Project Meeting and Guidelines: The Impact on Time Performance of Construction Projects in Malaysia
(Mesyuarat Projek dan Garis Panduan: Impak ke atas Prestasi Masa Projek Pembinaan di Malaysia)

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ABSTRACT

A project meeting is an event in which stakeholders communicate amongst themselves to meet expectations in the projects by follow up, update, and get feedback. It is a platform for the team to communicate in any projects to serve the purpose of the meeting. As there is a limited study from the literature on the time performance of the project meeting, it is important to determine whether the impact of the project meeting contributes significantly to project time performance or leads to time waste and affects the project time performance. This qualitative study investigates the most significant factors that impact the project meeting to project time performance. Data analysis was obtained from interviews with twenty-seven project managers in the construction industry among local property developers based in Klang Valley, West Malaysia. The study using nvivo technique of analysis revealed most of the project managers agreed scheduling project meetings will improve time performance. The study also proposed guidelines for project meetings incorporating insightful general elements of meetings and time monitoring by incorporating project time spend and analysis of time spent that will assist the project manager to manage meetings efficiently. The findings revealed most of the project managers agreed that the presence of guidelines for meetings helps to guide meetings efficiently and enhance time project performance.

Keywords: Impact; project meeting; scheduled meeting; meeting management; time project performance; guidelines

ABSTRAK

Mesyuarat projek merupakan medium atau saluran bagi pemegang taruh untuk berkomuikasi dan memenuhi kehendak projek dengan mendapatkan maklum balas, mengemas kini, dan mengambil tindakan susulan. Ia adalah medium atau platform berkomunikasi dalam projek untuk memenuhi tujuan mesyuarat. Oleh kerana terdapat kajian yang terhad dalam literatur mengenai impak mesyuarat projek, maka amatlah penting untuk mengenalpasti impak mesyuarat projek sama ada ia menyumbang secara signifikan kepada prestasi masa projek atau menjejaskan prestasi masa projek. Kajian ke atas mesyuarat projek ini penting bagi mengenalpasti sama ada ia memberi kebaikan kepada prestasi masa projek atau ia menjejaskan masa. Kajian kualitatif ini menyelidik faktor terpenting dalam mesyuarat projek yang memberi kesan ke atas prestasi masa projek. Analisis data diperolehi dari temubual dengan dua puluh tujuh pengurus projek dalam industri pembinaan dalam kalangan pemaju hartanah tempatan berpusat di Lembah Klang, Semenanjung Malaysia. Kajian ini menggunakan teknik nvivo mendapati kebanyakan pengurus projek bersetuju penjadualan mesyuarat meningkatkan prestasi masa projek. Kajian ini juga mencadangkan garis panduan untuk mesyuarat yang menggabungkan elemen umum mesyuarat dan pemantauan masa yang menggabungkan masa yang diperuntukkan dalam projek dan analisis peruntukan masa tersebut; untuk membantu pengurus projek menguruskan mesyuarat dengan cekap dan berkesan. Hasil kajian juga mendapati kebanyakan pengurus projek mengalu-alukan cadangan garis panduan mesyuarat untuk membantu pengurus projek mengendalikan mesyuarat dengan cekap dan meningkat prestasi masa projek.

Kata kunci: Impak; mesyuarat projek; mesyuarat berjadual; pengurusan mesyuarat; prestasi masa projek; garis panduan

INTRODUCTION

Despite the familiarity and importance of meetings in implementing a project, investigation into the substance of discussion and effectiveness of the deliberations has been lacking. According to Emmitt and Gorse (2003), the limitation to investigation was due to the sensitive nature of the discussion and partly to ethical and practical concerns regarding corporate relations. Whether the discussion is productive or otherwise, it is still a meeting. Problems innate to such meetings need to be investigated as to its time efficiency and effectiveness. Inadequate planning, poor execution, and unsuccessful outcomes are evidences of the unsuccessful project (Bagorogoza 2015). A study in performance measurement system by Mohamed et al. (2015) claimed that the process of quality improvement through dialogue, access, risk, and transparency (DART) will be able to promote performance measurement quality, resulting in communication effectiveness. Chin et al. (2018) maintained that construction businesses should communicate effectively with members through organizational communication channels. Khan et al. (2020) revealed that in order to boost productivity, employees must be proactive in their approach and attitude, as well as knowledgeable on the current situation. In addition, meetings should keep close to the set agenda to which participants have been given prior notice and should thus be prepared (Koshy et al. 2017; LeBlanc & Nosik 2019).

Besides concern for time efficiency, there is little evidence to show the existence of a synchronized system in a meeting. Yazid et al. (2017) found that conflict during performance review and its impact on the employee is inadequately examined. This could be due to differing perspectives among employees since conflict cannot be avoided in the process of organizational performance. Meetings are essential to the success of every organization, but most meeting organizers do not appear to follow fundamental meeting guidelines (Geimer et al. 2015). Many studies have discussed the subject of meeting guidelines (design variables) or process features (communication practices) as determinants of overall meeting effectiveness (Allen et al. 2014). In any organization, project meetings are one of the most utilised project management strategies despite the poor standard. As such, appropriate guidelines of meetings need to be formulated (Bagorogoza 2015).

A guideline is a reference tool that displays proper practice for the project manager to follow while conducting a project meeting. Guidelines are mostly formulated based on experience in information sharing, handover and in observations. Without guidelines, a meeting may lack consistency that may disrupt both parties, either the organizer (project manager) or the attendees (team of consultants). Flaws such as missing information, incorrect deliverance of information, unnecessary actions may eventually result in time wastage. This study will suggest the design of guidelines for project meetings that will be explored to enhance the conduct of meetings and also gauge time efficiency.

Project management involves the process of planning, coordinating, managing tasks and resources to achieve a desired project objective within time. This can be realised by making maximum use of available resources and optimal costs, together with quality deliverables. Tracking a project includes monitoring project progress against time, resources, and performance schedule during the project's execution (Mate & Hinge 2015). Successful meetings are important to confirm decisions and to ensure the project is on track. Meetings could lead to valuable wastage in both financial and emotional resources if it turned out to be unproductive. Baharuddin and Yusof (2018) indicated that top management must play an active role not only in resolving project threats and risks, but also in emphasizing the necessity in taking risks by project members so that each is aware of his risk-related obligations. Any weakness in risk management may produce detrimental effect on corporate efficiency, culture, innovation and competitiveness. Hence, proper planning, preparation, and execution of meetings are necessary to realise an efficient meeting. To build a good rapport in a business environment, company leaders must play a critical role along this line (Fresno & Savolainen 2014).

The need for proper meeting guidelines should spur investigations on this issue. If this is not addressed we will never know the limits nor the methods to manage meetings. There is also the lack of evidence to illustrate the consequences of poor time management in project meetings. Although past studies have dealt on meetings in general, very few has focused on project meetings. A theory of meetings that are based on common-sense understanding, has classified these into six components; namely meeting, agenda, chairman, leader, discussion, and response (Ravn 2013). Project meetings are scheduled continuously during project duration to ensure the comprehensive engagement of all project stakeholders in resolving issues, presentation of innovative ideas, and suggestion on remedies (Conrad 2014). The primary objective of project meetings is to arrive at decisive conclusions that lead to the timely and budget-conscious completion of projects, meeting their set specifications and objectives (Lech 2013). The concept of Project Meetings elucidates the established and requisite protocols for conducting meetings. These encompassed aspects such as the agenda, addressing actions from prior meetings, recording minutes, designating the meeting chairperson, handling relevant documents, fostering interaction during the meeting, and subsequent distributing of minutes (Sampietro 2016). Analysing the effect of project meetings on project time management performance in this study is essential in order to gauge the significance of project impact. This study may serve as a starting point for fostering further research and as a point of reference for other researchers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

DEFINING A MEETING AND A PROJECT MEETING

Project meeting is an important component of any project. It involves two or more individuals who come together to achieve a shared goal through verbal engagements, such as sharing information or reaching an agreement (Edmondson 2012; Ravn 2013). Meetings are essential to every organization's success (Geimer et al. 2015). A project meeting is an event in which stakeholders communicate amongst themselves by addressing concerns, exchanging ideas, and approves or rejects ideas that may contribute to a faster project deliverance in line with its planning goals, expectations, and outcomes (Silvius & Schipper 2019; Geimer et al. 2015). It is held at a regular time throughout the project timeframe to ensure that everyone involved in the project is actively participating in addressing problems, propositions of ideas and providing solutions (Conrad 2014). The goal of project meeting is to make decisions that result in projects being completed on time, within budget and set specifications (Lech 2013). Project meetings are organized by the clients and project managers, chaired by either depending on the purpose of the meetings. Discussion may centre on project status and progress made (Naqvi et al. 2011). Project meeting is unavoidable and a standard practice among clients and meted out as soon as the project team is appointed and the project initiated, regardless of its size and complexity (Oh & Choi 2020).

TYPES OF PROJECT MEETING

There are several types of project meetings, from a kick-off meeting to project status meetings, stakeholder meetings, change control meetings, and wrapped up with the end of project meetings, depending on the organizer's approach. In addition, there are also regular team meetings that involve representatives from the client's side, usually their project manager and the consultants' team to brief the technical aspects of the project (Chelliah & Davis 2011). The meetings ensure that the project is moving as intended and issues that are raised are acknowledged and resolved appropriately (Sampietro 2016).

TIME PROJECT PERFORMANCE

Uncertainty in estimating the duration of project activities is one of the critical considerations in the planning phase of the project. Every meeting can be as efficient if proper procedures are followed which may include having proper planning, timely reminder to attendees on meeting agendas, keeping the meeting on-time, taking good notes, requesting updates, and relevant follow ups (Thomson 1998). There are very limited studies on project meetings that discuss project time management and performance (Kauffeld & Willenbrock 2012; Bagorogoza 2015; Romney et al. 2019). Meetings must keep to the agenda to which participants are given prior notice (Koshy et al. 2017; LeBlanc & Nosik 2019). The amount of organizational time spent in meetings is steadily increasing (Rogelberg et al. 2006) and this will extend further with the growing popularity of such consultation (Geimer et al. 2015). Meetings have also acquired a reputation as being costly barriers to productivity that are toxic, terrible and poisonous (Kupritz & Cowell 2011; Allen & Shuffler 2018). Such adverse outcomes may render meetings as unproductive and unnecessary, and at cost to efficiency that may lead to lowered company morale and performance (Geimer et al. 2015).

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED IN THE MEETINGS

Meetings serve as a central platform for acquiring and exchanging information necessary to complete projects successfully. A study on interpersonal communication by Emmitt and Gorse (2003) found that meetings were not only used to manage resources and track progress, but they also served as channels to discuss, debate, and resolve problems and conflicts. The study concluded that project meetings are crucial in the formation and maintenance of relationships that influence and control the project. They are necessary platforms to discuss on, negotiate, compromise and reach a consensus in business dealings. A successful meeting can confidently achieve project delivery right on targeted time within the project cost and quality. Several studies have examined meeting structure (design variables) or process features (communication practices) as determinants of overall meeting effectiveness (Allen et al. 2014). According to Allen et al. (2018), there are three things that need to be detailed out; namely meeting design and preparation before the meeting, critical leader's and attendees' actions during the meeting and considerations to follow-up with and its lasting impact, after the meeting. There are no standard rules on duration of a project meeting. It could be one hour for simple projects or a commitment of one or two days for highly complex projects, depending on the agenda (LeBlanc & Nosik 2019). Spending too much time on meetings may be problematic since it may constrain the employee from working individually. This may restrict creativity time, say to closely examine the firm's strategic decisions, or to network and detect business opportunities (Rovelli 2020).

UNDERSTANDING SUCCESSFUL MEETINGS

The study on project meetings is crucial considering their impact on the organization's overall effectiveness as well as the well-being of team members (Rogelberg et al. 2014). Rogelberg et al. (2007) earlier agreed that there is no clear consensus on what meeting elements are necessary for success. They however stated that structural elements, relational elements, information acquisition and time management are all important contributors. The study also identified eight categories for a successful meeting; namely engagement, preparation, organization, outcomes, cooperation, communication, timing, and, attendance. It is important that the chairman or the leader of the meeting begins by setting a clear agenda and format, discusses timings and ensures that everyone feels equally valued (Oeppen et al. 2020). Most meetings are convened with barely two hours' notice, according to Eisenbart et al. (2014), and 63% are held without the provision of a printed agenda. Consistent with the conservation of resources theory, most employees are unhappy with meetings that reduce their work-related resources such as those that constrain their time, are not structured and are unproductive. Eisenbart et al. (2014) emphasized the importance of keeping strict meeting schedules in terms of how information are overly stretched out, unnecessary conflicts that affect meeting effectiveness and ultimate decisions. They also maintained that regardless of whether a choice to be made was scheduled or not, the potential impact of meetings on the utilization and distribution of information, elaboration, conflict, decision-making speed, and decision-making effectiveness need judicious consideration.

MEETINGS AND GUIDELINES OF THE PROJECT

There are numerous formats on how to arrange meetings and make them effective. These include setting of measurable meeting objectives, developing an agenda that includes a list of activities, prioritising these two or three days earlier, arranging papers on general agenda topics for review, inviting respective persons to the meeting, organising a suitable place with conducive environment for the meeting, and to have a set start and end time for the meeting (LeBlanc & Nosik 2019). Meeting time, and work performance should be correlated in a way that employees enjoy meetings when they have a clear objective, and when important relevant information is shared. Conversely, meetings that constrain their time, lack structure and are unproductive are anathema to participants (Allen et al. 2012). To understand the purpose of meetings, further specification of the guidelines are needed. Geimer et al. (2015) proposed a model through incorporating three areas into the guidelines; namely before meetings (preparation prior to the meeting), during meeting (on the time of the meeting), and after meeting (after the event took place). Allen et al. (2018) detailed out three areas; before meeting (meeting design and preparation), during meeting (critical leader's and attendees' actions), and after meeting (considerations to follow-up and lasting impact of meeting).

GUIDELINES OF THE MEETINGS IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT FOR PMBOK

Project management discipline emphasizes the strong connection between time management and project success. The concept of a "project" inherently involves time as a temporary endeavour with specific start and end points. The crucial factors for project success are completing projects within set timelines, budgets, and specifications (PMBOK 2017). Visual tools such as Gantt charts and milestones aid project actors in managing interactions and understanding project activities. Timely performance relies on resource selection, management schedules, supervision, control, and communication (Joiner 2007). Poor quality management, budgeting, human resource management, and team relationships can hinder time performance. Investigating how knowledge workers organize their time in various projects and routines can offer insights into knowledge practices affecting organizational learning and project outcomes (Wu & Passerini 2013). Time management involves regulating tasks within a given timeframe. It is a key aspect of job performance, contributing to profitability and group success (Meeampol & Ogunlana 2006). Effective project management ensures timely completion, budget adherence, and specification fulfilment. Tools such as meeting minutes are considered in time management (CIOB 2008), but inadequate procurement systems may contribute to poor project performance (Ali & Au Yong 2014; Chin & Hamid 2015). Two elements are needed for the Guidelines of Project Meetings; namely Project Time Management and Analysis of Time Spent. Project Time Management (PTM) encompasses planning and management methods for meeting project deadlines. PTM processes were shown to positively impact project completion and performance (Carcano et al. 2015). Project performance drivers encompass a range of measures, including time, which defines a successful project as achieving technical efficiency and maintaining schedules (Langston 2014). The complexity of defining time management across disciplines highlights the need for a comprehensive description (Aeon & Aguinis 2017). Analysing time spent helps identify obstacles to goal achievement within specific timeframes and regularly re-evaluate procrastination patterns (Chase et al. 2013).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

QUALITATIVE TECHNIQUE AND DEFINITIONS

This study adopted an inductive analysis process to formulate theories and develop a general hypothesis on the impact of project time on scheduled meeting.

For data analysis, the qualitative technique is the only method that will be used in the study. Only a few studies have elucidated the processes of meetings and most of these adopted the quantitative approach. Field-based investigations are subject to many variations since environmental factors are unpredictable and observing phenomena can be difficult. Some researchers found that quantitative methods are unsuitable for long organizational study and instead favour qualitative research (Emmitt & Gorse 2003). Quantitative methodologists devote significant time improving the quality of data collecting and analysis whereas fewer issues constraint qualitative research (Townsend 2013). In this study the in-depth interview was adopted as research approach.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

Twenty-seven project managers involved in this study were selected through the snowball sampling technique. A minimum sample size of twenty-five to thirty people was required to achieve saturation and redundancy (Dworkin 2012). The quality of data, the scope of the study, the nature of the topic, the information from respondents, and the study design used were factors that will determine sampling size (Morse 2000). This figure allows for a thorough investigation that addresses the research questions, enables sufficient data to be collected and increases the likelihood of hypothetical negative cases to be explored (Dworkin 2012; Charmaz 2006).

The background of the respondents was carefully vetted before proceeding with the interview. This should meet the requirements of "information power" in terms of study objective, sample specificity, proven theory, quality of discussion, and the analytic technique. The criteria for selecting respondents for this study were as follows; project manager with twenty years minimum experience, attached to local property developers based in Klang Valley, Peninsular Malaysia, and with relevant academic background in project management including building construction, infrastructure development, and transportation. Noor and Mehar (2021) examined the factors influencing risk propensity among project managers in the Klang Valley. They revealed that leadership qualities and experience hold greater significance in shaping the risk propensity of project managers (Shokory et al. 2022). A study on a group of project managers in the Klang Valley, to gauge the level of uncertainty factors and performance in projects, concluded that the feedback from the respondents was sufficiently suitable to form a database for analysis (Yacob et al. 2017). Following the background check with screening based on the listed criteria, a total of twenty-seven project managers were selected for the proceeding interview.

DATA ANALYSIS

The Nvivo software was used to analyse and produce output data gathered from interview. The subsequent qualitative analysis was aimed at synthesising and identifying patterns in the data without losing its diversity. The data was reflective leading to many observations that generated further questions and issues to be explored and analysed in-depth. In total, there were four types of analyses applied in this study; namely horizontal analysis, vertical analysis, trend analysis, and ratio analysis.

HORIZONTAL ANALYSIS

Horizontal analysis is one of the in-depth analyses in the phase following induction and characterised by horizontal data slicing that warranted better understandings. It compares data over two or more subjects for a particular variable. It reads across the page to compare any one-line item to categorize qualitative data to confirm conclusions and generate meaning (Sandelowski 2000). The basic approach to analysing the data was to read on and listen to the recording over a few times in order to identify the theme. The common pattern in the data will then be recognised as the major findings.

VERTICAL ANALYSIS

Vertical analysis is one of the depth analyses in the phase after induction with data sliced vertically to strengthen and warrant understanding. It compares data over two or more subjects for a particular variable. Vertical analysis was carried out on each item on a single statement in which the qualitative data for each component were shown vertically. The basic analysis of data is similar to that for horizontal analysis but conducted in a different direction to be read and listen repeatedly in order to identify the theme.

TREND ANALYSIS

Trend analysis is conducted over the combined findings from both vertical and horizontal analyses. It is the interaction of different forms of analysis that aids in the evaluation of performance in order to identify important patterns (Loeb et al. 2017). The analysis involved synthesising data from multiple sources into case studies. These are done to systematically compare and contrast data to deduce a typology of changes in practice, and identify the underlying aspects of literacy practices that can be fine-tuned. This type of analysis will yield the most significant findings of the study.

RATIO ANALYSIS

Ratio analysis combines both findings from vertical and horizontal analyses. The ratios are snapshots of the condition at a specific point but there may be underlying activity trends that are fast eroding an excellent current position (Loeb et al. 2017). One of the criteria used in understanding the ratio is in its trend whether the performance is increasing or declining. This analysis is essential to identify their desirable characteristics based on a common and most anticipated view.

FINDINGS

This section provides the total data collection from the interview session. The qualitative analysis will further identify the common ground response and most significant viewpoint that will enrich the findings of the study. Some important conclusions are given.

No.	Position/ Background	Organization Type (Size)	Total Industrial Experience (Years)	Total Client Experience (Years)	Project Involvement
1	Head of Department (Engineering)	GLC	26	19	Building construction
2	Project Manager (Architect)	GLC	21	13	Infrastructure and Transportation
3	Project Manager (Engineer)	Small startup	20	16	Building construction and Contract
4	Project Manager (Engineer)	GLC	21	15	Infrastructure and Transportation
5	Assistant Manager (Quantity Surveyor)	GLC	23	12	Contracts
6	Head of Department (Town Planning)	Well established	25	12	Building construction
7	Project Manager (Architect)	GLC	21	12	Building construction
8	Head of Department (Environmental HSE)	Well established	24	16	Infrastructure
9	Senior General Manager	GLC	21	13	Infrastructure and Transportation
10	Senior Manager (Engineer)	GLC	30	30	Infrastructure and Transportation
11	Project Manager (Engineer)	GLC	21	21	Building construction and Infrastructure
12	Project Manager (Engineer)	Well established	26	22	Building construction
13	Senior General Manager (Engineer)	Well established	30	25	Building construction
14	General Manager (Engineer)	Well established	27	27	Contracts
15	Assistant General Manager (Engineer)	Medium scale established	28	13	Building construction
16	Project Manager (Town Planner)	GLC	22	14	Infrastructure and Transportation
17	Project Manager (Engineer)	GLC	22	17	Infrastructure and Transportation
18	Project Manager (Architect)	Medium scale established	23	20	Building construction
19	Project Manager (Quantity Surveyor)	GLC	22	15	Contract
20	Project Manager (Engineer)	GLC	20	15	Infrastructure, Transportation, and Contracts
21	Project Manager (Engineer)	Medium scale established	24	16	Building construction
22	Head of Department (QAQC)	Medium scale established	25	18	Infrastructure
23	Project Manager (Engineer)	Well established	27	23	Infrastructure and Transportation
24	Project Manager (Engineer)	GLC	25	15	Building construction
25	Project Manager (Architect)	GLC	30	20	Building construction
26	Project Manager (Architect)	GLC	30	22	Building construction
27	Project Manager (Engineer)	Small startup	23	21	Building construction and Contracts

EVALUATION ON PROJECT MEETING ON-TIME PROJECT PERFORMANCE

The Implications of Project Meeting on Time Performance   Project meeting has significant impact on time performance since only three out of twenty seven project managers disagreed in scheduling project meeting to improve time efficiency. The remaining twenty four managers agreed with scheduling the project meeting to improve performance. Scheduling project meetings makes for easy delivery since the occasion enables members

to sit down together, exchange information and present reporting. The common activity ensures members are progressing in the same direction.

Eighteen out of twenty four managers were agreeable on scheduling project meeting. This enables the project to appear organized and the team well prepared thus ensuring the meeting to be effective and meet expectations.

The importance of a meeting in a project has been stressed by one of the project managers with twenty five years of working experience as stated below;

"Improves coordination because everyone can give their feedbacks. Clients are able to monitor; it encourages commitments and it is more effective that enables efficient information sharing with other parties and fast decision makings."
Project Manager 24

The Other Contributing Factors to Time Project Performance   Based on the response from the project managers, two factors were identified as the most significant to time project performance; scheduling project meetings and lack of meeting coordination. However, other factors must also be considered to enhance project time performance such as the implication of unscheduled project meeting and delay in time performance.

The Implications of Unscheduled Project Meeting on Time Performance   Unscheduled project meeting is something that must be prevented. It mostly results in frustrations and leads to poor time performance as indicated by most of project managers from large organizations and GLCs. Unscheduled project meeting is unorganized and characterized by improper planning. It ultimately caused the project team to be unprepared in making presentation thus adversely affecting the smooth flow in project timeline. The managers further stressed that the majority of their schedules are occupied with meetings. A proper time allocation for scheduled meetings is necessary to prevent clashes with other activities. The usual practice in large organizations and GLCs is for the full project team to be present in the scheduled meeting. Unscheduled meetings tend to be postponed whenever team members are not able to attend due to other commitments.

The Delay in Time Performance in the Project   Project delay is something that has been least thought of in time performance. The most common reason for delay is the unexpected circumstances that may constraint authority requirements. This factor should be treated appropriately through risk identification and risk crisis management to prevent adverse impact on time performance.

THE IMPORTANCE OF DEFINING MEETING AND SCHEDULING A MEETING IN A PROJECT

The Importance of Defining Meeting and Proper Scheduling of Meeting in a Project   The most important aspect in defining and scheduling project meetings, as suggested by nine out of twenty seven project managers, is to meet expectations and commitment to its delivery. These managers have experiences in megaprojects where appropriately scheduled meetings are routinely stressed. One GLC manager emphasized that meeting is meant to meet expectations and goals. It is a platform that enables the team to track project progress and contribute ideas on items to be expected and subsequently delivered. Another project manager from a medium organization stressed that meeting is important for members to stay focused on the given agenda. In this manner, the team always know what to expect, thus obviating avoidable delays where on-spot decisions can be made.

The other Contributing Factors that are Important in a Project   Formal scheduled meetings, informal meetings, casual communications, formats of meetings and meeting agendas are all identified as factors that are important in a project. This suggests that such factors that define meetings and proper scheduling of projects are increasingly recognized as important by project managers.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF HAVING GUIDELINES FOR MEETING ON-TIME PROJECT PERFORMANCE

The Presence of Guidelines for Meetings to Monitor Time Performance   It has been stated above that the majority of project managers support the establishment of guidelines for meetings and shall contribute to the timely delivery of the project. Only four out of twenty seven project managers disagreed on the need for guidelines to increase efficiency. The common positive response from project managers was that guidelines greatly facilitate them in handling the meeting and sustain its smooth flow. It is a judicious beginning for project managers or new practitioners to adapt to the correct way to conduct a meeting and achieve quality outcomes. The guidelines enable members to be well prepared for the meeting. The majority of project managers justified the guidelines based on their experiences. The prescriptions allow them to adapt fast in managing projects and adopt corrective actions. A senior GLC manager, with twenty one years of experience, maintained that guidelines for meetings are essential to condition them to be more productive and time efficient.

The other Contributing Factors in Guidelines Establishment for Meetings   Most respondents expressed the need for guidelines to ensure on-time project performance. However, other factors such as time performance assessment should also be considered to expedite the establishment of guidelines for meetings.

Time Performance Assessment through Guidelines Establishment for Meetings   Time performance assessment in establishing meeting guidelines is the most significant reason to project managers and always figure importantly in agendas to enable the chairperson to take effective control of meetings. The managers emphasized agendas based on what is required to resolve issues rather than to just skimming through the meeting. These managers, who came from various backgrounds and project experiences, recognised that all projects require solutions to outstanding problems to be sought after judiciously and not skimmed over superficially during meetings. One project manager from a small organization mentioned the need to have agenda-based meetings rather than time-based ones. Tedious issues need deep and thorough discussions, and cannot be skimmed away to be raised again in the next meeting. Another project manager from a medium-sized organization stressed for agendas that need to be properly identified, and given adequate time allocation for discussions.

THE ADOPTION OF GUIDELINES FOR ALL TYPES OF MEETINGS

The Way to Adopt Guidelines for All Types of Meetings   Guidelines for meetings can be adapted from their generalised features that can be listed out. Sixteen project managers out of the total twenty even maintained that meeting guidelines can be adapted from the similarities, common ground rules and SOPs of the generalised example. General guidelines are somewhat sufficiently similar to serve their purpose. The other eleven project managers however felt that adopting guidelines would overwhelm them as most already have numerous things on their hands and furthermore they already know how to handle meetings given their vast experience in managing projects.

The other Contributing Factors of Guidelines that can suit all types of Meeting   There are two most significant factors that are important in adopting guidelines for all meetings. These are the implementation of the additional guidelines and addressing matters in conducting the guidelines during meetings. However, there are four other factors that need to be considered in order to enhance the adoption of guidelines to all meetings. These are the requirements for the guidelines to different meetings, the structure before, during, and after adopting the guidelines, the specification of time duration, frequency of meetings, and the requirement of additional guidelines.

The Requirement of Guidelines for Different Meetings   Project managers who elected for guidelines emphasized their importance in steering them to manage the flow of meeting, to meet and deliver expectations, and to correctly anticipate different meetings with dissimilar objectives. The majority of project managers, from large organizations and GLCs, were agreeable on this since they usually value the involvements and anticipation of these meetings which reflect their mutual agreement. The type of meeting may differ, with some merely skimming through minutes and reports while others plunging deep into high-level decision makings.

The Structure Before, During, and After in the Guidelines to Time Performance   The structure of guidelines has attracted modest attention from project managers who mostly expressed the importance of incorporating the format before, during, and after the meeting in order to drive project time performance. The majority of project managers are from different organizations and have diverse involvements with the projects. In their experience, they feel that the given guidelines structure is really necessary. They share common views on the preparation, and expectations of meetings and how to make these concise so that the members are well prepared. A normal cycle should for example comprise presentation of information during meetings and which require follow-ups after that.

The Specification of Time Duration and Meeting Numbers to Time Performance   The structure of guidelines of time duration in meetings and total meeting frequency are factors that command the attention of some project managers and should be examined. They emphasized the importance of timekeeping that is to be incorporated in the meeting to cut off irrelevant points and allows for inputs without dragging discussion time.

However, the requirements to minimize the number of meetings or set out a maximum ceiling is either difficult to realise or may serve as a good example of project management. Frequency of meetings is hard to anticipate due to cases of project complexity or inference of external issues that could drag project timeframes leading to more frequent meetings and aggressive response. In a normal project, it would be possible to set the number of meetings according to type such as twice a month for TCM meetings or once a month for CCM meetings.

It goes the same way with meetings that are a hundred percent agenda-based. Even though such meeting was set for two hours, it may actually last for fifteen minutes. It is thus not necessary to drag the meeting to two hours because we may need to spend the time thus saved to address unresolved matters following the meeting. It should

also be noted that the number and quality of meetings and even the quality of the project itself is not necessarily based on having fewer meetings.

The Requirements Additional Specification Guidelines for Meeting   Even though the additional specification guidelines of the meeting did not draw much attention from the project managers, but those who responded to the query shared a common feedback suggesting them to get along with the project prior to further modifications if and when necessary. They also highlighted that any modifications were based on the experiences and circumstances encountered during the project. They felt that there was a possibility to make modifications due to unforeseen authority requirements or there may be a change throughout the phase of the project based on project needs.

THE WAY PRACTICE OF GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE TIME PROJECT PERFORMANCE

The Way to Practice Guidelines for Effective Time Project Performance   The most common response given by project managers to achieve effective project time performance was through contractual agreement or Letter of Appointment (LoA). Fourteen out of twenty seven managers did not mention identifying and specifying the guidelines in contractual agreement or whether LoA is the way to implement them to achieve effective project time performance. The responses were provided by project managers who were mostly involved in various backgrounds and project involvements. Through their experience, the contract is perceived as a legal way and a strong base to enforce the guidelines. One of the project managers mentioned that guidelines for meeting can be adopted as recorded below:

"Through contractual agreement there's the need to prepare documentation during kick-off meeting by sending out the handbook guidelines to the team members."
Project Manager 27

The Other Contributing Factors of the Way Guidelines can be Practiced   Three variables have been listed as the most critical factors to ensure that meeting guidelines can be practiced and implemented: The way to practice the guidelines, the view to legally bind these, and the exercise of bounded guidelines. In relation to the third factor, fewer project managers have thought about it or the possibility for the legally bind guidelines for all professionals to comply with.

The Possibility for the Legally Bind Guidelines for All Professionals to Practice   Only ten project managers responded to the query on contractual agreement. Of these, five agreed to the need of such agreement in order to prevent disputes. Project managers from small organizations positively responded to the legally bind (Ed: bound?) guidelines since they have to protect their positions. In comparison to large organizations, the team of consultants willingly accepted the guidelines if the client or project manager intends to impose any terms. One project manager from a GLC mentioned that the general way to adopt the guidelines was by spelling them out in a contractual agreement.

DISCUSSION

IMPACTS OF THE PROJECT MEETINGS TO TIME PROJECT PERFORMANCE

This section explains the link between project meetings and time performance. It is divided into two parts; the first part reveals the importance of coordination between meeting and project performance, and the second justifies the method that can be undertaken in managing projects.

The project meeting revealed that only three managers felt that they had bad experience in the project. The meeting served as a platform to resolve issues and helped to drive project performance. The findings revealed the implications of unscheduled project meeting and the delay in time performance. These are less recognised factors that contribute to the perfection of time project performance.

The unscheduled project meeting is peculiar since it is unorganized and has improper planning causing the project team to be unprepared for presentation. These findings are consistent with those of LeBlanc and Nosik (2019) in terms of planning and conducting effective meetings. The scheduled meetings are favoured, with participants allowed to transit to other activities. The setting up of project meetings were found consistent with findings based on experiences.

The delay in project time performance was due to unexpected circumstances beyond anticipation specifically when related to fulfilling requirements of the authority. However, there is a lack of evidence to support this reasoning considered to affect on-time performance since most scholars could not comprehend the delay. This knowledge gap deserves further investigation.

This section further clarifies the suggestion to establish guidelines for meetings and the way to adopt these in the project. It is divided into three parts: The first part discusses the establishment and implementation of guidelines for meetings in the project, the second elaborates on the adoption of the guidelines for all meetings while the third discusses the way to practice and implement the guidelines in a project meeting.

Only four out of twenty seven project managers disagreed with the suggestion of adopting guidelines for project meetings. The guidelines are important to steer project managers in handling meetings correctly in order to meet the objectives. The circumstances that impacted the industry have prompted the urgency to establish guidelines for meetings to protect them from further damage. The study revealed the requirements of the guidelines for different meetings. These include the structure before, during, and after the meetings, the specification of time duration and meeting frequency, and requirement of additional guidelines for the meetings. Together they constitute unrecognised factors that have been overlooked in implementing project meeting guidelines.

The requirement of guidelines for different meetings is important for smooth project management given the different expectations and objectives. LeBlanc and Nosik (2019) mentioned in their study that creating guidelines may be difficult and cannot be accomplished alone since meetings serve multiple purposes which may not be easily reflected in these specifications. The findings are consistent with Geimer et al. (2015) who contributed similar ideas on guidelines for meetings. However, the sparse contribution from other researchers could not justify the benefits of adopting multiple guidelines for different meetings. Further examination into this information gap is necessary.

The structure of guidelines before, during, and after meetings is important for efficient project performance. The majority of project managers come from various backgrounds and experiences and most maintained that varying the guideline structures is really necessary. Findings on the establishment of different guidelines are also consistent with Geimer et al. (2015) who suggested the outline of general guidelines.

The specification of time duration and meeting frequency are important for incorporation into meetings to remove irrelevant points and thus keeping tense discussions. However, the requirements to minimize the number of meetings or set a maximum number is hard to materialize but should serve as good examples.

There is a lack of evidence to indicate the importance of time duration of meetings and meeting frequency. The literature is sparse on this and thus should be the subject of further enquiry. Similarly, there is meagre proof that additional guidelines are necessary for meetings and past researchers did not highlight for their provision. This issue should also be examined further.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to elucidate the impact of project meetings on project time management; whether they influence on-time performance, project deliverance or progress. Recommendations on proposed meeting guidelines was also examined to determine their necessity and urgency to enhance project time performance. The SOPs of Project Time Management and Analysis of Time Spent, were duly formulated as guidelines for meetings.

The importance of understanding the impact of on-time project performance, either among professionals involved or society at large, is crucial so that those personally affected by scheduled or unscheduled meetings will understand the consequences on their respective organizations. The study suggests that fixing scheduled meetings will benefit time of project performance since they appear organized and structured during presentation, which thus greatly assist team preparation in meeting expectations. Almost all project managers with identical organization background and experience in project management agreed that time project performance will be improved if fixed schedule meetings are adopted. Similar outcomes were also shown by small-scaled organizations. All project managers also agreed that scheduling meetings not only track progress and monitor performance but are also used as platforms to update the team and provide direction. In fact, scheduled meetings were found to be common practice to most managers.

This study also discussed the insightful views by project managers on the formulation of meeting guidelines and recommendations to address on-time performance. They also ensure that project objectives are met and the participants are not frustrated by the project manager or attending consultants. The guidelines were formulated to steer project managers in conducting project meetings efficiently and will serve as reference for them. The study established that most project managers look forward to the adoption of these guidelines in meetings since it will enhance time project performance. Given that the ground rules of project meetings are about the same, common general guidelines are thus most preferred. Adoption of multiple guidelines is not only time consuming and costly, it may also overwhelm project managers who also have other commitments to simultaneously manage the organization.

The findings of this study add to the wider investigation on project meetings and time project performance since they are interrelated and exert impact on overall project flow and time performance. The added information

may be useful in spurring future research. This study recommends further in-depth research on project meetings including examining the role of time management as an influential factor and suitability of conducting virtual scheduled meetings that are now gaining currency. The environmental and cultural setting of the project may differ between virtual meeting and physical meeting. The study has also identified several limitations. Some project managers for example have very tight schedules and are also occupied with their other commitments. Hence it is crucial to impose time limits in responding to interview questions so as to be time efficient.

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