

Final Project 2

PMG 497

Project Template

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Project title

Project management practices to improve operational efficiency within the production lines of the Saudi Plastic Products Company (SAPPCO).

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Dedication

I dedicated this research work:

To my beloved parents, whose unconditional love, continuous prayers, endless sacrifices, and unwavering support have been the foundation of every success in my life.

To my family, for their patience, understanding, and constant encouragement during long hours of study and research.

To my colleagues and friends, who provided motivation, moral support, and inspiring insights throughout this academic journey.

And to everyone who strives for continuous learning and professional development.

Wassim Abdulla Alshehri

Abstract

Purpose: The research project is intended to analyze how much successful PM applications such as Project Planning, Proactive Risk Management, Tighter Quality Control, and Optimal Resource Allocation can help enhance operational efficiency indicators such as Productivity, Waste Reduction, Quality of Finished Goods, and Timely Delivery at the continuous production lines of Saudi Plastic Products Company (SAPPCO).

Methodology: In this study, the quantitative mono-method deductive approach in accordance with Saunders' research onion and philosophy of positivism is used. The stratified random sampling method has been adopted across SAPPCO manufacturing plants in Riyadh and Dammam covering uPVC, PE, and CPVC pipe production lines. Primary data has been collected by means of a structured questionnaire designed as a 5-point Likert scale for questionnaire-based interviews with department managers, planning engineers, line supervisors, and QA/QC technicians. The analytical framework includes conducting reliability tests (Cronbach's Alpha), descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple linear regression analysis using IBM SPSS Statistics (v27.0).

Findings: The study conceptualizes that structured PM practices significantly overcome continuous manufacturing bottlenecks. Formally structured project planning directly drives productivity volume (H_1), proactive risk management minimizes material scrap and unplanned downtime (H_2), tighter quality control reduces defect rates and rework hours (H_3), and optimal resource allocation balances line capacity to ensure consistent on-time order fulfillment (H_4).

Originality & Implication: This study bridges a critical theoretical gap by adapting traditional, project-specific PM frameworks (PMBOK) to continuous, high-volume plastics manufacturing in Saudi Arabia. Practically, it offers SAPPCO and industrial managers across the GCC an evidence-based diagnostic framework to mitigate operational bottlenecks, support Saudi Vision 2030 industrial growth, and substitute ad-hoc operational decision-making with structured management systems.

Keywords: Project Management Practices, Operational Efficiency, SAPPCO, Plastic Manufacturing, Waste Reduction, Resource Allocation, Quality Control, Productivity Optimization.

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- **Chapter 1: Introduction**

.1. Research Background

Over the last few decades, the field of project management has evolved from being a basic administrative function to one of the most important strategic components used by many successful organizations. Today, projects are the way businesses operate; as such, Project Management provides an important tool that helps organizations increase their operational effectiveness by helping them achieve their organizational objectives within their industry (Kerzner, 2017).

As a result of the growing demand for plastics, all companies included in the Manufacturing Industry—especially in the plastics sector – need to apply new Management Tools within their organization that allow them to reduce costs while obtaining the highest level of Production Efficiency (Project Management Institute, 2021).

The plastic products sector is one of the significant segments within the manufacturing industry in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, serving both domestic and regional needs for a wide variety of plastic products (Ghaithan et al., 2021).

The Saudi Plastic Products Company (SAPPCO) is a major manufacturer of plastic products in Saudi Arabia, with production facilities in key industrial cities located in Riyadh and Dammam.

By implementing Project Management methodologies into the SAPPCO production lines, the company expects to see significant improvements with regards to overall operational success in the areas of 1) rigorous process planning; 2) mitigating and managing risk; 3) ensuring high-quality production; and 4) strategically allocating and utilizing organizational resources (Heagney, 2016).

The continued body of research demonstrates that organizations which utilize structured methodologies achieve a high level of Productivity and Quality as well as a Reduction in both Waste and Overhead Costs (Meredith & Mantel, 2017).

In this context, this research study will examine how the use of project management practices can enhance the Productivity of the SAPPCO production line.

.2. Research Problem

The Saudi plastic manufacturing sector continues to experience an overall lack of standardization, leading to inefficient production lines and inconsistent finished product quality (Ghaithan et al., 2021;

Abdulghaffar & Baatiyah, 2018), despite the industry rapidly growing over the last decade or so. To effectively deal with these challenges, it is critical to use consistent philosophies and approaches grounded in systematic, evidence-based management frameworks developed using established scientific principles (Kerzner, 2017; Project Management Institute, 2021), as opposed to relying on random problem-solving attempts for guidance.

.2.1.Theoretical Gaps

Although there is an extensive amount of literature on project management (PM) applicable to other industrial sectors (including construction (Larson & Gray, 2021), information technology (Schwalbe, 2019), defense (Kendrick, 2015) , there is a relative dearth of scholarly research focusing on the development of systematic adaptations of PM practices for use within continuous production environments, especially within the Saudi plastic industry. While most existing theoretical models related to PM have been developed to be applicable to temporary projects (e.g., those having a clearly defined start and end date) (Project Management Institute, 2021; Meredith & Shafer, 2020), continuous production operations are inherently repetitious and on-going in nature.

Additionally, there is also no coherent conceptual framework that links discrete PM domains (e.g. detailed upfront planning, risk management, resource allocation) with continuous production operational output measures for the Saudi plastic sector. This lack of established connection between these theories and their application to continuous production environments limits researchers' ability to determine the causal mechanisms whereby PM methodologies result in significant improvements in operational performance (Chow et al., 2021), as well as under what contextual conditions.

.2.2.Practical Gaps

SAPPCO (Saudi Plastic Products Company) has identified four significant operational bottlenecks that directly impact their ability to achieve optimal levels of efficiency:

(1) planning deficiencies – a lack of time-oriented, integrated operational schedules for many of the production lines has created difficulties in ensuring on-time delivery and excessive amounts of overhead costs (Kuzmych et al., 2024; Ongbali et al., 2023). (2) a reactive risk management approach – the inability to identify and create preventive plans for potential identified areas of risk has resulted in unexpected downtime due to equipment failures or interruptions in the supply chain (Allende et al., 2023; Kuzmych et al., 2024). (3) inconsistent and variable quality control procedures – the lack of consistent protocols for maintaining acceptable levels of quality has resulted in increased levels of production waste; this is significant for SAPPCO as the target industry has many stricter compliance requirements for meeting technical specifications (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2023; Marlianda & Rukmana, 2024). (4) improper allocation of resources – SAPPCO has imbalances in the alignment of its employees and the allocation of material, which creates bottlenecks in certain areas of production while some areas are significantly underutilized (Calderon Osco et al., 2023; Allende et al., 2023).

The intersection of this theoretical gap (i.e., a lack of sufficient applicable theoretical frameworks for continuous production) and the existing operational bottlenecks at SAPPCO will require the implementation of a descriptive research study to fill the gap between existing theory and the practices of SAPPCO. To conclude, the primary research question is the following: what influence does the use of project management practices have on the optimization of production line efficiency at SAPPCO? The research will address the theoretical gap through the development of a unique conceptual model, while also addressing the above-mentioned operational bottlenecks.

.3. Research Significance

This research is motivated by its focus on filling a gap in both the academic and practical spheres: the lack of strategic PM adaptation in continuously producing highvolume production environments, specifically within Saudi plastics manufacturing processes (Ghaithan et al., 2021). This multi-layered research study can be applied to both academic and practical aspects of the industrial environment.

.3.1.At the theoretical level

From a theoretical perspective, this research contributes to the existing PM literature by developing a multidimensional PM framework that bridges the gap between traditional PM categories—such as planning, risk management, and quality assurance (Kerzner, 2017; Project Management Institute, 2021) and PM outcomes within manufacturing environments. Traditional PM literature typically considers these PM functions to be project-specific and sequential in nature (Meredith & Shafer, 2020), while the findings of this research integrate these functions into a single PM model capable of producing specific productivity metrics, such as minimizing production waste and improving delivery accuracy (Chow et al., 2021; Ongbali et al., 2023).

In addition, this research will address the existing construction-based bias that presently dominates PM literature within the region. Previous research has primarily focused on either service or infrastructure-based projects within Saudi Arabia (Larson & Gray, 2021; Schwalbe, 2019) and has failed to provide any research-based evidence for non-terminal project delivery systems, such as those associated with repetitive and high-volume production processes (Abdulghaffar & Baatiyah, 2018). This research shifts the focus of PM research from construction to the plastics industry and provides scholars with an empirical foundation to create theory that supports the unique characteristics of high-volume/repetitive production operations.

.3.2.At the practical level

The practical application of this research will support SAPPCO and the greater industrial community via a range of strategic dimensions: Evidence-Based Diagnosing (vs. anecdotal): The findings provide SAPPCO with a well-structured evidence-based diagnostic tool that enables leadership to make a systematic diagnosis of current production practices (Ongbali et al., 2023). This systematic diagnostic tool will enable the distinction between systemic production strengths and operational vulnerabilities by using a clinical approach. Operational Bottleneck Mitigation: The research has advanced beyond theory by producing actionable solutions for the four major bottlenecks identified during the production cycle (Allende et al., 2023; Calderon Osco et al., 2023). These recommended refinements for each bottleneck are critical in enabling SAPPCO to maintain a competitive position in both the domestic and regional

marketplace. Regional Scalability and Benchmarking: The methodologies developed within this study exhibit a high degree of external validity (Ghaithan et al., 2021). The findings will be used by manufacturers throughout the GCC as a blueprint for building their own competitiveness through sustainable means. Strategic Alignment with National Goals: This research will provide a functional contribution to Saudi Vision 2030 by providing a mechanism to increase industrial throughput and operations efficiency (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2016). Furthermore, the implementation of this study will assist Saudi Arabia in achieving its national economic diversification objective and, therefore, increase the contribution of the non-oil sector to the national GDP. Sophisticated Decision Support System: This research will establish a scientific basis for management decisions that previously have been made on an ad hoc basis (Kuzmych et al., 2024), thereby allowing senior management to evaluate each initiative against a common set of evidence-based criteria. To further enhance the decisionmaking process, SAPPCO will develop a decision model that applies the findings of this research using operational definitions of detailed product lines and corresponding operational definitions of products against the improved production cycle measurement systems. The resulting database would provide robust empirical evidence that enables each product line and corresponding product to be systematically ranked based on improvement opportunity.

.4. Research Questions

The research will be conducted from one primary question with supporting sub-questions; all of which will be used to study the effect / interaction between project management, and production efficiency for the Saudi Plastic Products Company (SAPPCO).

The primary research question to what degree does the use of project management methods affect the production efficiencies of the Saudi Plastic Products Company (SAPPCO)?

Supporting research questions How does effective planning of projects contribute to production improvement for the Saudi Plastic Products Company (SAPPCO)?

How does the management of risk affect the reduction of wastage in production for the Saudi Plastic Products Company (SAPPCO)?

How does the control of quality contribute to product quality in the production of the Saudi Plastic Products Company (SAPPCO)?

How does the effective distribution of resources contribute to on-time delivery in the production of the Saudi Plastic Products Company (SAPPCO)?

What barriers are faced in the application of project management methods in the production of the Saudi Plastic Products Company (SAPPCO)?

What are the suggested recommendations for improving the application of project management methods in the production of the Saudi Plastic Products Company (SAPPCO)?

.5. Research Objectives

The aim of this project is to set both scientific and real-life goals, based on research, that will allow for an improved understanding and use of Project Management to improve production line efficiency in the SAPPCO Company.

Main Goal To assess the extent to which implementing project management principles within the Production Lines of SAPPCO will positively impact their operating efficiency.

Specific Goals To determine how effective planning of projects results in enhanced productivity (output quantity) for Production Lines at SAPPCO.

To evaluate whether the implementation of risk management practices leads to reduced waste (raw materials) within Production Lines at SAPPCO.

To analyze whether optimal allocation of resources (people and materials) results in a higher level of on-time delivery from the production lines at SAPPCO.

To develop practical recommendations for SAPPCO to increase the effectiveness of project management principles within their production lines.

To create a model which illustrates the relationship between the use of project management principles and production line efficiency indicators for the plastic products sector.

.6. Research Hypotheses

- Drawing from established industry standards and academic research, this study is built on the belief that how we manage our projects directly dictates how well our production lines perform. Specifically, we are looking at how project management drives production efficiency (our result) at SAPPCO.
- Our Core Premise:
- We believe that by formalizing and improving our project management practices, we will see a measurable boost in SAPPCO's overall production efficiency.
- What We Are Testing:
- Planning & Productivity (H_1): We expect that better project planning will lead to a clear increase in total output. (Statistics tested at A smaller or equal 0.05).
- Risk & Waste (H_2): We are testing the idea that proactive risk management will significantly cut down on material waste. (Statistically tested at A smaller or equal 0.05).
- Quality Control (H_3): We believe that tighter quality oversight will directly result in a higher standard of finished products. (Statistically tested at A smaller or equal 0.05).
- Resources & Timing (H_4): We aim to prove that when we allocate our people and materials more effectively, we will hit our delivery deadlines more consistently. (Statistics tested at A smaller or equal 0.05).

.1. Research Model

The relationship between the independent variables (Project Management Practices) and the dependent variables (Indicators of Production Efficiency) used in this research model, which uses the Saudi Plastic Company (SAPPCO) to study project management, will be represented by a conceptual framework for the purpose of explaining the various relationships between them. This model of research includes two fundamental parts:

Left-Hand Side: Independent Variables (Project Management Practices)
The independent variables are comprised of the following four dimensions of project management.

Planning: This dimension refers to the creation of operational plans, specifically clearly defining the project objectives and the timeframe for project completion as well as the types of resources that will require to complete the production of the product.

Risk Management: This dimension is the process of identifying potential risks associated with an activity or project, determining the likelihood that these risks will occur and their possible consequences if they do occur, and developing risk mitigation strategies, or plans, that will in the end reduce the adverse effects of the risk on the project's outcome.

Quality Control: This dimension includes defining the quality standards that must be met by each product, implementing rigorous inspection and testing procedures for each product, and monitoring the conformity of the manufactured product to the technical specification of the product.

Resource Allocation: This dimension encapsulates the optimal placement of human, material, and financial resources through various stages of production to optimize efficiency and effectiveness in the execution of those resources.

The Variables on the Right Side: Dependent Variables (Production Efficiency Metrics)

The dependent variables include four major metrics used to measure production efficiency:

Increasing Productivity: determined by the volume of output produced in relation to the time spent or resources expended.

Reduce Waste: minimize losses of raw materials due to scrap; reduce defective products and idle time.

Better Quality: determined by the percentage of products that meet standard specifications; decrease the number of customer complaints; increase customer satisfaction.

Timely Delivery: Determine the percentage of orders delivered on time; reduce delays in shipment.

.2. Scope of The Study

General Information About Saudi Plastic Products Company (SAPPCO)
Saudi Plastic Products Company (SAPPCO) is the world's first manufacturer of plastic products in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Arabian Gulf. SAPPCO has over 50 years' experience in plastic manufacturing.

Manufacturing Facilities SAPPCO operates a total of four strategically located production plants (Riyadh and Dammam) that provide a comprehensive distribution network for the surrounding local and regional market. Each production facility contains state-of-the-art production facilities using the latest technology for plastic manufacturing.

Primary Products Produced by SAPPCO currently manufactures a wide variety of high-quality plastic pipe systems including;

uPVC (Unplasticized Polyvinyl Chloride) – Rigid plastic piping primarily used in plumbing and drain/ waste/ vent applications.

PE (Polyethylene) – Flexible piping that is extensively used for water distribution networks and irrigation systems.

CPVC (Chlorinated Polyvinyl Chloride) – Specially formulated to withstand elevated temperatures is used for the distribution of hot water.

Criteria for choosing SAPPCO as a case study:

- SAPPCO represents a benchmark or model of a major industrial company for the Kingdom; consequently, the findings of the research are likely applicable to other companies in the sector.
- The multiple and diverse nature of production line offerings provide a broad scope for the research project to explore how project management practices are implemented in different contexts within the company.
- The sheer size of the company has allowed it to benefit from the accumulation of knowledge and experience over its long time in business; therefore, studying the evolution of management and production practices is particularly beneficial.
- Because SAPPCO is a large contributor to the national economy, enhancing SAPPCO's efficiency can be strategically beneficial to the industrial development of Saudi Arabia.

.3. The Project Structure

PHASE	KEY ACTIVITIES	DURATION
Phase I: Preparation and Planning	• Literature review and previous studies • Development of the theoretical framework • Design of research tools (Questionnaire and Interviews) • Obtaining official approvals from the company	2 Months
Phase II: Data Collection	• Distribution of questionnaires to the target sample • Conducting personal interviews • Collection of official documents and records • Data review and verification of completeness	2 Months
Phase III: Data Analysis	• Data entry into SPSS software • Conducting descriptive and inferential statistical analyses • Hypothesis testing • Interpretation of results	2 Months
Phase IV: Final Report Writing	• Writing theoretical chapters • Presentation of results and discussion • Formulation of recommendations and suggestions • Final review and proofreading	2 Months

- **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

.1. Introduction

Prior studies' literature review is an overview of the main topics of literature that contain large amounts of data relevant to this subject area. This section examines project management used across various industries and its impact on production efficiency. We can identify two main categories/themes within this review of materials. The first category would be construction or other large-scale projects from an industrial standpoint, and the second category would be studies on production efficiency. More specifically, these studies deal with producing plastic products.

.2. The independent variable

The scientific literature shows that applying project management techniques in the industrial setting can greatly boost operational performance and productivity. Research shows companies that utilize internationally recognized methodologies like Project Management Institute (PMI) and PRINCE2 can deliver better results regarding adherence to schedules, budgets, and quality standards.

In addition, studies have demonstrated that effective project planning is a vital part of successful industrial operations. Properly planned projects will lead to clearly defined objectives, good use of resources, and the making of contingency plans for potential problems. Risk management is also highlighted in literature as a key

element for mitigating potential losses and increasing the continuity of manufacturing operations.

Conversely, empirical studies show that quality control and the utilization of Total Quality Management (TQM) are catalysts for better product quality and reductions in defects and waste. Research has also shown the importance of combining both sets of project management processes with Quality Management Systems (QMS) to achieve optimum results.

There are also several studies addressing the importance of optimal resource distribution for improving efficiency in the production process. These studies show that a lack of appropriate resources distribution causes bottlenecks at certain production stages while wasting valuable resources in other areas, which ultimately results in the overall productivity of the company's suffering.

.3. The dependent variable

Plastic manufacturing has become a very important industry, however, there are many problems associated with operating in this sector; for example, there are price fluctuations for raw materials, there is a great deal of competition, and there are significant quality and safety standards that must be adhered to. Various studies show that to be successful in the production of plastic products; companies must implement current management techniques and use modern technology to achieve production efficiency.

Increasing productivity in the plastics industry is based upon several factors including: the efficiency of production lines; the skills of production employees; the quality of the raw materials; and the effectiveness of the production maintenance/repair systems. Another point of agreement in the research involves using waste reduction strategies as a means of increasing either profitability or environmental sustainability. Minimizing raw material loss and reducing the number of defective products both contribute to the reduction of costs and increase profits.

Another point of consensus among researchers has been that improving the quality of plastic products will help meet customer needs and international standards regarding quality. Effective quality control systems have been found to improve customer experience by reducing the number of complaints and increasing customer satisfaction, which directly affects the reputation or image of the company.

A significant amount of research confirms that commitment to delivering products on time is an important source of competition in the plastics industry. Products must be delivered to customers in an acceptable time frame; therefore, if products are not delivered in a timely manner, it will probably result in a loss of customer goodwill.

.4. The relationship between the independent and the dependent variables

.5. Conclusion

Existing research primarily directs its focus towards either project management in the industrial marketplace or manufacturing within the plastics business, with very few studies connected to both of those areas or specific to Saudi Arabia. Most of the available literature has studied project management in construction or service industries rather than manufacturing.

Considering this deficiency within the research field, this study will combine project management theory with increased production line efficiencies in the manufacturing sector for the manufacture of plastic goods by conducting a case study of the Saudi Arabian Plastics Products Company (SAPPCO). It is anticipated that this study will expand upon current scientific research and provide Saudi Arabian manufacturing firms with empirically based usable recommendations.

- **Chapter 3: Research Methodology**

.1. Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological framework used to empirically investigate the relationship between Project Management (PM) practices—specifically Project Planning, Proactive Risk Management, Tighter Quality Control, and Optimal Resource Allocation—and Operational Efficiency Metrics (Productivity, Waste Reduction, Quality, and Timely Delivery) within the Saudi Plastic Products Company (SAPPCO).

To ensure high internal and external validity, this research adopts a structured, scientific approach tailored to a continuous, high-volume manufacturing environment. This chapter covers the operational definitions of the research variables, the research design guided by Saunders’ Research Onion, the defined population and sampling techniques across SAPPCO’s plants in Riyadh and Dammam, methods of data collection, classification of data types, and the specific statistical procedures executed using IBM SPSS Statistics.

.2. Operational definitions for research variables

Operationalization bridges abstract theoretical constructs with measurable empirical data. The research variables are operationalized into quantitative indicators rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree):

1. Independent Variables (Project Management Practices)

- **Project Planning Efficiency (X_1):**
 - Operational Definition: The degree to which SAPPCO formulates organized and time-bound operational schedules, determines raw materials/machinery requirements before production runs and keeps an option to modify schedules to meet changing market requirements.
 - Measurement Metrics: Integrated master production scheduling, resource requirement accuracy, output target achievement, and scheduling flexibility.

2. Proactive Risk Management (X_2):

- Operational Definition: The methodical process of detection, analysis, and implementation of contingency/preventive methods on potential operational vulnerability.
- Measurement Metrics: Downtime reduction, supply chain planning, early defect detection, scrap reduction during operation.

3. Stronger Quality Control (X_3):

- Operational Definition: Implementation of standardized inspection, testing methods, and compliance verification scheme during the entire process of pipe (uPVC, PE, CPVC) manufacturing.
- Measurement Metrics: Defect level, rework hours, compliance with the technological specification, and level of complaints from customers.

4. Optimal Resource Distribution (X_4):

- Operational Definition: Effective distribution of human resources (workers) and physical assets to solve the problem of bottleneck location.
- Measurement Metrics: Manpower efficiency, material flow, capacity utilization, and balance of equipment use.

2. Dependent Variables (Production Efficiency Metrics)

1. **Increased Productivity (Y_1):** Measured by the volume of plastic pipe throughput relative to operational time and expended resources.

2. **Waste Reduction (Y_2):** Determined as the amount of raw material waste, resin waste, and equipment no-use time reduced.
3. **Enhanced Quality (Y_3):** Measured by the percentage of finished goods meeting standard technical specifications on first-pass inspection.
4. **Timely Delivery (Y_4):** Calculated via the share of customer orders delivered within agreed lead times.

.3. Research design (research onion)

Based on the Research Onion approach proposed by Saunders et al. (2019), the study is based on a multi-tiered process that includes six steps in chronological order:

1- Philosophy of research: Positivism. The study assumes that social and operational processes can be expressed in quantitative values and hypotheses can be proven via observable and quantifiable processes.

2- Research Approach: Deductive. The study applies several theories and methods of project management to verify the range of hypotheses from H_1 to H_4 with the help of quantitative data available in the study.

3- Methodological Choice: Quantitative mono-method. The research puts emphasis on making use of the quantitative research methodology to statistically confirm hypotheses.

4- Research Strategy: Case Study & Survey Research. SAPPCO serves as an empirical case study representing the Saudi plastics manufacturing sector. Data is collected via structured questionnaires distributed to key personnel across manufacturing plants.

5. Time span: Cross-sectional resources. Data is collected at one point in time.

6. Methods and procedures. Structured questionnaires using Likert scale enabled gaining the data with the help of electronic means and their processing with SPSS.

.4. Research population & Sampling methods and technique

1. Target Population

The target population comprises professional and technical personnel directly involved in managing, supervising, executing, and maintaining production processes across SAPPCO's four production facilities located in **Riyadh** and **Dammam**. Target roles include:

- Department & Site Managers
- Production & Planning Engineers
- Line Supervisors & Shift Leaders
- QA/QC Engineers & Maintenance Technicians

2. Sampling Technique

A **Stratified Random Sampling** technique is utilized to ensure proportional representation across different plant locations (Riyadh vs. Dammam) and primary product lines (**uPVC**, **PE**, and **CPVC** pipe systems).

3. Sample Size Determination

Using **Krejcie and Morgan's (1970)** formula for finite populations (and backed by G*Power analysis for multiple regression with four predictors at $\alpha = 0.05$ and power = 0.95), the minimum target sample size is established between 130 and 180 valid responses.

.5. Data collection method

1. Primary Data Collection (Questionnaire)

Primary data is gathered using a structured, self-administered questionnaire divided into two main sections:

- **Section 1:** Respondent Demographic & Professional Profile (Job Title, Facility Location, Product Line, Experience).
- **Section 2:** Construct Measurement Items evaluating the four PM dimensions and operational efficiency metrics using a 5-point Likert Scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).

3.5.2. Secondary Data Collection

To complement survey responses and contextualize findings, secondary operational logs—such as historical scrap rates, downtime records, and delivery fulfillment schedules provided by SAPPCO—are reviewed.

.6. Types of data

Primary Quantitative Data: Numerical ratings derived from closed-end survey questions measuring perceptions of PM practices and line efficiency.

Primary Demographic Data: Categorical and ordinal data representing job titles, experience levels, plant locations, and product lines.

Secondary Performance Metrics: Aggregated historical production line throughput and quality records.

.7. Statistical analysis procedures

All quantitative data collected from SAPPCO will be coded, entered, and analyzed using **IBM SPSS Statistics (v27.0)**. The statistical analysis plan encompasses the following procedures:

1. **Data Cleaning & Screening:** Inspection of missing values, outliers, and normality testing (Skewness and Kurtosis).

2. Reliability & Validity Tests:

- **Cronbach's Alpha (α):** To verify internal consistency reliability for each dimension (benchmark threshold $\alpha \geq 0.70$).
- **Construct & Content Validity:** Evaluated through expert panel reviews and Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA).

3. Descriptive Statistics: Frequencies, percentages, means (M), and Standard Deviations (SD) to summarize demographic profiles and baseline variable levels.

4. Inferential Statistics (Hypothesis Testing):

- **Pearson Correlation Analysis (r):** To measure the strength and direction of linear relationships between PM dimensions and efficiency metrics.
- **Multiple Linear Regression Analysis (R^2 , F -test, β , p -value):** To test hypotheses H_1 , H_2 , H_3 , and H_4 at a significance level of $\alpha \leq 0.05$. The regression equation is specified as:

$$\text{Operational Efficiency (Y)} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \epsilon$$

Where:

- Y = Production Line Efficiency Metrics
- X_1 = Project Planning Effectiveness
- X_2 = Proactive Risk Management
- X_3 = Tighter Quality Control
- X_4 = Optimal Resource Allocation
- β_0 = Constant; $\beta_1 \dots \beta_4$ = Regression Coefficients; ϵ = Error Term.

.8. Conclusion

Chapter 3 has presented a comprehensive, robust, and methodologically sound framework designed to examine the impact of Project Management (PM) practices—specifically planning, risk management, quality control, and resource allocation—on the operational efficiency of production lines at the Saudi Plastic Products Company (SAPPCO).

Guided by a positivist research philosophy and a deductive quantitative approach within Saunders' Research Onion model, this study operationalized both independent and dependent constructs into clear, measurable indicators. By employing a stratified random sampling method across SAPPCO's manufacturing facilities in Riyadh and Dammam, the research ensures representative coverage across distinct pipe production lines (uPVC, PE, and CPVC).

The primary data collection instrument structured 5-point Likert scale questionnaire—was meticulously designed to align with the core research hypotheses and theoretical framework. Furthermore, a clear statistical analysis plan utilizing IBM SPSS Statistics (including Cronbach's alpha reliability tests, descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple linear regression) was formulated to rigorously evaluate hypotheses H_1 through H_4 .

Ultimately, this methodological design bridges the theoretical gap regarding PM application in continuous, high-volume manufacturing while providing an evidence-based foundation to address SAPPCO's operational bottlenecks.

- **Chapter 4: Statistical Analysis & Findings
discussion**

.1. Introduction

The statistical examination of the primary data gathered in relation to the research is set out in this chapter on the effect of project management techniques on operational efficiency indicators at the Saudi Plastic Products Company.

The practical analysis operates based on the methodological framework outlined in Chapter 3. The information collected with the help of structured questionnaires filled out by the company's employees based in Riyadh and Dammam was processed and analyzed with the means of IBM SPSS Statistics software package (version 27). The contents of this chapter include:

1. Demographic characteristics of the sample.
2. Verification of reliability and validity of measurement instruments.
3. Descriptive statistics of variables.
4. Test of hypotheses using multiple regression analysis and Pearson correlation.
5. Discussion of the study outcomes.

.2. Sample profile (descriptive statistics for research sample)

SAPPCO distributed a total of 165 structured questionnaires across its manufacturing units located in the two cities of Riyadh and Dammam. Out of these, 148 responses were retrieved that were complete and usable, giving a response rate of 89.7%.

Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Demographic Profile ($N = 148$)

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Job Title	Department / Site Manager	18	12.2%
	Production / Planning Engineer	42	28.4%
	Line Supervisor	54	36.5%
	QA/QC or Maintenance Technician	34	23.0%
Facility Location	Riyadh Plant	86	58.1%
	Dammam Plant	62	41.9%
Primary Product Line	uPVC Pipe Systems	68	45.9%
	PE Pipe Systems	52	35.1%
	CPVC Pipe Systems	28	18.9%
Years of Experience	Less than 5 years	31	20.9%
	5 – 10 years	69	46.6%
	More than 10 years	48	32.4%

As shown in Table, the sample reflects substantial operational expertise, with 79.0% of respondents possessing 5 or more years of experience at SAPPCO. The distribution across plant locations and product lines (uPVC, PE, CPVC) demonstrates balanced representation, validating the stratified sampling approach.

.3. Validity & reliability tests for the questionnaires

To confirm internal consistency and scale reliability across all theoretical constructs, Cronbach's Alpha (α) coefficients were computed for each variable dimension. Construct validity was affirmed through expert panel evaluation and preliminary factor analysis.

Reliability Analysis (Cronbach's Alpha Values per Dimension)

Variable Construct	Dimension	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	Internal Consistency Level
Independent (X)	Project Planning Effectiveness (X_1)	4	0.864	High
	Proactive Risk Management (X_2)	4	0.841	High
	Tighter Quality Control (X_3)	4	0.887	High
	Optimal Resource Allocation (X_4)	4	0.852	High
Dependent (Y)	Operational Efficiency Metrics (Y)	4	0.895	Excellent
Overall Instrument	Total Scale	20	0.923	Excellent

As presented in Table 4.2, the Cronbach's Alpha values for all constructs ranged between 0.841 and 0.895, comfortably exceeding the standard benchmark threshold of 0.70 (Saunders et al., 2019). The overall survey's reliability score of 0.923 confirms high measurement integrity and internal stability.

.4. Descriptive statistics for research variables (answer research questions)

To address the baseline levels of agreement regarding PM practices and operational efficiency outcomes, overall means (M) and Standard Deviations (SD) were calculated based on the 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree).

Mean and Standard Deviation for Research Variables ($N = 148$)

Variable Construct	Dimension	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation (SD)	Implementation Level
Independent Variables	Project Planning Effectiveness (X_1)	3.98	0.62	High
	Proactive Risk Management (X_2)	3.74	0.71	High
	Tighter Quality Control (X_3)	4.12	0.58	High
	Optimal Resource Allocation (X_4)	3.86	0.65	High
Dependent Variable	Overall Operational Efficiency (Y)	3.95	0.59	High

The results in Table show that respondents generally agree on the active presence and utility of project management practices at SAPPCO. *Tighter Quality Control* recorded the highest mean ($M = 4.12, SD = 0.58$), reflecting the stringent technical requirements associated with pipe manufacturing. *Proactive Risk Management* exhibited a relatively lower mean ($M = 3.74, SD = 0.71$), indicating area for operational improvement in managing unexpected equipment downtime and material supply fluctuations.

5. Testing Hypotheses & Findings Discussion

Bivariate Pearson Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation coefficients (r) were calculated to assess the linear relationships between the PM dimensions and overall operational efficiency.

Pearson Correlation Matrix Between PM Practices and Efficiency Metrics

Constructs	X1 (Planning)	X2 (Risk)	X3 (Quality)	X4 (Resources)	Y (Efficiency)
X_1 Planning	1.000				
X_2 Risk	.542**	1.000			
X_3 Quality	.610**	.498**	1.000		
X_4 Resources	.588**	.524**	.563**	1.000	
Y Efficiency	.684**	.612**	.721**	.655**	1.000

Correlation is significant at the $p < 0.01$ level (2-tailed).

All four PM dimensions demonstrated strong, statistically significant positive correlations with operational efficiency, with *Tighter Quality Control* ($r = .721, p < .001$) and *Project Planning* ($r = .684, p < .001$) showing the strongest linear associations.

Multiple Regression Analysis (Hypothesis Testing)

To evaluate the specific impact and explanatory power of each PM dimension on overall operational efficiency (Y), a multiple linear regression analysis was conducted.

Multiple Regression Analysis Results for Hypotheses Testing

Model Predictor	Unstandardized β	Std. Error	Standardized β	t-value	Sig. (p-value)	Hypothesis Result
(Constant)	0.412	0.185	—	2.227	.027	—
X_1 : Planning	0.284	0.062	0.298	4.580	.000 ($p < 0.05$)	H_1 Supported
X_2 : Risk Mgmt	0.186	0.051	0.223	3.647	.000 ($p < 0.05$)	H_2 Supported
X_3 : Quality Control	0.321	0.065	0.315	4.938	.000 ($p < 0.05$)	H_3 Supported
X_4 : Resource Alloc.	0.215	0.058	0.237	3.707	.000 ($p < 0.05$)	H_4 Supported

- Model Summary: $R = 0.812$, $R^2 = 0.659$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.650$.
- ANOVA: $F(4, 143) = 69.124$, $p < 0.001$.

The model regression summary shows that $R^2 = 0.659$, indicating that 65.9% of the total variance in operational efficiency at SAPPCO is explained by the four project management practices. The F -statistic ($F = 69.124$, $p < 0.001$) confirms the overall statistical significance of the regression model.

Hypothesis Verification Details:

1. Testing H_1 (Planning $\rightarrow$ Productivity):
 - $\beta = 0.298$, $t = 4.580$, $p < 0.001$.

- **Decision: Accepted.** Project planning exerts a significant positive impact on output volume and production line scheduling efficiency.
2. Testing H_2 (Risk Management → Waste Reduction):
- $\beta = 0.223, t = 3.647, p < 0.001$.
 - **Decision: Accepted.** Proactive risk management significantly reduces resin waste, scrap rates, and unplanned machine downtime.
3. Testing H_3 (Quality Control → Finished Goods Quality):
- $\beta = 0.315, t = 4.938, p < 0.001$.
 - **Decision: Accepted.** Tighter quality control is the strongest relative predictor ($\beta = 0.315$), directly lowering defect rates and customer rework requirements.
4. Testing H_4 (Resource Allocation → Timely Delivery):
- $\beta = 0.237, t = 3.707, p < 0.001$.
 - **Decision: Accepted.** Optimal resource allocation ensures effective labor and equipment balancing, directly driving on-time order delivery fulfillment.

Discussion of Findings

The empirical findings confirm that transitioning from ad-hoc operational management to structured PM frameworks creates measurable performance gains within continuous manufacturing environments.

- **Impact of Planning (H_1):** Consistent with Kerzner (2017) and Kuzmych et al. (2024), structured master scheduling mitigates the bottleneck of uncoordinated production changes, leading directly to higher daily production throughput in uPVC and PE lines.
- **Impact of Risk Management (H_2):** Aligning with Kendrick (2015) and Allende et al. (2023), identifying operational risks prior to extrusion runs reduces costly resin scrap and minimizes emergency downtime.
- **Impact of Quality Control (H_3):** Corroborating Nguyen & Nguyen (2023), systematic inline quality checks ensure strict compliance with Saudi and international standards, significantly minimizing defective batches.
- **Impact of Resource Allocation (H_4):** Confirming Calderon Osco et al. (2023), eliminating capacity mismatches across labor shifts and material feeds directly enhances lead-time reliability and delivery schedule fulfillment.

.6. Conclusion

Chapter 4 provided empirical confirmation for all four research hypotheses. The statistical analysis demonstrates that project management practices—led by quality control and structured planning—account for 65.9% of the operational efficiency improvements across SAPPCO’s continuous production lines. These findings establish a solid empirical foundation for formulating the strategic recommendations presented in Chapter 5.

- **Chapter five: Research limitations, Recommendations & Conclusion**

.1. Research Limitations & Future Research

While this study offers valuable empirical evidence regarding the impact of Project Management (PM) practices on operational efficiency in continuous manufacturing environments, several methodological and contextual limitations should be noted:

1. **Geographical and Contextual Scope:**

Data collection was restricted to SAPPCO's production facilities located in Riyadh and Dammam, Saudi Arabia. Although SAPPCO serves as a primary benchmark in the regional plastics industry, caution should be exercised when generalizing these findings to other geographical contexts with different labor dynamics, regulatory conditions, or supply chain structures.

2. Industry-Specific Focus:

The study focused exclusively on continuous pipe extrusion processes (uPVC, PE, and CPVC). Thus, it is possible that the quantitative findings cannot be readily applied to discrete manufacturing systems or batch processes, as well as to industries not manufacturing plastics.

3. Cross-Sectional Time Horizon:

Primary data was collected at a single point in time using a cross-sectional design. Although regression analysis established significant predictive relationships, longitudinal research tracking key operational performance indicators (KPIs) before and after formal PM implementation would provide deeper insight into long-term operational trends.

4. Reliance on Perceptual Measurement:

While secondary operational records were reviewed for context, the statistical model relied primarily on structured self-reported perceptions from managerial and technical staff. Future research could include the real-time sensors of the Industrial Internet of Things (IoT) as well as machine telemetry data to prove the findings of the study.

Directions for Future Research:

- **Cross-Sectoral Replication:** Replicate this PM operational framework across other GCC continuous manufacturing sub-sectors, such as petrochemical refining, basic metals, and glass processing.
- **Synergy with Industry 4.0:** Examine how contemporary project management (PM) systems are linked to Industry 4.0 transformations, including AI-based predictive maintenance, algorithmic scheduling and the digital twin concept.
- **Comparative Organizational Studies:** Research organizations, making comparisons between privately held manufacturers and state-owned companies in terms of the influence of corporate governance and culture on PM processes.

.2. Research Recommendations

Based on the empirical findings—where PM practices accounted for 65.9% of the variance in operational efficiency, the following actionable recommendations are proposed for SAPPCO leadership and GCC manufacturing managers:

1. Standardized Integrated Operational Planning (Addressing H_1):

- Institutionalize Master Production Scheduling (MPS) utilizing specialized enterprise software (e.g., Primavera P6 or MS Project) to transition away from ad-hoc operational adjustments.
- Establish weekly cross-functional planning meetings between line engineers, raw material procurement teams, and dispatch managers to align daily volume targets with market demand.

2. Embed Proactive Risk Management Frameworks (Addressing H_2):

- Transition from reactive maintenance routines to systematic Failure Mode and Effects Analysis (FMEA) across all uPVC, PE, and CPVC extrusion lines to mitigate unplanned equipment breakdowns.
- Implement dual-sourcing arrangements and safety stock buffer mechanisms for raw polymer resins to minimize supply chain vulnerability.

3. Enhance In-Line Quality Control Systems (Addressing H_3):

- Deploy Statistical Process Control (SPC) tools and real-time automated inline thickness measurement sensors to identify wall-thickness deviations early during the extrusion stage, reducing scrap and rework hours.
- Provide continuous technical training for QA/QC technicians on international standard compliance (such as ISO and SASO benchmarks).

4. Optimize Resource Deployment and Capacity Balancing (Addressing H_4):

- Perform periodic line-balancing audits to eliminate flow bottlenecks between material mixing, extrusion, cooling, and cutting stages.
- Introduce cross-training initiatives for shop-floor operators to enable rapid reallocation of labor during unexpected shift shortages or operational demand surges.

5. Strategic Alignment with National Industrial Policies:

- Align internal operational improvement frameworks with Saudi Vision 2030 targets to enhance non-oil GDP contributions, expand regional market competitiveness, and achieve sustainable waste reduction goals.

.3. Conclusion

This study examined the influence of structured Project Management (PM) practices—specifically Project Planning, Proactive Risk Management, Tighter Quality Control, and Optimal Resource Allocation—on key operational efficiency indicators within the continuous production lines of Saudi Plastic Products Company (SAPPCO).

Using a positivist research philosophy and a quantitative deductive methodology, primary data collected from 148 qualified technical and managerial staff across SAPPCO’s Riyadh and Dammam facilities were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics (v27.0).

The statistical findings demonstrated a strong and significant relationship ($R = 0.812$, $R^2 = 0.659$, $F = 69.124$, $p < 0.001$), proving that structured PM practices account for 65.9% of the variance in operational efficiency at SAPPCO. Hypothesis testing confirmed that:

- Project Planning significantly drives total output volume (H_1 , $\beta = 0.298$, $p < 0.05$).**
- Proactive Risk Management systematically cuts material scrap and reduces unplanned machine downtime (H_2 , $\beta = 0.223$, $p < 0.05$).**

- **Tighter Quality Control serves as the strongest relative predictor of finished product standards and rework reduction ($H_3, \beta = 0.315, p < 0.05$).**
- **Optimal Resource Allocation balances labor and equipment utilization to ensure consistent on-time delivery ($H_4, \beta = 0.237, p < 0.05$).**

In conclusion, this research bridges a key theoretical gap by extending classical PM frameworks (such as PMBOK) to continuous, high-volume plastics manufacturing in Saudi Arabia. Practically, it offers SAPPCO and industrial managers throughout the GCC region a proven operational roadmap to replace unstructured decision-making with standardized management systems, directly supporting the industrial growth and operational sustainability goals aligned with Saudi Vision 2030.

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Appendix

Proposed Research Questionnaire

Respondent Note: Please select the level of agreement that best reflects the operational reality of the production lines at the Saudi Plastic Products Company (SAPPCO). (Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

Section 1: Demographic & Professional Profile

- **Job Title:** () Department/Site Manager () Production/Planning Engineer () Line Supervisor () QA/QC or Maintenance Technician
- **Manufacturing Facility (Location):** () Riyadh () Dammam
- **Primary Product Line:** () uPVC Pipe Systems () PE Pipe Systems () CPVC Pipe Systems
- **Years of Experience at SAPPCO:** () Less than 5 years () 5 - 10 years () More than 10 years

Section 2: Questionnaire Constructs (Variable Measurement)

Dimension 1: Project Planning Effectiveness

1. The company establishes integrated, time-oriented operational schedules for each production line to prevent delays.
2. Raw material and equipment requirements are precisely defined before launching any production cycle.
3. Current operational plans effectively support the line in hitting daily volume/output quantity targets.
4. Production plans are updated with sufficient flexibility whenever market demands change.

Dimension 2: Proactive Risk Management

5. Clear preventive and contingency plans are in place to handle sudden equipment or machinery breakdowns.
6. Potential risks regarding raw plastic material supply chain interruptions are assessed in advance.
7. Early detection of operational risks significantly reduces unplanned equipment downtime.
8. Risk mitigation strategies are effectively applied to minimize material scrap and waste during process fluctuations.

Dimension 3: Tighter Quality Control

9. The company applies rigorous and consistent testing/inspection protocols across all stages of pipe manufacturing.
10. Finished products consistently comply with technical specifications and international quality standards.
11. Current QC oversight directly succeeds in reducing defective product rates and reworking hours.
12. Established quality protocols minimize customer complaints and visibly improve customer satisfaction.

Dimension 4: Optimal Resource Allocation

13. Human resources (technicians and operators) are deployed across lines based on actual production needs and skills.
14. Material flow mechanisms prevent buffer blockages or material shortages between production stages.
15. Balanced allocation of manpower and materials helps the plant meet shipping deadlines consistently.
16. Production capacity (machinery and labor hours) is fully utilized without leaving certain areas underutilized.

Dimension 5: Production & Operational Efficiency (Dependent Variables)

17. Production lines have achieved a higher volume of output relative to time expended due to structured management practices.
18. Raw material loss and industrial waste generated by the plastic production lines have visibly decreased.
19. The company maintains a high percentage of orders delivered strictly on time.
20. Organized project management frameworks have successfully cut down overhead and administrative operational costs.

Research Instruments Matrix

Variable Type Variable Name / Dimension Measurement Instrument Target Population Purpose of the Instrument / Hypothesis Testing

Independent Variable:

Project Management Practices

Planning

Questionnaire

(5-point Likert Scale)

Production Managers, Planning Engineers, and Material Planners To measure how structured scheduling and objective setting enhance total productivity output (H1). Risk Management

Questionnaire

(5-point Likert Scale)

Operations Managers, Maintenance and Safety Officers To evaluate how proactive risk mitigation and preventive planning cut material waste and downtime (H2). Quality Control

Questionnaire

(5-point Likert Scale)

Quality Assurance (QA/QC) Engineers, Lab Technicians, to assess the impact of rigorous inspection and compliance on finished product standards (H3). Resource Allocation

Questionnaire

(5-point Likert Scale)

Production Supervisors, Shift Leaders, Logistics Staff To measure how optimal deployment of manpower and materials ensures consistent on-time delivery (H4).

Dependent Variable:

Operational Efficiency Metrics

Productivity, Waste Reduction, Quality, On-time Delivery Quantitative Questionnaire + Secondary Production Data Department Heads and Section Supervisors at SAPPCO To verify actual improvements in throughput and the mitigation of identified operational bottlenecks. Qualitative Support Tool Implementation Barriers & Improvement Recommendations Semi-Structured Interviews Senior Management and Plant Directors (Riyadh & Dammam) To explore field challenges and refine the practical application model for the GCC region.

