MANAGING IT PROJECTS: EXPLORING THE LEADERSHIP APPROACH IN VIRTUAL PROJECT ENVIRONMENTS
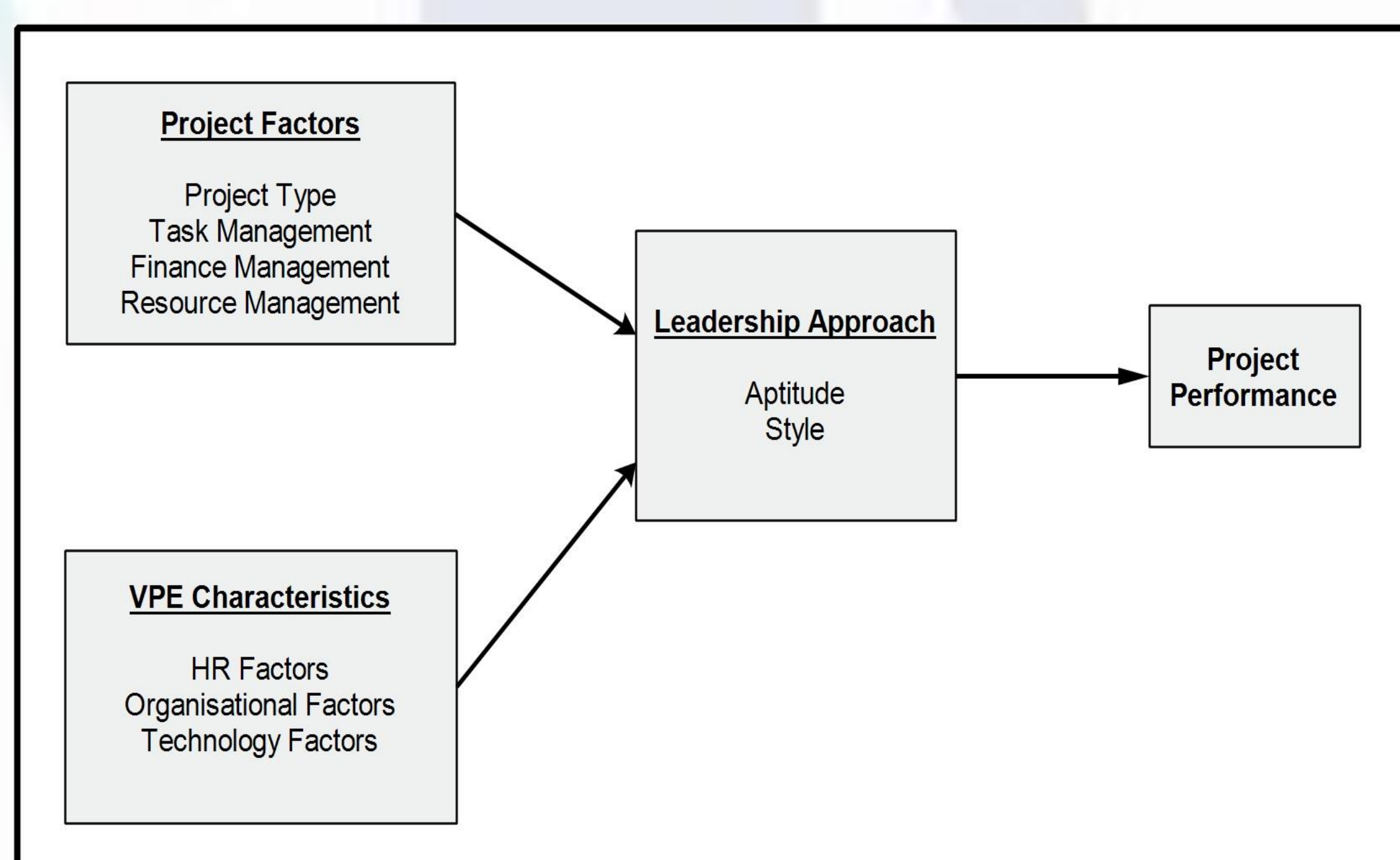
INTRODUCTION

- **Aim: To identify the leadership approach for managing VPEs**
- Research Question:
  - **'How a leadership approach impacts on project performance?'**
- **Research Objectives**
  - To identify the factors that influence leadership approach
  - To analyse the impact of leadership approach on VPEs
  - To discuss an appropriate leadership approach for managing VPEs
- **Managing VPEs effectively depends on**
  - Leadership Aptitude (Experience, Talent or Skills)
  - Leadership Approach (Attitude, behaviour or style)
- **Challenges and Issues in VPEs**
  - Location, culture, working practises, time shift, communication, diversity

LITERATURE

Leadership approach can be elaborated by both theories and styles

- **Leadership Theories**
  - Trait – Leaders are born, not made
  - Contingency – No best way to manage organisation or process; dependent upon settings or situation
  - Behavioural – Leader's behaviour predict leadership influence in terms of either he is Task oriented or People Oriented
- **Leadership Styles**
  - Transactional Style & Transformational Style
  - Autocratic Style & Democratic Style
  - Charismatic Style & Situational Style
- **Leadership approach has positive and negative impacts**
  - Positive Factors: Motivation of Team, performance, meeting deadlines, understanding of project scope etc
  - Negative Factors: Isolation of team, lag behind schedule, rise to conflicts, quality issues etc

RESEARCH DESIGN

- **Sampling**
  - Purposive Sampling
- **Research Methodology**
  - Qualitative Research Methods: Rich and Rigorous information; helps to reach close to the reality
  - Thematic Analysis: To identify, analyse and report events or emerging concepts within the data.
- **Unit of Analysis**
  - Fundamentals, events, actions or communal life that are under consideration
  - For this study, the unit of analysis is to analyse the behaviour, style or approach of leaders' in VPEs

DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS

- **Data Collection**
  - 15 Interviews, Semi-Structure Style, Open Ended Questions
  - Empirical Evidence used from PhD research
  - Interviews conducted in UK, Canada, Pakistan, Germany, UAE, Kuwait
- **Data Analysis**
  - Investigating Leadership style & aptitude (Analysis of responses against Leadership & VPEs Literature)
  - Recognising Emerging themes (In terms of actions) & identify which response tends to either styles of leadership
  - Ideas represented in the form of Conceptual Model

CONCEPTUAL MODEL

Project Factors
Project Type
Task Management
Finance Management
Resource Management

Leadership Approach
Aptitude
Style

Project Performance

VPE Characteristics
HR Factors
Organisational Factors
Technology Factors

DISCUSSION

- **Leadership approach in VPEs can be described by**
  - **Aptitude and Leadership Style that is dependent upon**
    - **Project Factors:** Project type, Task, Resource & Finance Management
    - **VPE Characteristics:** HR, Organisational & Technology Factors
  - Aptitude includes the leadership ability, experience or capacity to respond to certain event
- Appropriate Leadership styles identified for VPE can be
  - **Transactional:** performance based, hiring/firing individuals, progress monitoring, Less interaction, focus on outcome, use of power and authority on decisions, track team members, respond to issues straight away etc
  - **Transformational:** Promote team formation, develop a support system, promote consensus on decisions, promote new ideas to meet objectives, motivation, offering future rewards or incentives, etc

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