respondents strongly agreed that the following factors influence project success, they are namely: Essential communication skills is used a way of negotiating in Musanze F.C to enhance the project success($\mu=4.3846$ and $STD=.63102$), Musanze F.C as football team, Active listening skills are also used for understanding another's opinion in negotiation($\mu=4.5577$ and $STD=.66902$), Emotional intelligence is used as a way of negotiating in Musanze F.C on their project success($\mu=4.2692$ and $STD=.86581$), In Musanze F.C as football team, Expectation management as a way of negotiation($\mu=4.4615$ and $STD=.67043$), Rather than seeking a quick conclusion,

PROJECT MANAGEMENT, SOFT SKILLS AND PROJECT SUCCESS

negotiators often practice patience to properly assess a situation and reach the best conclusion for their players ($\mu=4.4231$ and $STD=.72345$), Adaptability is a vital skill for a successful negotiation in Musanze F.C as football team ($\mu=4.2885$ and $STD=.82454$), The ability to influence others (Persuasion) is an important skill of negotiation in Musanze F.C to attain its project success ($\mu=4.1731$ and $STD=.87942$), In Musanze F.C as a football team, negotiation requires planning to help you determine what you want to achieve the project success ($\mu=4.2885$ and $STD=.80041$), Integrity, or having strong ethical and moral principles is an essential skill for negotiations in Musanze F.C ($\mu=4.6154$ and $STD=.69038$), Negotiation requires the ability to see the problem and find a solution in Musanze F.C ($\mu=4.1731$ and $STD=.94394$). The overall results indicated the respondents strongly agreed that negotiation skills influence project success ($\mu = 4.3634$ and $STD=0.76984$).

Discussion

The findings from the objective related number one approved that there is positive and significant relationship between conflict management soft skills and project success of youth to senior team project of Musanze FC as indicated by statistics ($r=.866$, $p<.005$). conflicts management soft skills are very important in different project because every community can face with many challenges where people can have misunderstanding among them that is the reason why conflict management soft skills is an important topic which can be studies and put forward by different institutions. This study is similar to the study of Villax and Anantamula, (2010, July) asserted that there is strong relationship between conflict management and project success because a company have conflict among the members its development is not possible when the employees are not working by targeting the same goals that it is the reason why conflict management skills is very necessary in organization and every administrative managers must have this indicators so that he/she can achieve the planned objectives.

The finding from objective number two which was the relationship between negotiation skills and project success of youth to senior team project of Musanze FC. The study approved that there is positive and significant relationship between negotiation skills and project success of youth to senior team project of Musanze FC as shown is statistics ($r=.865$, $p<.005$). negotiation skills plays significant impact in project success as the marketing officer or procurement officers needs that skills in welcoming the investors or stakeholders apart from that this skills are also needed when Musanze FC wants to sell or to provide a bid of new talents from another team. Negotiation skills is trigger of success in different project. According to Wertheim, (2002) asserted that there is strong relationship between negotiation skills and project success negotiations is very necessary in organization because when there is a quarries in among the people, negotiation skills is needed to intervene in problem solving.

Conclusion

Finally, project management soft skills is very important with an organization when it targets to achieve designed goal. Project success needs strict involvement

PROJECT MANAGEMENT, SOFT SKILLS AND PROJECT SUCCESS

of stakeholders and it requires much efforts such as conflict management skill, negotiation skills. A project coordinator is considered as one of the important key elements which plays a big role in leading a project towards its successful performance (Xue, Rasool, Gillani & Khan, 2020). The meaning of competence consist of knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes and values and personal characteristics which are very important for task accomplishment. The researcher further, concluded that there is strong relationship between project management soft skills and project success. Government and stakeholders should contribute in developing projects and training them on project management.

References

- Villax, C., & Anantatmula, V. (2010, July). Understanding and managing conflict in a project environment. In *2010 PMI Education and Research Conference* (pp. 12-16).
- Wertheim, E. (2002). Negotiations and resolving conflicts: An overview. *College of Business Administration, Northeastern University*, [available at: <http://web.cba.neu.edu/~evertheim/interper/negot3.htm>].
- Sampson, R. C. (2007). R&D alliances and firm performance: The impact of technological diversity and alliance organization on innovation. *Academy of management journal*, 50(2), 364-386
- Richardson, D., Gilbourne, D., & Littlewood, M. (2004). Developing support mechanisms for elite young players in a professional soccer academy: Creative reflections in action research. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 4(4), 195-214.
- Rintaugu, E. G., Mwisukha, A., & Onywera, V. (2012). Analysis of factors that affect the standard of soccer in africa: the case of east african countries. *Journal of Physical Education & Sport*, 12(1).
- Petter, S., & Randolph, A. B. (2009). Developing soft skills to manage user expectations in IT projects: Knowledge reuse among IT project managers. *Project Management Journal*, 40(4), 45-59.
- Njororai, W. W. S. (2019). Organizational factors influencing football development in East African countries. *Soccer & Society*, 20(1), 168-188.
- Balcar, J. (2016). Is it better to invest in hard or soft skills?. *The Economic and Labour Relations Review*, 27(4), 453-470.
- Belzer, A. (2004). "It's not like normal school": the role of prior learning contexts in adult learning. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 55(1), 41-59.
- Carnevale, P. J., & Pruitt, D. G. (1992). Negotiation and mediation. *Annual review of psychology*, 43(1), 531-582.
- Chepyator-Thomson, J. R., & Ariyo, E. S. (2016). Out of Eastern Africa: An examination of sport labour migration in the post-independence era. *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 33(15), 1826-1846.
- Onwumechili, C. (2019). The structure and nature of professional elite leagues in Africa. In *Africa's Elite Football* (pp. 3-18). Routledge.