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The Impact of Time Management Practices on Project Success: An Applied Study

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1. Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Research Background

Projects are temporary organizational efforts undertaken to create a unique product, service, or result. Their temporary nature makes time one of the most visible and sensitive constraints facing project teams. A project may have adequate funding, capable employees, and a valuable objective, yet still fail to meet stakeholder expectations when its activities are not properly sequenced, monitored, and completed within an acceptable timeframe. Time management in projects therefore extends beyond personal productivity. It includes the processes used to define activities, estimate durations, develop a realistic schedule, assign responsibilities, monitor progress, and take corrective action when actual performance differs from the approved plan.

The contemporary business environment has increased the importance of effective project time management. Organizations are expected to respond quickly to market changes, regulatory requirements, customer expectations, technological developments, and strategic priorities. Many projects also involve several departments, external suppliers, and geographically dispersed stakeholders. These conditions create dependencies and uncertainties that can cause delays unless the project schedule is carefully developed and actively controlled. The Project Management Institute emphasizes that scheduling is essential for keeping projects aligned with strategic goals, managing resources, mitigating risks, and adapting to changing priorities (Project Management Institute [PMI], 2026a).

A sound schedule translates the project scope into a time-based plan. It identifies the work that must be performed, the logical relationship between activities, the resources required, and the expected dates for completing major deliverables. Planning and scheduling are closely related but distinct activities. Planning determines what should be done and how the project will be executed, while scheduling converts the plan into a structured timeline that can be used for coordination and control. A schedule is therefore not merely a calendar; it is a management model that enables the project team to test assumptions, identify constraints, communicate priorities, and assess the effect of changes.

Project success has traditionally been evaluated through the triple constraint of time, cost, and quality or scope. However, modern project management research recognizes that success is multidimensional. A project can meet its planned completion date and budget but still fail to satisfy

the customer, generate business value, or achieve its intended benefits. Conversely, a strategically valuable project may be viewed as successful even when limited schedule changes occur. For this reason, the present study treats project success as a combination of schedule performance, cost control, quality of deliverables, achievement of objectives, and stakeholder satisfaction (Pinto & Slevin, 1988; Radujković & Sjekavica, 2017; Pinto & Winch, 2022).

Although project success is broader than finishing on time, schedule performance remains a central indicator because delays often affect cost, resource availability, contractual commitments, customer confidence, and the realization of benefits. Poorly defined activities, unrealistic duration estimates, weak monitoring, uncontrolled changes, and unclear accountability can create a chain of delays across dependent tasks. Scope creep can also increase the workload without corresponding changes to time and resources, thereby reducing project performance (Ahmed et al., 2022).

Previous studies have identified planning and scheduling as important contributors to project performance. Papke-Shields et al. (2010) found that the use of project management practices is associated with better project outcomes, while Irfan et al. (2021) emphasized the role of project planning and project manager competence in project success. Research on construction and information systems projects likewise shows that project duration, postponement, planning quality, resource allocation, and management practices influence performance (Sanchez et al., 2017; Unegbu et al., 2022).

Despite its importance, time management is not applied consistently across organizations. In some projects, schedules are developed mainly to satisfy an administrative requirement and are not updated after execution begins. In others, deadlines are imposed without sufficient analysis of scope, resources, risks, or dependencies. Project teams may also rely on informal follow-up rather than objective progress data. Such practices reduce the reliability of the schedule and limit its usefulness for decision-making.

The present study focuses on four dimensions of project time management: schedule planning, activity prioritization and sequencing, progress monitoring and control, and management of schedule changes. These dimensions represent the main actions through which project teams transform objectives into a workable timeline and maintain control during implementation. The study proposes that stronger application of these practices will be associated with higher levels of project success among professionals working on projects in Saudi organizations.

This topic is particularly relevant in Saudi Arabia, where public and private organizations are implementing a large portfolio of transformation, infrastructure, technology, financial, entertainment, and service-development projects. The scale and strategic importance of these initiatives increase the need for disciplined planning and timely delivery. By examining how time management practices relate to project success, this study can provide evidence that is useful to project managers, project management offices, functional leaders, and organizations seeking to improve delivery performance.

Accordingly, the purpose of this research is to investigate the impact of project time management practices on project success through an applied quantitative study. The research will review the relevant literature, define measurable dimensions for both variables, and collect data from employees and professionals who have participated in projects. The findings are expected to clarify which time management practices deserve the greatest managerial attention and to provide practical recommendations for improving project outcomes.

1.2. Research Problem

Despite the availability of established scheduling methods and project management standards, many projects continue to experience delays, rushed completion, inefficient resource use, and weak coordination. The problem is not always the absence of a schedule; it is often the quality of the assumptions used to create it, the extent to which it is understood by the team, and the discipline with which it is monitored and updated. This study addresses the need to understand whether the systematic application of time management practices contributes to better project success.

1.2.1. Theoretical Gaps

The literature provides substantial discussion of project planning, scheduling, and critical success factors. However, several studies combine time management with a wider set of project management practices, which makes it difficult to isolate its specific contribution. In addition, project success is measured differently across studies, ranging from the traditional time-cost-quality triangle to broader measures such as stakeholder satisfaction and strategic value. There is therefore a need for a focused model that examines time management as a multidimensional independent variable and project success as a multidimensional dependent variable.

1.2.2. Practical Gaps

In practice, organizations frequently prepare project schedules but differ in how effectively they use them. Common challenges include unrealistic deadlines, incomplete activity definitions, weak coordination of dependencies, inadequate progress updates, delayed escalation, and uncontrolled changes. Managers need evidence on which time management practices are most strongly associated with successful outcomes so that they can improve procedures, training, governance, and project controls.

Main research question: To what extent do project time management practices affect project success in Saudi organizations?

1.3. Research Significance

1.3.1. At the theoretical level

At the theoretical level, the study contributes to project management literature by presenting an integrated model that links four dimensions of time management—schedule planning, activity prioritization and sequencing, progress monitoring and control, and schedule change management—to a broad measure of project success.

1.3.2. At the practical level

At the practical level, the study may help project managers and project management offices identify weaknesses in current scheduling and control practices. The proposed findings can support clearer scheduling procedures, better progress reporting, realistic deadline setting, and stronger change control.

1.4. Research Questions

1. To what extent does schedule planning affect project success?
2. To what extent do activity prioritization and sequencing affect project success?
3. To what extent do progress monitoring and schedule control affect project success?
4. To what extent does schedule change management affect project success?
5. Which dimension of project time management has the strongest effect on project success?

1.5. Research Objectives

1. To examine the effect of schedule planning on project success.
2. To assess the effect of activity prioritization and sequencing on project success.
3. To determine the effect of progress monitoring and schedule control on project success.

4. To evaluate the effect of schedule change management on project success.
5. To identify the time management dimension that best predicts project success and propose practical recommendations.

1.6. Research Hypotheses

- H1: Project time management practices have a statistically significant positive effect on project success.
- H1a: Schedule planning has a statistically significant positive effect on project success.
- H1b: Activity prioritization and sequencing have a statistically significant positive effect on project success.
- H1c: Progress monitoring and schedule control have a statistically significant positive effect on project success.
- H1d: Schedule change management has a statistically significant positive effect on project success.

1.7. Research Model

The conceptual model proposes a direct positive relationship between project time management practices and project success.

Independent Variable	Proposed Relationship	Dependent Variable
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Project Time Management Practices • Schedule planning • Prioritization and sequencing • Monitoring and control • Schedule change management	Positive effect →	Project Success • Timely completion • Cost performance • Quality • Achievement of objectives • Stakeholder satisfaction
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1.8. Research Methodology

The study will use a quantitative, cross-sectional, and explanatory research design. Primary data will be collected through a structured questionnaire distributed to employees, project team members, project coordinators, project managers, and other professionals who have participated in projects within Saudi organizations. A five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree will be used. The independent variable is project time management practices, measured through schedule planning, prioritization and sequencing, monitoring and control, and schedule change management. The dependent variable is project success, measured through timely completion, cost performance, quality, achievement of objectives, and stakeholder satisfaction.

A purposive and convenience sampling approach will be used because respondents must have practical exposure to projects. The target is at least 150 valid responses, subject to access and participation. The questionnaire will be reviewed for content validity and piloted before full distribution. Reliability will be assessed using Cronbach's alpha. Descriptive statistics, correlation, and multiple regression analysis will be used. Participation will be voluntary, informed consent will be obtained, and responses will be anonymous and used only for academic purposes.

1.9. Scope of The Study

The conceptual scope covers project time management practices and project success. The human scope includes professionals who have participated in projects as managers, coordinators, team members, specialists, or functional stakeholders. The geographical scope is Saudi Arabia, and the organizational scope includes public and private organizations across sectors. The study will be conducted during 2026. Because the study uses a cross-sectional survey and non-probability sampling, its findings should be generalized with appropriate caution.

1.10. The Suggested Project Structure

The project is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the research background, problem, significance, questions, objectives, hypotheses, model, methodology, and scope. Chapter 2 reviews the literature. Chapter 3 will explain the detailed research design and data collection. Chapter 4 will present and discuss the empirical findings. Chapter 5 will provide conclusions, recommendations, limitations, and suggestions for future research.

2. Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

This chapter reviews the theoretical and empirical literature related to project time management and project success. It first explains the independent variable and its dimensions, then discusses the dependent variable and its measurement. The final section evaluates the relationship between the two variables and develops the basis for the proposed hypotheses.

2.2. 2.2. Project Time Management Practices (Independent Variable)

Project time management refers to the organized processes and managerial behaviors used to plan, develop, maintain, monitor, and control the time required to complete project work. Current practice often uses the term schedule management because project time is managed through a schedule model that integrates activities, logical relationships, resources, constraints, and dates. PMI's Practice Standard for Scheduling explains that a schedule model supports objective measurement and provides a structured basis for schedule creation, use, and analysis (PMI, 2019).

Schedule planning includes defining the approach, roles, tools, calendars, units of measurement, reporting cycles, tolerance limits, and control procedures. A realistic schedule should be based on a clear scope and work breakdown structure. Activities must be sufficiently detailed to permit estimation and assignment while remaining manageable.

Activity prioritization and sequencing ensure that dependencies are understood and that attention and resources are directed toward work with high urgency, strategic value, or limited schedule

flexibility. Logical sequencing helps identify the critical path and the activities most likely to affect the completion date.

Progress monitoring and schedule control require comparing actual progress with the baseline schedule, applying agreed measurement rules, updating milestones, analyzing variances, and forecasting completion. Monitoring becomes valuable when it supports timely corrective action.

Schedule change management requires documenting proposed changes, analyzing their effects on scope, cost, resources, risks, and milestones, obtaining approval, updating the schedule, and communicating decisions. It distinguishes justified adaptation from unmanaged schedule drift.

2.3. 2.3. Project Success (Dependent Variable)

Project success is a multidimensional concept. The traditional view focuses on completing the project within approved time, cost, and quality or scope requirements. These measures remain important because they reflect execution efficiency and the organization's ability to meet commitments.

Modern perspectives distinguish project management success from overall project success. Project management success concerns delivery efficiency, whereas project success also considers effectiveness, stakeholder satisfaction, use of the output, strategic contribution, and long-term value (Radujković & Sjekavica, 2017; Pinto & Winch, 2022).

For this study, project success will be measured through five dimensions: timely completion, cost performance, quality of deliverables, achievement of objectives, and stakeholder satisfaction. A project that finishes quickly by reducing quality or failing to meet objectives cannot reasonably be classified as successful.

2.4. 2.4. Relationship Between Time Management Practices and Project Success

The relationship between time management and project success can be explained through coordination, predictability, and control. A credible schedule gives participants a shared understanding of priorities and deadlines. It allows managers to coordinate resources, anticipate bottlenecks, identify critical activities, and evaluate the effect of decisions before implementation.

Empirical research generally supports a positive relationship between planning practices and project performance. Papke-Shields et al. (2010) reported that formal project management practices were associated with project success measures. Irfan et al. (2021) found that project planning and project manager competency support project success. Unegbu et al. (2022) also identified relationships between project management practices and construction project performance.

Schedule performance interacts with other aspects of success. Delays may increase labor, financing, and procurement costs; reduce stakeholder confidence; postpone benefits; and create pressure that affects quality. Uncontrolled scope changes frequently create schedule delays and cost growth (Ahmed et al., 2022).

The relationship is not purely mechanical. An excessively rigid schedule can become unrealistic when uncertainty is high, while an overly flexible schedule can weaken accountability. Effective time management combines structure with informed adaptation and uses the schedule as a decision-support tool.

2.5. Conclusion

The literature indicates that project time management is a continuous process covering planning, sequencing, monitoring, control, and managed adaptation. Project success is broader than compliance with a completion date, but schedule performance remains closely connected to cost, quality, objectives, and stakeholder expectations. Existing research supports the importance of planning and management practices, while also showing the need for a focused empirical examination of time management dimensions.

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