Project Management Performance in China: A Review

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Abstract:
This study summarizes various aspects of project management performance in China, focusing on four dimensions: project planning skills, project communication skills, project risk management skills, and project monitoring and control skills. Through an in-depth analysis of these core skills, this paper reveals their key role in project management practice in China. Project planning skills ensure the orderly progress of the project, project communication skills promote the efficient transmission of information, project risk management skills help to prevent and control potential risks, and project monitoring and control skills ensure the smooth implementation and goal of the project. The comprehensive application of these dimensions is of great significance for improving the performance of project management in China.

Keywords: China, Project communication skills, Project management performance, Project monitoring and control skills, Project planning skills, Project risk management skills.

Introduction
In today's era of globalization and digitalization, project management, as an important tool to promote organizational change and enhance competitiveness, has become increasingly prominent. Especially in China, with the rapid development of the economy and the profound adjustment of the industrial structure, project management is not only widely used in traditional industries such as construction, IT, and manufacturing, but also penetrates emerging fields such as the service industry, medical care, and education, becoming a key factor in promoting the sustainable and healthy development of the social economy. (China Construction News. 2023). Therefore, reviewing the performance of project management in China is not only a summary of past practical experience but also a prediction and outlook on future development trends, which has important theoretical and practical significance (Zou, X.D., 2024).
As a systematic method, project management aims to achieve project goals through effective planning, organization, command, coordination, and control. When project management was introduced in China, has received widespread attention and application since its introduction. With the continuous development of management theory and practice, project management concepts and methods are constantly updated and improved (Li, X. 2022). While this is true, China's project management faces many challenges and problems such as increased project complexity and risks, and difficulties in performance monitoring. Th-
ese problems do not only affect the smooth implementation of the project but also have a significant impact on project management performance. (Liu, Z. J., Zhou, J., Li, X. H., Fan, H. P., & Bai, S. J. 2019) First, as the complexity of the project increases, the difficulty of project management increases significantly. The increase in project size means the need to coordinate multiple subprojects and multiple stakeholders, the increase in technical complexity requires the integration of new technologies and interdisciplinary knowledge. In addition, the extension of the project cycle has brought about the problem of a wider management span, requiring long-term coordination and management thus increasing the complexity of project management. (Zhu, J. W., Liu, G. Q., & Yin, Y. L. 2003). Secondly, the increase in risk has become another major challenge in project management. Frequent changes in policies and regulations have led to increased project compliance risks, while uncertainty in the external environment, such as market fluctuations and natural disasters, further exacerbated project risks. In addition, shortages of key materials and human resources also make the supply of resources unstable thus increasing the risks of project implementation. At the same time, the difficulties of performance monitoring have a particularly prominent impact on project management. Due to the difficulty of real-time monitoring of project progress, cost, and quality, the information feedback is often untimely affecting the smooth progress of the project. Imperfect data collection and analysis tools lead to an insufficient basis for decision-making, and inconsistent performance evaluation standards make it difficult to conduct objective evaluations. (Lan, T. 2019) Furthermore, communication and coordination issues are challenges that cannot be ignored in project management. Poor communication among multiple stakeholders and untimely transmission of information resulted in poor coordination during project advancement. This is due to cross-cultural teams. Cultural differences often lead to misunderstandings and conflicts, and poor coordination between internal teams and external suppliers can also affect project progress. In addition, the problem of talent shortage and lack of ability has become increasingly prominent. The shortage of project management professionals, especially those with international vision and practical experience, has become an important factor limiting the improvement of project management levels. Project team members lack the skills and experiences to cope with the demands of complex projects, while limited training and career development opportunities further contribute to talent attrition. (Tan, Z. T. 2019).

Finally, the budget and money management issues were noted to have a significant impact on project management performance. Inaccurate project budget formulation can easily lead to cost overruns, while delayed funding can affect project progress. The lack of transparency in the use of funds also creates risks of waste and corruption. When the country’s project management responds to many challenges and problems such as increased project complexity, increased risks, and difficulty in performance monitoring, it is necessary to take comprehensive measures to manage and respond to ensure the smooth implementation of projects and the improvement of management performance. (Hu, W. F., & He, X. H. 2021)

In recent years, domestic and foreign scholars and practitioners have conducted extensive research on project management performance. At the theoretical level, the research on project management performance evaluation systems, performance evaluation methods, performance improvement strategies, etc. has continued to deepen, providing strong theoretical support for project management practice. At the practical level, China’s project management has also achieved a series of major results, such as increasing project success rate, reducing costs, and improving quality. However, there are also some problems and controversies. For example, some scholars point out that China’s project management lacks sufficient
assessment indicators and data support; some practitioners believe that China's project management still needs to be strengthened in responding to changes in the external environment and improving the quality of project management talents. (Wu, T. 2019)

In recent years, domestic and foreign scholars and practitioners have pursued studies on project management performance. At the theoretical level, researchers have continued to conduct in-depth discussions on project management performance evaluation systems, performance evaluation methods, performance improvement strategies, etc., providing strong theoretical support for project management practice. These studies provide valuable insights and tools for how to scientifically evaluate project performance and improve project management methods.

At the practical level, China’s project management has also achieved a series of major results, such as improving project success rate, reducing costs, and improving quality. These achievements demonstrate the significant progress of my country's project management in practical operations and lay the foundation for the smooth implementation of various projects. However, despite this, there are still some problems and controversies. First, some scholars pointed out that China’s project management lacks sufficient assessment indicators and data support. This means that when evaluating project management performance, there is a lack of a systematic and comprehensive indicator system resulting in the performance evaluation results being inaccurate and unreliable. Specifically, many projects fail to fully consider the actual situation and data basis of each link when setting performance goals and measurement standards, resulting in performance appraisal becoming a mere formality and unable to effectively guide project management improvements. (Wu, T., 2022) Secondly, some practitioners believe that China’s project management still needs to be strengthened in responding to changes in the external environment. The uncertainty of the external environment, such as policy changes, market fluctuations, technology updates, etc., has brought huge challenges to project management. In practice, many project management teams cannot flexibly respond to these changes, resulting in project planning and execution often being affected. In addition, the project management team's lack of preparedness in emergency management and risk control further exposed its inadequacies in responding to changes in the external environment. (Li, Y. 2024). In addition, Guo, C. X. (2019) emphasized that cultivation of project management talents is still an urgent problem to be solved. He pointed out that although China has invested a lot of resources in project management training, overall, the quantity and quality of project management professionals still cannot meet the needs of increasingly complex projects. Many project managers lack systematic project management knowledge and practical experience, resulting in uneven project management levels. Wu, Y. Q. and Zhang, X. P. (2014) proposed that improper application of technology is also an important factor affecting project management performance. They believe that many projects fail to fully use modern project management tools and technologies during the implementation process, leading to inefficient information management and communication. Especially in large and complex projects, insufficient technology and improper application can significantly affect the progress and quality of the project. Finally, Zhang, T. (2022) pointed out that the cultural construction of project management is also an issue that needs attention. He believes that project management is not just the application of technology and tools but also the establishment of a positive team culture. By strengthening team collaboration and communication and improving team cohesion and execution, the overall performance of project management can be effectively improved.

To sum up, these problems indicate that China's project management needs to improve in aspects such as the improvement of the assessment indicator system, the improvement of the ability to respond to changes
in the external environment, the cultivation of project management talents, the improvement of technology application, and cultural construction to ensure that project management improvement of performance and smooth implementation of projects.

In response to the above problems and controversies, this paper aims to comprehensively analyze the current situation and problems of China's project management performance assessment through a review of China's project management performance and explore its future development trends and countermeasures. Specifically, this paper will discuss the following aspects: First, review the development history and current situation of China's project management, and analyze the application of project management in different industries and fields; secondly, this paper will focus on the current situation and problems of China's project management performance evaluation, including the construction of performance evaluation indicator system, the selection and application of performance evaluation methods, and the implementation of performance monitoring; finally, combined with the development trends and advanced experience of domestic and foreign project management, this paper proposes improvement strategies and suggestions for China's project management performance evaluation. (Zhu, J. W., Liu, G. Q., & Yin, Y. L. 2003)

This study has important theoretical and practical significance. On the theoretical level, this paper can enrich and improve the theoretical and methodological system of project management performance evaluation and provide more scientific theoretical support for project management practice; on the practical level, this paper can provide useful reference and reference for China's project management practice, help enterprises and organizations better cope with changes in the external environment, and improve project management performance. At the same time, this paper can also provide a platform for communication and discussion for relevant scholars and practitioners and promote the continuous development and progress of China's project management field. (Cheng, H., & Chen, Q. 2015)

In summary, this paper aims to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the current situation and problems of China's project management performance evaluation through a review of China's project management performance, and put forward corresponding improvement strategies and suggestions. This is not only a summary and improvement of China's project management practice, but also a contribution and extension to project management theory.

1. The Review

1.1. Project planning skills

Project Planning Skills, as one of the key factors affecting project management performance, have received widespread attention and research. It covers the entire process from project initiation to project closure and is the foundation for ensuring successful project implementation.

Project planning skills refer to the comprehensive, systematic, and scientific planning of projects during the project management process, including setting project goals, defining scope, managing time, allocating resources, managing risks, ensuring quality, etc. These planning activities are designed to ensure that the project progresses smoothly on the planned track and achieves the expected results (Li, B. 2018). It also refers to the use of systematic methods and techniques to plan and control all aspects of the project during the project management process to ensure that the project can be completed on time, on budget, and to quality requirements. (Li, X. 2022). Project planning skill is further defined as "the ability to create effective strategies to achieve project goals, including identifying the sequence of tasks, estimating the time and resources required, and developing appropriate communication and risk management strategies"
(Bu, S. S. 2024). Li, Y. F., and Xin, X. Y. (2022) likewise defined project planning skills as "determining project goals, breaking down the project into manageable tasks, ensuring that project resources are properly allocated, and monitoring project progress to adjust against the original project plan." Although these definitions have different wordings, they all emphasize the key role of project planning in ensuring project success, covering multiple aspects such as goal setting, task organization, resource allocation, and risk management. (Ding, R. 2009).

The importance of project planning skills in project management cannot be overestimated, as it lays the foundation for the success of the entire project. First, it ensures that the project has clear goals and directions. Project planning skills enable project managers and teams to clarify the ultimate goals and specific milestones of the project. This not only helps the team understand the overall goals of the project but also provides a clear working direction to ensure that all team members are working towards the same goal. Specifically, clear goals defined during the project planning process can help the team prioritize tasks and effectively manage time and resources, thereby improving overall work efficiency. (Ke, Y. X. 2014)

Second, effectively manage project risks. Good project planning not only includes goal setting but also involves comprehensive risk assessment. Project planning skills enable project managers to identify and assess potential risks and develop response strategies in advance. This forward-looking thinking helps minimize the impact of risks and ensures that the project can continue to move forward when faced with uncertainties and potential challenges. Through risk management, the project team can foresee problems and respond quickly to avoid or reduce possible losses and delays. In addition, the reasonable allocation and utilization of resources. Project planning skills also include the reasonable allocation of resources required for the project, including human, material, financial, and time resources. Through effective resource planning, it can ensure that various resources are used in the best way, avoid resource waste, and ensure that the project can be completed on time and on budget. Reasonable resource allocation also includes balancing the workload of project team members to ensure that team members do not overwork or waste resources due to improper resource allocation. (Xie, X. D. 2024). In short, project planning skills are a vital part of project management. Not only can they help project teams clarify their goals, but they can also effectively identify and manage risks, allocate resources reasonably, and ensure the smooth execution of projects. Through these strategies, project managers and teams can cope with various challenges and improve project success rates. (Zhao, Y. T. 2021).

In China, the application of Project Planning Skills has been widely practiced and developed. With the rapid growth of the Chinese economy and the promotion of globalization, more and more enterprises have begun to realize the importance of Project Planning Skills in project management. (Zeng, Y. H. 2019). They have formed distinctive project planning systems by introducing internationally advanced project management concepts and methods, combined with China's national conditions and corporate cultural characteristics. These systems not only cover all aspects of project management but also focus on integrating with the strategic goals of enterprises to ensure that the implementation of projects can bring actual benefits to enterprises. Specifically, Chinese enterprises focus on the following aspects of project planning: Clarifying project goals and scope: Enterprises clarify project goals and scope based on market demand and internal resource conditions to ensure that the project meets customer expectations and needs. (Gong, R. R. 2024). Developing detailed project plans: Enterprises develop detailed project plans, including time schedules, resource allocation plans, risk management plans, etc., to ensure that the project progresses smoothly according to the plan. (Wang, Z. Y. 2021). Strengthening team collaboration and
communication: Enterprises focus on team collaboration and communication to ensure that team members maintain close contact and collaboration to solve problems together. (Li, Q. 2014) Introducing advanced project management tools and methods: Enterprises actively introduce internationally advanced project management tools and methods, such as agile development, lean management, etc., to improve the efficiency and quality of project management. (Wang, W. Q. 2017)

Although project planning skills have been widely used and developed in project management in China, they still face some challenges. For example, the uncertainty of the project environment, the differences in the capabilities of team members, and the limited resources may all have an impact on project planning. To meet these challenges, companies need to continuously strengthen the cultivation and improvement of project planning skills and enhance the comprehensive capabilities and coping capabilities of project teams (Li, D. 2022). In the future, with the continuous development and innovation of technology, project planning skills will continue to be updated and improved. For example, the application of technologies such as artificial intelligence and big data will provide more accurate and efficient support for project planning. At the same time, with the intensification of globalization and market competition, companies also need to pay more attention to the integration of project planning with international standards and improve the internationalization level of project management (Qian, S. 2022).

1.2. Project communication skills

Project communication skills refer to the ability of project managers to communicate effectively with project team members, stakeholders, and other related parties through effective communication methods and techniques during the project implementation process. This ability includes oral communication, written communication, listening skills, and non-verbal communication, etc. (Duan, S, X. 2020). The importance of project communication skills is self-evident. It can help project managers obtain project information promptly, coordinate project resources, resolve project conflicts, and ensure the achievement of project goals. Hao, B. (2022), on the other hand, defined project communication skills as the ability to effectively transmit and receive information, ideas, needs, and opinions in project management. He further noted that it covers multiple forms of communication, such as oral communication, written communication, and non-verbal communication, to ensure smooth, accurate, and timely communication between project team members and between the project team and stakeholders.

According to different authors, there are several advantages to good project communication skills. First, it helps ensure that all team members have a better understanding of project goals, tasks, and expectations. Through effective communication, team members can coordinate and cooperate, divide the work, and work together to achieve project goals. Second, good communication can help the team identify and solve problems promptly. Open communication channels between team members enable all possible issues to be identified on time and can be quickly resolved through team collaboration. In addition, effective communication helps reduce misunderstandings and deviations, thereby reducing the risks faced by the project. Regular updates on project status and risks can help the team adjust strategies promptly and mitigate the adverse effects of risks on the project. Also, good communication can build good customer relationships and improve customer satisfaction. Timely communication of project progress and problems can help customers better understand the project and provide feedback, thereby improving the quality of project delivery and customer satisfaction. Project communication skills are also a key factor in the decision-making process. Effective communication between team members can promote information sharing and exchange, making decisions more comprehensive and accurate (Shen, X. F., Chen, Z. J., Xing,
W. D., & Lu, Z. B., 2015). Project communication skills are an indispensable part of project management, which directly affects the success of the project. By establishing good communication channels and skills, the project team can better understand project requirements, collaborate to solve problems, and ensure the smooth progress of the project. Therefore, project managers and team members should pay close attention and continue to improve project communication skills. (Huang, F. 2021).

In project management, the application of project communication skills runs through its entire life cycle (Chen, J. 2024). In the project initiation phase, the project manager needs to communicate extensively with the project team members to clarify project goals, task assignments, and responsibilities; in the project execution phase, the project manager needs to communicate with the project team members regularly to understand the progress of the project and promptly identify and solve problems; in the project monitoring phase, the project manager needs to communicate with stakeholders to obtain their feedback and suggestions to adjust and optimize the project; in the project closing phase, the project manager needs to summarize and evaluate with the project team members to accumulate experience for future projects. (Ju, J., 2019)

Although project communication skills play an important role in project management, they face some challenges in actual operation. First, cultural differences and communication barriers between project team members may affect communication effectiveness; second, the complexity and variability of project information may also lead to communication difficulties and finally, the different needs and expectations of project stakeholders may also put pressure on project communication. (Luo, W. 2023).

When it comes to project communication skills, cross-cultural project teams may face differences in cultural backgrounds and values, leading to communication barriers and misunderstandings. Project team members use different languages, which may lead to communication difficulties. Members of cross-regional teams may come from different geographical locations, and time zone differences and remote working environments may lead to communication delays and asynchrony. In large projects, information may be excessive or disorganized, resulting in communication noise and information overload, affecting effective communication. Emotional and interpersonal problems may affect communication effectiveness, such as conflict, distrust, or non-cooperation between team members. Electronic communication and online tools may face technical failures and security risks, such as data leakage or cyber-attacks. These challenges may affect the communication effectiveness between project teams, so project managers need to adopt appropriate strategies and methods to deal with these challenges to ensure smooth communication. (Shan, J., 2019)

Luo, W. (2023) posited that project managers should adopt effective strategies to cope with the challenges. For example, establish clear communication mechanisms and norms to enhance cultural exchange and integration among project team members; use modern information technology tools to improve communication efficiency and quality; strengthen communication and coordination with stakeholders, and obtain feedback and suggestions from stakeholders on time.

Through the literature review of project communication skills, the important role of project communication skills in project management, and the challenges and strategies for addressing them were evident. In the future, with the continuous development of project management theory and practice and the advancement of information technology, project communication skills will be further improved and perfected. There is a reason to believe that in the future of project management, project communication
skills will play an even more important role in providing strong support for the successful implementation of projects. (Lv, G., 2021).

1.3. Project risk management skills

Project risk management skills have always been an indispensable part of China's project management practice. With the rapid development of China's economy and the noted increase in various projects, the demand for project risk management skills is also growing. These skills not only affect the success or failure of the project but are also directly related to the economic interests of enterprises and the country (Ye, T., 2023). Project risk management skills cover risk identification, risk assessment, risk response, and risk monitoring. Risk identification requires project managers to have keen insight and comprehensive analytical ability, and to be able to accurately identify various risk factors that may affect project implementation in the early stages of the project; risk assessment requires quantitative and qualitative analysis of identified risk factors, and the use of statistical and probability theory tools to scientifically assess the probability of risk occurrence and possible losses; risk response is to formulate corresponding risk response measures based on the results of risk assessment and select appropriate risk response strategies; risk monitoring is to continuously track and monitor risk factors during project implementation, and to adjust risk response measures on time. The application and development of China's project risk management skills are closely related to the country's economic development (Yan.C.N.2023). With the implementation of major strategies such as the "Belt and Road Initiative", Chinese companies have undertaken more and more overseas projects and are facing increasingly complex risks. To improve the risk management skills of project managers, the Chinese government and major companies have increased training efforts, and some universities and research institutions have also begun to attach importance to the research and education of project risk management. However, compared with developed countries, China still has a gap in project risk management and needs to further strengthen the research and application of project risk management skills in the future. (Zhang, Y., & Huang, H. 2022)

1.4. Project monitoring and control skills

In the development of project management in China, project monitoring and control skills have always occupied a core position. These skills are not only related to the smooth implementation of the project but also directly affect the final performance and results of the project. (Zhou, S., Wang, W., Zhang, H., et al. 2023). Project monitoring and control skills include continuous tracking, measurement, analysis, and adjustment of key performance indicators such as progress, cost, quality, and scope during project execution to ensure that the project proceeds according to the established plan and achieves project goals. These skills require project managers to have solid theoretical knowledge of project management, rich practical experience, and a high sense of responsibility. (Wen, G.2023). Project monitoring and control skills are essential to the success of the project. Through continuous monitoring, project managers can keep abreast of the actual progress of the project, find deviations, and take corrective measures; through effective control measures, reasonably allocate resources, optimize processes, and improve execution efficiency. In addition, project monitoring and control skills also help project managers discover and solve potential problems promptly, reduce project risks, and ensure the smooth implementation of the project. With the continuous development of project management theory and practice, China has gradually formed a complete project monitoring and control system and has continuously explored and innovated in practice, forming some methods with Chinese characteristics. However, with the increasing complexity of projects,
the difficulty of monitoring and control is also increasing, and cross-departmental and cross-team collaboration issues need to be solved urgently. In the future, project monitoring and control skills will develop in a more refined, intelligent, and collaborative direction, achieving more accurate and efficient monitoring and control through advanced technologies such as big data and artificial intelligence, strengthening cross-departmental and cross-team collaboration, and improving project success rates and overall performance. (Zhao, G. 2021)

2. Conclusion and Prospects
The literature review provided a glimpse of the practice of performance management in the areas of planning, communication, risk management, and monitoring and control skills in China. It can be deduced that Chinese companies are likewise faced with challenges in each dimension of performance management. It has been found that the more complex projects become, the more problems arise in each dimension, especially with the effect of culture-related issues. The adoption of technology and other innovations in projects make project management more complicated. Thus, it is recommended that future research on the subject be done with a special focus on culture and adoption of technology resulting in improvement of performance management in China. Expansion in projects merits the use of cross-cultural teams. A thorough understanding of this subject will result in enhancement in project planning, communication, and risk management skills allowing for better monitoring and control. The adoption of technology and innovations in projects reduces costs and maximizes profits. It will pay off to conduct studies related to these technologies to ensure successful projects.

References