

## Impact of Inspirational Leadership on Project Success With Special Emphasis on Empowerment and Psychological Ownership

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### Abstract

*The study examines the association between inspirational leadership and project success, along with the role of empowerment and psychological ownership. The study is performed in the construction sector of Pakistan and projects under progress in Lahore, Faisalabad, and Multan. The study is questionnaire-based, and quantitative data analysis is performed. The questionnaires were distributed to the 250 employees who are genuinely engaged in projects, and data was collected from 215 employees. The regression analysis was performed to examine the impact of inspirational leadership on project success. The mediation and moderation analysis were used to explore the mediation effect of empowerment and the moderation effect of psychological ownership. The results found that inspirational leadership impacts the project's success. Further, the results reveal that psychological empowerment mediates the relationship between inspirational leadership and project success. The moderation influence of psychological ownership is also explored significantly in this study. The study concluded that inspirational leadership promotes a sense of self-responsibility and empowers employees in decision-making.*

**Keywords:** Inspirational Leadership, Project success, psychological empowerment, psychological ownership, regression analysis, mediation, moderation

### Introduction

Project success is the main objective of any project-based organization. The project's top management and employees are essential to achieving the goal. The primary function of leadership is to inspire the team and employees through their actions, behavior, and attitude. The different studies cover project success, but other factors affect project success. The leadership style also contributes to the project's success. The success of the project and organization is based on the leadership efficiency and effectiveness, leaders' behavior, and ability to utilize their skills because the style of managing the organization impacts it. The leadership assists in improving the working environment, makes timely decisions, and fulfills the future requirements and aspirations of the workers (S.A Shatnawi et al., 2021). So, it is desired to be the inspirational leader in the organizations, and a few aspire the employees and others enjoy it. Passionate leaders observe the past, understand the project's success and failure, and think and implement it in the present for future challenges. Leaders are the models of inspiration for their followers and employees. The push includes:

- Trust.
- Appreciation of work.
- Respect for the employees.

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- Preference for their needs over their own needs.
- Motivation of employees for the success of the project.

The inspirational quality of a leader implements moral standards and improves the efficiency of employees and organizations. Olutoye and Asikhia (2022). Such leaders boost the overall environment of the organization and appreciate the employees. So, they are also treated as motivator along with leader and helps the team to reach its full potential by adopting empowerment of teams. The kind and style of leadership are different. An inspirational leadership style develops a future vision and convinces others to stand with groups for common goals. Employees stay motivated by the efforts of passionate leaders who touch their emotions and imagination to create a positive working environment. The inspired and motivated teams are helpful in effective and efficient working conditions that may be innovative, productive, and customer-focused. It may be beneficial in the engagement of employees. Meeting employees can retain the employees within the organization to avoid recruitment and training costs. Leadership is a vital area in project management and sustainable development for the achievement of the organization's goals (Slimane, 2012).

The research focuses on situations where different employees in the team of the project need help understanding and acting on the norms of the organizations, which are mandatory for their knowledge (Khairunnisa et al., 2021). Interpersonal citizenship, courtesy and altruism, role of conduct and project loyalty are the different dimensions of the leadership style. The organizations should focus on developing and implementing formal or informal organizational standards. *Organizational citizenship* is a unique element of Time, task, and context. The non-permanent and collaborative features of the project are needed for staff support and project loyalty (Rodrigues & Ferreira, 2015). There are different leadership styles, but this study is conducted to evaluate the impact of inspirational leadership style on the project's success. The study of inspirational leadership in project management is scarce. Project management plays a role in finding solutions to problems through the limited time and resources the projects face. Project management has been developed as a critical field like other management fields, such as operations and financial management. The success of the organizations is linked with the success of the projects (Kerzner, 2019). There are different areas of project success. The success of the projects is not dependent upon a few specific areas. By way of research, we have to discover further different areas of project success. So, to determine the success of the projects, we add psychological empowerment as a mediating variable between the association of Inspirational leadership and project success. Cost, Time, and scope are three conventional facets of project success used to examine the project success. There needs to be more than the traditional factors of project success to measure the project's success (Toor & Ogunlana, 2010). Customer satisfaction, environmental standards, social responsibility, risk management, empowerment of employees, stakeholders' satisfaction, knowledge management, and quality management with others should be considered.

This study will be helpful in the area of project management to reduce the chances of failure of the projects. With the reduction of the probability of failure, there will be an increase in the project's success. Project failure in Pakistan is expected due to less awareness of project success factors and psychologists' interference. This study examines inspirational leadership's impact on project success and the mediation role of empowerment between inspirational leadership and project success. Further, the moderation role of psychological ownership between inspirational leadership and project success. The study is conducted in Lahore, Faisalabad, and Multan. The questionnaires are distributed to those employees who are genuinely engaged in projects. The regression analysis to observe the impact of inspirational leadership on project success is utilized, while mediation and moderation models are also used in the study. The project's success or failure depends upon the project manager's ability and capacity for

inspiration. The study will be helpful if it applies to training the staff of project-based organizations to achieve goals.

The project success is the ultimate goal of project management. The failure of the project is acceptable by project-based organizations. As we discussed, there are no specific factors of project success. There are different factors of project success, and we need to explore the factors affecting project success. There must be more than the Time, cost, and scope to measure the project's success. We make an effort by taking inspirational leadership as an independent variable, psychological empowerment as a mediator, and psychological ownership as a moderator in the relationship between inspirational leadership and project success. These factors are used to measure the success of the project. The project-based organizations have a wide range of options for project performance improvements. The project management quality may be enhanced by implementing the suggestions of researchers and academicians on inspirational leadership. Taking responsibility for tasks becomes the psychological ownership that affects the performance of the employees and organizations. The empowerment also creates the responsibility taking vision in the employees. Therefore, it may affect the success of the project.

## Literature Review

All the literature is presented here for theoretical justification and development of a theoretical framework. Further, this section is divided into sections to explain the empirical research on independent variable inspirational leadership, mediator empowerment, and moderator psychological ownership.

The status quo quality is not mandatory in the style of inspirational leadership. It focuses on achieving goals and applying fresh ideas about organizational strategy for previously unachieved goals. The inspiration is related to motivation, which is a requirement of project-based organizations. This leadership style delegates high-level duties to the employees without hesitation (Andriani et al., 2018). Inspirational leadership plays a vital role in increasing the performance of the project-based organizations. Several studies explored the significance of inspirational leadership in project-based organizations because of the influence of the behavior of the employees. Acar (2012) elaborated that there is a positive association between inspirational leadership and organizational commitment. Baotham (2011) explored a study and concluded that inspirational leadership positively influences the quality and productivity of performance. Bass and Stogdill (1990) and Avolio and Bass (2004) suggested that the charismatic abilities of the leader inspire the employees and their followers. In this way, the organizations attain the best employees. These are time-effective behaviors in different cultures. Metcalf and Benn (2012) elucidated that leaders apply abilities of interpreting, predicting, and engaging teams in diverse environments.

Slimane (2012) and Inness et al. (2010) explain the linkage of leadership and sustainable benefits and leadership and sustainability in dynamic organizational texture. A leader's vision may be different by adopting socio-economic and environmental characteristics. Rabiul and Yean (2021) explained that the habit of an inspired leader is to inspire and enhance the intellect. Dionne et al. (2004) explained that to win employees' confidence, trust, and commitment, the inspirational leader influences and conveys his vision. Burns (1978) and Kark et al. (2003) elaborated that leaders inspire their subordinates through their intellect to identify difficulties. Manoj-Amor et al. (2020) and Chua and Ayoko (2021) studied how work engagement is linked with transformational leadership. Schaufeli and Salanova (2007) elucidated that employees' sense of purpose could be better if they feel that the leaders care about them. In this way, they can handle their job commitments.

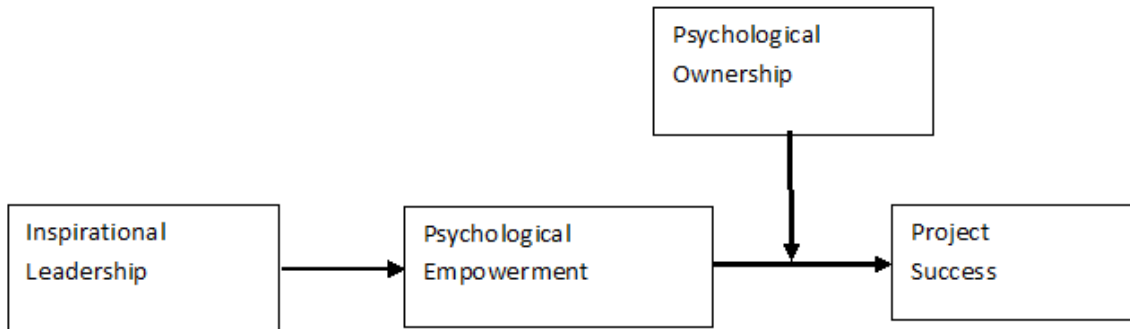
Ravanpykar & Pashazadh., (2014) defined *empowerment* as providing power and opportunities to individuals for making decisions. Chaturvedi et al. (2016) also defined *empowerment* as

giving power to individuals to think, perform, make decisions, and control work. Kanter (2006) conveyed that the research on psychological empowerment started three decades ago. Hempel et al. (2012) suggested that by empowering the workers, the performance of the workers and organizations may be enhanced. Seibert et al. (2011) defined psychological empowerment as this is the internal motivation of employees, which creates a sense of self-control and job involvement. In the last few years, psychological empowerment has become essential to the organization's performance. Several other researchers were conducted on areas like leadership psychology, the organization's performance, team cohesion, team productivity, motivation, and emotional intelligence that come under empowerment (Rae, 2013). Spreitzer, G. M. (1995) explained that inspirational leadership has intrinsic motivation and cognitive abilities. The ability to do an activity and remain confident is known as competence. The decision-making structure and information flow are high to low-level management in traditional organizations. However, in the psychological approach, stress is a lesson from the person who has the power to decide, and it contributes to intrinsic motivation. Spreitzer et al. (2005) suggested that the dimension of power sharing is linked with psychological empowerment. Khan et al. (2020) documented that empowerment ideas are invented through several management and leadership theories and participative and supportive leadership (Davis & Bowles, 2018; Hollander et al., 1986). Carless (2004) and Conger & Kanungo (1988) explained the linkage of empowerment with intrinsic motivation. Now, empowerment is not only power-sharing but also intrinsic motivation. Kirkman & Rosen (1999) extended empowerment from the organizational to the individual level. Bakker et al. (2003) explored the association between psychological empowerment and project success through the job demand resource model. They suggested two aspects of the environment affect the employee's performance. Iqbal et al. (2020) elaborated that job source is essential and linked with psychological empowerment in project-based organizations. Bakker et al., (2003) stated the examples of job resources, which are the wellbeing of employees, performance, and emotional and psychological actions. Garcia-Juan et al. (2019) elucidated research that the employees having power are more considerate of the customers' needs and deal effectively with changes pointed out by customers (Birdi & wood, 2008).

Psychological ownership is "the feeling of employees as though the objective of owning that the duty is mine" (Peck et al.; A. W., 2018). Khan et al. (2022) elaborated that psychological ownership promotes knowledge interactions as it influences the performance of skilled workers. Pierce & Jussila (2010) explained in research that psychological ownership is a situation where employees believe that the purpose of ownership is linked to them. Pierce, Kostova, and Dirks (2001) documented that ownership is an idiosyncrasy initially categorized outside the association and high-ups. They explored the three ways of feeling psychological ownership: controlling the target, having more considerate acquainted with the target, and investing themselves in the target. Zhang et al. (2023) explained that psychological ownership is related to the concept of acquaintance and understanding of the organization. When the leaders give the employees power, they make decisions and control their work conditions. Self-determination increases employees' feeling of responsibility for work, resulting in a feeling of psychological ownership. Dawkins et al. (2017) explained that there is no direct way to create psychological ownership. When the powers are given to the leaders, it increases the autonomy of the followers. *Work autonomy* is defined as the capacity of employees to regulate their work, which enhances the feeling of psychological ownership. Employees with more psychological ownership are more attached to prevention and accountable for it (Pierce et al., 2001).

## Research Model

**Figure 1: Research model of impact of Inspirational Leadership on project success and Mediating role of psychological empowerment and moderator role of psychological ownership**



## Research Methodology

This section includes the data, methodology, procedures, and techniques for examining research. The research aims to investigate the impact of inspirational leadership on project success through psychological empowerment and the influence of moderation of psychological ownership in Pakistan's construction sector. Data is taken from Lahore, Faisalabad, and Multan. Almost 250 questionnaires were distributed, and 215 were received back. The 250 questionnaires were disseminated through nonprobability sampling. Every respondent is asked to provide the required demographic information. To measure the employee's perception of inspirational leadership, the questionnaire of six items given by Bass and Bass Bernard (1985) and Joshi Lazarova & Liao (2009) and also adopted by Spreitzer, De Janasz & Quinn (1999) is taken.

The respondents gave the data on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The fourteen items-based questionnaire adopted by Aga, Noorderhaven, and Vallejo (2016) was taken to collect the data to measure the project's success. The eleven items containing a questionnaire for measuring psychological empowerment, developed by G.M. Spreitzer (1995), is taken for data collection. The scale having seven items for the measurement of psychological ownership developed by Kohn (2018) will be used in our study. The data is gathered, and all the initial tests have been applied before starting a significant part of the data analysis. The SPSS version 20 is taken into utilization for analyzing the data. The following steps are followed in data analysis. First of all, appropriate filled questionnaires are taken. Each variable is analyzed and coded correctly. The frequency table was observed to interpret the properties of the sample. The numerical values are observed by applying descriptive statistics. The association among the variables is examined through Correlation analysis. The regression analysis was applied to inspect the influence of independent variables on dependent variables. The Preacher and Hayes tests have been applied to observe the mediation effect and role of moderation of the mediator and moderator, respectively. The proposed hypotheses were examined by correlation and the Preacher and Hayes method to evaluate the rejection and acceptance of the proposed hypothesis.

## Results

In this section, the overall results of the analysis and the testing of the hypothesis are discussed. A general discussion is also done here.

**Table 1: Correlation Analysis**

Sr. No	Variables	1	2	3	4
1	Inspirational Leadership	1			
2	Project Success	0.735**	1		
3	Psychological Empowerment	0.657**	0.619**	1	
4	Psychological Ownership	0.789**	0.812**	0.756**	1

The table 1 explored that there is fit and direct association among all the variables taken in study. The association between inspirational leadership and project success is 0.735 which is highly significant. The correlation values of psychological empowerment are 0.657 and 0.619 for inspirational leadership and Project success. The values of correlation of psychological ownership are 0.789, 0.812 and 0.756 for Inspirational leadership, Project success and psychological empowerment. The results are significant.

**Table 2: Regression Analysis**

Predictor		B	R2	AdjR2	p
Inspirational Leadership (IL)	→ Project Success (PS)	0.691	0.605	0.601	0
Inspirational Leadership	→ Psychological Empowerment (PE)	0.745	0.595	0.592	0
Psychological Empowerment (PE)	→ Project Success (PS)	0.678	0.425	0.422	0

The regression analysis revealed that ( $\beta = 0.691$  at  $p=0$ ). The value of  $\beta$  is positive, symbolizing a positive change in project success due to a positive change in inspirational leadership. The p-value of the regression analysis is statistically significant for all variables. The results show the positive coefficients for all variables having values ( $\beta = 0.745$  at  $p=0$ ) and ( $\beta = 0.678$  at  $p=0$ ). In light of the regression analysis results, the study's first hypothesis is that inspirational leadership positively correlates with project success. The regression analysis results further revealed that ( $\beta = 0.745$  at  $p=0$ ), the coefficient is positive, which indicates a positive association between inspirational leadership and psychological empowerment. It means that positive change in inspirational leadership brings a positive change in psychological empowerment. The results indicate that ( $\beta = 0.678$  at  $p=0$ ), which means there is a positive association between psychological empowerment and project success. The increase in psychological empowerment brings an increase in project success. The positive coefficient indicates the positive relationship between psychological empowerment and project success. The p-value zero explains the statistical significance and fitness of the model.

**Table 3: Significance of Total effect, direct effect, and indirect effect**

DV	Effect of IV on M (a path)	Effect of M on DV (b path)	Total Effect of IV on DV (c path)	Direct effect of IV (c path)	Bootstrap results for indirect effect
					LLCI ULCI
Project Success (PS)	0.521***	0.587***	0.776***	0.312***	0.2712 0.5978

As per the explanation of Preacher and Hayes, there are three effects: Total effect, direct effect,

and indirect effect. The relationship between inspirational leadership and project success is the total effect. The results revealed that 0.776 is the total effect of inspirational leadership and project success association, with a zero significance value. The approximately 77.6% change comes in project success due to inspirational leadership changes. Both the lower and upper limits of bootstrapping are 0.2712 and 0.5978. The significant direct effect results are explored in this study, with a value of 0.312 and a p-value of zero. It is explained that inspirational leadership participates 31.2% in project success in the presence of a mediating variable. The mediation role is observed through the indirect effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable. Psychological empowerment mediates the relationship between inspirational leadership and project success.

**Table 4: Results of moderation effect**

Predictors	B	SE	T	P
Step 1 IL-PS	0.545	0.051	8.512	0.042
Step 2 PO-PS	0.649	0.062	7.965	0
Step 3PO*IL-PS	0.498	0.069	7.368	0

\*p<.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001

The table 4 presents the results of moderation effect and explored that there is moderation effect of psychological ownership between inspirational leadership and project success. The significance of the step three is indication of moderation effect. The standard values are near to zero whereas the p values are zero show the significance of the model.

## Discussion

The main objective of the research is to examine the impact of Inspirational leadership on project success with the mediating role of psychological empowerment and the moderation effect of psychological ownership. The research is performed by applying regression analysis, mediation, and moderation analysis in SPSS. The results also revealed that psychological empowerment mediates the relationship between inspirational leadership and project success. Further, the results explore that psychological ownership moderates the relationship between inspirational leadership and project success. Based on the findings, there is a positive relationship between inspirational leadership, an independent variable, and project success, a dependent variable. The results revealed that the mediation effect is significant, and based on the results, we accept the fourth hypothesis. The results of our study are consistent with previous studies. The results show a significant positive linkage between psychological empowerment and project success. Psychological ownership is an essential moderator, along with other variables. The results show that the relationship between inspirational leadership and project success is significantly moderated by psychological ownership. The findings of the study elaborate that if there is an increase in psychological ownership, it will moderate the relationship between inspirational leadership and project success.

## Conclusion

The study is performed to identify the impact of inspirational leadership on project success. Further, the study evaluates the role of mediation of psychological empowerment and the moderating effect of psychological ownership. The construction sector of Pakistan is selected for study. The respondents having different demographics participated in the study.

The 250 questionnaires were disseminated to the respondents, and 215 questionnaires were received, which were correctly filled. The different relevant tools were applied to get the results of the study. Following are the concluding remarks of the study. There is a positive impact of inspirational leadership on project success, which was derived from regression analysis.

Further, results found that psychological empowerment mediates the relationship between inspirational leadership and project success. The results concluded that the moderation effect of psychological ownership on the relationship between inspirational leadership and project success is also significant. The study provides the tools to attain the project's success by enhancing inspirational leadership, psychological empowerment, and psychological ownership. The training of top-level management and employees is needed to promote the self-responsibility of the employees. The project manager should be given authority to empower the employees for decision-making and a sense of responsibility. Project failure is unacceptable to organizations, so the organizations should consider the suggestions in this study. The training of employees should be conducted in the light of the study. Four variables, inspirational leadership, psychological empowerment, project success, and psychological ownership, were examined in this study to observe the importance of said variables. Psychological empowerment was taken as the mediator, and psychological ownership was the study's moderator. As discussed above, the variables are favorable for project success. The project management may be enhanced by adopting these four variables in their practices.

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