

**ADDIS ABEBA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF COMMERCE
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS**



**THE ASSESSMENT OF PROJECT PLANNING PRACTICE AND IT'S
CHALLENGES IN THE CASE OF ETHIO TELECOM HEAD OFFICE**

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**A project work submitted to Addis Abeba University School of commerce in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in
project management**

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June, 2022

Addis Abeba, Ethiopia

ADDIS ABEBA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF COMMERCE
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS
DEPARTMENT OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT

This is to certify that the project work is prepared by yosef meskele, entitled “The assessment of project planning practice and it’s challenges in the case of ethio telecom head office” submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in project management complies with regulation of the university and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

Signed by the examining committee:

Internal Examiner _____ Signature _____ Date _____

External Examiner _____ Signature _____ Date _____

Advisor _____ Signature _____ Date _____

DECLARATION

I, Yosef Meskele, hereby declare that the work contained in this project work is my own original work & it has not been submitted for a degree or any other purpose to any university or educational institution and all references used have been properly acknowledged.

Name: Yosef Meskele

Signature:

Date: June 2022

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Thanks God for giving me the courage to pass through all the hardship and finally enjoying the success. Then, I would like to express my special thanks of gratitude to my advisor Wasihun Mohammed (PhD) for his constrictive and supportive guidance for accomplishing of this paper. I also would like to thank to the stuffs of Ethio telecom project management offices for completing the survey questionnaires.

Abstract

The study aim to assess the practice and challenges of project planning practice in Ethio telecom head office, the study used both qualitative and quantitative research approach and the data obtained through questionnaire has been analyzed using descriptive statistics. Since the number of stuffs of project management office in Ethio telecom is manageable, census is used. To acquire the intended information the researcher used structurally designed questionnaire. Both primery and secondary data's were also used on the research. Frequency, percentage, mean and standard devition were used to analyze the data obtained. The result of the study indicated that most of the project planning processes were poorly practiced mainly with respect to the 10 most important project management knowledge areas, the study mainly reveled project quality management planning, project schedule management plan, project risk management plan, project integration management plan, project communication management plan and stakeholders management plan were poorly planned and require a serious effort to improve the gaps. The study also identified the application of project planning tools and stakeholder's participation on the project plan is so limited and improvement is needed to make the plan more effective. Some of the major challenges identified on the study were lack of time management so projects were not execute as per the planned schedule, lack of clarity on communication, poor project quality standards, absense of project risk identification and risk response plan and luck of adequate project management training. Thus, the study suggest the organization give emphases on project planning by considering all known project management knowledge areas and to use more advanced project planning tools and techniques and to provide training and development programs for the project management office stuffs.

Key Words: project planning practice, project planning tools, challenges of project planning

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background to the study

Project is “A temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique project service or result.” Projects are temporary and close down on the completion of the work they were chartered to deliver. (PMI, 2008)

Project also defined as a series of unique and related activities with a goal that must be achieved at a set time, within its cost constraints and in accordance with set specification (PMI, 2018)

Successful projects should be completed within the planned time and budget respective to the quality and scope parameters that are defined on the project plan. To accomplish the project objective and to get the required output projects should undergo with different phases (PMI, 2014)

Among these different phases of the project, project plan plays an essential role in helping guide stakeholders, sponsors, and team and project managers through other project phases. Planning is needed to identify desired goal, reduce risk, avoid missed deadlines, and ultimately deliver the agreed product, service or result. (Atkinson, 1999)

The Planning Process Group consists of those processes performed to establish the total scope of the effort, define and refine the objectives, and develop the course of action required to attain those objectives. (PMBOK, 2008)

Projects are mainly failed to meet the required objective because of improper or poor planning practice of many organization.

Donnelly et al., (1998) has shown the importance of project planning on projects and its influence on project success. Findings of their study have proven that higher levels of project planning effort can result in significant cost and schedule savings and poor planning also causes for the failure and increase of the cost of a project. Stakeholders of projects would like to accomplish their projects successfully, according to their plan and schedule. But they fail to achieve what they plan due to the problem they create in the planning phase of the project.

Many countries in the world are affected by poor project planning exercise (Yu-Ren and Edward 2008) lack of proper planning is identified as one of the main reasons for the failure results of projects in Africa (Moradat et al., 2005).

Time spent on planning activity will reduce the risk of project failure and increase the chance of project success, insufficient analysis and planning lead to failed project (Morris et al. ,2008)

From the IMF 2020 report Ethiopia shows a good economy growth for the last 10 years whereas the economy should be sustainable to see the development in every aspect, the country still need better electric power, roads and expansion, building of hospitals, schools and telecommunication services. These activities will be implemented through different projects and which will help for the development of the economy of the country.

The introduction of telecommunication services in Ethiopia dates back to 1884 G.C by Minilik regime who first introduced a telephone technology in Ethiopia. The first telecommunication line was installed from Harar to Addis Ababa with 477 KM distance coverage (Ethiopian telecommunication company profile, 2010)

Ethiopian Telecommunications Corporation (ETC) is the prior telecommunications operator (PTO) in Africa. It is a state-owned enterprise and the sole telecom service provider in the country. ETC was reformed it's structure and has been called Ethio telecom from the year 2010 G.C. and provides variety of services like internet, mobile, land line connection, data and internet and ISP services (email, web site, domain name and others)

Ethio telecom is structured with several divisions, and six of those divisions have a PMO office headed by a director and those are Fixed Line PM Section, Transport Network PM Section, Wireless and Access Network PM section, Infrastructure Power and Environment PM Section, and SPM division that acts as a senior corporate project office that support and manage the PMO offices. Ethio telecom runs its projects with different perspectives, some of the projects are planned and executed by Ethio telecom itself but majority of its projects was executed through other international operators like Huawei, Ericsson, and ZTE by using local contractors or SME. Ethio telecom is currently implementing two big operations, the one is Next generation network (NGN) started on 2006 contracting ZTE for the implementation and the other is telecom

Expansion Projects (TEP), that was started on 2013, and implementing by ZTE, Huawei and Ericsson.

On the year 2019 the government decided to liberalize and privatize the telecom industry.the liberalization has intention of providing full operation license to two operators while the privatization will transfer 40% of the companies share to a foreign company via bid and Kenyan company safaricom was win the bid on 2021 and about to start its own telecom service within short period of time.(ECA,2021).

1.2. Statement of the problem

Project planning plays an essential role in helping guide stakeholders, sponsors, teams, and the project manager through other project phases. Planning is needed to identify desired goals, reduce risks, avoid missed deadlines, and ultimately deliver the agreed product, service or result. Without careful planning, project performance is almost certainly guaranteed to suffer.(Richard, 2012).

According to Dvir et al. (2003), it's strongly related that successful project planning is led to the success of the entire project as a clear definitions of functional and technical specifications in project planning can lead to more effective execution of projects. They also found a strong correlation between successful implementation of planning procedures and benefits to project stakeholders.

Other researchers on the project planning activity such as Morris et al. (1998)show that insufficient planning will lead to a failed project but the more planning there is in a project, the more successful the project will be.

Companies should consider project planning and its activities as the starting and ending point of your project. All roads lead back to this phase, including your activities and final deliverables. Take the time to slow things down and plan all aspects of your project, including tasks, milestones, deliverables, costs, resources and all other possible considerations before diving into your project.

In many cases project planning practice of developing countries are very poor, the main reason for poor project performance in Africa is recognized as lack of proper planning and

implementation (Moradat et al.,2005). Moreover, failure of projects in developing countries was mainly due to insufficient and ineffective planning process. (Yardley,2002; Richard, 2012).

Projects that are implemented by the government havemassive importance to the citizens and residents of that nation as it forms part of the building blocks that support national growth. The successful execution of projects serves as a visible indicator of development in a country (Hanachor, 2013). And one of key reason for the failure of projects in developing countries is lack of effective project planning (Dvir et al., 2003)

According to Ogwueleka (2015), the rate of project failure in developing countries has been found to be higher than the rate in developed countries, thereby creating the need to embark on more development projects. These projects however, experience several challenges such as inefficient planning, cost variation and difficult stakeholders.

As mentioned on the introductory part of this research Ethio telecom is one of the prior and the only telecom service provider in Ethiopia with the vision to be a world class telecom service provider, and now the company is undertaking different telecom expansion and infrastructure projects to meet the company objective and to serve its customers satisfaction.

Therefore, in order to achieve the company's objective the projects commenced by the organization must be accomplished successful. Nonetheless, according to internal sources and preliminary observation on the company, Ethio telecom faces difficulty of implementing projects as per the planned schedule and there is lack of communication of project plan within the team and stakeholders. So, in order to solve those problem areas and to meet the desired outcome, the researcher assumed the company requires systematic and organized study and focus on project planning process.

From the general overview described on the above statement the student researcher is interested to undertake this study by focusing on the assessment and challenges of Ethio telecom project planning practice and will forward a recommendation after a rigorous analysis on the gaps and problem areas, that will be beneficial for the study organization to improve its planning practice and lessen a project failure.

1.3. Research questions

1. What is the project planning practice of Ethio telecom looks like?
2. What are the common problem areas of project planning activities in Ethio telecom ?
3. To what extent do the stakeholders of the project take apart in the planning process in Ethio telecom?
4. Which project planning tools are applied on Ethio telecom?

1.4. Objectives of the Research

1.4.1 General Objective The general objective of the study is to analyze the practice of project planning, to identify the challenges and forward a recommendation to Ethio telecom project constitute.

1.4.1 Specific Objectives

1. To assess the current project planning practice in Ethio Telecom?
2. To identify challenges that are showed on the project planning process of Ethio telecom ?
3. To assess project team and stakeholders participation on the planning process of Ethio telecom.
4. To recognize project planning tools used in ethio telecom.

1.5. Significance of the study

This study will have some importance for the student researcher and to the case company under study. Therefore initially it helps the company to use the research output information on their decision making process about projects undertaking by the organization. More over the study will reveal the improvement areas and gaps on the project planning process of the company. And finally the study will use as a reference for future studies on the area of project planning.

1.6. Scope of the study

This study will cover only ethio telecom head quarter project management office and sections under PM offices that are involved on the project planning process of the organization. Added to this the study give much emphasis only on the assessment of the project planning practice and its challenges

1.7. Limitation of the study

There was non-availability of adequately published and documented data about planning practices specific to Ethio telecom and inadequate empirical literature review because of the researcher got little information available on the subject matter and in addition to this the student researcher only use questionnaire as a data gathering instrument because of time constraint.

1.8. Organization of the study

The study has organized on five chapters. The first chapter provides the introduction part which consists of the background of the study and the case organization, statement of the research problem, research question, objectives of the study, significance of the study, scope of the study and limitations of the study. The second chapter deals with the review of theoretical and empirical literature. Chapter three focused on the research methodology, data collection and procedures, sample and sampling techniques, Chapter four presents the result analysis and discussion of the data. Finally, conclusions and recommendations were presented from the summary of the findings, under the fifth chapter

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Theoretical Literature Review

2.1.1. What Is Project

Project Management Body of Knowledge, or PMBOK GUIDE (2008), the PMI defines a project as “*a temporary endeavor which is aimed at creating a unique result*” its Temporary in that it has definite beginning and end in time. Unique means that this product, service, or result is different from others that may have preceded it. The activities in a project must be unique. And according to Bender, 2008 “*A projects is an organized effort to a specific, typically one-time goal. A has a specific beginning and an end, it has a specific goal, and it is complex and has many details*”.

So the term project is very broad term and it is defined differently by different scholars. Even if they define it by their own understanding it represents the same idea. There is no one universally agreed definition of project. But it all definitions of scholars gave similarity. So in this paper the term project is considered as a temporary activity conducted to achieve a given objective with a defined time, in specified quality, and predetermined budget.

2.1.2. Project management

Project management is the use of specific knowledge, skill, tools and techniques to deliver something of value to people. (PMI, 2008)

Kerzner, (2013) also defines PM as “*a series of planning, organizing, directing, and controlling the organization resources to achieve specific goal and objectives.*”

Project Management is basically the process of keeping a track of the accomplishments of the project (Munns&Bjeimi 1996).

The functions of project management include defining the project requirements, organizing the tasks and assign resources, directing and monitoring the progress and completion of specific

projects for an organization while ensuring these projects on time, budget and within scope. (Munns & Bjeimi, 1996).

There is a series of steps that is followed in the traditional method of Project Management (Wysocki 2010).these steps are also described on PM body of knowledge guideline, these are

1. Initiating processes

The goal of project initiation is to broadly define the project. This process usually begins with a business case or project charter. If research or feasibility testing is necessary, you should complete it during this phase.

2. Planning processes

Planning phase focuses on developing a roadmap for the team to follow. During the planning phase, project managers should organize their teams, set up collaborative resources, and set goals.

Two of the more popular methods for setting goals are S.M.A.R.T. and CLEAR:

3. Executing processes:

During the project execution phase, the team develops and completes deliverables. This phase begins with a kick-off meeting, is marked by the onset of status reports and updates, and transitions into performance and monitoring as the project progresses.

4. Monitoring and controlling processes:

Project performance and monitoring ensures that project results align with the management plan. Project managers use key performance indicators (KPIs) to determine if the project is on track. We've outlined the most common KPIs for performance tracking below/

5 .Closing processes:

Once a project is complete, the team must formally close it. Project managers generally hold a post mortem meeting to evaluate successes and failures. Project close helps a team identify things that went well and areas for improvement.

Once the project is complete, PMs still have a few tasks to complete. They will need to create a project punch list of things that didn't get accomplished during the project and work with team members to complete them. Perform a final project budget and prepare a final project report. Finally, they will need to collect all project documents and deliverables and store them in a single place.

2.1.3. Planning

Planning can best be described as a process to develop a strategy to achieve desired objective, to solve problems, and to facilitate action (Mitchell, 2006)

The process of planning and managing projects follows a logical, continuous cycle. Each phase of the project leads to the next.

- The identify stage includes a needs assessment process to determine the needs and problems in a community.
- The design phase includes the actual planning and design of a project.
- The implement stage refers to the implementation of the project, whether it is a single-year or multi-year implementation period.
- The evaluation of project results occurs at the end of a project and involves determining whether the project's goal and objectives were achieved. The evaluation stage then leads to the identification of additional or persisting problems, allowing the cycle to begin again.
- Project monitoring occurs throughout all stages allowing for small adjustments in the project's planning, design, and implementation in order to ensure the project's success.

2.1.4. Project planning

"A project plan is a formal document designed to guide the control and execution of a project.it integrates and consolidate all of the subsidiary management plans and baselines, and other information necessary to manage the project,this plan is the key to a successful project and is the most important document that needs to be created when starting any business project".(PMI, 2009)..

Slevin and Pinto (1986) define project planning as “*the extent to which timetables, milestones, workforce, equipment, and budget are specified or estimating the effort, time, cost and staff resources needed to execute the project.*”

A project plan is the key to a successful project and is the most important document that needs to be created when starting any business project.

Project planning and management is key framework for successful completion of any project. Planning is a procedural step in project management, where appropriate and standard documents are required to create an intact and comprehensive project. Knowledge, skills, tools and techniques are applied to various project activities to meet the project requirements. Planning without management is of no use. In order to develop a successful project, different project management techniques have been widely established in the areas such as planning and control.

In this, various project management methodologies, success and failure, planning activity etc have been proposed. Project plan lies at the heart of project management. As such, it is the key to controlling the progress of the project. A comment (attributed to the managing director of a pharmaceutical company) noted that “*we never seem to have time to plan our projects, but we always have time to do them twice*” (Turner, 2001). The most important responsibilities of a project manager are planning, integrating, and executing plans. Almost all projects, because of their relatively short duration and often prioritized control of resources, require formal, detailed planning. The integration of the planning activities is necessary because each functional unit may develop its own planning documentation with little regard for other functional units. (Kernzer, 2009)

It is required that the project manager be involved from project conception through execution. Inadequate planning is one of the most common reasons for project failures. Conversely, the success of every successful project can be attributed in part to good planning

Successful project managers realize that project planning is an iterative process and must be performed throughout the life of the project (Kernzer, 2009).

2.1.5. Objectives of project planning

Kernzer(2009) also explains the main reasons of project planning as *“to eliminate or reduce uncertainty, to improve efficiency of the operation and to obtain a better understanding of the objectives, and to provide a basis for monitoring and controlling work.”*

Lee (1998) identifies certain project development priorities in this sense and from a management viewpoint. They are: reducing the impact of uncertainties and risks; persuading individuals to execute sequential activities in order to maximize the use of available resources at all times; and providing the foundation for project control.

According to PMI (2013), the primary goal of a project plan is to include specific project management guidelines and instruments. These guidelines and instruments are used to:

- ❖ Direct and Oversee Project Work: This is the process of directing and executing the work specified in the project schedule, as well as incorporating agreed improvements and providing overall project management to meet the project's goals. Directing and managing project work activities include performing activities to accomplish the objectives; create deliverables to meet the planned work; provide, train, and manage the team members assigned, obtain, manage, and use resources, implement the planned methods and standards, establish and manage communication channels, generate work performance data such as cost, schedule, technical and quality progress, and status to facilitate forecasting, manage risks and implement risk response activities, manage stakeholders and their engagement, and collect and document lessons learned.
- ❖ Monitoring and controlling project work is the practice of monitoring, evaluating, and documenting progress in order to achieve the project plan's success goals. Monitoring and controlling a project entails comparing actual performance to the plan, assessing performance to see if any corrective or preventive actions are needed, and then recommending those actions as needed; identifying new risks and analyzing, tracking, and monitoring existing project risks to ensure risk response plans are followed; and providing in-depth analysis and reporting.
- ❖ Perform Integrated Change Control: This process reviews all requests for changes to project documents, deliverables, or the project management plan and determines the

resolution of the change requests. The key benefit of this process is that it allows for documented changes within the project to be considered in an integrated manner while addressing overall project risk, which often arises from changes made without consideration of the overall project objectives or plans.

2.1.6. Scopes of a project plan

Scope planning involves identifying the goals, objectives, tasks, resources, budget, and timeline. The purpose of scope planning is to ensure that all the required work and only the required work is clearly identified, that the deliverables and outcomes are documented, and that the boundary conditions are adequately defined to complete the project successfully. The key benefit of this process is that it describes the product, service, or result boundaries and acceptance criteria. This process is performed once or at predefined point in the project. (PMBok, 2014)

Project plan can be divided in to three groups depending on their depth. These are consists of strategic, tactical and operational.

Strategic Plan

A strategic plan is a high-level overview of the entire business, its vision, objectives, and value. This plan is the foundational basis of the organization and will dictate decisions in the long-term. The scope of the plan can be two, three, five, or even ten years.

A strategic plan is a high-level overview of the entire business, its vision, objectives, and value. This plan is the foundational basis of the organization and will dictate decisions in the long-term. The scope of the plan can be two, three, five, or even ten years.

Tactical Plan

The tactical plan describes the tactics the organization plans to use to achieve the ambitions outlined in the strategic plan. It is a short range (i.e. with a scope of less than one year), low-level document that breaks down the broader mission statements into smaller, actionable chunks. If the strategic plan is a response to “What?”, the tactical plan responds to “How?”.

The tactical plan is a very flexible document; it can hold anything and everything required to achieve the organization's goals. That said, there are some components shared by most tactical plans.

Operational plan

The operational plan describes the day to day running of the company. The operational plan charts out a roadmap to achieve the tactical goals within a realistic timeframe. This plan is highly specific with an emphasis on short-term objectives.

2.1.7. Steps of project plan

Step 1: Define Stakeholders: Stakeholders include anyone with an interest in the project. They can include the customer or end user, members of the project team, other people in the organization the project will affect and outside organizations or individuals with an interest.

Thus, the first step is to explain the planning process and the project plan to all key stakeholders. It is essential for them to understand the importance of this set of documents and to be familiar with its content, since they will be asked to review and approve the documents that pertain to them.

Components of the Project Plan Include:

Baselines: Baselines are sometimes called performance measures, because the performance of the entire project is measured against them. They are the project's three approved starting points and include the scope, schedule, and cost baselines. These provide the 'stakes in the ground.' That is, they are used to determine whether or not the project is on track, during the execution of the project.

Baseline management plans: These plans include documentation on how variances to the baselines will be handled throughout the project. Each project baseline will need to be reviewed and managed.

Other work products from the planning process: These include a risk management plan, a quality plan, a procurement plan, a staffing plan, and a communications plan.

Step 2: Define roles. Each stakeholder's role should be clearly defined. Some people will fill multiple roles. Not all key stakeholders will review all documents, so it is necessary to determine who on the project needs to approve which parts of the plan. Some of the key players are:

- **Project sponsor**, who owns and funds the entire project, Sponsors need to review and approve all aspects of the plan.
- **Designated business experts**, who will define their requirements for the end product. They need to help develop the scope baseline and approve the documents relating to scope.
- **Project manager**, who creates, executes, and controls the project plan. Since project managers build the plan, they do not need to approve it.
- **Project team**, who build the end product. The team needs to participate in the development of many aspects of the plan, such as identifying risks, quality, and design issues, but the team does not usually approve it.
- **End users**, who use the end product. They too, need to participate in the development of the plan, and review the plan, but rarely do they actually need to sign off.

Step 3: Introduce stakeholders. Hold a meeting to bring stakeholders together and unify the vision behind the project. The topics covered should include scope, goals, budget, schedule and roles.

The kickoff meeting is an effective way to bring stakeholders together to discuss the project. It is an effective way to initiate the planning process. It can be used to start building trust among the team members and ensure that everyone's idea is taken into account. Kickoff meetings also demonstrate commitment from the sponsor for the project. Here are some of the topics that might be included in a kickoff meeting:

Step 4: Develop a Scope Statement. The Scope Statement clearly describes what the outcome of the project will be. It is the basis for getting the buy-in and agreement from the sponsor and

other stakeholders and decreases the chances of miscommunication. This document will most likely grow and change with the life of the project. The Scope Statement should include:

- Business need and business problem
- Project objectives, stating what will occur within the project to solve the business problem
- Benefits of completing the project, as well as the project justification
- Project scope, stated as which deliverables will be included and excluded from the project.
- Key milestones, the approach, and other components as dictated by the size and nature of the project.

It can be treated like a contract between the project manager and sponsor, one that can only be changed with sponsor approval.

Step 5: Develop scope baseline. List tasks necessary to meet goals and prioritize them based on importance and interdependencies. The scope baseline has these elements:

- Identifies all the deliverables produced on the project, and therefore, identifies all the work to be done.
- Takes large deliverables and breaks them into a hierarchy of smaller deliverables. That is, each deliverable starts at a high level and is broken into subsequently lower and lower levels of detail.
- The lowest level is called a “work package” and can be numbered to correspond to activities and tasks.

The WBS is often thought of as a task breakdown, but activities and tasks are a separate breakdown, identified in the next step.

Step 6: Create a schedule and cost baseline. Establish a timeline that considers the resources needed for all the tasks.

Here are the steps involved in developing the schedule and cost baselines.

1. Identify activities and tasks needed to produce each of the work packages, creating a WBS of tasks.
2. Identify resources for each task, if known.
3. Estimate how long it will take to complete each task.
4. Estimate cost of each task, using an average hourly rate for each resource.
5. Consider resource constraints, or how much time each resource can realistically devoted to this project.
6. Determine which tasks are dependent on other tasks, and develop critical path.
7. Develop schedule, which is a calendarization of all the tasks and estimates. Develop the cost baseline, which is a time-phased budget, or cost by time period.

Step 7: Create baseline management plans. These management plans usually include a review and approval process for modifying the baselines. Different approval levels are usually needed for different types of changes. In addition, not all new requests will result in changes to the scope, schedule, or budget, but a process is needed to study all new requests to determine their impact to the project.

Step 8: Step 8: Develop the staffing plan. The staffing plan is a chart that shows the time periods, usually month, quarter, year, that each resource will come onto and leave the project. It is similar to other project management charts, like a Gantt chart, but does not show tasks, estimates, begin and end dates, or the critical path. It shows only the time period and resource and the length of time that resource is expected to remain on the project.

Step 9: Analyze project quality and risks. Project quality consists of ensuring that the end product not only meets the customer specifications, but is one that the sponsor and key business experts actually want to use

The emphasis on project quality is on preventing errors, rather than inspecting the product at the end of the project and then eliminating errors

Project Risks: Analyzing risks includes making a determination of both the probability that a specific event may occur and if it does, assessing its impact. The quantification of both the probability and impact will lead to determining which are the highest risk that need attention. Risk management includes not just assessing the risk, but developing risk management plans to understand and communicate how the team will respond to the high-risk events.

Step 10: Communicate One important aspect of the project plan is the Communications Plan. This document states such things as:

- Who on the project wants which reports, how often, in what format, and using what media.
- How issues will be escalated and when.
- Where project information will be stored and who can access it.

Once the project plan is complete, it is important not just to communicate the importance of the project plan to the sponsor, but also to communicate its contents once it's created. This communication should include such things as:

- Review and approval of the project plan.
- Process for changing the contents of the plan.
- Next steps—executing and controlling the project plan and key stakeholder roles/responsibilities in the upcoming phases

2.1.8. Project planning knowledge areas

There are 10 major knowledge areas of project management.

These areas of knowledge are recognized and accepted by most of the world's project managers. (PMI, 2014)

1) Project Integration Planning Knowledge area

Project integration management is the umbrella that covers all other project management knowledge areas. This area covers all PM activities from project initiation to closure. It helps to

link processes and tasks together. This creates a single, coherent project lifecycle. Project Integration Management covers the following

- Project Charter Development to initiate your project and define the project stakeholders
- Project Management Plan Development outlines how to manage the project to get results
- Directing and Management of Project Work focuses on the production and release of the project's deliverables
- Project Knowledge Management is about knowledge acquisition and sharing. It's especially important if your team works in international or cross-functional teams. These way team members build knowledge and share it with their colleagues, improving project quality. Ensuring that it finishes on time without exceeding its budget.
- Monitoring and Controlling of Project Work involves project performance monitoring, estimation of achieved results, identification of possible project challenges, and changes
- Performance of Integrated Change Control if your project needs changing administrative parts, such as a project sponsor or reviewing the project documentation, then it involves integrated change control tasks
- Closure of the Project or Phase covers tasks or objectives that are needed to close the project or its phases

2) Project Scope planning Knowledge area

This knowledge area involves the project scope, which is the work that is included within the project. Since scope changes are one of the top causes of project changes and grief in general, it is very important that the boundaries of the project be well defined from the outset and monitored rigorously. (PMI, 2014)

The project scope management includes six processes:

- **Planning scope management:** Based on the project charter, the plan is created to define the scope.
- **Collecting requirements:** Based on the scope management plan and stakeholder's consultancy, the requirement is collected.
- **Defining scope:** based on plan scope management, project charter and requirement, the scope is defined.

- **Creating WBS:** Creating a work breakdown structure to simplify the whole project into individual tasks.
- **Validating scope:** the outcome of individual tasks are reviewed and inspected.
- **Controlling scope:** after the execution of a project or task, the scope of work is monitored and controlled. The performance reports are prepared to check if the scope meets the requirements.

3) Project schedule planning knowledge areas

This is usually the most time consuming of the knowledge areas. During planning, the project manager must divide the project into tasks and create both a schedule (start and finish dates for each task) and budget for each task. (PMI, 2014)

A project manager has to define project tasks first and after create a schedule where they mark the starting and finishing dates. Moreover, the project plan and timetable often change.

There are six important processes in project schedule management, and they are:

- **Planning schedule management:** Creating a schedule plan and determining who is responsible for the specified task.
- **Defining project activities:** Project activities are defined according to plan schedule management. List of activities are created similar o work breakdown structure.
- **Sequencing activities:** Based on project activities, a sequence of all the activities are created according to priority.
- **Estimating resources and duration:** Based on schedule plan and activities, human resources and durations are assigned.
- **Developing the project schedule:** Based on all the above processes, the project schedule is developed
- **Controlling schedule:** after the execution of a project or task, the duration is checked and controlled if it exceeds the allotted time.

4) Project Cost planning Knowledge area

The project budget is usually one of the most sensitive parts of a project. Wouldn't it be nice to have project budgets that are comfortable and contain plenty of cushion, but very few projects have this luxury. The budget must be established through rigorous estimating techniques and monitoring to ensure there are no unnecessary changes that make stakeholders unhappy.

Project Cost Management involves:

- **Planning cost management:** Cost is planned based on the project activities, sequence of activities and duration allocated for each task.
- **Estimating Costs:** Based on the cost management plan, the cost is estimated for each task.
- **Determining Budget:** Based on estimated cost, the budget is prepared considering schedule management on a project basis.
- **Controlling costs:** During the execution phase of the project, the cost is monitored and if it exceeds or the risk identified that the cost might increase beyond the limit. It is controlled as the cost is the most critical factor in project management.

5) Project quality planning knowledge area

Project Quality Management heavily depends on Project Time and Project Cost knowledge areas. The more the time and budget, the better the quality. Therefore, the deliverable quality level should be defined at the stage of project planning and a project manager should specify it in the overall project management plan. Then when issues arise regarding product specifications, there is a plan to deal with it.

This project quality management knowledge area in PMBOK covers three processes:

- **Planning Quality Management:** The methodology used, the resource assigned, the cost allowed and the time allocated are the major factors affecting quality. Quality planning is done considering all the factors.

- **Managing quality:** During the execution stage, quality assurance is given maximum importance and considered in all aspects
- **Controlling quality:** quality is controlled by reassessment after execution if the customer or client is not satisfied.

6) Project Human resource planning Knowledge areas

Project Resource Management includes people, equipment, facilities, and others to ensure successful project fulfillment. However, equipment and budgeting play an essential role in project performance. The project team is the key factor that often determines the time and money spent on a project and influences the deliverable quality level. That's why it's particularly important to focus on the team when planning your project resources.

The processes included in this PMBOK knowledge area are:

- **Planning resource management:** Based on the project scope, planning of resources are done with cost input, quality and schedule management.
- **Estimating activity resources:** According to the availability of the resources and the project activities, the resource activity is estimated.
- **Acquiring resources:** Based on the deployment of skills to achieve specific goals, resources are acquired.
- **Developing the team:** The team is developed based on their knowledge, skill and ability to achieve the specified goal. Experience and hierarchy is considered while developing the team for the project.
- **Managing team:** The team, is managed according to plan management and the team developed. This ensures the specified goal is achieved on time.
- **Controlling resources:** After the execution stage, the resources are controlled if the deliverables are not delivered on time.

7) project communication planning knowledge area

When you develop your project plan, you need to establish a policy on how the project stakeholders shall communicate during the project execution, and in case of its changing. It's important to develop the communication rules for stakeholders to get in touch quickly once there appear unforeseen issues.

It is essential to develop a communication plan to keep all stakeholders "in the loop" throughout the project and communicate early and often when unexpected issues occur.

This PMBOK knowledge area also includes three processes:

- **Planning communications management:** The audience, objective, message and medium of communications are planned according to project activities and resources assigned.
- **Managing communications:** Once the communication plan is approved, the communications are managed by analysis of data received, distribution of data, storage of the reports and disposal of old messages.
- **Monitoring communications:** The communications are monitored by confirming the messages, confirming the messages are received by the correct stakeholders, confirming messages were understood

8) Project Risk planning knowledge areas

Project risks are often hidden and can't be seen at a mere glance. That's why to ensure successful project execution and minimize unexpected issues; project managers should perform a deep analysis of possible risks. To estimate project risks successfully, a project manager should carry out these tasks

There are seven project management processes involved in the risk management knowledge area in PMBOK:

- **Plan risk management:** Based on a risk assessment matrix, the document is prepared including foreseen risks, estimated impacts of risk on the project
- **Identify Risks**

- **Perform qualitative risk:** Based on their probability of occurring and impact of risk, the risks are prioritized for further analysis.
- **Perform quantitative risk:** The effect of identified risk is numerically analyzed on all the project objectives.
- **Plan risk responses:** The actions are planned to reduce the risk by addressing the risk according to priority, cost, and time.
- **Implement risk responses:** Based on risk responses plan, the actions are taken to mitigate the risk.
- **Monitoring risks:** Risks are monitored according to the impact of risk responses.

9) Project Procurement planning knowledge areas

Not every project requires the procurement of outside subcontractors to speed up the project development or involve niche specialists. However, if you feel the necessity to add an extra workforce to the project, you'll need a set of clear steps on how to do it. It'll minimize the possibility to exceed the budget or time limits. This keeps your project within the boundaries of your project plan.

Project Procurement Management processes include the following:

- **Planning Procurement Management:** the process of documenting the material required, specifying the approach, identifying potential dealers, identifying good service required for the project within the allocated budget and assured quality.
- **Conducting procurements:** Based on plan procurement management, procurements are done according to the requirement for deliverables of the project.
- **Controlling procurements:** The procurements are checked for quality control and also checked if the procurement met the entire requirement.

10) Project stakeholders planning knowledge areas

Project stakeholder management is an expansive process that includes communicating with stakeholders and managing their expectations of a project (PMBOK, 2010)

The four processes involved in Project Stakeholder Management:(PMBOK, 2010)

- **Identifying key stakeholders:** Based on performance, experience and skills, the key stakeholders are identified to manage the assigned part of the project.
- **Planning stakeholder engagement:** the roles and responsibilities of the key stakeholder are planned. The amount of engagement in each part of the work is assigned to stakeholders.
- **Manage stakeholder engagement:** the stakeholder engagement is managed and if any issue comes up, it is resolved through communication.
- **Monitor stakeholder management:** The process of monitoring stakeholder's engagement, strategies and activities. This ensures the deliverables are accepted by the customers.

Conclusion on project planning knowledge areas

When the project manager is well aware of all the project management knowledge areas, they can execute a project more efficiently and productively. The skills acquired by understanding these knowledge areas will assist the project manager to avoid crisis, and scope deviation and enable the project manager to make proactive decisions. So, once the project manager thoroughly understands the concepts of knowledge areas, they become proficient at managing any given project and the people involved in them.

2.1.9. Project planning tools

When you use a PM technique, you'll organize all the moving parts of your project into a logical set of tasks, leaving nothing to chance

Given below are some of the most noteworthy project management techniques that are commonly used in the industry right now

A) Work Breakdown Structure

A work breakdown structure (WBS) is a chart where the project tasks are illustrated to reflect their relations to each other and the project in general (PMBOK, 2010). It's a helpful diagram for project managers because it allows them to break down their project scope and visualize all the tasks required to complete their projects.

All the steps of project work are outlined in the work breakdown structure chart, which makes it an essential project planning tool. The final project deliverable, as well as the tasks and work packages associated with it rest on top of the WBS diagram, and the WBS levels below subdivide the project scope to indicate the tasks, deliverables and work packages that are needed to complete the project from start to finish (Wilson, 2022)

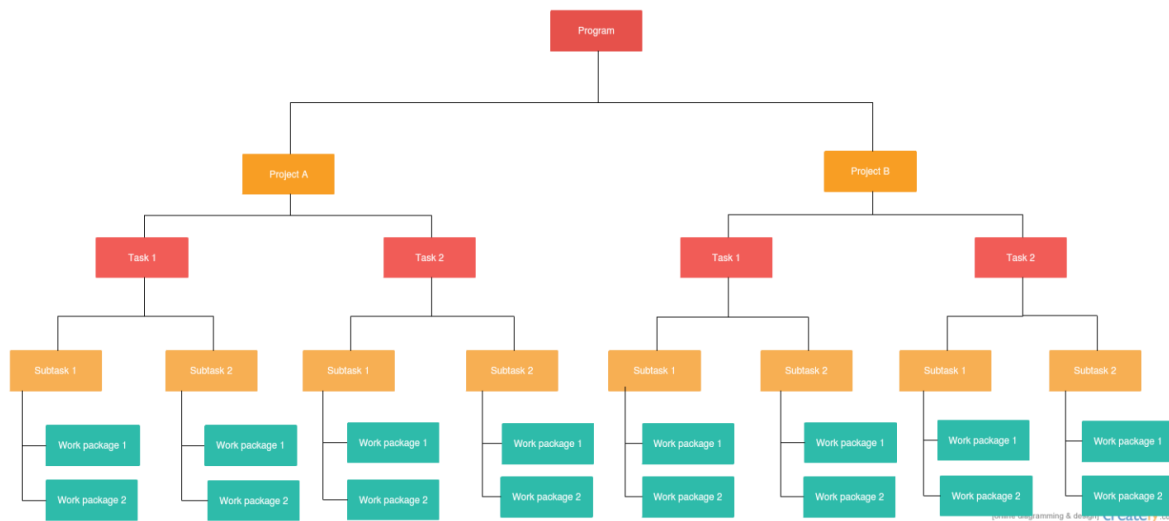


Figure 1 sample WBS diagram

B) Gantt chart

A Gantt chart is a matrix, which shows visual representation of all the tasks your team has to complete in order to wrap up the project, visualized together with time spans.(Pelin, 1996)

The Gantt Chart is simple, intuitive, practical and useful visual representation of project activities and durations, which can perhaps explain such resilience. Further, the Gantt Chart is

instrumental to enhance our cognitive ability to cope with structural complexity - coordination of a large number, diverse and interdependent tasks (Geraldi et al. 2015)

	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	April
Identify research area								
Formulate research questions								
Formulate research strategy, research design and select methods								
Write research proposal			15th					
Negotiate access								
Literature review								
Data collection								
Data analysis								
Write first draft								
Write second draft								
Write final draft								

Figure 2 sample Gantt chart for research proposal

C) Critical Path Method (CPM)

The Critical Path Method is one of project management techniques used to accurately schedule all project activities.

What you'll be actually doing is calculating the critical path – the shortest route to project completion, and arranging tasks accordingly. It's also a great way to establish task dependencies.

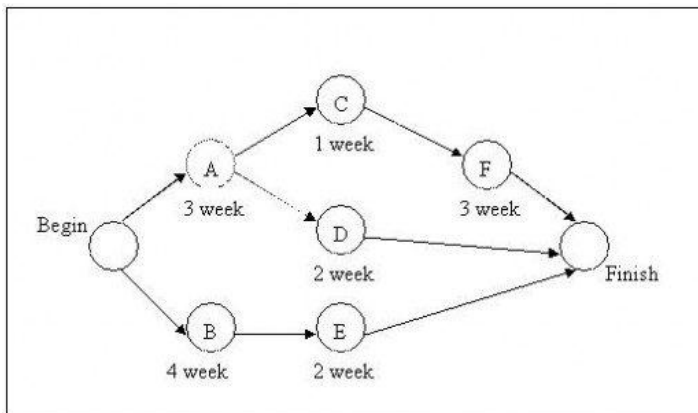


Figure 3 sample CPM diagram

D) Program Evaluation and review technique (PERT)

PERT is a project management planning tool used to calculate the amount of time it will take to realistically finish a project. PERT charts are used to plan tasks within a project making it easier to schedule and coordinate team members.

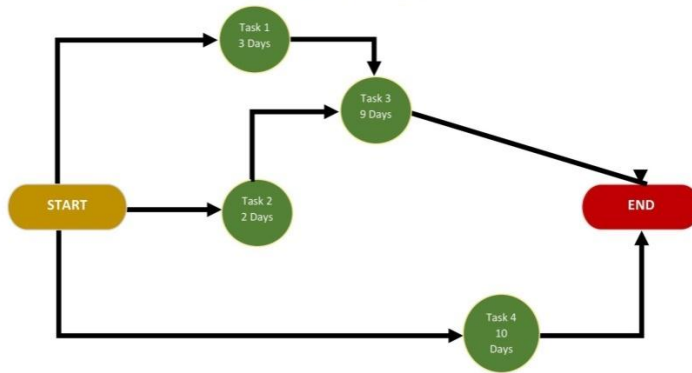


Figure 4 sample PERT chart

2.1.10. Challenge of Project Planning

Brisgon, (2007) there are number of challenges that affect the quality of project planning and consequently the entire project performance. These are

- Expanding the Project's Scope
- Lack of clear goal and objective
- Getting up to date information
- Budget constraint and changes
- Lack of communication
- Poor stakeholders coordination
- Unbalanced team skill
- Deadline impossible to meet
- Failed to meet required quality

2.2. Empirical Literature Review

There are limited researches have been conducted in Ethiopia about project planning at varying scope. Accordingly, in the next pages is an empirical review of these papers, with the aim of identifying the specific measurable components within the planning practices across different scopes and sectors of study.

Sisay (2017) conducted a research with the objective to assess Project planning knowledge of professionals, the extent to which project management knowledge areas are practiced during the planning process of construction projects and identify the level of use of project management

tools and techniques during planning stage of construction projects in the Oromia Housing and Urban Development Bureau, on his finding project planning and management knowledge is not sufficient enough in order to successfully manage construction projects and project planning practice in the organization when evaluated from the nine project management body of knowledge and thus found unsatisfactory. Specifically, project risk management planning, procurement planning, project quality planning and scheduling are not well considered, Moreover, the study concludes, use of project management tools and techniques during project planning phase is limited to WBS and LFA, where other tools and techniques are not well known and utilized.

Another research by Tadesse (2019) was conducted to explore the planning practice of commercial bank of Ethiopia. The research considered all nine planning areas that are covered on the above literature review, so as per the findings the company has poor project planning practice and it suggested the study organization to improve its planning practice by considering and referring the best planning practice, to use all important planning tools and techniques, project management office must make sure to incorporate training as part of the plan so that PM trainings should be provided to the project manager.

Lemma (2014), shows that the steadiness of the project plan highly influences project performance. If it has well established plan, there is a high tendency for successfully completion of a project.

Ali (2019) identifies that risk and cost are the most deficient planning knowledge areas, where procurement and human resource plans are comparatively well prepared, and where the most deficient planning practices were found on procurement and risk planning in his project work when assessing the planning practice of AA housing project.

2.3. Conceptual framework of the study

As shown on the below diagram from the different literatures reviewed the researcher developed the following conceptual framework. Project plan is an aggregate plan which includes all mentioned in the below figure. So this conceptual framework demonstrates project plan should include each specific project plans from each knowledge area.

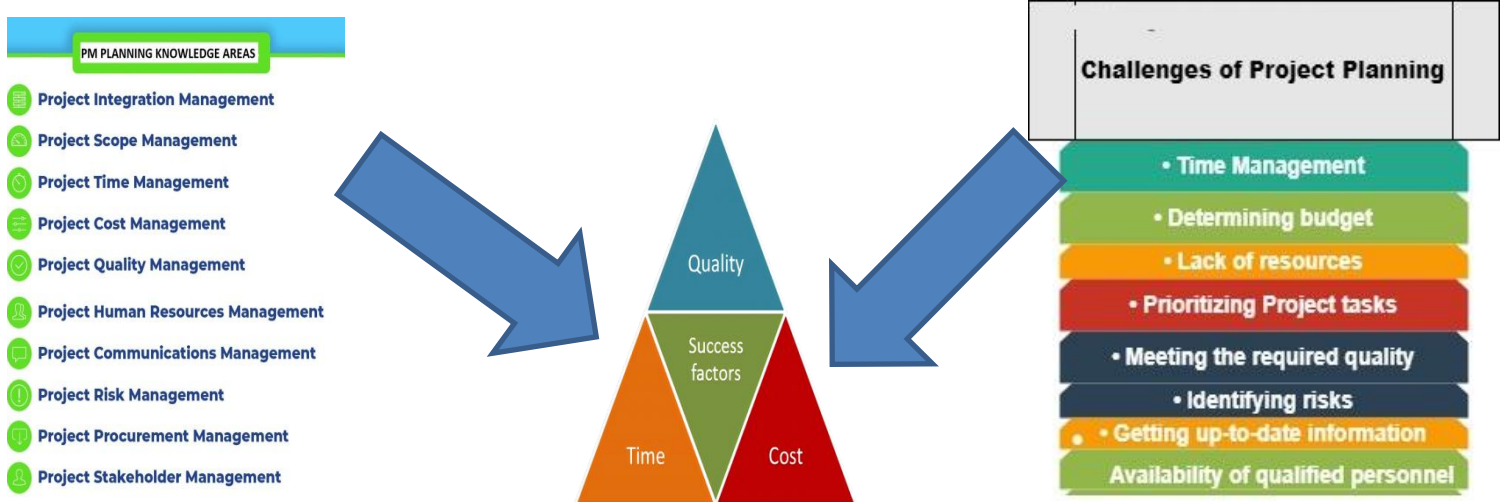


Figure 5 Conceptual framework (developed by student researcher)

As shown from the above model project plan is an aggregate of specific plans listed on the picture, so the project plan will be effective in all success parameters listed on the triangle when it can able to consider all the challenging factors in each of the project life cycle stage. So assessment of the project planning practice is made based on the above variables.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This part of the research discusses about research design, research process, study population, sources, tools and procedures of data collection and method of data analysis to be employed for the study.

3.2. Research approach and design

The Researcher applies both Quantitative and qualitative Research approach. Creswell (2012) describes research design as a set of distinguishing features that you can use to collect, analyze, and interpret data using quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. Catherine (2002) Qualitative research tries to get in depth opinion from the target group and explores attitudes, behavior and experiences through interviews or focus groups and questionnaire's

The study will apply a descriptive research approach as appropriate research design because the purpose of this study is to assess the project planning practice of the study organization so this research design applied to describe what the current project practice looks like in the study organization. The purpose of descriptive research is, of course, to describe, as well as explain, or validate some sort of hypothesis or objective when it comes to a specific group of people.(Kothari, 1990).This design useful when not much is known yet about the topic or problem.

3.3. Population

Castillo (2009) defines target population as, referring to the entire group of individuals or objects to which researchers are interested in generalizing the conclusions. For this research, the target populations are staffs of project management office who are participating on project planning at the head office of ethio telecom and sections of PM office under ethiotelecom. Thus, the total target population are 44 employees working under projects planning task. Since the target population is manageable to participate on the research the researcher chooses census survey method. A census can provide detailed information on all or most elements in the population.

3.4. Data collection

Both primary and secondary data's are will be collected and analyzed. The primary data refers the first hand information obtained by the researcher himself. The advantages of this method of data collection include; reliability & accuracy and it is a better method for intensive investigation, in this case the researcher collect primary data through questionnaire which includes both open and closed ended questions and distribute to each of research participants., in addition to this secondary data will employed for the research. Secondary data plays an important role in research activities by providing permanent data, comparative (contextual data) and unforeseen discoveries (Saunders et al. 2009).Secondary data includes reviewing the available relevant literature materials, company reports, articles, and project publications. The analysis of secondary information provided the general context for initiating the collection, analysis and the interpretation of primary data.

3.5. Data analysis and presentation

Wolcott (1994) describes data analysis as relying on agreed upon knowledge, the recognition of mutually recognized properties or standards which are inherently conservative, careful, and systematic. This research will use both Quantitative and Qualitative research approach which depends on the researcher's integrative and personal knowledge of the environment.

The quantitative data collected via questionnaires for close ended questions part will be feed to SPSS software to measure descriptive parameters. Descriptive statistics measures like percentage, frequency, measures of central tendency (mean and standard deviation) will be used. For qualitative data obtained with open ended questions will be analyzed qualitatively by continually refining and reorganizing in light of the emerging results. The results will be discussed in descriptive measurement method and contextually.

3.6. Validity and Reliability

In order for the research results to be considered accurate, its findings must be both reliable and valid. Validity explains how well the collected data covers the actual area of investigation (Ghauri and Gronhaug, 2005), and Reliability is about consistency of a measure. If the same result can be consistently achieved by using the same methods under same circumstances, the

measurement is considered reliable. Cronbach's α is the most commonly used test to determine the internal consistency of a measure and the researcher uses this instrument to check reliability, of the questionnaire using SPSS. In order to increase reliability and validity, In order to increase reliability and validity, the researcher also uses the Triangulation, checking for representativeness.

3.7. Ethical considerations

Ethical conduct states that it is the responsibility of the researcher to assess carefully the possibility of harm to research participants, and to the extent that it is possible, the possibility of harm should be minimized. The researcher will exercise utmost caution while administering the data collection instruments to the respondents to ensure their rights and privacy is upheld.

CAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Introduction

This chapter shows the analysis and presentation of the data collection we got through questionnaire, statistical tools like frequency, mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the data. SPSS version was used to analyze the data's descriptively which enable to present in the form of frequency table including different statistical tools like percentage, mean, and standard deviation.

For the analysis there were forty four questionnaires that are distributed for the target respondents

who are involved on the project planning process of ethio telecom, among the total forty four (44) questionnaires forty (40) of them were properly filled and returned , which gave us 90.9% return rate and assumed as suitable for the analysis.

4.2. Respondent's General Information

Respondent's characteristics include their educational level, overall work experience, and gender. The responses of the respondents and the implications are illustrated hereunder in table 4.2 as follows.

Table 1. Characteristics of the respondents

Variables	Classification of variables	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	31	77.5
	Female	9	22.5
Age	Below 30	6	15.4
	31-45	23	59.0
	46-60	10	25.6
Level of education	PhD	1	2.5
	MA/MSc	25	62.5
	BA/BSc	13	32.5
	College Diploma	1	2.5
Work experience	Less than 5 years	18	45.0
	5-10 years	13	32.5
	10-15 years	6	15.0
	more than 15 years	2	5.0
Job position of respondents	Managerial	11	27.5
	Non managerial	28	70.0
PM filed educational background	Yes	31	77.5
	No	9	22.5
Type of PM qualification	MA on Project management	19	61.3
	PM training and certification	12	38.7

As shown on the above table from the total no of respondents 31 (77.5%) were male and the rest 9(22.5) were females, when we see the age group of the respondent majority of the respondents or 23 (59%) lies between the age group of 31-45, the remaining 10(25.6%) were between 46-60 and the rest 6(15.4%) were on the age group below 30.

When we see the educational qualification of the respondents majority of them 26 (65%) were second degree and above qualification status and the remaining 14 (33.5%) of them were first degree holders and only 1(2.5%) of the respondent has a college diploma. The above table also illustrate the working experience of the respondents based on the no of years working on the case company, as a result most of the respondents 18 (45%) were 5 and less years of experience followed by 13 (32.5%) with a 5-10 years of experience, the remaining 8 (20%) of respondents have a 10 years and above working experience on the company. Regarding the job title most of them 28 (70%) were non managerial stuff and the remaining 11(30%) were managerial stuffs.

When we come to project related educational background, from the total no of respondents 31 (77.5%) of them do have project management educational background, and the rest 9 (22.5%) didn't have project management educational background, among the respondents who has project related educational background 19(61.3%) have a second degree on project management field of study and the remaining 12(38.7%) have project management trainings and certification, thus we can assume the project team has better understanding about the project management planning and its importance.

4.3. Analysis of project planning knowledge areas

In this section the practice of project planning will be assessed by taking a percentage, mean score and standard deviation of respondents for each question under the planning knowledge area category.

The main problem areas from the knowledge areas are identified by comparing their mean and standard deviation. The lower the mean of the knowledge areas indicate that they are poorly performed

As shown on the below table 2 the respondents asked about if the stakeholders management plan is defined on the project plan, from their response with mean and standard deviation of 3.5 & 0.906 and 67.5 % of agreed rate majority of the respondents are agreed that stakeholder management plan is defined on project plan.

Table 2 practice of stakeholder's management plan

Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std.
Stakeholder management plan was defined	2 (5%)	4 (10%)	7 (17.5%)	26 (65%)	1 (2.5%)	3.5	0.906

According to table 3 shown below majority of the respondents by a mean and standard deviation of 3.8 & 0.723 and with 77.5% of agreed rate they admitted that project scope plan is well defined on the organization project plan.

Table 3 Descriptive statistics for project scope plan

Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std.
The project scope was well defined in the planning stage	0	3 (7.5%)	6 (6.5%)	27 (67.5%)	4 (10%)	3.8	0.723

As shown on the below table 4 for the response of a question raised to know if project integration plan is defined on the project plan, 45% of the respondents were uncertain and 35% of the respondents were agreed with the mean and standard deviation of 3.18 & 0.874, therefore it shows majority of the respondents were uncertain about the project integration plan is defined on the project plan followed by a respondents who are agreed that the plan is defined on the project plan.

Table 4 Practice of project integration plan

Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std.
Project integration plan is defined in the planning process	1 (2.5%)	7 (17.5%)	18 (45%)	12 (30%)	2 (5%)	3.18	0.874

As presented by table 5 below, the respondents were asked about the project schedule planning practice of the organization, thus the illustration shows most of the respondents were agreed with 77.5% by a mean and standard deviation of 3.88 & 0.791 to the schedule management plan that is defined on the project plan, however majority of the respondents were didn't agree about project activities were defined on the project plan by a response rate 57.5 % disagreed with the mean and standard deviation of 2.4 & 1.08, similarly the respondents were not agreed to duration of activities were clearly defined on the project schedule plan by the response rate of 72.5 % disagreed with the mean and standard deviation of 2.05 & 0.846.

Lastly the respondents were asked if projects are completed within the planned schedule, and 75% of the respondents were disagreed with the statement by the mean and standard deviation of 2.03 & 0.947. This indicates that Project time management is poorly planned on the organization.

For the below questions grouped under project schedule planning the reliability test got a Cronbach's Alpha value was 0.735 which was acceptable for the study as a cronbach's alpha value is < 0.6 indicate unsatisfactory internal consistency reliability and cronbach's alpha value is > 0.6 indicates satisfactory internal consistency reliability and accepted level (Nunnally & Berstein, 1994)

Table 5 Descriptive statistics for project schedule planning

Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std.
Schedule management plan was defined	0	3 (7.5%)	6 (15%)	24 (60%)	7 (17.5%)	3.88	0.791
Project activities were well defined	8 (20%)	15 (37.5%)	10 (25%)	7 (17.5%)	0	2.4	1.08
Duration of activities were determined on the planning stage	11 (27.5%)	18 (45%)	9 (22.5%)	2 (5%)	0	2.05	0.846
Project completed with the planned schedule	13 (32.5%)	17 (42.5%)	6 (15%)	4 (10%)	0	2.03	0.947

Table 6 Cronbach's Alpha schedule planning

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.735	4

The below table 7 shows a response for the inquiries regarding project cost planning, the result shows 65% of the respondents agreed on the project cost plan is well defined on the project plan with the mean and standard deviation of 3.58 & 0.844, comparably most of the respondents agreed that project cost is well estimated on the planning phase of the project by 67.5 % of agreed rate and with the mean and standard deviation of 3.55 & 0.876. Conversely 65.5 % of the respondents with a mean and standard deviation of 2.42 & 1.13 were not agreed for projects were completed with the planned budget, this shows project cost planning is poorly prepared on the organization.

For the below questions grouped under project cost planning the reliability test got a Cronbach's Alpha value was 0.606 which was acceptable for the study

Table 7 The practice of project cost planning

Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std.
Project cost plan is well defined on the planning stage	0	6(15%)	8 (20%)	23 (57.5%)	3 (7.5%)	3.58	0.844
Project cost is well estimated on the planning stage	1 (2.5%)	5 (12.5%)	7 (15.5%)	25 (62.5%)	2(5%)	3.55	0.876
Project completed with the planned budget	8 (20%)	17 (42.5%)	7 (17.5%)	6 (15%)	2(5%)	2.42	1.13

Table 8 Cronbach's Alpha budget planning

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.606	3

As indicated on table 9 below the majority of the respondents do not agree by 67.5% disagree rate with the mean and standard deviation of 2.25 & 0.927 for the statement project quality plan and quality assurance is not well prepared on the project plan

Table 9 Descriptive statistics for project quality planning

Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std.
Project quality plan and quality assurance process were well prepared	8 (20%)	19 (47.5%)	8 (20%)	5 (12.5%)	0	2.25	0.927

Table 10 shows below that 77.5 % of the respondents with a mean and standard deviation of 3.6 & 0.955 are agreed that project HR plan were defined on the project planning process, this indicates project HR plan is well prepared.

Table 10 The practice of project resource planning

Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std.
Project human resource plan is prepare on the planning phase	0	8 (20%)	5 (12.5%)	22 (55%)	5 (12.5%)	3.6	0.955

The below table 11 shows a response for the inquiries regarding project communication planning, the result shows 75% of the respondents not agreed on the project communication plan established during project planning with the mean and standard deviation of 2.17& 0.712, comparably most of the respondents disagree about the application of on-going communication with project by 90% of disagreement rate and with the mean and standard deviation of 1.9 & 0.632. This indicates that Project communication plan is very poorly planned in the projects of the organization.

The reliability test of communication planning got a Cronbach's Alpha value was 0.846 which was acceptable for the study

Table 11 The practice of project communication planning

Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std.
Communication plans and strategies are established during project planning processes	5 (12.5%)	25 (62.5%)	8 (20%)	2 (5%)		2.17	0.712
On-going communication with project stakeholders are maintained	9 (22.5%)	27 (67.5%)	3 (7.5%)	1 (2.5%)		1.9	0.632

Table 12 Cronbach's Alpha communication planning

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.846	2

Table.13 illustrate project risk planning practice of the organization, hereby the result shows that there is a low acceptance about project risk identification on the planning process of the organization, on which 65 % of the respondents disagree with the mean and standard deviation of 2.4 & 0.9. Likewise 75 % of the respondents with the mean and standard deviation of 2.17 & 0.844 were disagreed on preparation of risk response planning on the project plan, accordingly this implies the organization has poor project risk planning.

The reliability test of risk planning questions has got a Cronbach's Alpha value was 0.859 which was acceptable for the study

Table 13 The practice of project risk planning

Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std.
Project Risk is identified during the planning stage	4 (10%)	22 (55%)	9 (22.5%)	4 (10%)	1 (2.5%)	2.4	0.9
Risk response planning prepared in the planning stage	7 (17.5%)	23 (57.5%)	6 (15%)	4 (10%)		2.17	0.844

Table 14 Cronbach's Alpha risk planning

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.859	2

According to table 15 majority of the respondents were agreed that project procurement plan is well defined on the project plan with a response of 72.5 % agreed rate with a mean and standard deviation of 3.75 & 0.899. This shows the organization has a good project procurement planning practice.

Table 15 The practice of project procurement planning

Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std.
Project procurement plan were well prepared	1 (2.5%)	3 (7.5%)	7 (17.5%)	23 (57.5%)	6 (15%)	3.75	0.899

4.4. Analysis of project planning tools and techniques

There are many different types of planning tools and techniques used in the planning the projects. Tools like WBS, Gant chart, CPM, PERT, PMIS, project planning methodology and so many others are used, so this section looks the practice of using these tools on Ethio telecom project plans.

Table 16 illustrated below that 77.5% of the respondents with the mean and standard deviation score of 3.83 & 0.747 agreed that project planning tools are applied on the projects of ethio telecom, between these tools most of the respondents believed that work break down is applied on project planning with 70% agreed rate with the mean and standard deviation score of 3.68 & 0.764, similarly 70% of the respondents with the mean and standard deviation score of 3.73 & 0.905 were agreed that Gant chart is applicable in the project planning practice of the organization. Moreover in response to the question that was if project management software is applicable while planning the projects and the result shows 62.5% of the respondents with the mean and standard deviation value of 3.58 & 1.01 were agreed that the tool is used on the organization project plan.

Conversely the below table shows a different result for the tools like CPM, PERT and network diagram, with regard to the critical path method application 50% of the respondents were neutral on the use of CPM with the mean and standard deviation score of 2.95 & 0.815 so it may be perceived that respondents were indifferent or not familiar with the use of these tool on project planning. Respecting PERT (program evaluation review technique) 60% of the respondents with the mean and standard deviation score of 2.53 & 1.037 did not agree to the statement PERT is used on the company, finally in respect of the question raised to know if network diagram is applicable on project planning 40% of the respondents agree that network diagram is used on the project planning with the mean and standard deviation of 3 & 1.086, as the mean score lies exactly on average value of 3 it considered the application of network diagram is not well enough on the study organization, to summarize the results of project planning tools the above figures implies that tools like work break down , Gantt chart and project management software's are used on the planning process of the study organization. On the other hand the organization has low utilization of CPM, PERT and network diagram project planning tools.

The reliability test of project planning tools questions has got a Cronbach's Alpha value was 0.724 which was acceptable for the study

Table 16 The practice of project planning tools and techniques

Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std.
Project planning tools were applied while planning	0	3 (7.5%)	6 (15%)	26 (65%)	5 (12.5%)	3.83	0.747
Critical path method is applied during planning	2 (5%)	8 (20%)	20 (50%)	10 (25%)	0	2.95	0.815
Work breakdown is used while planning	0	4 (10%)	8 (20%)	25 (62.5%)	3 (7.5%)	3.68	0.764
Network diagram is applicable while planning	5 (12.5%)	7 (17.5%)	12 (30%)	15 (37.5%)	1 (2.5%)	3	1.086
Gantt chart is applicable while planning	1 (2.5)	3 (7.5%)	8 (20%)	22 (55%)	6 (15%)	3.73	0.905
Project management software is applicable while planning	1 (2.5%)	6 (15%)	8 (20%)	19 (47.5%)	6 (15%)	3.58	1.01
Program evaluation and review technique is applicable while planning	5 (12.5%)	19 (47.5%)	7 (17.5%)	8 (20%)	1 (2.5%)	2.53	1.037

Table 17 Cronbach's Alpha project planning tools

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.724	7

4.5. Analysis of stakeholder’s involvement on project planning

In this section we will analyze and discuss the results we got form the questions related to the stake holders involvement in the project planning activates of the study organization

As show on table 18 from the total number of respondents 67.5% of them disagree with the statement if key stakeholders are included on the planning process with the mean and standard deviation value of 2.33 & 0.917, similarly 72.5% of the respondent were not agreed about the statement if the project plan was detailed and easily understandable by each stakeholders with the mean and standard deviation value of 2.23 & 0.891. Likewise the respondents were asked if there was sufficient communication among the project team members and stakeholder the result shows 80% of the respondents were disagreed by the mean and standard deviation score of 2.1 & 0.709. In contrast to this 57.5 % of the respondents were agreed to the statements if Project managers and Sponsors were included in the planning process with the mean and standard deviation score of 3.45 & 1.06. The result indicates the practice of stakeholder’s involvement on the planning process as well as the communication between the team members and stakeholders is very poor on the study organization, furthermore the project plan is not detailed and easily understandable by the stakeholders. However the practice of involving the project manager on the planning process is relatively good.

The reliability test of questions under stakeholder’s involvement on project planning showed a Cronbach’s Alpha value of 0.797 which was acceptable for the study.

Table 18 The practice of stakeholders involvement on project planning

Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std.
Key stakeholders were included on the planning process	6 (15%)	21 (52.5%)	7 (17.5%)	6 (15%)	0	2.33	0.917
The project plan is detailed and easily understandable by every stakeholders	7 (17.5%)	2 (55%)	6 (15%)	5 (12.5%)	0	2.23	0.891
Project managers were involved on the planning phase of the project	2 (5%)	6 (15%)	9 (22.5%)	18 (45%)	5 (12.5%)	3.45	1.061
There were sufficient communication among the project team members and stakeholders	6 (15%)	26 (65%)	6 (15%)	2 (5%)	0	2.1	0.709

Reliability Test**Table 19 Cronbach's alpha stakeholders involvement**

Cronbach's alpha	No of items
0.797	4

4.6. Analysis of project planning problems and challenges of Ethio telecom

As it been mentioned in the literature project planning is the most important factor for the success of the project. How well a plan is made for a project will determine how smoothly the project will be implemented as well as how effective the final product of the project will be. Consequently, any project planning also has a number of factors that affect it. In these section the student researcher summarizes and present the findings of open ended questions that are collected from the respondents about their reflections to the challenges of project planning faces on ethio telecom , out of the 40 questionnaires only 29 of them were properly described the challenges of project planning they are encountered on the planning process. The researcher analyzes and present the responses based on the ranking order of respondent's most to least frequent feedbacks.

The first and most important challenge mentioned by respondents were project schedule management; this is mainly due to lack of determining duration of tasks in systematic manner and poor activity planning practice this lead to schedule run out to meet project deadlines .

The other most important challenge mentioned was poor stakeholder's involvement on the planning process of the company. This includes failure to identify key stakeholders and poor communication between project team.

The other challenge was difficulty of spending enough time on the planning stage due to the sponsor pressure to fast track the execution. This leads the projects to execute without detailed and well defined plan.

Budget determination is the other challenge caused by lack of adequate data and details to estimate the budget, these impacts on project output by going over budget.

Other most important challenges of project planning mentioned by most of the respondents were summarized as follows

- ❖ Poor project management training and development program
- ❖ Lack of effective project quality management for ensuring that all project activities accurately to design, plan and execute a project in order to meet the required quality expectations.
- ❖ Limitation on the skill and experience of a project team
- ❖ Insufficient communication between project managers and team member
- ❖ Poor project risk management practice leads to difficulty to identify risk areas of the project and to develop risk mitigation strategies in order to tackle risky areas
- ❖ Poor interaction between departments & lack of integration between projects
- ❖ Poor utilization of project planning tools & absence of training on planning tools
- ❖ Poor documentation of previously executed projects

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1. Introduction

This study has been conducted in the assessment of project planning practice & challenges of Ethiotelcom. In this study the researcher tried to see the most important components of a good project plan and tried to analyze the study based on the practices which are explained in book named PMBOK.

This section provides conclusion of the study and forward recommendation at the end

5.2. Conclusion

The results of this study provide a good understanding of important planning areas that affects the quality or performance of project planning processes. And also it gives to identify main knowledge areas that are important on project planning.

Particularly, the study produced the following findings:

- ❖ With regard to project scope planning the organization has a good practice of defining the scope and the requirement during the planning process.
- ❖ Project integration plan is fairly defined on the project plan whereas there are gaps on the interaction of departments and other projects.
- ❖ Planning cost practice is unsatisfactory on the study organization, preparing a good cost plan is one of the most essential element in preparing a good project plan. Even if the plan has a defined and well estimated project cost plan projects were not completed by a planned budget.
- ❖ According to the data obtained and the analysis made, activity planning and duration of activities were poorly planned so it's difficult to determine the actual time needed for each activity and the whole project completion time.
- ❖ The organization has poor project quality plan and quality assurance practice as they are using weak quality standard, policy and procedures.
- ❖ The organization has a good human resource project planning practice whereas there are still gaps on hiring professional project specialists and the pool of talent on the project

team is limited because of inadequate training and development program given to the project team and project managers.

- ❖ In the study organization the communication plan is not properly planned. There is no well-established system for transferring and disseminating information to the concerned bodies in the project, these create communication gap between key project stakeholders that directly affect the project output as communication is one of the most important inputs in determining and preparation of a good project plan.
- ❖ Project risk planning practice of the organization is very poor on which risks are not properly identified and quantified moreover the organization has no risk response mechanism on its project plan. This area requires significant improvement. As a risk is plan is one of the important element in the project plan.
- ❖ The findings of the study revealed that project procurement planning practice of the study organization is good and admired.
- ❖ With regard to project planning tool the organization applied some planning tools at acceptable level. Project management software, Gantt chart and work break down were applicable on the organization but the use of other important project planning tools like PERT, CPM and network diagram were unknown or poorly practiced on the organization.
- ❖ Finally, with respect to stakeholder's involvement on the planning practice of the organization the findings revealed that it's not well conducted. Key stakeholders were not identified and include on the planning process, moreover the plan is not detailed and clear to communicate with the stakeholders and poor communication between a project team and stakeholders is a challenge for the project output.

5.3. Recommendation

On the basis of the conclusion drawn above, the researcher recommended the following points for better improvements of project outcomes and achieving success in project performances of the company.

- ❖ The company should give high attention on the planning stage of a project plan. A project with a good project plan is a good road map that provides a shared vision for what the project aims to accomplish. This shared understanding keeps the team working together to achieve the project goal and deliver excellent result.

- ❖ Stakeholders should be involved in the planning stage of the project. Involving stakeholder's in the planning stage helps to see the project from different points of view. Accordingly each stakeholder should closely work with the project team and the plan should be discussed or communicated clearly with all concerned bodies inside or outside the organization.
- ❖ The organization should improve its communication plan and strategies and must maintain a stable on-going communication system that can transfer and disseminate information to the concerned body in the project. The communication plan should also be clarify which issues should be escalated, where project information is stored, and who can access it.
- ❖ It's very crucial to assess the risks involved with a project while creating a project plan. The risk management plan should identify and register all potential risks, analyze the risk and develop a risk response plan that will overcome or control the risks and increase the chance of project success.
- ❖ The organization should improve the project schedule plan by determining duration tasks on systematic manner with a clear calendarization of all required tasks and timelines. It shows the project duration, who is doing what and when each task begins and ends.
- ❖ The organization should improve its quality assurance plan. The plan should ensure project requirements and deliverables that meet quality expectation. The project quality plan should involve setting the project standards, acceptance criteria, and metrics that will use throughout the project.
- ❖ The organization should also utilize additional project management tools like PERT, CPM, and network diagram as they are more time consuming and use to optimize the duration of the project to minimize the total project time and cost. The organization should also arrange training programs to increase the awareness and the use of project management tools for the project team.
- ❖ Finally the student researcher recommends the study organization to invest on the right type of expertise who has the experience and knowledge on project planning to fill the current skill gap of the project team.

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APPENDIX 1

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR DATA COLLECTION

Title: The Assessment of project planning practice and its challenges in case of Ethio telecom

Dear respondents,

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect information for the study that assesses the project planning practices and challenges of ethio telecom. The study is a requirement for achieving master's degree. your response to the questionnaire would kept confidential and it has no intention except for academic purpose. Please don't write your name on the questionnaire, and for any clarification please contact me on the below telephone number.

I would like to thank you in advance for completing this questionnaire and assisting me in my project work.

Kind regards

YosefMeskele

Post graduate student, project management

Addis Aebea university school of commerce

Telephone No: 0930013435/0911692433

Email: jossy2002@gmail.com

General Instructions

There is no need of writing your name

In all cases were answer options are available please make an {✓} in the appropriate box

Part I. Background information about respondents

1. Gender

Male

Female

2. Age

Below 30

31-45

46-60

Above 60

3. Educational Background

PhD

MA/MSc

BA/BSc

College Diploma

4. Work Experience on the company

Less than 5 years

5-10 years

10-15 years

Above 15 year

5. Job position

Managerial

Non Managerial

6. Do you have education background on PM field

Yes

No

If yes please specify _____

PRT II : Questions On Project Planning Practices ofEthiotelecom

Instructions: Please consider the recent projects in your organization and answer the following questions. For each of the questions please tick{✓}In the provided space which is the most suitable using the given cable.

A)Questions about planning practices by using project planning knowledge areas

NO	Description	scale				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	Stakeholders management plan was defined in the project plan					
2	The project scope was well defined on the planning stage					
3	Project integration plan is well defined on the project plan					
4	Schedule management plan is well defined on the project plan					
5	Project activity were well defined					
6	Duration of activity were determined on the planning stage					
7	The project is completed on the planned schedule					
8	Project cost plan is well defined on the planning stage					
9	Project cost is well estimated on the planning stage					
10	The project is completed within the planned budget					
11	Project quality plan and quality assurance were well prepare on the Plan					
12	Project human resource management plan is well prepared on the plan					

13	Communication plan and strategies were prepared on the project plan					
14	Ongoing communication with project stakeholder were clearly determined					
15	Project risk is identified during the planning stage					
16	Risk response planning prepared during the planning stage					
17	Project procurement plan is well defined					

B) Questions about application of project planning tool

No	Description	Scale				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
18	Project planning tools are applied on the project plan					
19	Critical path method is applying during the planning stage					
20	Work Breakdown is used during planning					
21	Network diagram is applied during the planning process					
22	Gantt chart is applied during the planning process					
23	Project management software is applicable on the planning process					
24	Program or project evaluation and review technique were applicable on the planning process					

C) Questions about Stakeholders involvement in the Project Planning Activities

No	Description	Scale				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
25	Key stakeholder were included on the planning process					
26	The project plan is detailed and easily understandable by all stakeholders					
27	Project managers were included on the planning process					
28	There Was sufficient communication among the project team members and other stakeholders					

30. What challenges have you encountered in the project planning process of your company?

APPENDIX 2

Time period for the research

Task			Apr-22				May-22				Jun-22	
	week 3	week 4	week 1	week 2	week 3	week 4	week 1	week 2	week 3	week 4	week 1	week 2
Identifying research area												
research title submission and approval												
Concept note and statement of the problem												
Formulating research question												
Formulating research design, methodology												
Writing research proposal												
Submitting research proposal												
literature review												
preparing data collection instrument												
Data collection												
Data analysis and presentation												
write research conclusion and recommendation												
submitting first draft												
write final draft and submission												

Source: develop by researcher