

Journal of Entrepreneurship & Project Management

ISSN Online: 2616-8464



Effect of Staff Competence on Project Implementation of Government Funded Projects in USA

Dest Pichlak Hutchinson, Aaronson Gavin Hogan & Turner Grzesik Newsom

ISSN: 2616-8464

Effect of Staff Competence on Project Implementation of Government Funded Projects in USA

¹*Dest Pichlak Hutchinson, ²Aaronson Gavin Hogan & ³Turner Grzesik Newsom

¹*Postgraduate Student, Duke University

^{2,3}Lecturers, Duke University

*Email of the corresponding author: desthutchinsonpichlak@gmail.com

How to cite this article: Hutchinson, D. P., Hogan, A. G., & Newsom, T. G. (2022). Effect of Staff Competence on Project Implementation of Government Funded Projects in USA. *Journal of Entrepreneurship & Project Management*, 6(6), 13-21. <https://doi.org/10.53819/81018102t50118>

Abstract

Staff competence is fundamental in ensuring the performance of a particular project. Competency among staff is expected to induce high-performance project results and optimistic business outcomes. Competencies such as management skills lead to the enhancement of the likelihood of project success. Thus, the study examined the effect of staff competence on project implementation of government-funded projects in the USA. The study was literature based. The study discovered that staff competence has a significant impact on project implementation. Staff competence includes the combination of observable and measurable knowledge, skills, abilities and personal attributes that contribute to enhanced employee performance and ultimately result in organizational success. To understand competencies, it is important to define the various components of competencies. Employee competencies are a list of skills and behaviors that are specific and well-defined and are used to lay out an organization's performance. Identifying the level of competence of project supervisors is required to promote effective project implementation. The study concluded that staff competence influences the effective implementation of projects. The study recommended that much consideration be implemented to support staff competency. Organizations need to set aside resources that can be used for the capacity building of the employees. The organization's employees should be tested to examine their competency level. Creating a project group with the requisite competencies to conduct their functions is important. There is a need for regular staff training to improve the competency needed in the implementation of projects. The workers should have the required skills to perform the activities adequately and attain the objectives. Creating a project group with the requisite competencies to conduct project implementation functions is necessary.

Keywords: *Staff competence, project implementation, USA*

<https://doi.org/10.53819/81018102t50118>

1.0 Introduction

Globally, project implementation needs qualified staff. Staff competencies require sufficient skills (Guo & Kapucu, 2019). Any government project has to acquire and use its resources properly. It is therefore important that every government project carry out training as one of the primary steps to enhance staff competency. Even though few project managers have the competencies to manage various projects, competent managers should align sufficient resources to assist their employees in overcoming different risks that may come along (Esther & Savhira, 2019). In the United States of America, government project managers are responsible for gathering all risks from the employed workers and leading the employees in a risk analysis exercise to establish which risks are likely to affect the project negatively.

Plummer and DarConte (2021) argued that effective project implementation is required for project success. A project is expressed as an undertaking that takes in inputs and gives out results that a group requires of individuals or people within a certain period. Projects have a clear life cycle completed when they have attained the intended goals, signifying their end. A project is largely thought to be effectively performed in the manner intended, with enough budget allocation and achieves each of the goals initially set for it and is acknowledged and used by the individuals for whom it was supposed to benefit (Stjerne, Söderlund & Minbaeva, 2019). The effectiveness and efficiency of projects is depended on appropriate implementation. Competence is expressed as the ability or capability that the intent appears like a set of behavior (Buheji & Buheji, 2020). It is possible to forecast the effectiveness of the scenario by comprehending what behavior and intention are relevant. It is a key indicator of performance in a business environment or firm. Hence, competence is fundamental in enhancing the performance of the project. The abilities or capabilities of human resources in a firm are value, vision, knowledge, occupation, role responsibility, and the job needed to perform (Jiméneza, Fasci & Valdez, 2019).

Bals, Schulze, Kelly and Stek (2019) reported that staff competence might include management, organizational and administrative competence. Leading is creating a common culture and values, communicating objectives to human resources in the entire business and instilling the stated human resources with the desire to perform highly. These competencies, such as management skills and behavior, enhance the likelihood of project success in a firm. Competency among staff is expected to induce high-performance project results and optimistic business outcomes (Zuo, Zhao, Nguyen, Ma & Gao, 2018). When the jobs and activities are described, jobs ought to be developed and assigned to workers within the firm or project setting. Plummer and DarConte (2021) established that staff competence is fundamental in ensuring the performance of a particular project. Competency among staff is expected to induce high-performance project results and optimistic business outcomes. Competencies such as management skills lead to the enhancement of the likelihood of project success. Staff competence includes the combination of observable and measurable knowledge, skills, abilities and personal attributes that contribute to enhanced employee performance and ultimately result in organizational success. To understand competencies, it is important to define the various components of competencies. Employee competencies are a list of skills and behaviors that are specific and well-defined and are used to lay out an organization's performance. Identifying the level of competence of project supervisors is required to promote effective project implementation.

<https://doi.org/10.53819/81018102t50118>

Shamim (2022) noted that the particular competencies might additionally include strong vision and imagination competencies, quality administration skills, safety consciousness, risk and conflict administration abilities, management skills, experience, coordination, communication skills, organizational frameworks, control mechanisms of subcontractors' work, and the overall supervisory actions in planning, organizing, leading and controlling. Project managers with a strong vision and creativity competencies considerably affect preparation for the future to contribute to the project implementation (de Oliveira & Rabechini Jr, 2019). Their level of staff competence has a significant effect on the project implementation. As a result, identifying the level of competence of project supervisors is required to promote effective project implementation.

A project's staff must have the skills that will enable them to operate effectively, like when working on different projects. Inadequately trained staff might not have the required knowledge and skills, contributing to the project's failure (Thesing, Feldmann & Burchardt, 2021). The project's success relies on the competency of individuals using the new process and systems. Implementation of the project is an intricate process and calls for the improvement and restructuring of government frameworks (Glyptis, Christofi, Vrontis, Del Giudice, Dimitriou & Michael, 2020). The process requires electronic systems for demand estimation, budget plans, sourcing, purchasing and supply monitoring. Procuring in a project is associated with enhanced performance, reduced transactional costs, low corruption cases and improved control and tracking of the public procurement process.

2.0 Literature Review

Rana and Shuja (2022) reported that effective project implementation is required for project success. The implementation of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Projects is of many issues internationally. Nevertheless, In the Dharavi slums, most water, sanitation and hygiene projects have not been executed as called for. A large number of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene is delayed or incomplete. This is an obstacle to realizing one of the 2040 Sustainable Development Goals pillars, which is accessibility to clean water and sanitation. The role of the research was to check out the components of effective execution of water, sanitation and hygiene projects in India: the study case of Dharavi Slums. Although 2040 is not very far, these goals are not yet accomplished to the contentment of the target beneficiaries. They are also not sustainable to guarantee survival after the withdrawal of the project teams. The study investigates how the staff competence of project groups has influenced the effective implementation of these projects to ensure sustainability and beneficiary contentment. Results were obtained from a population of 550, who were sampled using a stratified random sampling strategy to get a sample of 300 participants. The results revealed that staff competence positively affected the execution of the projects. Hence, the study concludes that it is essential to employ competent staff when executing technical like the WASH.

Grzesik and Piwowar-Sutlej (2018) researched the impact of staff competence on project implementation in Australia. According to these objectives, one hypothesis was created and a pragmatic paradigm was taken to sustain a mixed-approach study layout. In particular, the research used both cross-sectional and correlation designs. The purposive sampling method was used to choose the projects that were researched. The population included all the project managers who led the project groups in the ongoing projects in the energy segment. Particularly, the research concentrated on transmission, generation, nuclear, and distribution projects. Seventy ongoing projects were picked. Out of these, 20 were utilized in the pretest phase. Hence, 50 projects were

<https://doi.org/10.53819/81018102t50118>

selected for the research. A Survey consisting of closed and open-ended questionnaires taking the layout of 5 points Likert scale range was utilized to get information from project managers. SPSS version 20 was used to carry out regression evaluation, and its outcomes were utilized to figure out coefficients of multiple regression models, test hypotheses, review the reliability of approximated partnership and determine sample regression design. The study likewise discovered that staff skills positively impact project implementation in the power segment in Australia. The research notes the crucial elements of staff competence that would notify effective project execution. The research varied from other research by empirically demonstrating how detailed integration of competent personnel may influence project implementation and additionally uses the opportunity of contributing to transforming the method projects are planned, designed and implemented. The research advises that transactional and transformational management styles should be utilized in managing projects with a better focus on the transformational management style. It also promotes the creation of clear communication plans with simple and joint networks for efficient communication. Additionally, there ought to be responses systems, regular communication and free accessibility to information. Communication methods ought to be chosen according to the target people. The study additionally advices proper stakeholder management in projects. It advises stakeholder engagement at each phase of the project life cycle. Moreover, it recommends punctual and ample compensation of stakeholders, prompt conclusion of projects, innovativeness and proper remedy of stakeholder problems. On the organizational environment, the research encourages on the need for enhancement on administration practices, provision of the suitable materials, and prompt funding. It also advises that the problems in the physical environment need to be taken care of besides providing staff with the appropriate skills.

Podgórska and Pichlak (2019) performed research to examine the association between emotional, managerial, and intellectual competence of staff member that refer the LDQ (Leadership Development Questionnaire) and influence on project execution. Huge and complex projects are being performed in a vibrant business environment. The requirement for capacities and supervisory aspects of participants of the project for business performance rises. Questionnaires were carried out on 80 project management professionals in different projects from Kuwait. The structural equation modeling approach was executed to determine the influence of competence of personnel on project execution. The outcomes provided empirical assistance for the effect of personnel' competencies on project implementation. Furthermore, there is no disparity in the assumption of the influence of personnel' competencies on project implementation, relying on their functions, like project manager and team member. In the study, the advantages of the competence of staff members according to the project supervisor were presented. The results of this research recommend the strategic direction of the members at this point when organization innovation is required.

Kozłowska and Lubina (2021) conducted study to examine the impact of project staff member competency on the execution of farming projects in Israel. Some farming projects in Israel are still encountering the issues of incompetent staff, lack of supervisory skills and a lot of individuals working in those projects do not have the required expertise. The research used descriptive study design to get results expected from this research. Hence, the study layout concentrated on qualitative method, also quantitative technique was utilized to develop partnership in between variables utilizing inferential data. The targeted population was 200 respondents and a sample size of 90 was chosen. The research utilized descriptive research. The researcher utilized random

<https://doi.org/10.53819/81018102t50118>

sampling strategy as they enable the researcher to choose participants who provided researcher with the data required for the research. Questionnaires were utilized to gather information. Prior to evaluating the data, first mistakes were recognized and eliminated as far as this was promptly impact administering surveys to defend against omission. SPSS was used to analyze data. Knowledge, employee skills and training impact execution of farming project. The research analyzed the impact of project worker competence on the execution of farming projects in Israel. It also shows that the project implementation is substantially figured out by knowledge, worker skills and training. The research concluded that several workers employed in this project were properly experienced in project implementation. The researcher suggested that knowledge, worker skills and training should be sufficient and affect the project execution. It is recommended that the crafters of the budget should attend to the needs of farming projects' implementation.

A study by Nani and Ali (2020) noted that in the current competitive and dynamic business environment, there has been a greater acknowledgment of the need for public sector institutions to harness innovative technologies to improve performance and cost savings. In Thailand, the government brought in an electronic procurement system to bring openness and accountability to the usage of public cash. Despite these efforts by the national government and the advantages of e-procurement, the system has not been implemented by the regional governments. The research, as a result, evaluated the impact of worker competence on the implementation of e-procurement by regional governments in Thailand. A descriptive study layout was utilized and the target population was the six regions in Thailand. A sample of 3 regions was utilized in the research. The sample was chosen utilizing a simple random sampling strategy. A questionnaire was utilized to gather data from the sampled population. To determine the questionnaire's validity and reliability, pretesting of the study tools was performed. To develop the validity of the study tools, content credibility was utilized, while the internal consistency approach was utilized to determine the reliability. The information gathered was examined utilizing SPSS. The data was assessed via descriptive data. The research discovered that worker competence has a considerable favorable effect on implementing e-procurement in the regions. The regional management needs to train employees on using e-procurement instruments to improve the execution of e-procurement. The institutions ought also to use competent workers and provide them with the electronic procurement manual to direct on e-procurement processes and help implement e-procurement.

Plummer and DarConte (2021) established that staff competence is fundamental in ensuring the performance of a particular project. Competency among staff is expected to induce high-performance project results and optimistic business outcomes. Competencies such as management skills lead to the enhancement of the likelihood of project success. Staff competence includes the combination of observable and measurable knowledge, skills, abilities and personal attributes that contribute to enhanced employee performance and ultimately result in organizational success. To understand competencies, it is important to define the various components of competencies. Employee competencies are a list of skills and behaviors that are specific and well-defined and are used to lay out an organization's performance. Identifying the level of competence of project supervisors is required to promote effective project implementation. The study concluded that staff competence influences the effective implementation of projects. The study recommended that much consideration be implemented to support staff competency. Organizations need to set aside resources that can be used for the capacity building of the employees. The organization's employees should be tested to examine their competency level. Creating a project group with the

<https://doi.org/10.53819/81018102t50118>

requisite competencies to conduct their functions is important. There is a need for regular staff training to improve the competency needed in the implementation of projects. The workers should have the required skills to perform the activities adequately and attain the objectives. Creating a project group with the requisite competencies to conduct project implementation functions is necessary.

Yucel and Ayvaz (2019) performed a study to evaluate the effect of staff competency on the performance of procurement management units in public sectors in Turkey. Vocational Education and Training Authority (VETA) Head Office was used as a case study. The research assessed the experienced employees, skilled personnel and training of the procurement team on the performance of procurement function at VETA head office in Ankara. The research utilized a case study design where a sample of 76 participants was chosen using Slovin's formula from the population of 120 workers. Primary and secondary data were gathered using surveys, interviews and documentaries. Qualitative data were evaluated utilizing cases and examples, while quantitative information was evaluated and presented in tables, graphs, percentages and frequency with the help of SPSS version 20. The findings revealed 89.52% of the respondents agreed that experienced and competent procurement employees influenced procurement performance, but 3.20% disagreed. Also, 79.50% of the participants concurred that VETA recruits an experienced and competent procurement team; however, 20.2% of the participants were neutral. 88.20% of the participants agreed that training staff members boost competency level, but 3.25% disagreed. The research concluded that the experience, expertise and training of procurement personnel substantially impact the performance of the procurement function at VETA. Therefore, the performance of PMU at VETA relies on a mix of these three elements. Performance in procurement function in this research was regarded in terms of timely delivery, quality goods and service and delivery of goods in appropriate quantity. It is suggested that VETA should give training not just to PMU personnel but to various other departments like Tender Board, User department, Audit officer, etc. to improve competency amongst players. Moreover, it was suggested that VETA should employ experienced and professional staff members in the procurement department, given that competency affects performance.

3.0 Research Findings

The study discovered that staff competence has a significant impact on project implementation. Staff competence includes the combination of observable and measurable knowledge, skills, abilities and personal attributes that contribute to enhanced employee performance and ultimately result in organizational success. To understand competencies, it is important to define the various components of competencies. Employee competencies are a list of skills and behaviors that are specific and well-defined and are used to lay out an organization's performance. Identifying the level of competence of project supervisors is required to promote effective project implementation. Competency among staff is expected to induce high-performance project results and optimistic business outcomes. The project staff is required to have the skills that will enable them to operate effectively. Staff competence can include management, organizational and administrative competence. Implementing projects is an intricate process that calls for the improvement and restructuring of frameworks. Competencies additionally include strong vision and imagination competencies, quality administration skills, safety consciousness, risk and conflict administration abilities, management skills, experience, coordination, communication skills, organizational

<https://doi.org/10.53819/81018102t50118>

frameworks, control mechanisms of subcontractors' work, and the overall supervisory actions in planning, organizing, leading and controlling.

4.0 Conclusion

The study concluded that staff competence influences the effective implementation of projects. Staff competence includes the combination of observable and measurable knowledge, skills, abilities and personal attributes that contribute to enhanced employee performance and ultimately result in organizational success. To understand competencies, it is important to define the various components of competencies. Employee competencies are a list of skills and behaviors that are specific and well-defined and are used to lay out an organization's performance. Competent staff are anticipated to induce high performance and result in good project results. After the activities have been highlighted, work should be designed and given to workers within the project. The workers should have the skills to perform the activities properly and attain the objectives. Employee skills determine the project implementation. By bringing in, more training programs in the project, workers become interested in obtaining more knowledge regarding their work which in turn assists them in being promoted. Staff competence should be at the top of the mind of project initiators, given that the people aspect of the project makes sure resources are well executed. The set time schedules are complied with by reorganizing activities to fit the available skills.

5.0 Recommendations

The study recommended that much consideration be implemented to support staff competency. Organizations need to set aside resources that can be used for the capacity building of the employees. The organization's employees should be tested after some time to examine their competency level. Creating a project group with the requisite competencies to conduct their functions is important. There is a need for regular staff training to improve the competency needed in the implementation of projects. Staff should additionally be trained on the use of different project tools. Effective coaching should be conducted and the trainees should be given a chance to exercise the newly received skills after completing the training. A workforce with ideal skills should promote the participatory and sustainable implementation of projects.

REFERENCES

- Bals, L., Schulze, H., Kelly, S., & Stek, K. (2019). Purchasing and supply management (PSM) competencies: Current and future requirements. *Journal of purchasing and supply management*, 25(5), 104-119. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pursup.2019.100572>
- Buheji, M., & Buheji, A. (2020). Planning competency in the new Normal–employability competency in post-COVID-19 pandemic. *International Journal of Human Resource Studies*, 10(2), 237-251. <https://doi.org/10.5296/ijhrs.v10i2.17085>
- de Oliveira, G. F., & Rabechini Jr, R. (2019). Stakeholder management influence on trust in a project: A quantitative study. *International journal of project management*, 37(1), 131-144. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijproman.2018.11.001>
- Esthi, R. B., & Savhira, I. (2019). The influence of work training, competence and discipline of work on employee performance in PT. Lestarindo Perkasa. *Journal of Research in Business, Economics, and Education*, 1(2),19-23

<https://doi.org/10.53819/81018102t50118>

- Glyptis, L., Christofi, M., Vrontis, D., Del Giudice, M., Dimitriou, S., & Michael, P. (2020). E-Government implementation challenges in small countries: The project manager's perspective. *Technological Forecasting and social change*, 15(2), 119-128. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2019.119880>
- Grzesik, K., & Piwovar-Sulej, K. (2018). Project managers' competencies and leadership styles from the perspective of organizations functioning in Australia. *Journal of Entrepreneurship, Management and Innovation*, 14(3), 59-71. <https://doi.org/10.7341/20181432>
- Guo, X., & Kapucu, N. (2019). Examining stakeholder participation in social stability risk assessment for mega projects using network analysis. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Management*, 1(1), 1-31. <https://doi.org/10.18485/ijdrm.2019.1.1.1>
- Jiménez, M. B., Fasci, M. A., & Valdez, J. (2019). A Comparison of Management Style for Mexican Firms in Mexico and the United States. *International Journal of Business*, 14(3), 89-93
- Klein, C., DiazGranados, D., Salas, E., Le, H., Burke, C. S., Lyons, R., & Goodwin, G. F. (2020). Does team build work? *Small group research*, 40(2), 181-222. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1046496408328821>
- Kozłowska, M., & Lubina, M. (2021). The Burmese road to Israeli-style agricultural cooperative: The Namsang project, 1956–63. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 52(4), 701-725. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022463421000977>
- Nani, D. A., & Ali, S. (2020). Determinants of Effective E-Procurement System: Empirical Evidence from Thailand Local Governments. *Jurnal Dinamika Akuntansi Dan Bisnis*, 7(1), 33-50. <https://doi.org/10.24815/jdab.v7i1.15671>
- Owen, R., Priest, S., & Kotze, A. (2022). Applying behaviour analysis to team-building in outdoor learning. *Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning*, 4(2)1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14729679.2022.2127113>
- Plummer, F. B., & DarConte, F. X. (2021). Leadership, Ethics, and Project Execution: An Evidence-Based Project Success Model. Routledge.
- Podgórska, M., & Pichlak, M. (2019). Analysis of project managers' leadership competencies: project success relation: what are the competencies of polish project leaders? *International Journal of Managing Projects in Business*, 7(2), 16-26. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJMPB-08-2018-0149>
- Poth, A., Kottke, M., & Riel, A. (2020, June). Evaluation of agile team work quality. In International Conference on Agile Software Development (pp. 101-110). Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-58858-8_11
- Rana, A. G., & Shuja, A. (2022). Influence of Leadership Competencies on Transport Infrastructure Projects' Success: A Mediated Moderation through Innovative-Work-Behavior and the Project Type. *India Journal of Commerce and Social Sciences*, 16(1), 1-33.

<https://doi.org/10.53819/81018102t50118>

- Sanyal, S., & Hisam, M. W. (2018). The impact of teamwork on work performance of employees: A study of faculty members in Dhofar University. *IOSR Journal of Business and Management*, 20(3), 15-22.
- Shamim, M. I. (2022). Exploring the Success Factors of Project Management. *American Journal of Economics and Business Management*, 5(7), 64-72.
- Stjerne, I. S., Söderlund, J., & Minbaeva, D. (2019). Crossing times: Temporal boundary-spanning practices in interorganizational projects. *International Journal of Project Management*, 37(2), 347-365. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijproman.2018.09.004>
- Thesing, T., Feldmann, C., & Burchardt, M. (2021). Agile versus waterfall project management: decision model for selecting the appropriate approach to a project. *Procedia Computer Science*, 18(1), 746-756. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.procs.2021.01.227>
- Yucel, M. G., & Ayvaz, B. (2019). Causal loop analysis and improvement areas of AS 9100 aerospace quality management system implementation in Turkish aerospace and defence industry supply chain. *Int. J Sup. Chain. Mgt Vol*, 8(3), 685-694
- Zuo, J., Zhao, X., Nguyen, Q. B. M., Ma, T., & Gao, S. (2018). Soft skills of construction project management professionals and project success factors: A structural equation model. *Engineering, Construction and Architectural Management* 9(3), 17-34. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ECAM-01-2016-0016>