In Chapter 2 of the Handbook, we consider the management of construction projects and different theories of project management. Here we identify three academic journal papers from the International Journal of Project Management which continue and contribute to the debate.

In Building theories of project management: past research, questions for the future, Jonas Soderlund discusses emerging perspectives in project management. He argues that Project management has long been considered as an academic field for planning-oriented techniques and, in many respects, an application of engineering science and optimization theory. Much research has also been devoted to the search for the generic factors of project success. Project management has, however, in the last decade received wider interest from other academic disciplines. As the field rapidly expands, the need for an internal discussion and debate about project management research increases. Project management and project organization is a complex subject and, we argue, is usefully examined from several perspectives. The paper presents a number of questions that project research to a greater extent should acknowledge. The questions concern issues such as why project organizations exist, how they behave and why they differ. The principal argument is that too much effort has been dedicated to clarifying the reasons of project success and failure, while downplaying a number of important research questions that need to be discussed in order to further the knowledge about project management.

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In Analyzing project management research: Perspectives from top management journals, Young Hoon Kwak and Frank T. Anbari examine project management
research from the perspective of its relationship to allied disciplines in the management field and provide a view of the progress of project management as a research-based academic discipline. This study, which is partially funded by the Project Management Institute, specifically investigates project management research in allied disciplines from 18 top management and business journal publications and categorizes it into eight allied disciplines. The evolution and trends of project management research are analyzed by exploring, identifying, and classifying management journal articles on project management in the allied disciplines. The analysis of project management research in the allied disciplines reveals an explosion of popularity and strong interest in project management research. The ranking of occurrences of the eight allied disciplines from most to the least appeared subjects over the last 50 years are (1) Strategy/Portfolio Management; (2) Operations Research/Decision Sciences; (3) Organizational Behavior/Human Resources Management; (4) Information Technology/Information Systems; (5) Technology Applications/Innovation; (6) Performance Management/Earned Value Management; (7) Engineering and Construction; and (8) Quality Management/Six Sigma. Result of this study help us better understand the evolution of project management as a field of practice and an academic discipline, and allow us to provide suggestions for future project management research opportunities.


In The changing paradigms of project management, Julien Pollack examines the academic literature on Project Management in relation to the hard and soft paradigms, two broad tendencies for thought and action that have had considerable impact on the development of a variety of comparable fields. A critical reading of the literature confirms strong links between the hard paradigm and Project Management. However, it is also demonstrated that undercurrents exist in the literature, which suggest a growing acceptance of the soft paradigm. Models of the field are presented through which the influence of these paradigms on the field can be understood, and a way is suggested in which further developments in the use of the soft paradigm in Project Management could be progressed.