

Balancing Artificial and Emotional Intelligence in IT Project Management Leadership: A Path to Efficient and High-Quality Project Delivery in the IT Service Industry

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Abstract— Recent technology breakthroughs, especially in Artificial Intelligence (AI), have started to impact many sectors and their processes. However, the field of Project Management (PM) is not solely reliant on AI; rather, other technologies like Emotional Intelligence (EI) also play a significant role by enhancing empathy, communication, conflict resolution, and stakeholder trust. While AI provides predictive insights, automation, and operational efficiency, EI ensures that these insights are implemented in a human-centered manner. Therefore, it is essential to explore how both elements can be used in PM to optimize advantages, as neither can independently deliver the anticipated benefits or quality demanded by clients and stakeholders. This study aimed to investigate the integration of AI and EI in PM within the IT service industry. Semi-structured interviews were conducted across multiple organizations, and the data were analyzed with thematic analysis using both deductive and inductive approaches. Despite the small sample size, thematic saturation was achieved, providing meaningful insights into this emerging area. This ensures a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. Findings suggested that six key factors must be considered when integrating AI and EI into PM: AI as a catalyst for efficiency, EI as a leadership enabler, integration challenges, synergy between AI and EI, ethical and trust concerns, and capacity building and training. Together, this highlights not only the opportunities but also the practical barriers in implementation. Importantly, the study offers a road map for industries on how to incorporate AI and EI into their PM processes, ensuring a balance between technological precision and human-centered leadership.

Keyword— Artificial Intelligence, AI-EI Integration, Emotional Intelligence, Project Management, IT Service Industry, Thematic Analysis,



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