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The Effects of Project Management Practices on Organizational Performance in Lebanon: The Mediating Role of Organizational Culture

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to explore how Project Management (PM) practices affect organizational performance in Lebanese organizations, with particular focus on the mediating role of organizational culture. Using a quantitative correlational design, data were gathered from 100 top- to middle-level managers using validated measurement instruments for project management practices, organizational culture, and organizational performance. Descriptive results suggest relatively high levels of utilization of formal project management methodologies and, overall, positive perceptions of organizational culture and performance-related outcomes. The regression analyses indicate that good project management practices have a strong positive impact on organizational performance and are positively associated with a supportive organizational culture. Moreover, organizational culture is found to have a significant effect on performance and partially mediates the relationship between project management practices and organizational performance. These findings indicate that superior performance is achieved when formal project management models are complemented by a collaborative, learning-based, and performance-oriented culture within the organization. The theoretical implication is that the article adds to knowledge an explanation of how formal project management practices lead to tangible organizational results in a Lebanese context and provides practical insights for enhancing performance through the convergence of project governance and cultural fit.

Introduction

Project Management (PM) has become an increasingly important cornerstone of modern organizational strategy, aimed at enhancing efficiency, ensuring timely delivery, optimizing resource utilization, and sustaining competitive advantage. As an organized managerial approach, project management focuses on the planned coordination of stakeholders, with risk, performance, and lessons learnt continuously managed [1]. A positive association between project management practices and performance at all levels of organizations has been shown in empirical research across different sectors and national contexts. For example, standardizing operating project plans, developing performance-related competencies for teams, and involving management can significantly impact operational results and stakeholder satisfaction. Similarly, studies of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) show that implementing standardized project management techniques improves financial and operational performance [2]. Evidence from emerging markets also supports the notion that formal project governance, risk assessment, and continuous improvement processes enhance overall organizational effectiveness [3].

Beyond these direct effects, recent studies highlight the role of contextual and organizational factors in making project management practices more effective and sustainable. Researchers argue that project management, combined with knowledge management systems and strategic alignment mechanisms, would lead to positive synergy performance effects. Furthermore, organizational climate and strategic direction is used to capitalize on the value that framework-based project management provides [4]. There are various intervening factors in these contexts that contribute to whether a given culture can take root, and one seems particularly important: organizational culture. An engaged and supportive culture enables collaboration, accountability, learning, and adaptability, the building blocks of effective project delivery. The organization's culture and how it can be transmitted to people's behavior, communication, innovation, and change are likely to influence the success of project management [5]. Empirical evidence demonstrates that a performance-driven, adaptive culture is critical to supporting financial and operational success in developing country settings. Recent studies also indicate that organizational culture will not only reinforce but also mediate the relationship between project management practices and innovation performance [6].

Collectively, these results indicate that although there is a set of structural tools and methodologies for achieving strategic objectives in organizational project management, these practices are also highly dependent on organizational culture for driving performance gains over time. Thus, the call for research to explore the mediating role of organizational culture in the relationship between project management practices and organizational performance, especially in an emerging economy setting, could not have been more explicit.

Problem Statement

The success of project management practices in improving organizational performance is being undermined by low employee engagement, work stress, and a lack of cross-functional collaboration in the current Lebanese work context. Workplace studies around the world find that levels of employee engagement are alarmingly low, and high daily stress saps morale, productivity, and workers' commitment to their organization. Such conditions are especially troublesome for the projectized organization, with its rigid project management, where successful project implementation depends on team

participation, leadership support, communication, and positive employee attitudes [7].

Project management processes, including project planning, stakeholder engagement, risk management, and performance evaluation, depend on an enabling project organization to operate effectively. However, if engagement is low and resistance to change remains high, then even the best-planned project methodologies will fail to deliver lasting improvement. This indicates that structured project governance is not enough to ensure improved organizational results [8].

The literature emphasizes the importance of organizational culture for employee behavior, co-operation, and flexibility. A culture of support forges engagement, accountability, and shared ownership in the results of a project. On the other hand, a fragmented or hierarchical culture can interfere with communication and hinder project success. Thus, OC may be considered a significant mediating factor in how PMP impacts (organizational) performance [9].

Against this backdrop, it becomes clear that there is an emerging imperative to investigate how organizational culture enables or hinders the translation of project management techniques into actual, sustained improvement in Lebanon's organizational performance. Awareness of this mediating role is critical for organizations seeking to enhance the strategic impact of a project management intervention [10].

Objectives

This study aims to examine the direct influence of Project Management (PM) practices on organizational performance within Lebanese organizations. Specifically, it seeks to:

1. Assess the extent to which project management practices contribute to improved organizational performance.
2. Examine the influence of project management practices on internal organizational culture.
3. Determine the role of organizational culture in achieving enhanced performance outcomes.
4. Investigate whether organizational culture serves as a mediating mechanism through which project management practices translate into stronger and more sustainable organizational performance.

Research Questions

1. How do project management practices affect organizational performance in Lebanese organizations?
2. Do project management practices positively influence organizational culture in the Lebanese context?
3. What is the relationship between organizational culture and organizational performance?
4. Does organizational culture mediate the effect of project management practices on organizational performance?

Hypotheses

H1: Project management practices have a positive and significant effect on organizational performance.

H2: Project management practices positively influence organizational culture.

H3: Organizational culture has a positive and significant effect on organizational performance.

H4: Organizational culture mediates the relationship between project management practices and organizational performance.

Significance of the Study

This study is important as it investigates the impact of Project Management (PM) practices on organizational performance in the challenging Lebanese context. Project management's structured methodologies are known for their efficiency, accountability, and strategic focus, but effectiveness depends heavily on the internal structure within which they are engaged. Simply espousing formal project approaches does not ensure an enhanced performance; the environment in which these initiatives exist is just as important.

The organization's culture is a key influencer in how engaged, aligned, collaborative, and responsive employees are to project-led interventions. Supported and performance-oriented culture that promotes teamwork, knowledge sharing, adaptability, and commitment towards project goals. On the other hand, a fragmented or inflexible culture can hamper communication and decision-making and diminish project effectiveness. Hence, culture as a mediating force is crucial to our explanation of how PM practices lead to actual and sustainable improvements in performance.

Through the mediating role of organizational culture, this research provides further insight into how project management practices lead to significant performance improvements in Lebanese organizations. Such findings may provide practical insights for managers and policymakers interested in developing robust project governance capability, enhancing organizational resilience, and becoming more competitive in a highly unpredictable and dynamic world. Finally, this paper provides a theoretical and practical contribution toward a structured project management approach implemented in concert with cultural compatibility to enhance overall organizational performance.

Literature Review

Impact of project management practices on organizational performance

There is a clear body of evidence in the literature that structured project management (PM) practices can significantly improve organizational performance, regardless of industry or nationality [11]. Project management (PM) practices e.g., project planning and scheduling, monitoring compliance with any project scope definition, risk management, managing stakeholder's communication, performance measurement, are often found to relate to more robust nonfinancial performance outcomes such as increased internal process efficiency, higher outputs reliability and greater service quality which then impact on financial success through cost control/cutbacks or customer satisfaction. In most firms, PM is used first to enhance corporate systems (for instance, governance, coordination, accountability) and then to trigger more extensive changes, such as increased market responsiveness or competitiveness [12].

Other research highlights that the extent to which PM practices are institutionalized and aligned with the organizational strategy will influence PM performance outcomes [13]. Organizations are more likely to achieve favorable time, cost, quality, and stakeholder value outcomes when they apply governance mechanisms such as clear decision rights, standardized procedures, stage-gate controls, and lessons learned during their projects. However, the literature reminds us that PM tools and techniques are not sufficient to succeed: internal organizational climate, in terms of management cultural support for behavioral routines, knowledge-sharing practices, team competence, and collaborative solutions, and decides whether the implementation

of PM practices leads to sustainable improvement in performance [14]. This indicates that PM offers the structural mechanisms for implementation, while additional contingent organizational capabilities are needed to turn the practice of PM into tangible organizational benefits.

Organizational culture as a mediator

Increasing evidence is being published that highlights organizational culture as a core driver of the efficiency of PM practices and their influence on performance. It also drives/enables collective norms and values of accountability, teamwork, transparency, learning from failure, and openness to change, all of which are essential for successful project delivery [15]. The literature frequently advocates that an organization can more easily implement PM practices and become a more effective user of these PM instruments to achieve better results if it has developed a supportive culture of continuous improvement, cooperation, and learning. These teams are also more effective in their communications, escalate risks earlier, collaborate cross-functionally more seamlessly, and implement standard PM practices more consistently [4].

Further, there is increasing evidence that culture not only moderates the culture–implementation relationship but also transmits (mediates) PM practices to organizational performance. PM processes can create environments to plan, manage, and/or learn from actions after projects, but whether or not these habits become institutionalized depends on the acceptance of a culture of reinforcement (e.g., whether people actually use lessons learned, share knowledge, and understand governance as facilitating rather than bureaucratic) [16]. Advance, where culture is conducive to learning and shared accountability, PM practices are more likely to lead to sustained improvements in operational performance and innovation outcomes. In sum, the literature suggests that organizational culture acts as an enabling mediating mechanism, facilitating PM practices that transform structured project processes into sustained performance gains at the organizational level [17].

Methods

This research will apply a quantitative correlational methodology to investigate the relationships among project management practices, organizational culture, and organizational performance within a food manufacturing firm in Lebanon. A correlational strategy is appropriate for inferring the nature and magnitude of relationships among variables without intervening in experimental conditions. The design also allows for testing direct and mediating relations according to the theoretical hypothesis.

Participants

The population consists of 100 managers from the top, middle, and functional levels of management in a Beirut, Lebanon–based food–producing company. The sampling methodology is a census, and we send invitations to all managers in the target population to ensure representation across hierarchical levels is as exhaustive as possible. The chosen managers are involved in the firm's project implementation, decision-making, and performance appraisal functions.

Instruments

Data are collected using three standardized, closed-ended questionnaires measured on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). All instruments are adapted from previously validated scales and slightly modified to reflect the Lebanese food manufacturing context while maintaining their reliability and validity.

1. **Project Management Practices Scale** – Adapted from established project management maturity and governance frameworks, this scale measures key dimensions such as leadership support, project planning and scheduling, stakeholder management, risk management, performance monitoring, and continuous improvement practices.
2. **Organizational Culture Scale** – Based on the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI) developed by Cameron and Quinn, this instrument measures four dominant culture types: clan, adhocracy, market, and hierarchy cultures. The scale is widely validated and assesses shared values, norms, and behavioral expectations within the organization.
3. **Organizational Performance Scale** – Adapted from prior performance measurement studies, this scale evaluates perceived organizational performance across financial, operational, and market dimensions. Respondents assess their organization's performance relative to competitors across profitability, operational efficiency, market share, and overall effectiveness.

Data Collection Procedure

Data is collected online through Google Forms. Security: A secure survey Web link is circulated to participants via e-mail with a cover letter explaining the study purpose, assurance of confidentiality, voluntary participation, and anonymity. Electronic consent is provided before respondents continue to the questionnaire. Involvement in the survey is optional, and answers will remain private.

Data Analysis

Data is processed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Preliminary data screening involves inspection of missing values, outliers, and normality assumptions. The main variables are described with means and standard deviations.

Cronbach's alpha coefficients are used to test the reliability of scales. Pearson's correlation is employed to assess the associations among project management practices, organizational culture, and performance. Multiple regression analysis is carried out to test the hypotheses. A mediation test is conducted to examine the mediating role of organizational culture between project management practices and organizational performance using conventional regression-based methods.

Results

Demographics

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N = 100).

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	58	58%
	Female	42	42%
Age	20–30 years	22	22%
	31–40 years	38	38%
	41–50 years	28	28%
	Above 50 years	12	12%
Position	Top Management	15	15%
	Middle Management	45	45%
	Line/Operational Manager	40	40%
Experience	Less than 5 years	18	18%
	5–10 years	34	34%
	11–15 years	28	28%
	More than 15 years	20	20%

The characteristics of the sample indicate that the managerial workforce is balanced and diverse in terms of gender, age, hierarchical position, and experience, and therefore provides a good basis for interpreting these findings at the organizational level. Of the sample, 58% were male, and 42% were female, with public participation fairly balanced by gender.

In terms of the distribution of age, most participants (38%) were aged 31-40 years, and the second place was for those who were 41-50 years (28%). 20–30-year-olds accounted for 22% of the sample, whereas fewer than 12% were over 50. This suggests that the sample is mainly mid-career professionals.

In the organizational hierarchy, the majority of respondents were middle managers (45%), followed by line and operational managers (40%), with top managers accounting for 15%. This may indicate that the results are influenced by middle-level and operational decision makers.

The level of experience was also well balanced: 34% had between 5 and 10 years of experience, the equivalent for 28% was from 11 to 15 years, while more than 15 years (20%) or less than 5 years (18%). On the whole, the sample comprises both amateur and experienced management profiles, which, in turn, makes responses on project management practices, organizational culture, and organizational performance more credible.

Descriptive statistics

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Project Management Practices Dimensions (N = 100).

Project Management Dimension	Mean	SD
Leadership Support	3.85	0.61
Project Planning & Scheduling	3.90	0.58
Risk Management	3.72	0.64
Stakeholder Management	3.80	0.59
Performance Monitoring & Control	3.75	0.62
Project Governance	3.68	0.66
Continuous Improvement & Learning	3.82	0.60

The descriptive statistics indicate a relatively high level of implementation of project management practices within the organization. Average response scores ranged from 3.68 to 3.90, indicating that respondents are moderately in favor of applying well-defined project management practices. The highest mean was reported by Project Planning and Scheduling (M = 3.90, SD = 0.58), followed closely by Leadership Support (M = 3.85, SD = 0.61) and Continuous Improvement and Learning (M = 3.82, SD = 0.60).

Risk Management (M = 3.72, SD = 0.64) and Project Governance (M = 3.68, SD = 0.66) received only positive ratings, but somewhat lower ones, suggesting a need to improve formal control mechanisms and governance arrangements. In general, the findings indicate that the organization has a moderate to strong use of formalized project management techniques.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Organizational Culture Dimensions (N = 100).

Organizational Culture Dimension	Mean	SD
Clan Culture	3.70	0.57
Adhocracy Culture	3.65	0.60
Market Culture	3.80	0.63
Hierarchy Culture	3.72	0.58

The descriptive statistics for dimensions of organizational culture indicate a fairly balanced cultural profile in the organization involved. All four culture forms have mean scores above the midpoint on the scale (3.00), indicating they were actively present in the organizational environment.

Market Culture displayed the highest M value (M = 3.80, SD = 0.63), indicating a strong focus on competitiveness, goal attainment, and result-oriented behavior. Hierarchy Culture (M = 3.72, SD = 0.58) and Clan Culture (M = 3.70, SD = 0.57) closely followed this trend, indicating structured procedures alongside teamwork, cohesion, and internal support. Adhocracy Culture had the lowest score (M = 3.65, SD = 0.60), but was still above the mean, indicating that innovation and flexibility are present but less dominant than performance-and-control orientations.

In sum, we observe a transitional cultural matrix marked by high performance orientation and stability, combined with low levels of collaboration and innovation. A culture in balance toward such a model may offer the control factors for successful project implementation, as well as the flexibility needed to improve continuously.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for Organizational Performance Dimensions (N = 100).

Organizational Performance Dimension	Mean	SD
Financial Performance	3.78	0.65
Operational Performance	3.85	0.62
Market Performance	3.90	0.60

The descriptive statistics of organizational performance show a high level of perceived performance across all three dimensions. Regarding their organization's overall performance, all mean scores exceed 3.70, indicating that respondents have a generally positive perception of it.

Market Performance yielded the highest status (M = 3.90, SD = 0.60), suggesting a competitive marketplace position and high customer satisfaction. Operational Performance was closely followed (M = 3.85, SD = 0.62), indicating efficient internal operations, productivity, and effective workflow management. Despite being slightly weaker (M = 3.78, SD = 0.65), the construct of Financial Performance also shows average results in earnings power, cost efficiency, and resource management (restructuring).

The similar high-level mean scores across all factors indicate that the organization has a level performance profile, with no signs of outstanding performance in specific areas such as market responsiveness and operational excellence, but at an equivalent level in terms of financial outcomes.

Table 5: Mean and Standard Deviation of Total Scale Scores.

Scale	Total Mean Score	Total SD
Total Project Management Practices Score	3.79	0.61
Total Organizational Culture Score	3.72	0.59
Total Organizational Performance Score	3.84	0.63

The total scale scores suggest overall positive perceptions of project management practice, organizational culture, and organizational performance within the organization surveyed.

Total Project Management Practices Score: Total project management practices were found to be satisfactorily well normatively implemented (M = 3.79, SD = 0.61). This indicates that essential practices such as leadership support, planning and scheduling, stakeholder involvement, governance, and performance monitoring are carried out at a high level within an organization.

Respondents perceive the organizational environment as supportive, structured, and moderately innovative, as reflected in a Total Organization Culture Score of M = 3.72 (SD = 0.59). This could indicate that current cultural conditions may be conducive to successful project delivery and cooperation.

The total level of performance was the highest relative to the mean (M = 3.84; SD = 0.63) total organizational performance score, suggesting that the organization is producing positive results in financial, market, and operational terms.

Together, these results indicate robust alignment among project management, cultural traits, and performance outcomes, supporting the theoretical claim that organized project management within a supportive organizational culture facilitates improved organizational performance.

Inferential Statistics

Table 6: Regression Results for the Effect of Project Management Practices and Organizational Culture on Organizational Performance.

Model	Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p
Model 1	Project Management Practices → Organizational Performance	0.52	0.08	0.58	6.50	< .001
Model 2	Project Management Practices → Organizational Culture	0.61	0.07	0.63	8.71	< .001
Model 3	Project Management Practices → Organizational Performance	0.31	0.09	0.35	3.44	.001
	Organizational Culture → Organizational Performance	0.41	0.08	0.46	5.12	< .001

The regression analysis tested the direct and mediating relationships among project management practices, organizational culture, and organizational performance.

In Model 1, project management practices significantly predicted organizational performance ($\beta = 0.58$, $p < .001$), supporting H1. This indicates that stronger implementation of project management practices is associated with higher levels of organizational performance.

In Model 2, project management practices had a significant positive effect on organizational culture ($\beta = 0.63$, $p < .001$), supporting H2. This suggests that structured project management practices foster a supportive, performance-oriented cultural environment.

In Model 3, when both project management practices and organizational culture were included as predictors of organizational performance, both variables remained significant. Organizational culture predicted performance ($\beta = 0.46$, $p < .001$), supporting H3. Meanwhile, the effect of project management practices on performance decreased from $\beta = 0.58$ (Model 1) to $\beta = 0.35$ but remained significant ($p = .001$).

The reduction in the beta coefficient for project management practices following the introduction of organizational culture indicates partial mediation, supporting H4. This finding suggests that organizational culture partially mediates the relationship between project management practices and organizational performance. In other words, project management practices enhance performance both directly and indirectly by positively influencing organizational culture.

Discussion

The descriptive statistics suggest that project management practices are well-rooted in the surveyed Lebanese organization, as their mean scores range from 3.68 to 3.90 across the different dimensions of this concept. The results of the regression indicate a significant positive influence of project management practices on organizational performance ($\beta = 0.58$, $p < .001$), supporting H1. This result is consistent with international evidence that structuring project management leads to greater operational efficiency, more effective resource use, greater stakeholder satisfaction, and stronger strategic alignment. The findings answer RQ1 precisely in the affirmative, indicating that effective project management practices directly impact organizational performance in Lebanon.

The results also indicate a strong direct impact of project management practices on organizational culture (= 0.001), supporting H2. The findings, with an overall culture mean of 3.72, indicate that structured project governance and planning routines, stakeholder engagement, and performance monitoring mechanisms lead to the development of collaborative, learning-oriented, and performance-driven cultural norms. This is consistent with the view that project management tools are institutional arrangements, not just technical devices, that influence both expectations and the values people share. Hence, RQ2 is supported: project management practices positively influence the internal cultural environment.

Similarly, organizational culture has a positive and significant effect on organizational performance ($\beta = 0.46$, $p < .001$), supporting H3. This seems to validate the idea that a supportive, balanced culture is an antecedent of organizational performance, as it promotes consideration of responsibility, cooperation, and adaptation, as well as explicit knowledge transfer. With organizational culture included in the regression equation, project management practices have shown a declining effect on performance, from $\beta = 0.58$ to $\beta = 0.35$, which remains significant. This decrease points to partial mediation and thus supports H4. Thus, RQ3 and RQ4 are also met, as organizational culture predicts performance, and project management practices mediate the relationship between organizational culture and performance.

Together, these results indicate that PM practices are beneficial for performance through direct and indirect effects stemming from a supportive organizational climate. The findings further support the need to connect structured project management methodologies with cultural alignment for sustainable organizational success.

Conclusion

This study illustrates the importance of project management processes in improving Lebanese organizations' performance. The results reveal that application of the structured PM techniques, referred to as leadership support, planning and scheduling, risk management, governance, and continuous improvement, has a positive impact on financial performance (FP), operational performance (OP), and market performance (MP).

The findings also demonstrate how PM practices shape organizational culture, fostering collaboration, structure, and performance orientation. The organizational culture itself was also an important determinant of performance and partially mediated the effects of project management practices on organizational performance.

In total, all inquiry questions and hypotheses were supported, demonstrating that sound project management practices, strengthened by a supportive organizational culture, are the real sources of benefit to an organization. The research also indicates the need to link technical PM systems with internal cultural dynamics for sustained performance enhancements.

Recommendations

Organizations that seek to improve performance through project management should focus on developing leadership commitment, defining and resourcing project objectives, and deploying formal governance and performance-monitoring structures to drive accountability and consistency. Just as important, facilitate a supportive environment for collaboration, knowledge exchange, flexibility, and shared responsibility through team-based efforts and continual learning. Ongoing training and employee participation in decision-making can contribute to the advancement of project savvy and commitment, with the implementation of knowledge management systems and data-driven models feeding into evidence-based project control and continuous improvement. Future studies could investigate project management across different sectors in Lebanon, examine external environmental factors, and adopt longitudinal designs to better understand how project management maturity evolves.

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