
The Role of Stakeholders Perception towards Change Managers in Petroleum Industry in Saudi Arabia

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to investigate the role of stakeholder's perception towards the change managers in the petroleum industry of Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, the social skills, personal qualities and experience and expertise of the managers as a mediator between the change managers influence and the change management influence is investigated. This study employs a quantitative methodology for which questionnaires were distributed to petroleum industry employees, and a sample of 347 responses were collected for SPSS analysis. The results show that social skills and experience and expertise mediates between change manager influence and change management. The personal qualities show insignificant mediation between change manager influence and change management. This study suggests focus on manager's social skills and experience and expertise which leads to effective change management. This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge in human resource management.

Keywords: Stakeholder perspective, Change Manager Influence, Social Skills, Personal Qualities, Experience and Expertise, Change Management.

JEL Classification Code:M11, M19, O14, O22

1. INTRODUCTION

During the past years, there are several studies in the field of project management which has focused on evaluating the change manager's skills and their role in change management. Furthermore, the perception of the stakeholders is of prime importance as the success of any project depends on the skills of their managers. Identifying the change manager skills is critical in examining the change management influence (Svistunov, Lobachev, & Manukyan, 2021). According to a study by Et al (2021), the perception of the stakeholders involved in projects have to support the change management process as it is influenced by the change manager skills. Therefore, it is important to study the required skills of change managers which can make projects successful. In numerous studies, the social skills of a change manager is considered to be of prime importance as the change manager have to be a people person to get the work done (Elmezain, Baduruzzaman, & Khoiry, 2021). Furthermore, the experience and expertise of a change manager in change management contributes towards the success of a project (Ozawa, 2020). The personal qualities of a change manager is an added advantage to an organization as the personality itself plays a vital role in implementation of change. The professional commitment, extraversion and conscientiousness are considered fundamental for a project success (Ameer et al., 2021). The influence of change management increases with the role clarity of a project manager (Ribeiro, Amaral, & Barros, 2021). The success of a project depends on its planning and scheduling, following a lean approach in a project rather than a traditional approach can increase the project value (Lalmi, Fernandes, & Souad, 2021). The process of change at the projects becomes spontaneous as when the project manager's communication and engagement with their employees increases (Shakeri et al., 2020). The change is always facing resistance wherever it is implemented but when the employees receive the required support then they embrace change. Furthermore, building resilience among the employees will contribute towards the project success (Olayisade & Awolusi, 2021; Basile, Capobiamco, & Vona, 2021). The value of a project is realized when it generates the desired results (Silva, Pereira, & Magano, 2021). Therefore, the organizations have to focus on the personal abilities of the project managers to manage change.

An analysis of the project management literature suggest that the most of the studies are conducted on examining the effect of project management financial and re-engineering approaches. Thus, very few studies have examined the impact of human resource management on the project success (Carden, Kovach, & Flores, 2021). Saudi Arabia is the largest supplier of petroleum with strong government controls over its main activities of the economy. It is an oil-based economy which possess 16% of the

petroleum reserves of the world and is ranked as the largest exporter. Furthermore, it is leading the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries(OPEC). The Saudi Arabia petroleum sector covers 87% of the budgeted revenue, 90% of the export earnings, and 42% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Additionally, Saudi Arabia is providing a platform of growth to its private sector so it can diversify its economy and employ more citizens of Saudi Arabia. In Saudi economy, there are 6 million workers who play an important role (“Saudi Arabia - Economic Indicators”, n.d.). Therefore, Saudi Arabia oil and gas companies have to devise strategies to overcome the challenges of change in the industry.

This research contributes in the literature by examining the impact of human resource management on project management by exploring the human resource practices and employees abilities to maintain and sustain change. First, this is the initial study to examine the human resource management in petroleum to face the challenges of change management. Second, most of the studies are conducted on financial and reengineering of the petroleum industry. Thus, ignoring the human resource management aspect. Therefore, considering the call for research on human resource management in petroleum industry. This research has empirically investigated the impact of human resource experiences, abilities and social skills in implementing change management in petroleum industry of Saudi Arabia.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

The dynamic approaches of human resource management and its promising influence on stakeholders perspectives under change is highlighted across the literature of human resource management by numerous theories and models (e.g. Stakeholder theory (Freenman,1984), Nudge theory of change management(Thaler&Sunstein, 2008). The stakeholder theory focuses on decision making in organizations and the power relations with stressing the importance of explaining how the decision making is influenced by the stakeholders according to their needs and why the organization must focus on balancing those needs (Boucher &Rendtorff, 2016; Mainardes et al., 2011).Nudge Theory explains the influence on human behavior to impose change. Both the theories are taking into account the influences and needs of the groups and individuals of the employees in an organization to make decisions. The present research examines the role of stakeholder’s perspective on change managers and the change management influence on project management by drawing on the theory of stakeholders and nudge theory of change management. Fig. 1 display the conceptual framework and identifies the corresponding hypotheses.

2.1 Stakeholders Perspective and Change Manager Influence

Stakeholder perspective is a pressure on managers to implement change as per their perspective. But there are critiques on this perspective as well. According to a report by Johnston, Blakemore, and Bell (2020), the government imposing restrictions on the oil and gas companies which is making them comply with the policies and the only interest of the oil and gas companies is to provide the returns to their stakeholders. Since the stakeholders are interested in the returns, thus they have little interest in compliance issues of the companies. Change manager influence increases as they develop better understanding towards the expectation of their stakeholders (Sukoco *et. al.*, 2021). Furthermore, stakeholder perspective also provides a guideline to managers. The guidelines provide direction to change managers as the progress towards change, keeping the stakeholders returns on priority. (Atti, Galantini, & Sartor 2019). Change managers are considered as risk managers according to stakeholder's perspective. Change is a risk with uncertain outcomes but with experience and expertise of change managers, risk is reduced. (Caredioa 2021). Hence, based on the above discussion, the following hypothesis is formulated,

H1: Stakeholders perspective is significantly related to change manager influence

2.2 Mediating Role of Social Skills between the Change Manager Influence and Change Management Influence

The previous researches shows a resistance to change in organizations but with well-planned approaches there are positive results also. The social skills of managers contributes immensely towards the change management. The social information processing of a managers is a valued added ability which can help the management in effective implementation of their plans (Promsri, 2017). The social skills are used for interaction with others both for verbal and nonverbal communication. The manager's social skills will differ that managers from others as being more visionary, better in communication, influencing, conflict management, change catalyst, working through teams, building blocks and collaborating (Botelho, 2021). Hence, based on the above discussion, the following hypothesis is formulated,

H2: Social skills mediates the relationship between the change manager influence and change management influence

2.3 Mediating Role of Personal Qualities between the Change Manager Influence and Change Management Influence

Personal qualities of a change manager influences the performance of the team. (Lianget *al.*, 2022). According to Nowicka and Rajs (2018), the personal qualities of a project

manager contributes towards the success of a project. Leadership qualities are the top priorities of any project since this quality leads the project in the right direction. A project manager must have consistency in its work so the project is completed in its decided time (Gunderson, & Goldwasser, 2022). The soft skills of a project manager is considered to be an added advantage because through communication, the project manager change the mindset of their employees (Mehdiyeva, 2018). Hence, based on the above discussion, the following hypothesis is formulated,

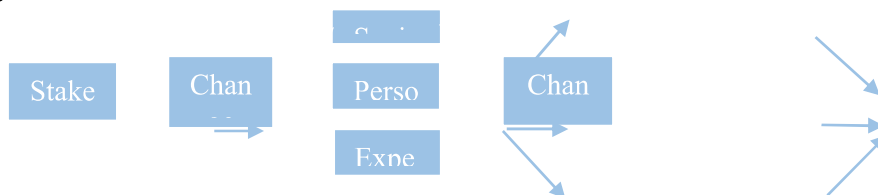
H3: Personal qualities mediates the relationship between the change manager influence and change management influence

2.4 Mediating Role of Experience and Expertise between the Change Manager Influence and Change Management Influence

The experience and expertise of a project manager plays a critical role in the success of a project. The expertise of any manager is gained over years which is reflected in the planning of the project. The project can utilize these expertise for the successful completion of the project (Bisson et al., 2022). According to Ivina, Olsson, & Hiselius (2022), the experience of a project manager in managing the projects contributes towards managing the changing nature of projects. It is successfully executed because of effective collaboration and communication. Hence, based on the above discussion, the following hypothesis is formulated,

H2: Experience and expertise mediates the relationship between the change manager influence and change management influence

Figure 1: Research Framework



3. Research Methodology

To identify the associations between the variables, quantitative research method is used to study the impact on the dependent variable. The descriptive research approach is used

to address the descriptions about the change managers influence of petroleum industry in Saudi Arabia because the objective is to conduct an explanatory research which can provide analyze the required behaviors of managers.

3.1 Sample Selection

The sample for data collection are the petroleum companies of Saudi Arabia. Most of the petroleum companies are located in this area. Stratified random sampling will be used to cover the large number of employees working in the petroleum companies.

3.2 Sample Size

The sample size was 400 employees of petroleum companies. The sample is of top level and middle level managers.

3.3 Data Collection

The data is collected from the top and middle level managers of Saudi Arabia petroleum companies through emails and google forms. The choice of population were the managers who were involved in managing the strategies and direction of the company. The middle level managers are considered as change managers because they are handling all the changes at the ground level.

3.4 Research Instrument

A questionnaire was used to collect the data and SPSS software was used to analyze the data. The empirical tests will be conducted to analyze the reliability, correlation and regression of variables.

4. Analysis and Results

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.718	22

For reliability testing 347 respondents has returned the questionnaires and has been selected to measure the internal consistency of data and validity of questionnaire. Cronbach's Alpha of preliminary questionnaire test is 71.8% which is very high

reliability for the research. The standard equation of linear regression is as follows which is used in analysis of data in this report several times as per requirement.

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + e$$

To utilize the Sobel test, need to determine both “a” and “b” Unstandardized Regression Coefficients and their Standard Errors (S_a and S_b, respectively) then utilizing values for “a”, “b”, “S_a”, and “S_b” using calculator (Preacher & Leonardelli, 2010).

Sobel test equation

$$z\text{-value} = a \times b / \text{SQRT}(b^2 \times s_{a^2} + a^2 \times s_{b^2})$$

Aroian test equation

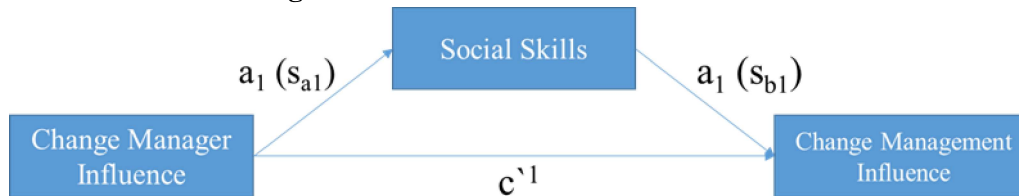
$$z\text{-value} = a \times b / \text{SQRT}(b^2 \times s_{a^2} + a^2 \times s_{b^2} + s_{a^2} \times s_{b^2})$$

Goodman test equation

$$z\text{-value} = a \times b / \text{SQRT}(b^2 \times s_{a^2} + a^2 \times s_{b^2} - s_{a^2} \times s_{b^2})$$

To analyze Mediation effect of Mediator on relationship of Dependent & Independent Variables, Sobel Test has been selected using both SPSS and online calculator (Preacher & Leonardelli, 2010). The Z-score of Mediator can also be calculated by using aforementioned formulas using 3 different test equation manually or using excel spread sheet (Abu-Bader & Jones, 2021).

Social Skills as Mediating Factor



Direct Relationship

Term	Coefficient	SE Coefficient	T	P
Constant	1.602	0.108	14.79	0.000
Change Manger Influence	0.484	0.034	14.391	0.000

Mediation Relationship

Term	Coefficient	SE Coefficient	T	P
Constant	2.176	0.103	21.107	0.000
Change Manger Influence	-1.064	0.032	33.583	0.000
Social Skills	1.325	0.04	33.049	0.000

The test used to analyze if, Social Skills (MV) have mediating the relationship between Change Manager Influence and Change Management Influence. First, results of simple linear regression show that Change Manager Influence (DV) is statistically significant predictor of Change Management Influence (beta = -.484, t = 14.391, p < 0.05). Then, the mediator, Social Skills (MV) entered in the Multiple Linear Regression Analysis, both Predictor and Mediator are significant with respective data (beta = 1.325, t = 33.049, p < 0.05) and (beta = -1.064, t = -33.583, p < 0.05) respectively.

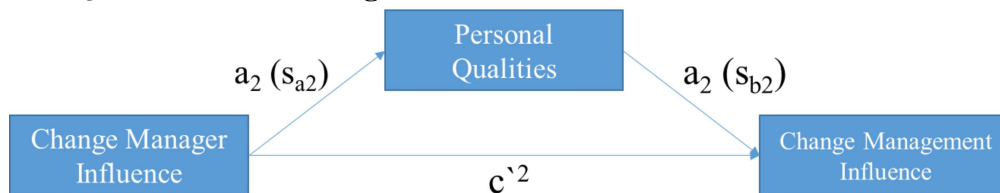
SOCIAL SKILLS

INPUT		RESULTS			
Regression Coefficient (a1)	0.48	Statistical Test	Goodman test		
Coefficient b/w	4	Test	Sobel test	Aroian test	test
Mediator & DV (b1)	1.32	Test	13.078737	13.073709	13.083770
	5	statistic:	37	63	91
	0.03		0.0490337	0.0490526	0.0490149
Standard Error (sa1)	4	Std. Error:	9	4	2
Standard Error (sb1)	0.04	p-value:	0.000	0.000	0.000

Above table shows the results of the Sobel test as well as two additional tests: Goodman tests and Aroian. The latter two tests use slightly modified formulas of the Sobel test to compute the Z score (MacKinnon, Ghulam, & James, 1995). It can also compute the Sobel test statistics using below formulas.

For further investigation of mediator, the Sobel test was utilized to examine Social Skills significantly mediates the relationship between Change Manager Influence and Change Management Influence. The results confirmed that Mediator significantly mediates the relationship between DV and Predictor (Z = 13.07873737, p < 0.05).

Personal Qualities as Mediating Factor



The test used to analyze if, Personal Qualities (MV) have mediating the relationship between Change Manager Influence and Change Management Influence. First, results of simple linear regression show that Change Manager Influence (DV) is statistically insignificant predictor of Change Management Influence (beta = 0.024, t = 0.445, p

>0.05). Then, the mediator, Personal Qualities (MV) entered in the Multiple Linear Regression Analysis, both Predictor and Mediator are showing significant with respective data (beta = -1.064, t = -33.583, p < 0.05) and (beta = -1.325, t = -33.049, p < 0.05) respectively.

Direct Relationship

Term	Coefficient	SE Coefficient	T	P
Constant	2.935	0.172	17.062	0.000
Change Manger Influence	0.024	0.053	0.445	0.657

Mediation Relationship

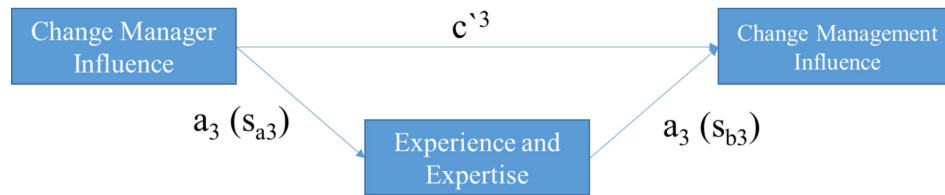
Term	Coef	SE Coef	T	P
Constant	2.176	0.103	21.107	0.000
			-	
Personal Qualities	-1.064	0.032	33.583	0.000
Change Manger Influence	1.325	0.04	33.049	0.000

For further investigation of mediator, the Sobel test was utilized to examine Personal Qualities showing no mediation relationship between Change Manager Influence and Change Management Influence. The results confirmed that mediator is insignificantly mediation the relationship between DV and Predictor (Z = 0.45279283, p > 0.05).

PERSONAL QUALITIES

INPUT			RESULTS		
Regression Coefficient (a ₂)		0.24	Statistical Test	Sobel test	Goodman test
Coefficient b/w	0.84		Test	0.4527928	0.4529751
Mediator & DV (b ₂)	6		statistic:	3	1
				0.4485973	0.4482365
Standard Error (s _{a2})	0.53		Std. Error:	0.448417	7
	0.02				5
Standard Error (s _{b2})	4		p-value:	0.651	0.651
				0.651	0.651

Experience & Expertise as a Mediating Factor



The test used to analyze if, Experience and Expertise (MV) have mediating the relationship between Change Manager Influence and Change Management Influence. First, results of simple linear regression show that Change Manager Influence (DV) is statistically significant predictor of Change Management Influence (beta = -0.405, t = 6.044, p < 0.05). Then, the mediator, Experience and Expertise (MV) was entered in the Multiple Linear Regression Analysis, both Predictor and Mediator are significant with respective data (beta = -.129, t = -7.695, p < 0.05) and (beta = 0.724, t = 56.437, p < 0.05) respectively.

Direct Relationship

Term	Coefficient	SE Coefficient	T	P
Constant	4.313	0.216	19.974	0.000
Change Manger Influence	-0.405	0.067	-6.044	0.000

Mediation Relationship

Term	Coefficient	SE Coefficient	T	P
Constant	1.176	0.076	15.564	0.000
Experience & Expertise	0.724	0.013	56.437	0.000
Change Manger Influence	-0.129	0.017	-7.695	0.000

For further investigation of mediator, the Sobel test was utilized to examine Experience and Expertise significantly mediates the relationship between Change Manager Influence and Change Management Influence. The results confirmed that mediator significantly mediates the relationship between DV and Predictor (Z = -6.0094819, p < 0.05).

EXPERIENCE & EXPERTISE

INPUT		RESULTS		
Regression	-	Statistical	Goodman	
Coefficien (a3)	5	Test	Sobel test	Aroian test
Coefficient	b/w 0.72	Test	-6.0094819	-

Mediator & DV (b3)	4	statistic:	6.00852465	6.01043961
Standard Error (sa3)	0.06		0.0487928	
Standard Error (sb3)	0.01	Std. Error:	0.04880067	0.04878512
	3	p-value:	0	0

5. Discussion and Findings

This study has made a significant contribution to the practice of human resource management. From a theoretical point of view, the results of the study support the previous work by (Sukoco et. al., 2021; Botelho, 2021; Nowicka & Rajs, 2018; Bisson et al., 2022). Further, the mediation role of social skills, personal qualities and experience and expertise on the change manager influence and change management is empirically proved to be valid. The results show that the personal qualities are not supported and the social skills and experience and expertise are empirically validated. The impact of stakeholder perspective on change manager is validated through this study. The results are consistent with the findings of Sukoco et. al. (2021). This study contributes to a better knowledge of the examined relationships in Saudi Arabia petroleum industry. By investigating the key factors which can contribute towards change management in petroleum industry since this industry have to face many challenges which can only be better handled through the competent human resource. This study have provided some important empirical evidence that the personal qualities are not contributing towards the change management effectiveness which is a key finding of the petroleum industry since here the knowledge matters. In this study, the results revealed that the stakeholders are interested in change managers influence because as mentioned earlier, the profits are depended on them. The social skills and expertise and experience of change managers contribute largely towards the successful management of a project. The employees on the projects are working in deserted areas where they need motivation. The managers play a key role in using their social skills to keep their employees motivated since their employees face emotional problems as well. Experience and expertise are very much needed in petroleum industry because the technical knowledge is required with experience so the managers who are serving in the petroleum industry have to be an expert.

6. Conclusion

This study fills in the gap by empirically providing evidence for the petroleum industry stakeholders and managers. The key finding of this study is when the employees are working in deserted areas which develops emotional problems among them so in order

to handle this, the role of their managers becomes more crucial. The social skills of the managers are considered to be given priority because employees need motivation at work (Botelho, 2021). Furthermore, the experience of the managers along with their expertise is considered to be playing a key role in managing the changing conditions of the workplace in the petroleum industry (Bisson et al., 2022). The study concluded that the personal qualities of the managers are not playing a major role towards the change management in petroleum industry of Saudi Arabia. Their working knowledge of the machine and the functions plays a key role in management. As far as the managers social skills are considered, they are playing a key role as the motivation is required at the workplace. The stakeholders of the petroleum industry are interested in managers who are capable of handling the challenges of the environment since the petroleum project are mostly working in deserted areas.

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