



Excellence in Project Management An Icelandic Study

Eyjólfur Eyfells

Thesis of 12 ECTS credits
Master of Project Management (MPM)

December 2014



Excellence in Project Management: An Icelandic Study

Eyjólfur Eyfells

Thesis of 12 ECTS credits submitted to the School of Science and Engineering
at Reykjavík University in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Project Management

December 2014

Supervisor:

Haukur Ingi Jónasson, PhD Psychiatry and Religion
Professor, Reykjavík University, Iceland

Excellence in Project Management: An Icelandic Study

Eyjólfur Eyfells

12 ECTS thesis submitted to the School of Science and Engineering
at Reykjavík University in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Project Management (MPM).

December 2014

Student:

Eyjólfur Eyfells

Eyjólfur Eyfells

Supervisor:

Haukur Ingi Jónasson

Department:

EXCELLENCE IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT: AN ICELANDIC STUDY

Eyjólfur Eyfells¹

Reykjavík University

**Paper presented as part of requirements for the degree of Master of Project Management (MPM)
at the School of Science and Engineering, Reykjavík University – December 2014**

ABSTRACT

This paper covers the research of excellence in project management leadership and looks into what qualities define the successful project manager in Iceland. The research question is as follows: “What qualities define the IPMA Level B certified Icelandic project managers?” Where IPMA stands for the International Project Management Association. Qualitative research methods based on grounded theory were used and the research scope was limited to interviewing five Icelandic project managers who have acquired an IPMA Level B certification in project management. The findings of this paper are that the main qualities that define the Level B certified Icelandic project managers are communication and organisational skills, as well as honesty. In that sense, the results are in line with the project management literature used in this thesis, which also states these qualities as being highly important for the successful project manager. It leads to the conclusion that excellent Icelandic project managers have similar qualities as those generally described in the literature review and that in order to dig deeper into the issue, longer interviews with a larger number of subjects would be needed to be undertaken.

Keywords: Project management, IPMA, Iceland, success, excellence.

¹ Eyjólfur Eyfells, eyjolfure12@ru.is, tel. +44 7535163435

1. INTRODUCTION

What is it that makes a project manager 'excellent'? This topic has been widely researched in different countries and on a more international academic level but to the author's best knowledge, it has not been thoroughly researched in the Icelandic context. Now why would anyone be interested in learning about what defines the successful Icelandic project manager rather than, for example, successful American or German project managers? For one thing, Iceland is unique. It is a small island nation with a population of only about 320,000 people. It is a proud nation with Viking heritage and its people have had to endure various hardships in the form of natural cataclysms, disease outbreaks, cold winters and famines, which has forged the nation into what it is today. It also has the highest ratio per capita of IPMA certified project managers and an unusually high percentage of women with D and C IPMA certifications. Hence, it is the author's belief that it would indeed be interesting to study what qualities define the excellent project manager in Iceland and compare those findings with what has been studied abroad, possibly finding similarities and/or differences, if any exist. This leads us to the thesis' research question: "What qualities define the IPMA Level B certified Icelandic project manager?"

First in the literature review chapter, we will cover the most recent project management literature and investigate what it says about successful project managers and leaders. The thesis will also have a look at more traditional and also standardised project management literature. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design* (Creswell, 1998) will be used as the main source for the research part of the thesis.

This will be followed by a chapter on the research method used in the thesis. The research project is qualitative and involves interviewing five IPMA Level B certified Icelandic project managers and exploring what values and competences are most fundamental to them in their work of project management and which attitudes to avoid. This method will help shed light on the research question.

The next chapter will focus on the results of the research method and discussion on the results. The results will be used to assess the qualities that define the excellent Icelandic project manager, given that they need to be excellent in order to qualify for an IPMA Level B certification. The results will be interpreted and compared to the literature review and how the new data changes the scene. Based on the results, an attempt will be made to provide an answer to the research question.

The thesis will end with a conclusion chapter where the thesis' results will be wrapped up. It will include possible future steps to be taken in order to further investigate the topic, and to improve and strengthen the paper's idea on what defines the excellent Icelandic project manager.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In exploring what has been investigated about the subject under consideration this study uses a range of literature on project management and leadership, as well as a source on qualitative research methods. The literature review chapter is divided into three sub-chapters. The first sub-chapter contains recent articles and books on project management and leadership. Using this literature will help shed light on what some essential sources have to say about the excellent project manager. The second sub-chapter presents the traditional and standardised literature on project management. These are the mainstream sources on project management used by the the world's leading project management associations such as IPMA and PMI. The third sub-chapter incorporates a source on qualitative research methods. Let us now have a closer look at each of the sub-chapters.

2.1 Modern Project Management Literature

In recent years, much has been written about project managers and leaders, and what defines the excellent project manager. It is right to note that in the literature review chapter the terms 'project manager' and 'project leader' are both used to refer to the project manager but for the rest of thesis the term 'project manager' will be used. The thesis will now turn to some of the more popular literature on the subject, starting with *Project Leadership* (Briner, Hastings and Geddes, 1996).

There are many qualities that can define the excellent project manager. In *Project Leadership*, Briner, Hastings and Geddes (Briner et al., 1996, p. 28) mention reflection as one of the project manager's qualities: "Research into effective learning confirms the importance of the natural process of reflection, and pulling back from day-to-day concerns to see them in perspective ... monitoring your own stress levels and discovering what you find difficult to handle and why. A stressed project leader usually passes the stress on to others." From this it can be assumed that the project manager would ideally possess the quality of having an overview of the project's current state which would help him or her maintain a relaxed mindset, one that does not pass stress on to his or her colleagues. The three authors (Briner et al., 1996, p. 30) further mention that: "...you should always create small but significant periods of reflection time. Without this you will never even realize if your priorities are upside down." Here again, the authors emphasise the quality of reflection.

The authors researched what the core competencies of project leaders are. By interviewing project leaders, their sponsors and team members, they found that the following skills were important:

- "The ability to explain complicated things simply and in understandable language.

- Don't panic and become hyperactive or alternatively become paralysed into inactivity – stay calm and find a step-by-step way forward with the team.
- Face up to problems, find out the causes and make proposals to management and customers.
- Let people know what's happening all the time – team members, senior managers and customers – don't default into mushroom management, because everybody expects the worst. Knowing the good and the bad news are equally important.
- The 'matrix mind', keeping an eye on the vision or the big picture, whilst having a finger on the pulse of the project's progress." (Briner et al., 1996, p. 29)

If we look at each point subsequently, we can see that the first point emphasises the importance of proper communication; of getting the message across. The second point stresses the need for the project manager to conduct himself or herself in a calm manner and do things in an orderly fashion. The third point underscores the importance of dealing directly with problems or challenges, finding the right solutions and communicating them to stakeholders. The fourth point also highlights the significance of communication as it involves regularly updating stakeholders about the project's progress. The fifth and the last point, points out the value of the project manager having a project overview as well as noticing the project's nitty-gritty.

The overall theme could be said to be the importance of communication. That seems to be the project leader's essential quality. Briner et al. (1996, p. 29) further support this by stating that: "Being able to interact and communicate while managing the project's tasks seems to be the key."

In *Project-Oriented Leadership*, Ralf Müller and J. Rodney Turner (2010) investigate the different qualities and competences that the excellent project manager should have. They cite investigations conducted by Kirkpatrick and Locke on the different traits that the effective leader possesses:

- "drive and ambition;
- the desire to lead and influence others;
- honesty and integrity;
- self-confidence;
- intelligence;
- technical knowledge." (as cited in Müller and Turner, 2010, p. 11)

The above mentioned qualities are cited in the project management context and therefore it can be inferred that each of these qualities would benefit the project manager in his or her work.

To add to above-mentioned qualities, Turner “...identified seven traits of effective project managers”:

- “Problem solving
- Result orientation
- Self-confidence
- Perspective
- Communication
- Negotiating ability
- Energy and initiative.” (As cited in Müller and Turner, 2010, p. 11-12)

In these seven points, ‘perspective’, ‘communication’ and its related term ‘negotiation’ can be noticed. This is a common theme throughout all the literature explored and highlights the significance of being well versed in communication and inter-personal relations. Also, in both of the above quotations, the word ‘self-confidence’ comes up, as well as the similar terms ‘drive and ambition’ on one hand, and ‘energy and initiative’ on the other.

In *Afþurðaaárangur* (Gunnarsdóttir & Ingason, 2007), which could be translated something along the lines of *Outstanding Performance*, Gunnarsdóttir and Ingason refer to a research that was conducted in order to find the main qualities of leaders in outstanding companies. They mentioned that the research group was surprised to find out that the excellent leaders were not particularly striking as characters to the outside world and well-known in the business community. Rather, they kept a low profile and were more often than not discreet and even shy. There was a slight paradox in their characteristics since they’re characterised by modesty but also powerful professionalism. They are more like Lincoln and Socrates rather than Patton and Ceasar. They possess contrasting characteristics; they are reserved but stubborn, and humble but fearless. Other words that were often used to describe them were quiet, humble, unpretentious, demure, friendly and flying under the radar (As cited in Gunnarsdóttir & Ingason, 2007, p. 25).

The following source the thesis will be looking at, *In Search of Excellence: Lessons from America’s Best Run Companies* (Peters & Waterman Jr., 1982), was first published in 1982. It was a #1 national best-seller in the US and considered the “Greatest Business Book of All Time” by Bloomsbury UK. Hence, the book is a powerful authority on management and useful to this thesis in defining the qualities of the excellent project leader or manager.

Peters and Waterman Jr. (1982, p. 53) mention pathfinding as being important for the leader, and that: “Pathfinding is essentially an aesthetic, intuitive process, a design process.” Therefore, for the

project leader to find his or her project's right path, he or she would need to possess acute intuition and design skills.

Peterman and Waterman Jr. (1982, p. 131) were hired to help solve a challenge in an IT project and found out that the project's main challenge was to do with communication: "...although [the project] was following most of the rules of good task force management, the computer people and the division people were almost never in face-to-face communication, except at formal meetings." Here again we are reminded of the significance of proper communication and in this case the project manager should have taken the initiative and made sure that team members were communicating as needed and thereby kept understandings and cooperation at maximum levels.

The two authors (1982, p. 17) also write that: "Far too many managers have lost sight of the basics, in our opinion: quick action, service to customers, practical innovation, and the fact that you can't get any of these without virtually everyone's commitment." If we adapt this to the project management context, we can see some qualities that would benefit the project manager, that is, he or she needs to be quick to act, live in the spirit of service, be innovative and get the most out of his or her team by getting everyone on board committed.

In this context it is right to mention *the Halo Effect ...and the Eight Other Business Delusions That Deceive Managers* (Rosenzweig, 2009). In his work, Rosenzweig criticises some of the popular success and leadership books such as *In Search of Excellence: Lessons from America's Best Run Companies* (Peters & Waterman Jr., 1982), i.a. that it is not enough to simply pick out the winning dots of successful companies. The good managers according to Rosenzweig:

...[S]ee the world clearly, accurately, without delusions. They don't write self-congratulatory accounts of their victorious careers or offer platitudes about authenticity and integrity and humility, as if those things – important though they may be – were sufficient to guarantee success. They don't cling to an idealized view of the business world. Rather, they are thoughtful managers who recognize that success comes about from a combination of shrewd judgment and hard work with a dose of good luck mixed in, and they're well aware that if the breaks of the game had gone just a bit differently, the results could have been vastly different. (Rosenzweig, 2009, p.159)

Kazuo Inamori, the founder of the Japanese corporations Kyocera and KDDI, stresses in his book *A Compass to Fulfillment: Passion and Spirituality in Life and Business*, the importance of virtue and character in connection with the leadership role: "...high leadership positions should be given to people of noble character." And that: "Leaders should be judged by their character rather than by

their abilities.” Inamori refers to Chinese scholar-official Lu Kun (1536-1618) who wrote that: “...the first qualification for leadership is depth, the second is generous courage, and the third is sagacious eloquence. These qualities also can be interpreted as character, courage, and ability. All three attributes are important, but if I were to prioritize them, character would rank first, courage second, and ability third” (Inamori, 2010, p. 56). Hence, we can see the importance of not just being a project manager of outstanding ability, but that he or she requires to possess a virtuous and courageous character.

The literature covered so far has presented us with different qualities that are considered important for the project manager. The frequency of communication’s importance in the project manager’s work is of particular interest. The thesis will now move into standard project management literature to explore what it has to say about the project manager’s important qualities.

2.2 Standard Project Management Literature

This sub-chapter will look at traditional and standardised sources on project management and extract the main points concerning the qualities of the excellent project manager. The sources used in this sub-chapter are the following: *International Project Management Association Competence Baseline (ICB) Version 3.0* (2006), *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBok Guide) Fifth Edition* (2013), *Project Management: A Systems Approach to Planning, Scheduling and Controlling* (Kerzner, 2009), *Association for Project Management (APM) Body of Knowledge Fifth Edition* (2006), and finally *Projects in Controlled Environment Version 2 (PRINCE2) Revealed Second Edition* (2010) along with two other sources on PRINCE2. Let us first take a look at the *ICB 3.0* (2006).

It is important to note that the *ICB 3.0* (2006) is considered especially relevant for this thesis since the thesis question: “What qualities define the IPMA Level B certified Icelandic project managers?” is based on an IPMA certification and IPMA also publishes the ICB. The *ICB 3.0* (2006) is mostly based on three competences: Contextual competences, behavioural competences and technical competences (see figure 1 on p. 8). Here, we will be looking at some of what this thesis considers to be the main competences.

In the technical competence chapter, *communication* is mentioned as “...the effective exchange and understanding of information between parties. Effective communication is vital to the success of projects, programmes and portfolios; the right information has to be transmitted to relevant parties, accurately and consistently to meet their expectations” (ICB 3.0, 2006, p. 76). Since communication is considered to be ‘vital’ to project success, it could be said to be one of the most important competences. In fact, it is so important that Sigurðardóttir writes: “...excellent leadership and

communication skills are not just accessories for future project leaders but something that lies at the core of good project management...” (Sigurðardóttir, 2013, p. 3) and that: “...all of the ICB-3 competences describe behaviours, so IPMA might, in fact, want to consider to change the term [behaviour] to a more specific one— such as leadership/intrapersonal competences and or **communication/interpersonal** competences” (Sigurðardóttir, 2013, p. 7).

Another important competence is *ethics*, which is mentioned in the behavioural competence chapter: “**Ethics** embraces the morally accepted conduct or behaviour of every individual. Ethical behaviour is the basis of every social system. In organisations, certain ethical standards are usually included in contracts of employment and cover the professional rules of conduct and behaviour that are expected of employees” (ICB 3.0, 2006, p. 122). Honesty falls under the category of correct ethical behaviour and therefore it can be inferred that honesty is an important quality of the excellent project manager.

In the same chapter, *openness* is stated as being: “...the ability to make others feel they are welcome to express themselves, so that the project can benefit from their input, suggestions, worries and concerns. Openness is necessary as a means of benefiting from others’ knowledge and experience ... [t]he relationships in the team are built on mutual respect, trust and reliability” (ICB 3.0, 2006, p. 98). Here again, we see reference to trust which is closely related to honesty. Also, in the ICB 3.0, openness is mentioned as being linked to flexibility: “[The project manager] is flexible, adapts to change, keeping in mind the interests of the project” (ICB 3.0, 2006, p. 99). Hence, the excellent project manager needs to be open and flexible.

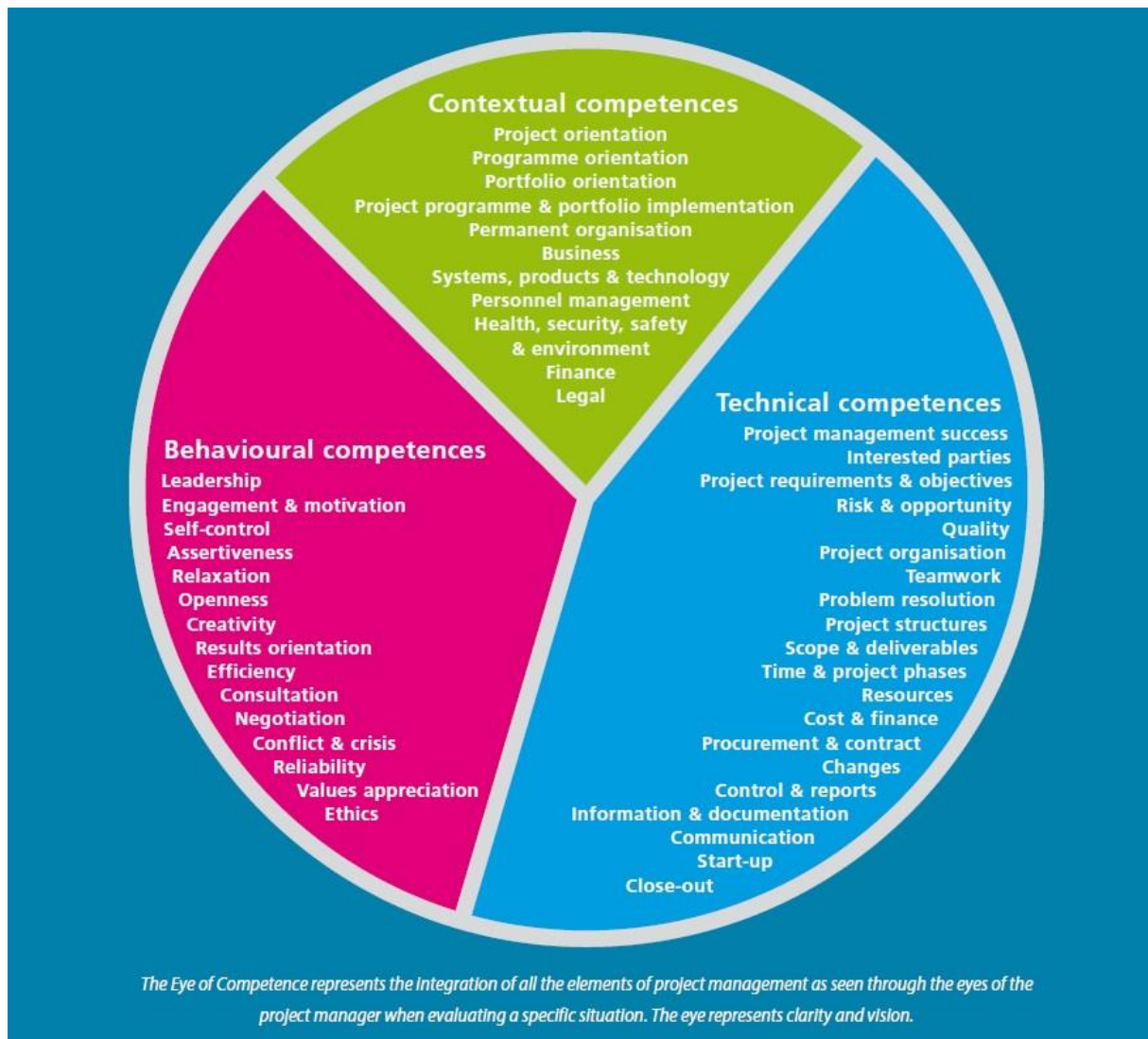


Figure 1 – IPMA’s Eye of Competence

A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBoK Guide) Fifth Edition (2013) is an important source on basic project management and is used as the main text by the Project Management Institution (PMI). Like most of the other references, the PMBoK Guide (2013) refers to *communication* as an important element in the project manager’s work:

Project managers spend most time communicating with team members and other project stakeholders, whether they are internal (at all organizational levels) or external to the organization. Effective communication creates a bridge between diverse stakeholders who may have different cultural and organizational backgrounds, different levels of expertise, and different perspectives and interests, which impact or have an influence upon the project execution or outcome. (PMBoK Guide, 2013, p. 287)

Here, again, it is evident how essential good communication is to the project manager since he or she “...spend most time of communicating...” Furthermore, *the PMBoK Guide* (2013) further states that: “Project managers accomplish work through the project team and other stakeholders. Effective project managers require a balance of ethical, interpersonal, and conceptual skills that help them analyze situations and interact appropriately” (PMBoK Guide, 2013, p. 17). Here, like in the *ICB 3.0* (2006), *the PMBoK Guide* (2013) goes into the importance of both communication and ethics. It also refers to other vital competences that are recommended for the project manager:

In addition to any area-specific skills and general management proficiencies required for the project, effective project management requires that the project manager possess the following competencies:

- **Knowledge** – Refers to what the project manager knows about project management.
- **Performance** – Refers to what the project manager is able to do or accomplish while applying his or her project management knowledge.
- **Personal** – 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. (PMBoK Guide, 2013, p. 17)

Now we will look at a leading authority on project management, Kerzner’s *Project Management: A Systems Approach to Planning, Scheduling and Controlling* (2009). Kerzner writes about various qualities that the excellent project manager would ideally possess:

- “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 solutions 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.” (Kerzner, 2009, p. 146-147)

Here we can notice a few qualities that have been mentioned in some of the thesis’ other quoted sources, such as leadership skills, being an effective communicator and showing enthusiasm. We can also notice one quality, ‘aggressiveness’, that in some contexts might not be seen as a quality at all. More skills Kerzner mentions are:

- “Team building
- Leadership
- Conflict resolution
- Technical expertise
- Planning
- Organization
- Entrepreneurship
- Administration
- Management support
- Resource allocation.” (Kerzner, 2009, p. 149)

Concerning above points, he mentions that: “It is important that the personal management style underlying these skills facilitate the integration of multidisciplinary program resources for synergistic operation. The days of the manager who gets by with technical expertise alone or pure administrative skills are gone” (Kerzner, 2009, p. 149). Hence, we can see the emphasis on the importance of interpersonal skills and qualities.

Finally, Kerzner writes that: “An effective management style might be characterized this way:

- Clear project leadership and direction
- Assistance in problem-solving
- Facilitating the integration of new members into the team
- Ability to handle interpersonal conflict
- Facilitating group decisions
- Capability to plan and elicit commitments
- Ability to communicate clearly
- Presentation of the team to higher management

- Ability to balance technical solutions against economic and human factors.” (Kerzner, 2009, p. 150)

He goes on to explain that: “The personal traits desirable and supportive of the above skills are:

- Project management experience
- Flexibility and change orientation
- Innovative thinking
- Initiative and enthusiasm
- Charisma and persuasiveness
- Organization and discipline.” (Kerzner, 2009, p. 150)

As can be seen from above points, there are various skills and qualities that Kerzner recommends for the project manager and that a few of these points, Kerzner mentions more than one time.

We will now be looking at *the APM Body of Knowledge* (2006). It is right to note that the APM is the certification body in the UK for the IPMA. Like *the ICB 3.0, The APM Body of Knowledge* (2006, p. 102) states that: “Effective communication management throughout the life cycle is fundamental to the project” and that: “The project manager should recognise that these different audiences, [the project team, the sponsor, stakeholders, senior management and the organisation], have different communication needs in terms of volume, content, style, tone and medium, and tailor their communication to meet these needs” (APM Body of Knowledge, 2006, p. 105). Furthermore, it declares that: “The project manager needs to build and maintain a positive and effective team that encourages involvement, flexibility, efficiency, innovation and productivity to contribute to project success” (APM Body of Knowledge, 2006, p. 105). It mentions eight characteristics that are important for the project manager: “an open, positive ‘can-do’ attitude, common sense, open mindedness, adaptability, inventiveness, prudent risk taker, fairness and commitment” (APM Body of Knowledge, 2006, p. 114). The APM Body of Knowledge claims that the project manager should display professionalism and adhere to ethics: “Ethical requirements are an integral part of the project manager’s professional behaviour and require a fundamental understanding of the norms of the organisation’s expectations, moral values and legal boundaries, which in turn vary by location, culture and sector” (APM Body of Knowledge, 2006, p. 118) and that there are “...expectations that project managers will behave professionally and ethically, to a consistent level of performance, creating a relationship that nurtures trust between the organisation and project manager in ways that transcend commercial agreements” (APM Body of Knowledge, 2006, p. 119).

The next reference the thesis will be looking at is *PRINCE2 Revealed* by Colin Bentley (2010) which is based on a standard project management method used widely in UK government departments and the United Nations. This text is clear cut and straight to the point. It goes on to proclaim that: “Good communication between the relevant parties is a major benefit to a project. It avoids delays and misunderstandings” (Bentley, 2010, p. 43). The project manager will be the centre of communication in the project and therefore needs to excel at it.

In *PRINCE2: A Practical Handbook*, also by Colin Bentley (2002, p. 281), it is mentioned that the project manager should ideally “[d]irect and motivate the project team.” If the project manager is to motivate his or her own team, he or she would need to be motivated him/herself and be enthusiastic about the project’s success.

That concludes the sub-chapters on standardised and traditional project management. Here the thesis has brought up the various qualities that these types of literature support as being important for the project manager’s work.

3. Qualitative Research Method

Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design (Creswell, 1998) will be used as the main source for the research part of the thesis. It was decided to use grounded theory since it was considered most suitable for this type of research. That is, interviewing individuals in order to shed light on the research question, which is about the qualities that define the successful Icelandic project manager. In grounded theory, the common practice is to collect and analyse data first, in order to develop a theory based on those findings (Creswell, 1998, p. 86). To further support this: “Strauss and Corbin are clear that one collects and analyzes data before using theory in a grounded theory study” (As cited in Creswell, 1998, p. 86). Hence, in this research it was important to collect the data first by interviewing all subjects and then use the findings to help answer the research question. According to Creswell (1998, p. 57): “The participants interviewed are theoretically chosen – in theoretical sampling – to help the researcher best form the theory.” In this case, the participants are theoretically chosen as excellent Icelandic project managers who have acquired an IPMA Level B certification in order to form as accurate theory as possible. However, using grounded theory presents the researcher with a few challenges:

- “The investigator needs to set aside, as much as possible, theoretical ideas or notions so that the analytic, substantive theory can emerge.
- Despite the evolving, inductive nature of this form of qualitative inquiry, the researcher must recognize that this is a systematic approach to research with specific steps in data analysis.
- The researcher faces the difficulty of determining when categories are saturated or when the theory is sufficiently detailed.” (Creswell, 1998, p. 58)

Since this thesis’ research focuses on three concrete central questions asked in the interviews, it will help to create an analytic and substantive theory. The steps in data analysis will be to look at the answers to the three central questions answered by the interviewees and look at similarities and/or a certain theme that defines the subjects, which would then be used to form a concrete theory on Iceland’s excellent project managers. There will be the challenge of “determining when the theory is sufficiently detailed,” and if to further the research, more interviewee subjects may be necessary in order to improve and strengthen the theory.

In relation to qualitative studies, Creswell mentions that: “...variables cannot be easily identified, theories are not available to explain behaviour of participants or their population of study, and theories need to be developed. Third, use qualitative study because of the need to present a detailed view of the topic” (Creswell, 1998, p. 17). In this case, theories of excellent Icelandic project managers are not available, and need to be developed and as mentioned, this type of research will enable the thesis “to present a detailed view of the topic.” The author had no prior experience with this research method and using *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design* (1998) as a reference proved most useful.

3. RESEARCH PROJECT

The objective of this research project was to interview five Icelandic Level B IPMA certified project managers in order to find out if they possessed any specific qualities that contribute to project success. The results would then be mirrored in literature about excellent project managers to find out similarities and/or differences. This leads us to the following research question: “What qualities define the IPMA Level B certified Icelandic project manager?”

The thesis question was originally supposed to focus on excellent Icelandic project managers in general, but due to the challenge of defining an “excellent project manager,” it was decided, in consultancy with the thesis’ advisor, Dr Haukur Ingi Jónasson, to limit the interviewees to Icelandic project managers who have acquired a Level B certification from IPMA. The thesis is therefore focusing on excellent project managers and there is an assumption that in order to acquire a Level B certification, one must first become an excellent project manager. The reason this assumption can be made, is that the IPMA standard is strict and all applicants applying for a Level B certification are required to go through a thorough three phase screening process before acquiring the certification. According to IPMA (International Project Management Association, 2014) the experience required to apply for a Level B certification is: “Three years in a responsible leadership position in the management of complex projects, plus two additional years in project management. All five years of experience must have been obtained during the last eight years.” It further states that: “Candidates will be expected to provide evidence that they have done the following:

- Were responsible for all project management aspects of a complex project.
- Managed a large project management team and led managers of sub-projects.
- Used appropriate project management processes, methods, techniques and tools” (International Project Management Association, 2014).

Hence, the Level B certification could be considered a criteria for excellence and a project manager who has acquired such a certification called an excellent project manager. It would have been more preferable to focus on project managers who had acquired the higher IPMA A Level certification but considering the fact that only one Icelander has accomplished that feat, it would have proved insufficient for the research project.

Let us take a closer look at the word “quality.” In the thesis’ context, it is the focus on the quality of certain core values and attitudes recognised in human behaviour as being fundamental in achieving the state of excellence, in this context, excellence in project management. This search of excellence

has become increasingly popular in contemporary society in all fields of endeavour. This research paper attempts to seek out the values that define the excellent Icelandic project manager.

3.1 Research Methodology

The essay is built on qualitative research methods based on grounded theory. Other methods could have been used, such as a quantitative research methods using an internet based survey with multiple choice questions. In that case, more subjects could have participated. Despite the advantage of having a larger number of participants, the conclusion was to use qualitative research methods since they give a deeper understanding of the subject.

The attempt to find the answer to the research question is guided by three central questions asked in the interviews: “When working as a project manager, what are the three values that you find most important and how are they important?” and “when working as a project manager, what are the three competences that you find most important and how are they important?” and finally the polar opposite: “What are the three attitudes that you feel should be avoided when working as a project manager?” These central questions are then followed up by two background questions concerning the religious background of the participants and why they decided to apply for the IPMA Level B certification.

The interviews were conducted during the third week in May 2014. The samples were randomly chosen from a pool of all 44 Level B certified Icelandic project managers. Currently, there are 38 men and 6 women who have obtained a Level B certification in Iceland (Project Management Association of Iceland, 2014). In order to maintain accuracy of research results based on gender equality, three men and two women were chosen from the pool. The method of choosing the samples was to cut down all 38 names into paper slips and divide them by gender. In the first round, the men’s group’s paper slips were put into a hat, and the researcher’s mother blindly picked three slips. In the second round, the mother’s researcher blindly picked two slips from the women’s group. The author then contacted the chosen names and 4 additional paper slips needed to be picked out due to subjects’ unavailability or inconvenience.

4. RESEARCH RESULTS AND INDUSTRIAL IMPACT

In this chapter, the thesis will present the results from the qualitative research. We will first look at the key points mentioned by each of the five project managers who were interviewed. Then we will look at how these key points are mirrored in the literature covered in order to find similarities and/or differences between the two. This will help shed light on the thesis' research question: "What qualities define the IPMA Level B certified Icelandic project managers?" The thesis will then explore how these results can be useful in the business community and their industrial impact.

4.1 Interviews and Results

Here we will look at the main results from the interviews. Each of the five interviewed subjects will be featured in turn. Let us have a look at the first subject.

Subject 1

The first subject (Subject 1, personal communication, 21 May 2014) mentioned that one value she felt was important, not just for project management but the foundation in everything, was honesty; to be straightforward and to keep everything on the surface. Another important value she mentioned was practicality and being economical. Then she mentioned the importance of good communication skills, and that that was something she had always looked at when working as a project manager:

Especially in large, complicated projects where you have many different stakeholders and interested parties such as different municipalities and their local authorities, the government, the Icelandic National Planning Agency, the Environment Agency of Iceland, building officers, contractors, site inspectors and the project team itself. There are a lot of strings to hold and somehow the project manager becomes the centre of it all. It is hard work making the project progress, and for that communication is extremely vital. A project manager should do his or her utmost to keep communications good. And to inform which is linked to honesty.

She also mentioned diligence as being an important value.

As for competences, she mentioned the importance of being spontaneous and the ability to respond quickly to a changing environment:

Flexibility is important especially when you are dealing with large projects where every day large sums of resources are being used. There are always some challenges coming up and it is

important to respond to them quickly and constantly guide the project in the right direction so that it can continue smoothly and keep disruption, discomfort and cost at a minimum. Organisational skills are very important as well, which includes being accurate and good at organising. It is important to possess sharp intuition as well as the importance of seeing the big picture and focus on the nitty-gritty, and not to get too stuck in details. But in the end it all comes down to communication. To keep everybody well-informed and on board. If you keep good communication, the whole project life-cycle everything runs more smoothly.

Concerning attitudes that would be considered undesirable for a project manager, she mentioned arrogance and putting on airs. "Being careless and too happy-go-lucky attitudes are not good either. Lack of or being insufficient in communication and dishonesty, but the latter goes for everything and not just project management."

Through background questions, the author discovered that this interviewee did not have a particularly religious background, though she is registered in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland. Her religion does not play a role in her work as a project manager. She believes in what she considers to be good. She mentioned that it did not matter whether one is a Christian or a Muslim: "Rather, it is about being kind to your neighbour and a good servant in society; to do good."

The reason for applying for a Level B certification was due to several factors: "The main reason was that the company encouraged and emphasised its project managers to do so." She also liked the idea of summarising all the project management work that she had done so far and doing the self-reflection involved with the certification. She mentioned that: "It is good to have confirmation of your skills." Another reason she feels it is good to have the certification is that the title 'project manager' is misused a lot in Iceland and that people are called project managers even though their work has nothing to do with project management: "It is just a title because you have to call yourself 'something manager' and it is a nice title to have."

Subject 2

The second interviewee (Subject 2, personal communication, 21 May 2014) mentioned reliability or authenticity as being an important value. To him, that means to deal with matters responsibly and to deliver what you are meant to deliver so that the project outcome is reliable and meets the project needs and scope. He mentioned the importance of valuing time and managing time well: "So you deliver what was agreed on, within the deadline that was agreed upon. So that the client, whether they are within the company or outside it, gets the project results delivered at the point in time that was agreed. That way, he or she can continue their own work, and our work won't delay them." The

third value the interviewee mentioned was courage; the courage to trust one's coworkers that they do their job and that they'll find the right solutions: "It is important to find new solutions and be willing to think outside the box and find solutions that might not be obvious in the beginning. To have the courage to do these things. So courage and trust are very important, and they are also interrelated."

Concerning competences that are important for the project manager, the subject mentioned communication skills as being by far the most important competence; to be able to communicate with people and to be able to draw out good solutions from others and mediate: "To find good solutions and monitor how the project is progressing." The next important competence that the subject mentioned was knowledge of the project's subject, that is, technical knowledge or expertise:

You don't need to be the specialist in everything but you need to have at least insight as to what the big picture looks like and to be able to sense it. So technical knowledge and of course knowledge of project and change management. You need to know scope management and know how you keep track of the project. So communication and technical knowledge of the subject.

Concerning attitudes that the project manager should avoid, he mentioned know-it-all attitudes as being undesirable, to think that you always know best. That is a closed attitude; "my way or the highway." The interviewee mentioned it as being: "...the worst possible attribute a project manager could have. Arrogance and high-handedness is something that is completely fatal for a project manager. Another undesirable attitude to have is carelessness towards the project, its scope, deadline, cost etc. These attitudes should be avoided at all costs. "

Background questions revealed that this interviewee did not have a religious background that played a role in his project management work. The reason for applying for a Level B certification was to do with the fact that his company is involved with big projects and some of his coworkers already had certification so he decided to go for it as well:

It is a confirmation of your own abilities and can serve as a sales tool. It is a stamp and a marketing tool. So it is important for the company as well as the individual. If and when changing jobs it would certainly help to have the certification. The company markets itself as a project management and design company, and therefore it is important to have qualified project managers on board. You cannot acquire a Level B certification without having knowledge, experience, and competence. It is good to have something concrete like the certification but there are of course many qualified, excellent project managers that have not

been officially qualified. But that goes for other professions as well. It is just a stamp and a recognition, or not a recognition, rather confirmation of your level of competence. Just like a certified quality system. Today it is a demand and you don't do business unless you have a certified quality system.

Subject 3

The third subject (Subject 3, personal communication, 21 May 2014) mentioned trust as being a very important value. He mentioned professionalism as also being an important value that he put emphasis on. He noted that:

The other side of trust is reliability, which I would say is the upstream of trust, the importance of being able to trust people. The other value is professionalism in the way that people are both reliable and know their profession; that they work professionally and not amateurishly. These are the two main values that I'm looking at both in my own work and how contractors conduct their work for our company's projects. I also stress the importance of human kindness or love for one's neighbor; drawing out the best in my coworkers. I consider it one of my strengths in project management to see other people's strengths and help them cultivate it. I try to work around people's weaknesses and not to focus on them but to be aware of them.

As for competences that could benefit the project manager, the interviewee mentioned that something he saw as a weakness at consulting firms working for his company, is that they lack internal project management:

Therefore, I place a great deal of emphasis on having an overview and knowledge of how and who will manage the internal work so that it doesn't get chaotic. Competence in project management and a well-defined scope of work so that each and every one take on their roles. This has sometimes been lacking but I'm looking at improvement where this is concerned. Those who take on big projects need to have a solid foundation in project management. I have focused on improving myself in communication skills. Project management is mostly about communicating with other people and entrusting them with work or make sure they commit to their obligations. Good communication skills help to create a positive atmosphere.

Concerning attitudes that are undesirable for project managers, the subject noted that:

Being closed and keeping information to oneself so that flow of information is non-transparent is undesirable. That is a dangerous attitude to have. I think people should not jump to conclusions, and I believe it is dangerous to be hot-headed and quick-tempered in project

management. It is important to keep calm and undesirable to be easily angered. Worst of all attitudes is some kind of dishonesty, that will in all cases undermine the person. If a person is not straight-forward and honest, it will always undermine the person where project management is concerned. There are of course other attitudes that are undesirable but I think dishonesty is at the top of that list.

When probing into if the subject's religious background played a role in project management, it was revealed that the interviewee believed in love for one's neighbour, and that it helped us to possess that quality. He is spiritually seeking and believes in a supreme being without knowing exactly what that is. He is a member of a personal development organisation and practises a spiritual practice that he believes helps him to avoid stagnation.

The reason for applying for a Level B certification was a personal choice to self-reflect on his knowledge of project management. He used it as an opportunity to find out if he had weaknesses in his knowledge of project management:

The certification was kind of like a measurement that pointed out where I needed to improve. So going through the process of obtaining the certification was a learning experience no less precious than having the certification as a stamp. It helped me to go over my own knowledge and to realise if there were any weaknesses in my knowledge of project management that needed improving. So when it comes down to it, the main reason was to see where I stood from a knowledge point of view and if there were any particular weaknesses that needed improving, as well as the certification being a personal quality stamp.

Subject 4

When asked what were the main values that a project manager should possess, the subject (subject 4, personal communication, 22 May 2014) answered good organisational skills, honesty and steadfastness/determination:

You need to be true to yourself and sometimes you might need to swim against the stream. During such times you need to maintain your composure and stick to the project. You need to be able to have thick skin and come to terms with the fact that everybody doesn't agree all the time. That is why it is so important to be true to yourself when you start out with the project and stick to the project goals without being rude. It is important to be honest and that is linked to communication when working with people. You are trying to lead a project team through a certain project and its processes, and during that period it is very important that everybody is straight-forward. Good flow of information is also very important and certain things are not

being hidden from certain stakeholders or interested parties. It is important to keep everything on the surface. What is the goal, where are we going and how are we going to go about it? Everybody needs to be true to themselves. You can sometimes have challenging individuals in your team, that's just how it is. In such cases you also need to be honest about what is delaying the project and why. It needs to be dealt with, but that can often be very challenging, it is usually the most challenging from my own personal experience. People are different. You also need to learn to be like a fish that sometimes swims in between the challenges. But where honesty is concerned, it is important that everything is on the surface, and that everybody knows what we're dealing with, why, how long it's going to take and when it's supposed to be finished. But it mostly comes down to organisation skills, to be able to have the project under control. I would say these are the most important values.

The most important competence mentioned by the subject was organisational skills, a repeat from the first question:

It is such an important competence and not possible to continue with the project if you are not organised yourself. That is the competence I feel people need to possess. You also need to be a people person and want to work in a team with other people. You need to be able to communicate with people and have good communication skills. I would say good organisational skills and good communication skills. Like I mentioned before, you need to be able to deal with challenging issues, and you need to be able to do that without being a clown. You also need to have a good overview. It is good to have good organisational skills but you need to be able to see the big picture. Sometimes you are working in big projects and you are only dealing with a small part of it. At the same time, it is important to be able to see the big picture and link your part to it, and not just see your part only. So you need a good overview. So organisational skills, communication skills and overview. These are the three competences I would mention. It is not scientific, I haven't read a lot about these things so I don't know if this is the case. I never learned project management at university but I've been working as a project manager dealing with big projects. So I'm more speaking from experience. So this is just my experience which I consider very important.

When asked about attitudes that the project manager should avoid, the subject mentioned the opposite of before mentioned values and competences; the attitude of being unorganised, shortsighted or not having an overview, and lacking in communication skills. She mentioned:

Somebody that is a loner, who is not good at leading or taking care of a team; not good at cooperation. Somebody that hides behind the computer screen and prefers to send e-mails

instead of having proper meetings. You need to be able to find the right balance. The human factor must not be neglected, to meet up with people. You can only take electronic communication so far, but then it reaches the point where you just need to meet up. That is important and can be a test of character. You cannot be a good project manager without being good in human communication as they are always working with people and groups that vary in size. Lacking in communication skills is polluting.

The subject did not have a religious background that played a particular role in her work of project management.

The reason for applying for a Level B certification was that the subject used to work as a project manager and was encouraged by her workplace to apply:

It was part of the organisation's quality system to have qualified project managers. Since I had worked for a long period dealing with big projects, I decided to go through the process of applying for the certification. In order to pass the certification, it was required for applicants to take an exam and hand in a report concerning the projects that I had been leading. But the motivation came more from my employer than myself. But a few years ago, I had to apply for certification renewal and this time, it was my own decision and not my employer's decision since I was working independently for a different company at that time. At that time I applied by myself for the certification's renewal and I will probably do it again in the future. In order to renew, you need to be able to show proof that you've been dealing with big projects for a certain period of time, and I think that is an advantage. It gives more weight to the certification. The term 'project manager' became misused and suddenly everybody was called a 'project manager'. There is more understanding now for those who are certified and have some experience to back up their 'project manager' title. Anybody cannot just suddenly add this title to their name, just because they feel like it. That is the reason I applied for it in the first place.

Subject 5

The fifth subject (subject 5, personal communication, 22 May 2014) noted practicality, vision and honesty as values that he used in his work:

The greatest value, wherever you are is honesty; it helps you enormously. It is easy to say honesty and nobody will object to the fact that it is good to be honest, but being honest isn't always easy or comfortable. For example, if I feel like your delivery of work is low quality, it's easier for me to just ignore it and not say much. If I'm going to be honest towards myself and my project that I'm managing, and towards the contractor or whoever is working for me, I'll

tell you exactly how I feel and I won't hold back. So honesty can be both about praising people and also telling them off about their negative traits where work is concerned. So honesty is a fundamental value that will help you wherever you are. Practicality and vision are values that play a bigger role in daily management or concerning long-term investment decisions. Vision in project management can mean visualising the finalised contract and how the project will be accomplished from start to end, and how it will deliver. Practicality is about doing things in a practical and economic manner. So these are the values that I'm using today.

Concerning competences that benefit the project manager, the subject mentioned communication skills as being number one, two and three:

It is the beginning and the end of everything. If you cannot communicate, then nothing works, doesn't matter what it is. Well, you can be some kind of designer in a corner, but in project management it's all about communication. It is the key in everything so in my opinion, it's the most important issue. Another important competence is general technical knowledge of project management. But you don't need to have technical expertise on canals even if you order an excavator to dig one. You need to have good, solid knowledge of project management, how it works, and all the factors involved. So communication and project management knowledge. To have the competence of being able to put the knowledge to good use. You might be full of knowledge and know everything but still unable to deliver in praxis. The knowledge is the foundation to the competence, but you need to have the competence to use the knowledge.

As for the project manager's undesirable attitudes, the interviewee mentioned the mirror of before mentioned points:

If communication is not OK and you lack communication skills, it is highly likely that things will go up the Khyber Pass. I thought about impatience, but it can be good up to a certain point. It's not good to be too patient because then nothing ever happens. But excessive impatience messes up the project and can affect the project's quality. Especially if people want to rush on with the project execution or project launch when the project is still only half-finished. Lack of time or lack of preparation if you are not familiar with the project you're taking on. If you don't give yourself time to prepare for the project and know what is demanded of you, or you're simply not given enough time, you're simply juggling too many balls at the same time, it will adversely affect the work you're doing. So being well prepared or lack thereof, is a big issue. Organisation skills is another important factor, but you can be very adept at organising but still

not have enough time to properly prepare yourself if you're dealing with twenty projects but only have time for ten. Lack of organisation skills is a bigger issue.

The subject had been thinking about applying for the Level B certification for several years and saw it as an opportunity. He mentioned that the certification was becoming more of a measurement in Iceland although not as recognised as abroad. In light of his knowledge and experience, he felt like he was on home turf when applying. He believed the certification could be useful in international projects and that the certification would receive increasing recognition in Iceland and then it would be useful to have the certification up one's sleeve:

I could have gone for the Level C certification a year or two earlier. Considering my experience and knowledge, I felt like it wasn't that enticing and that it wouldn't add anything. So I waited for about two years until my portfolio was strong enough to apply for the Level B certification. I felt that was more interesting because the Level B certification adds more than the C one. I might as well have presented my CV and the C certification wouldn't have added much to it. The B one is a much more powerful stamp.

4.2 Key Points

Where values are concerned, the ones that were most frequent were communication, honesty, trust, reliability, and organisational skills. Out of these, communication skills were by far the most frequent, followed by honesty. Communication skills and organisational skills overlapped between values and competences and were mentioned in both categories. Other values that came up included practicality, courage, love for one's neighbour, and professionalism.

As for the successful project manager's main competences, the ones that were most frequently mentioned were communication skills, organisational skills, flexibility, being able to see the big picture, and technical knowledge/competence.

The main attitude that the project manager should avoid and that was mentioned by several of the interviewees is arrogance. Another attitude that was mentioned a few times was dishonesty. Careless or inattentive attitude as well as lack of communication skills were mentioned by two of the subjects. Other attitudes included being closed and keeping information to oneself, being hot-headed, unorganised, impatient and practising bad time management.

Through the interviews, it was clear that religion did not play a particularly important role in the subjects' work as project managers. Rather, most of the subjects had a general belief in human goodness and service to others.

The main reasons for applying for the B-certification was to get a personal stamp and recognition as a project manager, in a society where the term 'project manager' is used rather loosely and there is no professional or academic requirement for taking on that title. Other reasons included using it as an opportunity for self-reflection and seeing where they stood as project managers.

4.3 Comparison to Literature Review

We can see both similarities and differences in the subjects' responses and the literature review. In both, there is an underlying theme of communication skills being the most important aspect of the project manager's work, followed by its related value honesty and then organisational skills. Other qualities that were mentioned in both, included technical competence/knowledge, seeing the big picture, courage, flexibility and professionalism. There were a few values and competences that were mentioned in the interviews that were not mentioned in the literature review and vice versa. For example, in the literature, reflection, drive, ambition, humility, charisma, and motivation were all considered important for the project manager, although none of these were directly mentioned in the interviews. Also, love for one's neighbour was mentioned by one of the interviewees but was not found in the literature. The possible reason why some of the values and competences were not mentioned in the interviews, is that generally the subjects mentioned only three of the values and competences that they considered to be most important, thereby limiting the scope and therefore not being able to match the number of qualities and competences mentioned in the literature review.

It could be noticed that the literature did not cover much about undesirable attitudes or behaviours, although the *ICB 3.0* does include lists of adequate behaviours and then behaviours needing improvement. It is clear that the lion's share of the literature focuses on the project manager's positive attributes and not the undesirable ones. Hence, it was quite enlightening to include undesirable attitudes in the interviews.

4.4 The Research Question

This brings the thesis to answering the research question: "What qualities define the IPMA Level B certified Icelandic project managers?" From all the interviews and research done, it can be argued that in short, the main qualities that define the IPMA Level B certified Icelandic project managers are possessing good communication and organisational skills, as well as being honest. That would be the qualities and theme that describe and define them, but at the same time they all have individual qualities that define them and set them apart from each other. For the most part, the excellent Icelandic project managers possess most of the main qualities mentioned in the literature review and are according to that, not that different from project managers in other countries.

4.5 Implementation and Exploitation

Now that research has been done on the qualities of the IPMA Level B certified Icelandic project managers, which as was argued before could be considered excellent project managers, it would be ideal if other Icelandic project managers would look at those results and learn from them. In other words, the excellent Icelandic project managers and the qualities they possess could be looked upon as something considered as a standard for other project managers to strive towards. In that instance, the ordinary Icelandic project managers could first of all look at the main qualities that define the excellent Icelandic project managers, that is, excellent communication and organisational skills, and honesty, and strive to make them their own qualities. First and foremost, it would be best to focus on these three qualities and once mastered to a certain extent, choose other qualities mentioned in the interviews and also make them a part of themselves.

Furthermore, it could significantly benefit Icelandic project managers to look at the undesirable attitudes mentioned and avoid them at all costs. That would include avoiding arrogance, dishonesty and carelessness. Following these guidelines could dramatically benefit the Icelandic project managers and the projects they manage. It is a well-known fact that in general, Icelandic projects run well over budget, which is due to various factors, in some cases including poor project management. However, striving to develop excellent project managers could potentially have a greatly positive impact on projects and lower project costs. That is the development the author would like to see.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The thesis has taken us through success project management literature and focused on the main qualities that define the successful project manager. We have gone through the research involved in finding out: “What qualities define the IPMA Level B certified Icelandic project managers?” The results of the research are for the most part in line with the project management literature used in this thesis, where both state the same qualities as being highly important. It leads to the conclusion that chiefly, excellent Icelandic project managers have similar qualities as those generally described in the literature review and that the three main qualities that describe them are excellent communication and organisational skills, as well as honesty.

Although the excellent Icelandic project managers are similar to those described in the literature, there is a possibility that further investigation could lead to a clearer definition of the qualities that define the excellent Icelandic project managers. In order to dig deeper into the issue, longer interviews with a larger number of subjects would needed to be undertaken. Another interesting topic to research would be to compare such a larger study conducted in Iceland with similar studies conducted abroad, such as in the United States, UK, Germany or other countries. Then to investigate the similarities and differences for the excellent project managers between those countries. Those findings could strengthen and improve what this thesis has elaborated on, but the magnitude of such a study is beyond the scope of this thesis.

It is the author’s wish that this thesis will be a contributing factor, however big or small, to project management success in Iceland and beyond.

6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author gratefully acknowledges the support and guidance provided by the thesis' advisor, Dr Haukur Ingi Jónasson. Without his precious supervision and input, this thesis would not have come to be. The author also offers his deepest gratitude to his partner, Laura Rahaman, for her continued support and patience during the course of the thesis and the MPM studies. Gratitude goes to the author's father, Ingólfur Eyfells, who graciously proofread the thesis and gave valuable feedback and encouragement. The author thanks the five subjects for taking their time to participate in the study, for without their participation, it could not have been conducted. Finally, the author extends his gratitude to his mother, Hrafnhildur Eyfells, his family and friends for their support.

7. REFERENCES

- Association for Project Management (2006). *APM Body of Knowledge 5th.edition*. UK: Association for Project Management.
- Bentley, C. (2002). *PRINCE2: A Practical Handbook 2nd. edition*. GB: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Bentley, C. (2010). *PRINCE2 Revealed Second Edition*. GB: Routledge.
- Briner, W., Hastings, C. & Geddes, M. (1996). *Project Leadership 2nd edition*. Aldershot, Brookfield: Gower.
- Caupin, G., Knoepfel, H., Pannenbacker, K., Pérez-Polo, F., Seabury, C., & Koch, G. (Eds.). (n.d.). ICB - IPMA Competence Baseline Version 3.0. Retrieved from: <http://www.ipma.ch/assets/ICB3.pdf>
- Creswell, J.W. (1998). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*. USA: SAGE.
- Gunnarsdóttir, A.H. & Ingason, Þ.I. (2007). *Afburðarárangur*. Reykjavik: Háskólaútgáfan.
- Inamori, I. (2010). *A Compass to Fulfillment: Passion and Spirituality in Life and Business*. US: McGraw-Hill.
- International Project Management Association. *IPMA Level B*. Retrieved 28 November 2014 from: <http://ipma.ch/certification/certify-individuals/ipma-level-b/>
- Kerzner, H. (2009). *Project Management: A Systems Approach to Planning, Scheduling and Controlling 10th. edition*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.
- Müller, R. & Turner, J.R. (2010). *Project-Oriented Leadership*. Aldershot, Brookfield: Gower.
- Peters, T. & Waterman Jr., R.H. (1982). *In Search of Excellence: Lessons from America's Best-Run Companies*. NY: Harper & Row.
- Project Management Association of Iceland. Retrieved 11 August 2014 from: <http://www.vsf.is/vottun/vottadir-verkefnastjorar/b-stig/>
- Project Management Institute (2013). *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBok Guide) Fifth Edition*. Pennsylvania: Project Management Institute.
- Rosenzweig, P. (2009). *The Halo Effect ...and the Eight Other Business Delusions That Deceive Managers*. NY: Free Press.

Sigurðardóttir, Ó. (2013). *Bringing Out the Best: Validating the ICB-3 Behavioural Competence Assessment Survey for the Maturation of the Project Management Profession*. MPM thesis. Reykjavik: Reykjavik University.