



## **THE IMPACT OF PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS ON PROJECT MANAGEMENT**

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### **Abstract**

The aim of every organization is to achieve the organizational strategy. In order to achieve the organizational strategy and objectives, the organizations use project management. In the Project Management Institute's view, the project management is defined as "the application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to project activities to meet the project requirements." (PMBOK, 2013, p.5). Ten knowledge areas and five process groups are defined in the Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK), published by Project Management Institute (PMI). The knowledge areas are Project Integration Management, Project Scope Management, Project Time Management, Project Cost Management, Project Quality Management, Project Human Resources Management, Project Communication Management, Project Risk Management and Project Procurement Management. The project management process groups are Initiating, Planning, Executing, Monitoring & Controlling and Closing.

Most of organizations have adopted the Project Management Institute's approach and developed their own project management methodology and standard based on PMBOK. During developing the organizational project management standard, the organizations should consider the impact of personal characteristics. Developing and following a defined project management standard, which contains the effects of personal characteristics, increase the success rate of projects.

This paper will explain the impact of personal characteristics on project management in systematic way. In order to realize that the author will explain the fundamental concepts of this subject. After that, the systematic way will be detailed. This systematic way consists of six steps:

- Develop an Organizational Personal Characteristic Map
- The Impact of Personal Characteristics on Project Human Resources Management
- The Impact of Personal Characteristics on Project Communications Management
- The Impact of Personal Characteristics on Project Risk Management
- The Impact of Personal Characteristics on Project Stakeholder Management
- The Impact of Personal Characteristics on Project Procurement Management

**Key words:** *Personal Characteristics, Project Management,*

**JEL code:** *Z00*

### **Introduction**

The main aim of establishing an organization is to make profit. Richard Lambert, who is the Director General of the Confederation of British Industry, wrote in 2010 as "Business in some ways quite simple. It has clearly defined aims. The aim is to make money. So you have a measure against which to judge all subsidiary actions which add up to the overall result." (Zsolnai, 2011, p.175) In order to make profit and survive in the competitive environment, every organization should set its own strategy. According to the PMBOK, "effective organizational strategy provides defined directions for development and growth, in addition to performance metrics for success. In order to bridge the gap between organizational strategy and successful

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business value realization, the use of portfolio, program, and project management techniques is essential.” (PMBOK, 2013, p.14)

To bridge the gap between organizational strategy and successful business value realizations, the organizations develop their own organizational project management standard based on industry standard such as PMBOK or Projects in Controlled Environment Version 2 (PRINCE2) or the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). During developing their own organizational project management standard and following it, the organizations should consider an important factor. Personal Characteristics. Personal is defined as “of or relating to a particular person” and characteristic is defined as “being a feature that helps to distinguish a personal or thing” in the American Heritage Dictionary of the English language (2014). However, the PMBOK mentions the characteristics of project- related (project life cycle, project), of product related and of organizational, the terminology “personal characteristics” is mentioned only once as “refers to how the project manager behaves when performing the project or related activity. Personal effectiveness encompasses attitudes, core personality characteristics, and leadership, which provides the ability to guide the project team while achieving project objectives and balancing the project constraints.” (PMBO, 2013, p.17) Taylor listed the most important personal characteristics needed by a success project manager as “flexible and adaptable, possessing and exhibiting initiative and leadership, confident and persuasive, possessing verbal fluency, able to balance technical and human components of a project, problem- solving and decision- making capability, good time manager, a sense of humor.” (Taylor, 2006, p.150)

The aim of this paper is to explain the impact of personal characteristics on project management. The paper will start by definition of fundamental concepts in order to develop a common understanding. The purpose behind developing a common understanding is to ensure that the readers understand the main topic, and numerous details related to the main topic. What is a project? What is project management? What is project management process? What is a team? How could we define communications? What is a risk? Who is a stakeholder? Which type of stakeholder is existed? What is a personal characteristic? Afterwards, the authors will suggest a systematic way for considering the impact of personal characteristics on project management based on PMBOK. The systematic way consists of six steps:

- Develop an Organizational Personal Characteristic Map
- The Impact of Personal Characteristics on Project Human Resources Management
- The Impact of Personal Characteristics on Project Communications Management
- The Impact of Personal Characteristics on Project Risk Management
- The Impact of Personal Characteristics on Project Stakeholder Management
- The Impact of Personal Characteristics on Project Procurement Management

### Background

Before explaining the systematic way of considering the impact of personal characteristics, the fundamental concepts have to be clarified. The fundamental concepts are: a project, project management, project management process, a team, communications, a risk, a stakeholder, personal characteristic.



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The first concept is a project. The definition of a project, stated in PMBOK, is “a temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product, service, or result. (PMBOK, 2013, p.3).

The next concept is project management. Project management is defined as “the application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to project activities to meet the project requirements”. There are five process groups: Initiating, Planning, Executing, Monitoring and Controlling, and Closing and the knowledge areas: Project Integration Management, Project Scope Management, Project Time Management, Project Cost Management, Project Quality Management, Project Human Resource Management, Project Communications Management, Project Risk Management, Project Procurement Management, Project Stakeholder Management. (PMBOK, 2013, p.5).

Another concept is project management process. According to the PMBOK, a process is stated as “a set of interrelated actions and activities performed to create a pre-specified product, service, or result. Each process is characterized by its inputs, the tools and techniques.” (PMBOK, 2013, p.47) And continued that “these processes ensure the effective flow of the project throughout its life cycle.” (PMBOK, 2013, p.47).

The fourth concept is a team. PMBOK indicates that “Project Human Resource Management includes the processes that organize, manage, and lead the project team.” (PMBOK, 2013, p.255) The definition of a project team is “a set of individual who support the project manager in performing the work of the project to achieve its objectives. “(PMBOK, 2013, p.556).

Communications is another concept. In Ron Arp’ s view, communications are “as character expression. It is a process of helping people understand who you are, what you stand for, and why you do the things you do. Character is anchored in honesty, integrity and trust.” (McKee & Richardson & Hinton & Lamp, 2010, p.8) Another definition of communications is “the flow or exchange of information and ideas from one person to another.” (U.S. Army Board Study Guide, 2006, p.90) Newell & Grashina emphasize communications as “the art of transmitting an idea from the mind of one person to the mind of another, with understanding.” (Newell & Grashina, 2004, p.236) Dow and Taylor stated that “Project communications is the most important aspect of project management.” (Dow & Taylor, 2010, p.311) They argued that “Project communication is a two-way effort and both parties are responsible for ensuring that their messages are clear and concise. Without that, project failure is inevitable.” (Dow & Taylor, 2010, p. xxviii) Other author Kliem stated that “communications is about information rather than data.” (Kliem, 2007, p.5) The definition of communications, in the Effective Communications for Project Management book, is “an integrated and interdependent process between two or more people. To communicate effectively, two or more people must be involved, one to send something and the other to receive it.” (Kliem, 2007, p.5) Kerzner & Saladis categorized project communication as formal, informal, verbal, or written and argued that “Approximately 80% of communications is nonverbal”.

The next concept is a risk. The definition of a risk is “a random event that may occur and, if it did occur would have a negative impact on the goals of the organization. Thus, a risk is composed of three elements: the scenario; its probability of occurrence; and the size of its impact if it did occur.” (Vose, 2008, p.3) According to the PMBOK, the identification of a risk is “an uncertain event or condition that, if it occurs, has a positive or negative effect on one or more project objectives.” (PMBOK, 2013, p.559).



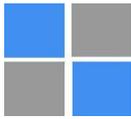
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Another concept is a stakeholder. A stakeholder is defined as “any individual or group who can affect or is affected by the actions, decisions, policies, practices, or goals of the organization.” (Freeman, 1984). Weiss categorized stakeholders into two groups: The primary stakeholders, the secondary stakeholders. In Weiss’ s view, the primary stakeholders are owners, customers, employees and suppliers. The secondary stakeholders are all other interested groups, such as media, consumers, lobbyists, courts, governments, competitors, the public, and society, (Weiss, 2014) The PMBOK defined a stakeholder as “an individual, group, or organization who may affect, be affected by, or perceive itself to be affected by a decision, activity, or outcome of a project.” (PMBOK, 2013, p.563).

The last concept is personal characteristic. Abraham Lincoln said: “Character is like a tree and reputation like its shadow. The shadow is what we think of it; the tree is the real think.” (McKee & Richardson & Hinton & Lamp, 2010, p.8) Segil argued under the title Management Processes: Horizontal Project Management that “many management processes are related to this personal characteristic of ability to complete.” (Segil, 2002, p.62) and defined The Lorraine Segil Matrix. In this matrix, there are three columns: Personal characteristic, organizational environment needed and example of a management process for implementation. For example, fearlessness is personal characteristic, “permits failure” is organizational environment needed and “shared learning and shared power” is an example of a management process for implementation. (Segil, 2002, p.70) The other personal characteristics are completion, commitment, inspiration, assuredness, penetration, intelligence, energy, integrity, perception. (Segil, 2002, p.216) Rothwell and Sullivan argued that “there are two types of personal characteristics, each of which contains different measures. First, there are biographical characteristics that are considered hard measured and are usually found in most personnel files. Biographical characteristics include such things as age, race, gender, tenure, and function. The second type of personal characteristic is personality. Personality refers to more stable behavioral traits that people exhibit. For example, there are a variety of personality models, such as the Myers- Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), the Big Five (extraversion, emotional stability, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience), and other non-dimensional measures, such as locus-of control and pessimism.” (Rothwell & Sullivan, 2005, p.336) Russell Archibald defines desired personal characteristic as following: flexibility and adaptability, preference for significant initiative and leadership, aggressiveness, confidence, persuasiveness, verbal fluency, ambition, activity, forcefulness, effectiveness as a communicator and integrator, broad scope of personal interests, poise, enthusiasm, imagination, spontaneity, able to balance technical solution with time, cost, and human factors, well organized and disciplined, a generalist rather than a specialist, able and willing to devote most of his time to planning and controlling, able to identify problems, willing to make decisions, able to maintain proper balance in the use of time. (Archibald, 1976, p.55) It is stated that “In China, Jin Zhang established competence model of enterprise project management from three dimensional structures, namely management skills, interpersonal relationship and personal qualities. Guozheng Chen put forward dimensions of knowledge and skill, attitude, values, competency model of project manager which is composed by leadership traits. Huiling Xu put the idea that competency model of international construction project is composed by four dimensions and 22 competence model structures, the four dimensions are personal characteristics, management



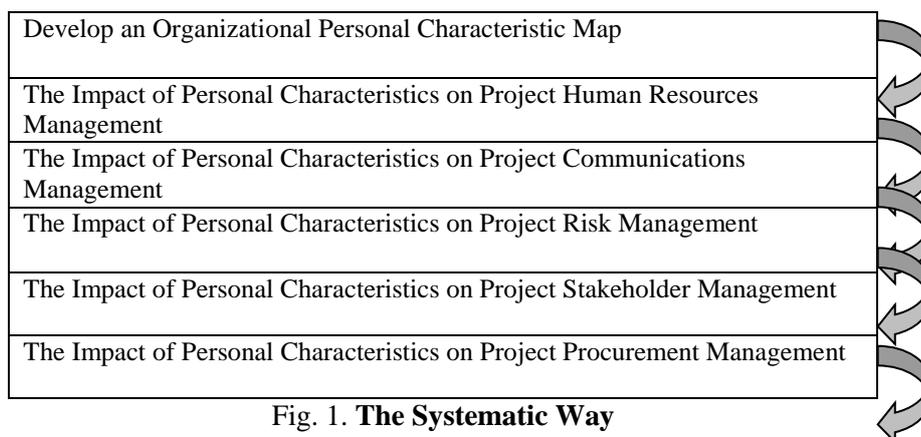
skills, interpersonal relationship and basic knowledge. (Briscope and Hall 1999)” in the International Asia Conference. “(Qi & Shen & Dou, 2013, p.911).

### **The Systematic Way**

To follow a systematic way when developing an organizational project management standard is affected the efficiency of the standard. In this paper, the authors will explain how an organization could develop their own project management standard based on PMBOK as considering the impact of personal characteristics. The personal characteristics are related to six knowledge areas. The knowledge areas are Project Integration Management, Project Human Resource Management, Project Communications Management, Project Risk Management, Project Stakeholder Management, Project Procurement Management and Project Integration Management.

First of all, every organization should develop their own personal characteristic map. In order to realize that, every employee should be taken the personality test, prepared by Human Resource Management department. Durai defined the personality as “the sum of the characteristics of a personal which reflect on his/her response to a particular situation. The characteristics may include, among other things, introversion, inter- personal skills, motivation, stability, self-belief, courage, attitude and temperament. A personality test proposes to assess and predict these basic characteristics of a person.” (Durai, 2010, p.157) After assessing the personal characteristics of the employee, the human resource should analyze the data and develop an organizational personal characteristic map. This map could be used by project manager during project human resource management process.

Then, the systematic way will be followed. As stated before, the systematic way contains six steps: Develop an Organizational Personal Characteristic Map, The Impact of Personal Characteristics on Project Human Resources Management, The Impact of Personal Characteristics on Project Communications Management, The Impact of Personal Characteristics on Project Risk Management, The Impact of Personal Characteristics on Project Stakeholder Management, The Impact of Personal Characteristics on Project Procurement Management. The figure 1 shows the systematic way.



**Fig. 1. The Systematic Way**

*Source: Authors' construction*



### **The Impact of Personal Characteristics on Project Human Resources Management**

“Project Human Resource Management includes the processes that organize, manage and lead the project team“(PMBOK, 2013, p.255.) The processes are: Plan Human Resource Management, Acquire Project Team, Develop Project Team, Manage Project Team. All the project team members are assigned specific roles and responsibilities on each project. In reality, all the project managers do project management in different environments, cultures and nations. That means that the project manager is working with different project team members that have their own beliefs, habits, behaviours, communication needs and personal characteristics in the projects. The Project manager needs to be aware of these differences while creating Human Resource Management Plan.

The key personal characteristics, necessary for project success, during acquiring project team should be defined by project manager. For example, “ a risk champion will have a combination of technical skills (including the ability to understand and manage different types of individuals and groups). These latter soft skills are very useful for keeping energy levels high during the risk process, and a high degree of emotional literacy can be particularly helpful.” (Hillson, 2009, p.87) It is important to make the involvement of all team members in project is beneficial. Bee & Bee stated that “In addition to selecting for the requisite professional skills and informal team roles, there are certain personal skills and qualities that make for effective project team members.” and continued “The type of person selected for project work needs to be resilient and capable of coping with change; want greater personal interdependence than those in the traditional, functional role. Because of these required characteristics there needs to be greater care in the selection of project team members.” (Bee& Bee, 1997, p.30)

Since 1980, many academics and practitioners have agreed that human resource management (HRM) is one of the most crucial elements of an organization’s success. It is known that, Human Resource Management benefits from successful networking by improving knowledge and access to human resource assets such as strong competencies, specialized experience, and external partnership opportunities. (PMBOK, 2013, p.262) So, the processes that the project manager should apply on the projects require making the most effective use of the people involved with the project. To make the most effective use, project peoples’ characteristics and communication needs should be analysed carefully and a common language for the all project team should be created. In order to supply this, it is necessary for each project manager to work like an orchestra maestro. It is important that collecting project team members’ data to manage this orchestra effectively. Finally, all these things regarding to evaluation of personnel characteristics need to be follow up on all processes of Human Resource Management. During this step, the project manager could use the following checklist.



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Questions	Answer (Yes / No)
Are the personal characteristics of project team defined accurately?	
Are the factors for the common employee attitudes in the country analyzed carefully?	
Are the working habits of persons analyzed accurately? (Collectivist or Individualist)	
Are the personal characteristics considered during planning human resource management?	
Are the personal characteristics considered during acquiring project team process?	
Are the personal characteristics considered during development of project team?	
Are the personal characteristics considered during management of project team?	

Fig. 2. **The Checklist for Project Human Resource Management**

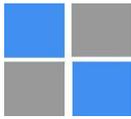
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### The Impact of Personal Characteristics on Project Communications Management

Project managers spend most of their time communicating with team members, stakeholders and internal or external project resources to make them stick together for the effective project communication. According to the PMBOK communication defined as "Effective communication creates a bridge between diverse stakeholders who may have different culture, organizational backgrounds, different perspective and interests, which impact or have an influence upon the project execution or outcome." (PMBOK, 2013, p.287) Processes for the Project Communication Management are: Plan Communication Management, Manage Communications and Control Communications.

Depending on that situation all stakeholders already have different personal characteristics according to their nations, beliefs or family life. Project manager need to be aware of that differences while developing communication management plan. For example; Stakeholders from different cultures or nations at the executive level, for example, have communication preferences and needs that are different from the others in project. So, horizontal and vertical communication must be clarified and adopted to the needs of whoever is receiving the data and information. On that point it is important to classify characteristics of project team members come from diverse cultures within the context of project. Some of the project team members may come from individualist cultures while others come from collectivist ones. "Individual interests take priority over group interests in individualist cultures. Conversely, people respect and adhere to the norms of the group to which they belong in a collectivist culture." (Spolander & Martin, 2012, p.154) On that point, these interests should be identified in the planning phase of communications and proper communication models & methods are need to be analyzed according to the stakeholder's needs, requirements, competency and experiences.

For example; Muller indicates that "the personal characteristic or competence that determines the communication preferences of project sponsors is their number of years with project management experience. Contents-wise sponsors prefer quantitative project analysis



data and forward looking information like trends and issues over that of project managers. Analytic data, such as quality metrics or earned value results, are preferred because they are perceived more credible than qualitative statements in status reports about recent achievements.” (Müller, 2003, p.168)

In summary, project managers’ typical practices for communication with their stakeholders’ are not wrong, but it is better to think about personnel characteristics while occurring relationship between all project team. Project managers’ can use following checklist for project communication management.

Questions	Answer (Yes / No)
Are the personal characteristics of project team, project stakeholders defined accurately?	
Are the personal characteristics considered during planning process of communications management?	
Are the personal characteristics considered during management of communications?	
Are the personal characteristics considered during control communications process?	

Fig. 3. The Checklist for Project Communications Management

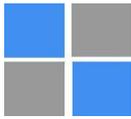
Source: Authors’ construction.

### The Impact of Personal Characteristics on Project Risk Management

According to the PMBOK, “the project risk management includes the processes of conducting risk management planning, identification, analysis, response planning, and controlling risk on a project.” (PMBOK, 2013, p. 309) The processes are: Plan Risk Management, Identify Risks, Perform Qualitative Risk Analysis, Perform Quantitative Risk Analysis, Plan Risk Responses, Control Risks.

Firstly, the project manager should define the personal characteristics of the project team, project stakeholders and supplier or vendors. When developing project risk management plan, subsidiary plan of project management plan, the project manager should define how the risk management activities related to personal characteristics are conducted for the project. The inputs of this process are project management plan, project charter, and stakeholder register and enterprise environmental factors. The project manager should ensure that the inputs include the detail of personal characteristics. For example, the project manager could define personal characteristics as a risk category and create a risk breakdown structure (RBS). In the PMI’ s view, “RBS helps the project team to look at many sources from which project risk may arise in a risk identification exercise.” (PMBOK, 2013, p.317)

After that, the project manager identifies which personal characteristics of the team, stakeholders, supplier and vendors may affect the project and will document them in the risk register. For example, finding the right personal characteristics qualification is not an easy task and the project manager should define this risk in the risk register. In the third step, the project manager performs risk analysis and updates the risk register. Then, the risk responses are planned and the project manager develops options and actions in order to enhance the



opportunities and reduce threats. During monitoring and controlling process groups, the project manager implements the risk response plans, tracks identified risks according to the personal characteristics, monitors residual risks, and identifies new risks. During this step, the project manager could use the following checklist:

Questions	Answer (Yes / No)
Are the personal characteristic of the project team, project stakeholders, suppliers or vendors defined accurately?	
Are the personal characteristics considered during planning risk management and developing project risk management plan?	
Are the personal characteristics considered during identifying risks and producing the risk register?	
Are the personal characteristics considered during performing risk analysis?	
Are the personal characteristics considered during planning risk responses?	
Are the project manager control the risks related to the personal characteristics during monitoring and controlling process groups?	

Fig. 4. **The Checklist for Project Risk Management.**

Source: Authors' construction.

### **The Impact of Personal Characteristics on Project Stakeholder Management**

In addition to project communication, the project manager should define the personal characteristics of the project stakeholders. According to the PMBOK, "Project Stakeholder Management includes the processes required to identify the people, groups or organizations that could impact or be impacted by the project, to analyze stakeholder expectations and their impact or be impacted by the project, to analyze stakeholder expectations and their impact on the project, and to develop appropriate management strategies for effectively engaging stakeholders in project decisions and execution" (PMBOK, 2013, p.391) The processes for Project Stakeholder Management are: Identify Stakeholders, Plan Stakeholder Management, Manage Stakeholder Engagement and Control Stakeholder Engagement. In order to manage communication with stakeholders beneficially, the project manager again work on the identification of stakeholders, groups and their characteristics.

Firstly, project manager should make stakeholder characteristic analyzes for each stakeholder. By this way stakeholder characteristic map, their relation to the project, impacts and positions may be demonstrated. Each stakeholder has their own has their own working habits and express their own opinions about how a project should be managed. For example, in Middle East customers push their project owners to obey their rules, make a lot of meetings and ask to be part of the project. It is very important for the project manager to understand expectations and handle these stakeholders, develop strategies and engage in active communication where appropriate. In some cases, "the project manager might have his or her hands tied, depending on who the stakeholder is and how much power or influence the stakeholder has on the project manager" (Wilson, 2014,230) When developing stakeholder management plan, the project manager should define how the stake holders have influence on the project, develop a strategy on communication needs and carry out the project according to



this environment. In some cases, stakeholders can be unaware of project details and its impacts, however they would like to lead the project and ask to be involved in the decision making steps. All these details needs to be identified carefully and included in the stakeholder register and also in the stakeholder management plan which then allows the project manager to develop various ways to engage stakeholders in the project, to manage their expectations, and to achieve the project objectives more effectively.

After that on the planning stakeholder phase, the project manager should also use these environmental characteristics while running the project. All these information probably help the project manager to identify interrelationships and communication requirements for the project.

Finally, the key benefit of this identification is that it allows “the project manager to increase support and minimize resistance from stakeholders, significantly increasing the chance to achieve project success” (PMBOK, 2013, 404).

During this step, the project manager could use the following checklist.

Questions	Answer (Yes / No)
Are the personal characteristics of project stakeholders defined accurately?	
Are the personal characteristics considered during identification process of stakeholders?	
Are the personal characteristics considered during planning process of stakeholder management?	
Are the personal characteristics considered during management of stakeholder engagement process?	
Are the personal characteristics considered during controlling of stakeholder engagement process?	

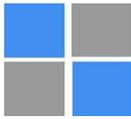
**Fig. 5. The Checklist for Project Stakeholder Management.**

*Source: Authors' construction.*

### **The Impact of Personal Characteristics on Project Procurement Management**

The procurement management is defined as “the processes necessary to purchase or acquire products, services or results needed from outside the project team. The organization can be either the buyer or seller of the products, services, or results of a project.” (PMBOK, 2013, p.355) The processes are: Plan Procurement Management, Conduct Procurements, Control Procurements, and Close Procurements.

In the first step, Plan Procurement Management, the project manager determines project procurement decisions, specifies the procurement approach, and identifies potential seller. In the PMI' s view, “The Plan Procurement Management process also includes evaluating potential sellers, particularly if the buyer wishes to exercise some degree of influence or control over acquisition decisions.” (PMBOK, 2013, p.360) During this process, the project manager should determine how to manage the personal characteristics of potential suppliers and vendors and define them in the Procurement Management Plan. In addition, the project manager should describe which personal characteristics should have the potential suppliers and vendors in the Source Selection Criteria. According to the PMBOK, “Source selection criteria are often



included as part of the procurement documents. Such criteria are developed and used to rate or score seller proposals, and can be objective or subjective.” (PMBOK, 2013, p.368) The next step is “Conduct Procurements”. When selecting a seller and awarding a contract, the project manager should use the defined selection criteria, which includes personal characteristics. When monitoring and controlling, the project manager should manage the procurement relationships as considering the personal characteristics of buyers and sellers. Considering the personal characteristics of buyers and sellers helps to ensure that the performance of sellers and buyers meets the procurement requirements.

During this process, the project manager should describe which personal characteristics should have the potential suppliers and vendors. In addition, the project manager should include managing the personal characteristics of potential suppliers and vendors. The next step is “Conduct Procurements.” When selecting a seller and awarding a contract, the project manager should use the defined selection criteria, which includes personal characteristics. The work performance information, the output of the process “Conduct Procurements”, should define the current or potential problems regarding to the personal characteristics to support later claims or new procurements. Finally, the project manager completes each procurement. The project manager archives the personal characteristics information of potential suppliers and vendors for future and updates lessons learned documentation.

Questions	Answer (Yes / No)
Is how to manage the personal characteristic of the potential suppliers and vendors defined in the Procurement Management Plan?	
Are the required personal characteristics of potential suppliers and vendors defined in the Source Selection Criteria?	
Are the defined selection criteria used during selecting a seller and awarding a contract?	
Is the work performance information produced as an output?	
Is the lessons learned documentation during closing procurement process?	

Fig. 6. **The Checklist for Project Procurement Management.**

Source: Authors’ construction.

**Conclusions**

To consider the impact of personal characteristic during developing organizational project management standard will help to increase the successful completion rate of project. So, the organizations make profit and survive in the competitive environment. The authors define a systematic way which has six steps. This steps are according to the project management knowledge areas: Human Resource Management, Communications Management, Risk Management, Stakeholder Management and Procurement Management.

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