



Success Factors of PMO Implementation for UAE Project-Based Organizations

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Abstract: In current competitive market, organisations strive not only to complete projects on time, but also to ensure stakeholder satisfaction. Creating a separate body or department for project management within an organisation is frequently motivated by a desire to improve project management and reduce projects that fall short of customers' and stakeholders' expectations due to budget overruns or intolerable delays. Thus, Project management Office (PMO) practises are becoming more popular around the world to support project management activities. Hence, this paper presents a qualitative approach by interviewing twenty experienced personnel who had worked with PMO for several years. The experts were from four organisation namely Masdar Abu Dhabi Future Energy Company, Al Mansouri 3B Group, Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange (ADX), and Gulf Falcon Company (GFC). These open interview sessions were to discover the success factors in implementing PMO in UAE organisation. The results of the interview found that there are six key factors affecting the effective implementation of the PMO which are project flexibility; politics and change resistance in stakeholders; alignment and accountability; efficient resources; risk management; effective leadership and team management. Project flexibility, as well as effective leadership and team management, are cited as the most critical factors by all respondents. The paper also incorporates an effective PMO framework which suggests various strategic measures to implement in five phases of the project lifecycle: initiation, planning, execution, monitoring and controlling, closing, and post-implementation reviewing.

Keywords: Success factor, effective PMO

1. Introduction

A project is viewed as a collection of tasks with a single goal that must be completed within a predetermined time frame while utilising a predetermined set of resources and budget. When the goal is met while staying within the boundaries of the established criteria and the implementation meets the needs of all stakeholders, the project is deemed successful. Despite the fact that the terms "project failures" and "project management failures" are sometimes used interchangeably, Both concepts, in the researcher's opinion, are wholly distinct. When the project's predetermined goal is not met, it fails. There are several ways to describe project management failure, and it heavily depends on a variety of variables. Even if the mission is completed, project management may be deemed unsuccessful if the budget exceeds the one that was originally suggested. In any other scenario, late project completion can be viewed as a project management failure.

Project management is always a difficult stage for firms seeking exceptional operational breakthroughs. New technology improvements have made managing and finishing projects more difficult. In order to increase efficiency, new and creative methods have had to be developed due to the complexity of project operations. Projects are typically thought of as a collection of tasks coordinated to accomplish a single objective. The process of managing and regulating operations to accomplish a goal within the parameters of time, scope, money, and so forth is known as project management. Project implementation is typically seen as a collective effort involving all the divisions within a business. Due to the influence they have on the project execution process, the construction of Project Management Offices has earned support from critics all around the world. The idea behind the project management office is to create a new or separate department within the organisation that will support other departments in managing the projects. As a system of control, the Project Management Office (PMO) is set up to make sure that concurrent project processes are properly carried out and represent the organization's goals (Almansoori et al. 2021a). It follows that the project management office is crucial to the strategic strategy designed to carry out the business plan. Because of this, research suggests that PMOs are now essential to project management when it comes to the issue of how organisations identify and accomplish their strategic objectives (Karayaz & Gungor, 2013). The concept of Project Management Office (PMO) was introduced a century ago to manage complex projects in organisation. In the 1930s, the first recorded PMO is by the United States (U.S.) Army Air Corps to monitor the development of aircraft (Almansoori et al. 2021b)

Organizations aim to not only complete projects on time in today's competitive market, but also to take stakeholder satisfaction into account. The motivation behind creating a distinct body or department for project management within an organisation is frequently a desire to enhance project management and to decrease projects that fall short of customers' and stakeholders' expectations owing to budget overruns or intolerable delays (Karayaz & Gungor, 2013). For companies in the public and private sectors whose primary activities are project-based, the existence of a PMO has become essential. This project management unit is in charge of enhancing the host organization's project management capabilities because it can actively engage with a project and a business environment there (Tjahjana, L., Dwyer, P., & Habib, 2009).

Despite the fact that there may not be a significant percentage of project failures, it has been observed that there is a high rate of project management errors that delay or impair the execution and completion of the projects. Even though the majority of project management system failures go unreported, they still cause enormous losses for the organisations and may throw off operations and budgets. However, both project-based and non-project-based enterprises today make use of the advantages of a separate project management entity. It is primarily because the dedicated project management office has shown to be more effective at containing deviations from the planned and, as a result, positively contribute to project success.

2. Projects in United Arab Emirates

Many nations are anticipating their future circumstances to maintain the momentum of their stability and economic advancement in the world of today, which features a dynamic economy, open commerce, and active socio-political movements. The United Arab Emirate (UAE) has one of the fastest growing economies in the Middle East (Alhammedi and Memon 2020). In order to ensure the continuation of its accomplished successful socioeconomic growth and state stability, the Federal Government of the UAE has plans. As a result, the Federal Government suggests "The UAE 2021 Vision" as a blueprint for reaching national goals and final targets that would be paving the way for additional forward motion. The authorities have proposed a number of actions based on their vision. EXPO 2020 is a component of this strategic plan, which is seen by the UAE government as a means of luring visitors and investors from all over the world to discover the nation's technological and economic developments. These programmes offer numerous opportunities for integrating cutting-edge breakthroughs and tested technology. Regarding this, numerous infrastructure projects have been announced, and some have even started. The authorities are making extraordinary efforts while maintaining their aim to complete the projects effectively. To effectively manage complex projects, a variety of advanced project management strategies are used.

The Abu Dhabi Economic Vision 2030 was created with the private sector as an active partner, using these suggested rules as the Plan's evaluation criteria. The Vision 2030 is viewed as a 22-year plan to achieve the desired results and ensure that all parties involved in the Emirate's economic paradigm are acting in concert with the aim of achieving the long-term objectives. United Arab Emirates designed and carried out a number of projects with the aim of improving its tourism attractions. In the nation, excellent projects are carried out and successfully performed. The Louvre Abu Dhabi, Saadiyat Cultural District, Zayed National Museum, Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, Khalifa Port, Etihad Rail, and STRATA are some of the major projects in Abu Dhabi that have been completed or will be in the near future. The Abu Dhabi International Airport will also be extended to increase the comfort of travellers. In the meantime, the Dubai government has begun several of the projects that had been put on hold because of the 2007-2008 catastrophe (Rehman, 2015).

The UAE government has various initiatives planned that will improve the country's appearance and is keenly focused on the future. Numerous projects that are strategically oriented are scheduled for 2020, including EXPO 2020, the skyscraper at Dubai Creek Harbour, Masar 2020, the Dubai Tourism Initiative 2020, and the Education 2020 strategy. The project is still being carried out, with a completion target of 2020. Until recently, the goal of setting foot

on Mars in the year 2117 roughly 100 years from now has only been visualised by the government. This amply demonstrates the government's perception and determination to increase the country's output, stability, and strength. The government has created a Centennial Plan 2071 that outlines different development and progress-oriented policies that will be attained by consideration of social, moral, wholesome, environmentally friendly, and humanitarian factors (Government, 2019).

Table 1 - Projects announced by government of UAE, Source: (Government, 2019)

Project	Purpose
Vision 2021	To improve the ranking of the country in all aspects in the Golden Jubilee year of Independence.
National innovation Strategy	To stimulate innovation in all fields especially in renewable energy, transport, education, health, technology, water and space.
Dubai Plan 2021	To focus more on economy and to enhance the living urban environment more comfortable and healthy to the residents
Dubai Health Strategy 2021	To provide the best quality of health services by early detecting and preventing diseases. Also this strategy aims to motivate people to bring healthy lifestyle through fitness, exercises and proper diet.
Sharjah Tourism Vision 2021	To improve the infrastructure of the Emirate and thereby promote tourism
Ajman 2021	To build a green economy by holding the cultural and heritage values
Abu Dhabi Economic Vision 2030	To focus more on the knowledge based industries and to less depend on the oil sources.
Environmental Vision 2030	To maintain the integrity between social, economic and environmental vision and thereby improve the living style of residents.
Dubai's Industrial Strategy 2030	To convert Dubai to a global platform with more sustainable, productive and innovative hub for knowledge based industries.
Fujairah 2040	To improve the infrastructure, health services, port facilities and other sectors in Fujairah
UAE Centennial 2071 Plan	The long term vision of government is included in Centennial Plan which is targeted to accomplish in the 100 th year of independence

Various projects related to this have been started by both the public and private sectors in the countries. The entire project execution team is working together in the hopes of producing a successful result. The management of the project's execution is regarded as crucial, and the authorities are making greater investments and making the best use of available resources to reduce challenges. A successful project management office is a necessary component of the entire procedure. Based on research done in 19 project-based, publicly traded companies in Abu Dhabi and Dubai, Al Ameri (2016) highlighted the PMO's functions. In UAE organisations, he claims, PMO does not have the reach that it ought to. Additionally, the main issue he brought up is that some PMO models used in UAE organisations lack flexibility.

The project Management Office (PMO) is a department within an organisation that establishes standards and practises for the organisation to use during the project's operation. PMO is a tool used for coordination to bring a close relationship between the organization's strategy objective and the practical workings to make an idea a reality through project management (Almansoori et al. 2021c). The advantages that the PMO has brought to the UAE's public sector are highlighted in a second study on the impact of PMOs in UAE organisations. However, in addition to the successes, the study also reveals the main problems with the PMO's implementation in the UAE. According to the article, the main contributing factors are politics, stakeholder resistance to change, a lack of alignment, inadequate training, a lack of resources, and low accountability. PMOs are not typically regarded as independent units in most organisations, but political interference affected their operations, which prevented them from operating at their peak efficiency (Al Qubaisi, 2015).

El-Sayegh, a professor and PMI-certified Project Management Professional, is currently working on a similar study. He claims that despite PMO's acceptance in UAE's public sector organisations, project management methodologies still face numerous implementation difficulties. The report notes that the lack of appropriate risk management practises has significantly hampered the effectiveness of success in the organisational projects as the most pervasive challenge (El-Sayegh, 2014). To increase the success rate, projects should be carried out using cutting-edge tools and technologies. Being a hub for cutting-edge technology on a global scale, UAE tries to use all the requirements to fulfil project requirements. The nation is using instruments like document control and register, project master plan (PMS), Gantt chart, change register, project directory, risk analysis, work breakdown structure (WBS), task

responsibility matrix (TRM), and organisational breakdown structure (OBS). With all these trends, it has been observed that the project management office could simplify its tasks and operations, increasing productivity (Al-Hajj & Sayers, 2014).

Additionally, a study to determine the dimensions of project management identified elements that affect the success rate of projects in the United Arab Emirates was carried out by Ajmal et al, (2017). The study shows that the best project management practises in an organisation can be summed up by the researchers as proper risk management, organisational culture, stakeholder approach, management approach, and project leadership. Effective leadership and team management techniques, as well as the requirement for a strong PMO, are among the major difficulties that project-based organisations in the United Arab Emirates face. A successful PMO implementation in the organisations, according to the report, could encourage greater diligence in project planning, coordination, and control.

The main project stakeholders i.e. the client, consultants, project managers, contractors, and authorities are also the main causes of project management failures. When the project's goals are met while staying within the allocated time, financial constraints, and boundaries of its scope, it is deemed successful. A project is a multi-stage process that includes several stages such as project conception, planning, execution, supervision, control, closing, delivery, and maintenance as needed. Any deviations from this project life cycle, however, could lead to the project management failing. The world economy entered a recession in 2008, which also affected the UAE market. Finance and project funding were two of the biggest difficulties encountered. As the country's primary source of income, changes in the price of oil also had an impact on the market (Rehman, 2015).

Due to a few crucial factors, project management in the GCC region frequently encounters failures. For a project to be implemented, experienced leadership is a necessity in order to prevent delays in resource allocation and decision-making. Furthermore, effective top management support is a necessary component of project execution. Conflicts arise when there is a lack of coordination and teamwork within the project team. Along with technical and technological skills, project failures may occur if managers lack the necessary soft skills, such as leadership, communication, negotiation, time management, and organisation. Conflicts among the stakeholders are exacerbated by improper communication about the requirements. Inappropriate resource allocation and a lack of operational records are additional causes of project completion delays (AECOM, 2019). The challenges that the project faces depend on a variety of factors. The main causes of a project's failure are poor money management and underestimating the financial situation. Other factors that frequently contribute to project management failures include poor planning, poor management, lower labour productivity, inappropriate decision-making, poor quality, and unexpected deviations. Depending on their nature, root causes, and severity, project delays can be categorised (Adel & Martin 2009).

Table 2 - Critical factors for projects implementation, Source (Ren, Atout & Jones, 2008)

Critical aspects	Elaboration
Specialist requirements	Should require most advanced technologies and well trained manpower
Supply and demand aspects	Delays in the delivery of resources may create challenges in the project execution
Multicultural Resources	Manpower from diverse culture and background may take time to get along
Unrealistic Project durations	All the projects are proposed with an early time realization. Then too impractical forecasting of project completion may create stress on all the stakeholders and may result in issues.
Language barriers	In UAE, the multicultural environment brings out different language speaking people to work together; hence, miscommunication can be happened that may delay the work.
Client decision making	Clients being major finance sponsors and decision makers may bring deviations at odd times which may affect the projects
Local Authority requirements	In UAE, the requirements for the project executions are updated frequently, that emphasizes on the quality and abides to the standardized system of the country. Often many companies fail to comply with these and face issues.

Even though improper planning is the root cause of project failure, it can be further divided into problems with owners and problems with contractors. Scope, communication, coordination, estimation, designs, risk management, schedules, resource management, and unexpected deviations are pertinent concerns that are impacted by project management issues (Hassan, 2016). According to a survey of clients, contractors, and consultants, there are ten main causes of project delays in the United Arab Emirates. They include a lack of coordination between the parties involved, the choice of resources based on price rather than quality, delays in decision-making and delivery, unforeseen additional work, inconsistency between the plan and execution, labour that is less productive, a lack of quality, delays in approval, and a project's unrealistic time frame proposal (Rehman, 2015).

The management mistakes can be seen as the budget overrun and time delay even though the projects are finished. The Big Dig highway project in the United States was supposed to be finished in 1998, but it was actually finished in December 2007. Additionally, the project's estimated price was \$2.8 billion, but the final price was \$14.6 billion, a

significant difference. The primary cause of these delays was attributed to poor project management. Depending on the sectors and industries, different factors contribute to project management failures (Elbaz, 2015). Lack of a standardised project management methodology is thought to be the main cause of project management failures in the Middle East. Lack of effective communication during project implementation results in unforeseen difficulties and problems. Poor resource management, inadequate documentation, and a lack of project log updates could all contribute to project execution delays. One of the main causes of problems in projects is a lack of teamwork and coordination among the participants. When the project team is unaware of their job description and reporting structure, conflicts have been reported frequently. The executive team's and top management's lack of commitment can be seen in the quality of the work produced. Above all, poor risk management and a lack of project experts could have a negative impact on a project's productivity (Elbaz, 2015).

The UAE government has established a number of regulatory bodies to regulate project execution processes and reduce project delays and failures. The frameworks are made so that projects can start only after meeting a set of requirements. Quality, safety, planning, budget, and other related government authority approvals are all included in the scope. The contractors start a number of joint deals that are advantageous to all parties in order to address the financial and fund-raising issues. People began to think more broadly as a result of the lessons they had learned from earlier rejections. These days, price fluctuations and funding problems are anticipated, and the project plan is created taking all of these factors into account. This adaptability encourages the best qualities in people and shortens project delays. With the help of the mutual understanding between the contractors and developers, the ongoing projects in 2018 are demonstrating a positive deviation to success when compared to the projects in previous years (Nair, 2018). The government enacts laws to safeguard the contractual rights of clients and contractors. When the project first started, the legal framework required that an account be created. To ensure that all stakeholders are aware of the fund flow and the project execution cycle, all project-related expenses must be paid through this account only. The legal frameworks ensure that the rights of all parties involved in the project life cycle are protected, and the auditing procedures themselves are also easily completed (Shaiba, 2019).

According to the construction handbook for 2018-19, the UAE's economy has grown and is now ranked 21st in the world. To reduce failures and delays, the government implemented a number of reforms in project management and execution. The government's implementation of stringent qualification requirements is one of its major initiatives. This might enhance quality control and help select qualified developers. To save the project team time, effort, and money, the majority of approvals and formalities are completed online and with the aid of sophisticated applications. Consumer credit scores are assigned to developers and contractors so that financial institutions can evaluate their credibility in raising capital. The government also introduces a bankruptcy law that could guarantee operations in urgent circumstances (AECOM, 2019).

The foundation of project execution and the key to a project's success are proper specialisation and experienced project managers. The project team should receive thorough training in verbal, written, and nonverbal communication. The team's suggestions or ideas should be incorporated into the project management process starting with the planning phase. To prevent conflicts and strengthen commitment, the roles, responsibilities, and reporting structure should be clearly communicated. Prior to taking any action, the risks should be identified and their effects should be reduced or eliminated. Above all, the project team needs to have the necessary skills and knowledge to manage risks and challenges during execution (Elbaz, 2015).

3. Factors of an Effective Project Management Office on Project Success

When the project's goal is accomplished while adhering to all quality standards and within the allocated budget and time frame, it is deemed successful. The budget, resource allocation, timeline, customer expectations, and the available and required labour force are the main factors that hinder the successful completion of projects. Minor variations are regarded as negligible.

Numerous PMO operation factors and the success of the project have been the focus of numerous research studies. According to Munyoki and Njeru (2014), when considering PMO operations, the reporting line is a crucial consideration. The first finding is that PMOs that report to the organization's middle management have a high success rate for the projects they manage. Participation in strategic planning is another aspect of PMO operations examined in the study. The issue is whether participation in strategic planning had an effect on the success rate of the projects. PMOs with a high level of involvement in the organization's strategic planning experienced higher success rates for the projects they oversaw or supported. Clifton (2015) proposed seven factors, including change and stakeholder management, tools and framework (resources management), effective documentation, progress controlling and quality, risk management, training and capability training, communication and collaboration, as well as management of resources, that determine the success of a PMO.

In essence, one of the mediating factors of project success is thought to be the maturity of the project management team. This implies that a company's experience base, which includes the number of years it has worked on projects, does not inherently guarantee a high success rate but rather increases the likelihood of success. However, it has the potential and ability to increase the chances or rather, the probabilities of a project's success (Carroll, 2015). It is not expected that a company with limited project management experience will perform as well as one with extensive

experience (Sears, 2015). In light of this, the project management office may occasionally be required to maintain records of the projects it completes over time (Heerkens, 2015).

3. Research Methodology

Research methodology is the process of gathering, analysing, and presenting data to address research questions or achieve research goals. In other words, research methodology is the method a researcher uses to investigate research issues in an effort to identify solutions. In all types of research, the researcher(s) choose from a variety of research methods an approach suitable for the study. Research philosophies, research approaches, research strategies, research choices, time horizon, and techniques and procedures are the six layers of the research methodologies, starting from the outside (Saunders et al 2007). Three categories of research methodology exist: mixed, qualitative, and quantitative (Cresswell 2014 and Bachayo et al. 2022). The qualitative research approach was used in this study. This will enable the researcher to examine the research problem in greater detail and from a variety of angles, as well as to paint a fuller picture when analysing the findings using descriptive data. Typically, qualitative research is an exploratory method used to gather facts, arguments, and professional opinions (specialized people who are aware about the objective of the study). Survey forms were used to gather data. The instrumentation and time span of the surveys are the two main factors used to categorise them into two groups. The instrumentation category includes questionnaires and interviews, while the time span category includes longitudinal and cross-sectional surveys (Sincero, 2012).

Analyzing qualitative data is a methodical process. To analyse the data, the qualitative research process is not required to adhere to any predetermined patterns. However, each study must use a method for including pertinent information from a sizable descriptive data set (Patton, 2002). McCellan and associates (2003) The analysis of qualitative data can take five different forms. While the latter is used to reformulate and revise primary qualitative data, the former is used to categorise and analyse verbal or behavioural data. Discourse analysis is done when the data is in the form of text and natural conversation. Coding, mapping, and interpretation are all necessary steps for more complex data. In these situations, the framework analysis method is applied. By concentrating on a single case and relating it to others, grounded theory is a technique for developing theory. The application of qualitative data analysis involves three steps. The creation and application of codes or themes based on the gathered data, either manually or automatically, constitute the first stage. The researcher is solely responsible for the analysis of qualitative data; there are no specific methods for doing so. The next step is to determine the connections between the themes before summarising the data. Either the researcher's words or the feedback from the respondents are used to represent it in the summary. 2018 (Dudovskiy).

4. Demographic Profiles of Respondents

PMO specialists from four organisations were consulted: Gulf Falcon Company, Al Mansouri 3B Group, Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange (ADX), and Masdar Abu Dhabi Future Energy Company (GFC). 20 people in total participated in the data collection process. To maintain the confidentiality of the respondents, this study speaks to each one of them separately. According to Sieber (1992), anonymity is the lack of identifiers that show which people or organisations provided which data. The abbreviations "respondent" and "the nth number of the interview session" are used for the pseudonyms "R" and "nth root," respectively. These respondents' designation, age, service history, level of education, and four demographic profiles are shown in Table 3.

Table 3 - Demographic profiles of respondents

Case Study	Company Name	Respondent	Designation	Age	Length of Service (in years)	Education Level
1	Masdar Abu Dhabi Future Energy Company	R1	Director of Support Services	49	9	MBA
		R2	Senior Manager of Project Management	39	10	MBA
		R3	Senior Manager of Project Management	43	15	MBA
		R4	Program Manager	44	11	Master
		R5	Senior Engineer	40	8	Master
2	Al Mansouri 3B Group	R6	Director	45	12	PhD
		R7	Senior Manager	38	9	MBA
		R8	Senior Manager	37	9	MBA
		R9	Engineer	30	6	Master
		R10	Senior Engineer	40	12	Master
		R11	Directive PMO in IT	42	20	MBA

3	Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange (ADX)	R12	Senior Manager	43	15	Master
		R13	Senior Manager	41	13	MBA
		R14	Senior Manager	37	8	MBA
		R15	Senior Manager	39	9	MBA
		R16	Director	41	13	PhD
4	Gulf Falcon Company (GFC)	R17	Director	43	15	PhD
		R18	Senior Manager	45	10	Master
		R19	Senior Manager	44	9	Master
		R20	Manager	41	7	Master

These respondents were classified into five categories based on their job titles: director (5 respondents), senior manager (10 respondents), manager (2 respondents), senior engineer (2 respondents), and engineer (1 respondent). Ages 30 to 49 are the range for all respondents. The minimum and maximum service terms are six and twenty years, respectively. The youngest respondent (30 years old) has the shortest length of service (6 years). However, the 49-year-old respondent did not have the longest service history. This is as a result of the oldest respondent's short service history of only 9 years. The respondent with the longest service is 42 years old. The majority of respondents have a master's degree, and three have a PhD, aside from that.

5. Key Success Factors in PMO Implementation in UAE Project-Based Organizations

The research goal of this study is to identify the critical elements in setting up the project management office in the UAE's project-based organisation. All respondents to this study pointed out six factors influence the project's successful implementation of PMO in the UAE. The six components of an effective PMO are project flexibility, stakeholder politics and resistance to change, alignment and accountability, effective resource management, risk management, and strong teamwork and leadership as depicted in Figure 1.

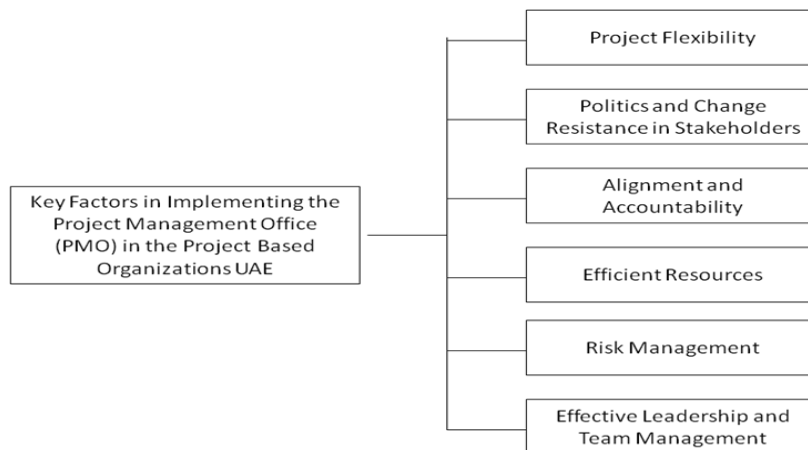


Fig. 1 - Key success factors in PMO implementation

5.1 Project Flexibility

According to the interview, "We must be adaptable to market changes, regulatory controls, and different market conditions in order to keep up with the market's rapid changes here in Masdar" (Reviewer 1). In order to maintain full control over the project with minimal project financial and operational impacts, he continued, "For us, there is a change process throughout a project amendment request that must be adhered to" (Reviewer 1). This assertion is consistent with the research by Wedekind, Philbin (2018). He claimed in the study that flexible, strategic operation produces the best results. Because it has been observed in the majority of organisations that communicating with stakeholders about changing the way a project is executed depend on their response. This is due to the fact that it might involve anything from internal communications to news coverage. They are happy to collaborate on the promotion of their accomplishments in the areas of sustainability and the development of clean energy because the public media covers the majority of their accomplishments in an open and transparent manner. Project flexibility was also listed by respondents 12 as a necessary element for the PMO's successful implementation in the UAE.

By ensuring that the project mile stones are reasonable, clear, and team time-considered, we can be flexible with the modification projects in our company. Our business offered the PMO's policy and procedures to manage the project's modification. Any modification must receive top management approval before being approved by the steering

committee. Any modification must then receive the steering committee's approval before being distributed to all concept members and updated in the project charter by the project owner as reported by reviewer 13 (R13). This finding is similar with the opinion of respondent R2, R7, and R9. Besides this, R3 continued, "Flexible can be considered one of the important factors as long as it does not go beyond deadlines or alter the general management process. When there are changes to how a project is being executed, we typically communicate with stakeholders via email, but occasionally we have a project steering committee. This statement is in line with the statement of respondent 6 (R6) on how to coordinate and communicate the process for changing how a project is carried out. The respondent said, "The business needs to change and be flexible frequently," pointed out by respondent R8. In other words, the PMO should constantly be in line with the company's strategic goal. When discussing the modification of the project's execution with the project stakeholders, our company will follow a documented change procedure and use tools like workshops, reports, meetings, and others as our communication channels.

According to the discussion, every respondent believes that this factor is crucial in their company because flexible project management enables managers to consistently allocate resources and workload to projects. They can even stagger the start dates of various projects and spread out demand's peaks and throughput at the same time. This will lessen the stress on their employees' lives and improve the consistency of their cash flow and schedule. PMOs frequently manage several projects at once, but this is intentional rather than convenient. The advantages of this are clear: the more projects a business can complete, the more revenue they can generate, and the quicker they can expand.

5.2 Politics and Change Resistance in Stakeholders

Only four out of the twenty statements mention that stakeholders' political and change resistance affects the success of PMO projects. "Politics needs to be faced with an effective change management process, which includes obtaining the buy-in of the key stakeholders in the company smartly and professionally," as pointed out by respondent R16. Further, the respondent mentioned that sometimes they work, and other times you need to change your approach to deal with the pressure in a way that doesn't jeopardise the project's timeline and expected results. This claim demonstrates that stakeholder political resistance won't impede the project's progress or results. The business must control the political climate and overcome stakeholder opposition. R16 added that their business typically communicates with other stakeholders via email in order to manage internal disputes. To impartially investigate a dispute and find a resolution that benefits, a disputed panel composed of representatives from various business units may occasionally be formed. Additionally, they are using an escalation matrix and involving their legal and compliance unit in resolving the company's resistance to change.

Respondent R17 stated that "We typically alter management responsibilities to accommodate politics and internal opposition in businesses. This facilitates stakeholder interaction and effective conflict management within organisations. If there is resistance to change within the organisation, we will implement a plan of action to modify the management policy and procedures to address all instances of resistance within the organisation and across all projects. Additionally, Respondent R15 mentioned that project committee and executive directors are involved in their departments' efforts to compel change among the workforce and deal with politics and resistance within the organisation. They also mentioned that a meeting was held and all interested parties were invited in order to control internal conflicts and discuss game plans to deal with resistance to change within the organisation. To reduce resistance within the company, they typically implement a number of action plans, including:

- Resistance always exists, no matter how well you manage a change.
- Carry out change in stages or phases.
- Effective discussion of change.

When negotiating and weighing the needs of various stakeholders, "our company handles politics and resistance within the company, ensuring project outcomes are not risky" as highlighted by respondent R9. In conclusion, the PMO's internal and external relations must take political and change resistance into account. The PMO must determine if any of its activities, plans, and goals conflict with current regulations. To identify and eliminate policies and strategies that present conflicts of interest and have the potential to impair PMO operations, policy makers within the PMO must consult widely with those outside the organisation.

5.3 Alignment and Accountability

Only 16 of the 20 statements make the claim that accountability and alignment are crucial elements in the efficient execution of PMO projects. Respondent R4 reported that the design flow of the project execution in accordance with the plan and standards in the company is the responsibility of the PMP, project team, and pertinent Unit Director. They held regular meetings to oversee the company's standards and project execution at the same time. To make sure that both milestones are met as agreed and that problems are flagged in advance before they have an impact on the project, regular meetings are held with the project team, the relevant PMO, and top management. Additionally, R4 added that "For each of Masdar's units, roper policies and procedures have been developed. These documents outline decision-making procedures and keep track of all the actions required to follow them. Any unjustified deviations that might

impair a project's progress are taken seriously, treated as violations, and perhaps even given a compliance case. Our business held regular meetings to make sure the project was given the proper resources and was carried out without error.

If any adjustments are required, they will be made with the benefit of the whole. The project owner, project sponsor, project member, and PMO team are accountable for the design flow of project execution in accordance with the company's plan and standards, according to respondents R7. The project owner should update the company on the project's status every three weeks and in the merger mail stone in order to control the flow of project execution and standards. The company then uses a direct authority matrix control to make decisions. Team selection, internal and external auditing, and the steering committee will coordinate the team project to finish the task in the company. It differs from respondent R12, which states that the project manager is in charge of ensuring that the design flow is carried out in accordance with the plan and company standards. To manage the flow of project execution, company standards, and align the team project to finish the task in the company, they then conducted a weekly review. R12 added that they follow any amendments that are required when making decisions for the company.

According to support statement of respondent R20, the central PMO department should be in charge of ensuring that projects are carried out in accordance with the company's standards and plan. They regularly monitor the status of their projects and take timely action. All project stakeholders must participate in the decision-making process simultaneously. A decision-making process that involves multiple decision-makers and can occur in three different contexts—face-to-face, distributed synchronous, and distributed asynchronous is referred to as a collective decision-making process. The team project was then aligned and the task was completed within the company by the Gulf Falcon Company through routine training and awareness-raising.

In the project-based organisations in the UAE, alignment and accountability are significant factors influencing the implementation of PMO. Relevant training and management by those in charge of the project may have a positive impact on improving alignment and accountability within the PMO. A high level of commitment to PMO objectives and concerns, the use of appropriate resources, the reliability of funds, and effective general financial management are all examples of efficient management. Therefore, it is crucial that roles and responsibilities are assigned in accordance with the relevant education, experience, and training. If financial misappropriation is discovered, PMO should have regular monitoring to ensure that all resources are recovered.

5.4 Efficient Resources

Alignment and accountability were only mentioned as crucial elements in the successful implementation of PMO projects by 16 of the 20 respondents. If resources are available, MO strategies can be put into practise. According to respondent R10, "Our Company analyses every project's specifics and employs a breakdown structure to identify all the tasks and activities that are essential to this project's success."The right resources must be allocated after carefully considering each one separately. Respondent R3, R12, and R18 agree with claim R10 regarding how their organisation intends to allocate suitable resources. According to R10, human resources departments in businesses are crucial in helping with hiring the best candidates and putting in place the proper incentive and reward programmes. The division director is in charge of creating the proper KPIs for each resource and measuring them against these KPIs on a quarterly basis on the operational front. They keep a strong and efficient financial tracking system in place to manage budget allocation within the business. The financial success of any project within their organisation depends on this financial tracking process. Therefore, prior to starting a project, effective planning is crucial. Their business can make plans to guarantee the resources' effectiveness as well as their competencies and capabilities.

Additionally, "Through collaboration between all departments, we ensure that all necessary resources, budgets, and tools are available for the project. We do not manage all of the company's resources, particularly the IT PMO. Nevertheless, we do manage the IT department's resources that are involved in particular projects. Additionally, the finance departments of our company exercise control over budget allocation through budgeting cycle exercises (R13). In accordance with statement R13, they involve all departments to make sure that resources are allocated effectively and efficiently in accordance with the needs of the project. In conclusion, it was discovered that effective resources were a crucial component in the PMO's implementation success. While adding more staff can reduce staff turnover, good strategic management is also likely to result in the creation of adequate resources. The project management office's greatest resource is its workforce. It is as a result of their knowledge, skills, labour, and patience being put into it. While overused resources make up the other, reliable resources are effective in producing strategic work. The categorization will be useful in creating methods or strategies to aid the project teams. As a result, the majority of PMOs are successful at utilising their productive employees.

5.5 Risk Management

Eleven out of 20 respondents concurred that risk management was a key component of a PMO's success when it was implemented in a project-based environment. The necessity of risk management is mentioned in every single project and business management standard. This is a crucial point that every PMO is aware of. None of them, however, is sincere about it or prepared to introduce risk management procedures within the company. Project Teams, Project

Managers, and PMO grumble about how much time are spent managing risks. Work rules should be implemented with a justification for why this is necessary, just like any other innovation. Knowledge of theory and real-world examples, both positive and negative, is necessary in addition to persuasiveness skills. To guarantee that the same procedures and standards are applied when gathering data for use in decision-making, consistency is crucial.

Respondent R2 pointed out that "To help us forecast risks and create the necessary plans to mitigate them; we keep a risk register that dates back more than 10 years. We consult it whenever we plan a new project. We also consider the risks connected to the stakeholders and estimate how those risks might impact us. We classify these risks and their likelihood before examining any political, natural, economic, or regulatory risks to make sure we are ready. The claims made by R2 are also supported by respondent R5 and R13. R2 also mentioned that Masdar Abu Dhabi Future Energy Company held meetings on a regular basis to discuss problems before they disrupt project operations due to employee conflicts. As a result, an action plan is created that may range from a straightforward case of finding a satisfactory resolution to potentially more disciplinary action that is in the best interest of the organisation. Regular audits by Masdar Abu Dhabi Future Energy Company and referrals to their risk register are essential for ensuring that any associated risks are found and addressed right away with an appropriate corrective plan. It also requires prompt escalation to the appropriate stakeholder.

Respondent R7 also mentioned that by offering project team members mentoring and training, the PMO could support the processes. Delivering the risk management framework (processes, etc.) is crucial, but so is training and mentoring because they help team members understand their responsibilities and how to carry them out successfully. Guidelines and specifications will perish the same way that most copies of Tolstoy's *War and Peace* do without the mentoring and training. It frequently occupies a prominent position on bookcases, but upon closer examination, it is apparent that the book has rarely, if ever, been opened. By bridging the knowledge gap between theory and practise, training makes sure that all projects are capable of carrying out the necessary steps in the risk management process.

In conclusion, PMOs offer a capability for portfolio risk management in which the evaluations of the project risks are compiled at the portfolio level. Companies are able to identify shared risks across projects that can be managed most successfully at the organisational level by rolling up these risks. Because risk management has been centralised, the PMO can now provide portfolio risk reporting capabilities to various organisation stakeholders. PMOs can be crucial in ensuring that a standardised project portfolio risk management process is implemented. This process includes offering a framework, coaching and training, and portfolio reporting capabilities.

5.6 Effective Leadership and Team Management

All the respondents concurred that implementing PMO in project-based environments required effective leadership and team management. The successful completion of a project within the parameters of scope, budget, and time, assuming quality and customer satisfaction, is the focus of project delivery leadership. The project manager in this position has the ability to concentrate their skills and energies on the project. General definitions of leadership include the capacity of an individual to inspire, encourage, and enable others to contribute to the effectiveness and success of the organisations of which they are a part. By narrowing the scope of the leadership definition to the PMO, this study may further define PMO leadership as the capacity to influence, inspire, and facilitate the PMO and project manager in their efforts to contribute to the effectiveness and success of the sponsoring organisation.

Respondent R11 mentioned that "A good leader makes sure that everyone on the team is on the same page and will see the project through to completion without any hiccups. A good leader will encourage his team to give their best effort without pressuring them to do so and will make sure those conflicts and disruptions are kept to a minimum. To keep the project team members focused on their deliveries, a good leader will also see to it that any outside pressure is handled by him and does not trickle down to them. This statement was supported by the majority of respondents. Additionally, respondents R1 and R11 claimed that their company held monthly meetings with the entire team and frequent emails to update them on discussions, in addition to weekly meetings with the project team or the unit head. Senior management also met with them to discuss issues that might directly or indirectly affect their jobs and responsibilities. Respondent R15 added that their business gives proper ongoing guidance, encouragement, and rewards to ensure that the project teamwork is successful in achieving the mission and vision. Then, to engage the off-site team and make sure they have everything they need to perform their job duties. They also intend to establish high standards for their project team through effective task and responsibility delegation and the provision of KPIs for quarterly evaluation.

Therefore, management and leadership are frequently equated. Some see leadership as a subset of management. A leader is seen as knowing where to go. Using their management abilities, they succeed. To elaborate further, there are managers and leaders, but there are also managers and leaders who can do both. The secret lies in "effectiveness," especially when it comes to motivating others, fostering change, articulating a vision, and (when necessary) resolving conflict.

Table 4 - Factors for the successful implementation of PMO in project based organizations in UAE

Respondents	Successful Factors					
	Project Flexibility	Politics and change resistance in stakeholders	Alignment and accountability	Efficient resources	Risk management	Effective Leadership and team management
R1	/	/	/	/	/	/
R2	/	/	/	/	/	/
R3	/	/	/	/	/	/
R4	/	/	/	/	/	/
R5	/	/	/	/	/	/
R6	/	/	/	/	/	/
R7	/	/	/	/	/	/
R8	/	/	/	/	/	/
R9	/	/	/	/	/	/
R10	/	/	/	/	/	/
R11	/	/	/	/	/	/
R12	/	/	/	/	/	/
R13	/	/	/	/	/	/
R14	/	/	/	/	/	/
R15	/	/	/	/	/	/
R16	/	/	/	/	/	/
R17	/	/	/	/	/	/
R18	/	/	/	/	/	/
R19	/	/	/	/	/	/
R20	/	/	/	/	/	/
Frequency	20	4	16	18	11	20

Table 4 shows that factors project flexibility and effective leadership and team management are having the highest score which indicates the most significant factors for the successful of PMO implementation. The following factors are Efficient resources than follows by Alignment and accountability, Risk management and finally, Politics and change resistance in stakeholders.

6. Effective PMO framework

In order to promote effective implementation of the PMO, a model is proposed to direct strategic and tactical decision-making in the design and implementation of PMOs, increasing the likelihood that project-based organizations in the UAE will succeed. Figure 3 illustrates a conceptual PMO framework that was created based on the data analysis and is both practical and applicable in practice.

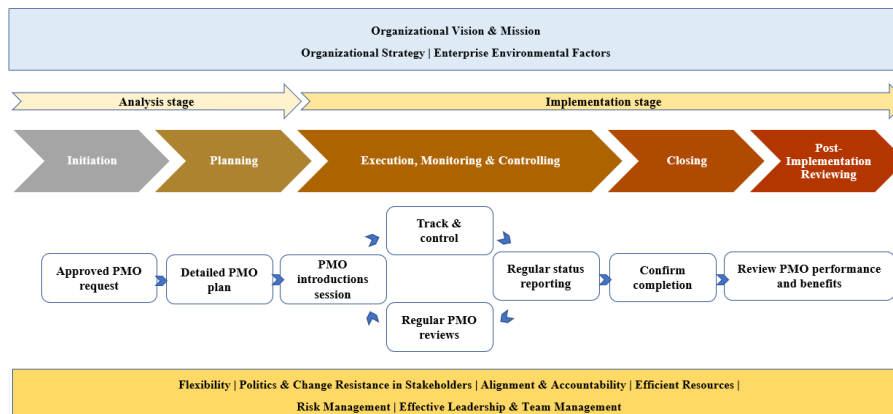


Fig. 2 - Proposed PMO Conceptual framework for project-based organizations in UAE

Based on Figure 2, the proposed PMO conceptual model had two stages: analysis and implementation. The analysis stage includes PMO planning and execution, whereas the implementation stage includes execution, monitoring, closing, and post-implementation reviewing. Each step in the creation of a PMO is important and has a

specified course of action. The creation and implementation are guided by the organizational vision and mission, organizational strategy, and enterprise environmental variables. Making sure the PMO effort is in line with the organizations' goals and strategies is done in this way. The fundamentals of the PMO are supported by the following six essential implementation criteria for PMOs in project-based businesses: flexibility, stakeholder politics and resistance to change, alignment and accountability, effective leadership and team management, efficient resource use, and risk management round out the prerequisites. The establishment and operation of the PMO will be strong and effective thanks to these key PMO implementation aspects. Table 5 details the primary action plan for each stage of developing and implementing a successful PMO.

Table 5 - Proposing action plan in implementing PMO

PMO Steps	Description
Initiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PMO initiation ▪ Determine PMO vision, mission, strategy, goals and scope ▪ Determine team structure with roles and responsibilities ▪ Develop baseline PMO plan ▪ Create communication plan ▪ Project initiation meeting
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Analyze meeting documents to gather requirements ▪ Review report documents to finalize PMO design ▪ Information migration plan ▪ Develop PMO acceptance test scenarios
Execution, Monitoring and Controlling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Manage and track decisions ▪ Facilitate change management ▪ Monitor and manage risks and issues ▪ Execute and revise PMO timeline ▪ Execute and revise communication plan ▪ Gather PMO status updates
Closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Formally transfer all deliverables ▪ Confirm completion ▪ Review all contracts and documentations ▪ Release resources ▪ Conduct a post-mortem ▪ Archive documentations
Post-implementation reviewing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduct a gap analysis ▪ Determine whether the PMO objectives were achieved ▪ Determine the satisfaction of stakeholders ▪ Determine the overall PMO costs and benefits ▪ Identify areas for further development ▪ Identify lessons learned ▪ Report findings and recommendations

7. Conclusion

This paper discussed the success factors affecting PMO implementation in the UAE. The study was carried out through interviewing 20 experience personnel having experience of working with PMO for several years. The experts were from four organisation namely Masdar Abu Dhabi Future Energy Company, Al Mansouri 3B Group, Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange (ADX), and Gulf Falcon Company (GFC). Based on the interviews, it was found that project flexibility; politics and change resistance in stakeholders; alignment and accountability; efficient resources; risk management; effective leadership and team management are the six key factors which affect the effective implementation of the PMO. Among these factors project flexibility; and effective leadership and team management are reported as the most critical factors as agreed by all the respondents. The paper also incorporates an effective PMO framework which suggests various strategic measures to implement in five phases of project lifecycle as initiation phase, planning phase, execution phase, monitoring and controlling phase; closing phase; and post-implementation reviewing phase. This findings can contribute knowledge to researchers and also practitioners that involed in working with project management office (PMO).

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