



ASSESSING THE PROJECT MANAGEMENT SERVICES NEEDS OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS OF ZAMBALES

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Abstract: The typical problem faced by the local government units (LGUs) in Zambales concerning the management of the project have been broadly analyzed in this study. The major goals were to learn how to plan and execute a project, to find out what services are necessary for the management of the project, to find local service providers, to calculate prices, and to enhance the procurement process. To identify what services the Local Government Units (LGUs) of Zambales require for project management, the study utilized a parallel convergent mixed-method research design which combined qualitative and quantitative methods. The survey results indicate that LGUs are good at choosing projects and using their resources, but to better involve stakeholders and set strategic goals, more effort is needed. Furthermore, the survey results state that the stakeholders are quite comfortable with the availability and prices of local service providers. The recommendation was that individuals should develop budgets, constantly examine them, and deliberately follow budgetary processes to enhance the efficiency of finances and administration. To improve procurement techniques, they used open and fair processes, compared their methods to the finest ones in the market, and worked with other service providers to solve difficulties. The study also looked at how LGU-project management service providers operate together, and it suggested that they develop trust, communicate honestly, and always look for ways to improve. In conclusion, the study presented Zambales LGUs useful information and specific suggestions for how to better manage projects, which would lead to better results that are more focused on the community.

Keywords: Public administration, project management, service needs, local government units, mixed-method design, Zambales

INTRODUCTION

To reach strategic goals, effective municipal administrations need systematic project management, which means they need skilled project managers, well-organized procedures, and strong teamwork. Research shows that connecting projects to strategic goals is important for making organizations more productive (Artto et al., 2011; Shenhar, 2001). To plan a project well, you need clear timetables, deliverables, and focused project management (Baccarini, 1996; Giammalvo, 2015; Crawford et al., 2008). Resource allocation is important for performance (Belout & Gauvreau, 2004; Aydogan & Ahi, 2017), and stakeholder involvement has a big impact on results (Bryde et al., 2013; Chen, 2009). Monitoring, evaluation, and risk management let us see how far we've come, help us make decisions, and help us deal with setbacks (Pinto & Slevin, 2017; Hillson, 2017). Regional research, especially in ASEAN, support comparable results, stressing that structured methodologies, resource allocation, and success indicators make it easier to carry out and assess projects (Nguyen, 2019; Thi & Huu Nguyen, 2021). Zambales LGUs have to utilize project management effectively that will involve the implementation of systematic procedures, having managers with expertise, and maintaining a good collaboration for the successful accomplishment of a project. The research of project management in the Philippines presents that strategic alignment, well-defined deliverables, and disciplined timetables are the factors that contribute to the improvement of project outcomes (Egan, 2012; Lansangan & Koh, 2015; Vilorio & Regudo, 2016). The practice of active progress tracking, stakeholder interaction, and resource allocation (Delfin et al., 2017; Govindan et al., 2019) are the main features of the process that is done to make more accurate judgments.



Success criteria that are clearly defined together with effective risk management are the base for judging project results and minimizing risks (Dela Cruz et al., 2017; Regudo & Vilorio, 2019). Modification of practices to be more compatible with the requirements of the local areas for the enhancement of the project's success is an element that is emphasized not only by the Philippines but also by ASEAN research. The local government organizations in Zambales need solid project management frameworks that are able to manage their strategic objectives, mitigate risks, and incorporate schedules and stakeholder participation. Custom frameworks give you maximum use of your resources and project operations that are more efficient. Research that is targeted is indispensable and is the only way to satisfactorily address local issues, as it allows researchers to directly relate their findings to field conditions. If a needs assessment for Zambanga local government units is conducted, then, projects would function better, be in accordance with strategic goals, apply best practices, and ensure the efficient and sustainable delivery of services.

FRAMEWORK

After basing the study on PMBOK (PMI, 2017) and Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984), it is revealed that the inclusion of standardized project management techniques as well as the involvement of stakeholders is of paramount importance. Stakeholder theory helps in identifying those needs and wants of the key stakeholders, which is the most important thing in the success of the project (Bryde et al., 2013; Chen, 2009). First of all, the PMBOK methodology enables projects to flow more effectively and be in harmony with the strategic objectives of the organization by allocating you the resources needed for managing budgets, timelines, risks, stakeholders, and quality. Research carried out in a great number of places throughout the continent of Asia revealed that a project that is to succeed must be in line with the organization's goals, have very clear deadlines and outputs, be managed well, and have the involvement of the stakeholders (Kerzner, 2017; Nguyen, 2019). Certainly project alignment, resource mobilization, stakeholder participation, and sound risk management are among the key factors that will determine the success of local governments in the Philippines (Banawa, 2015; Ocampo et al., 2016). In order to improve project outcomes and long-term success, Zambales LGUs have to deeply integrate the best practices into their project management frameworks.

The Zambales Local Government Unit encountered difficulties in project management. This research has reviewed such issues and presented solutions to boost service provider collaboration, planning, and the execution of the plan. The framework deeply penetrates the area of project design and management services, ease by way of operator search for local suppliers, cost estimations and purchasing strategies in order to make the purchases on time and at the right cost. To improve LGU project management in Zambales, it is crucial to consider project selection, scoping, resource allocation, scheduling, stakeholder involvement, risk management, and issue resolution. The process is highlighted with intense project planning, budget allocation, risk assessment, stakeholder engagement, and procuring that is prompt and efficient. In addition, verifying the local suppliers will reduce the cost of business and will allow for the business to collaborate with the city. The framework suggests that competitive bidding and performance evaluation are the ways to achieving the best procurement outcomes as well as project goals in an economical manner. The issue of Zambales LGUs project management has been addressed in the study and a conceptual framework was used to help work it out. This research has recognized and suggested methods to improve relations among service providers, design and project execution. The framework simplifies construction and provision of services by the Zambales Local Government Unit. Organizations and professionals can use good



project management techniques to make sure that everyone is on the same page with strategic goals, that everyone is aware of what's going on, that stakeholders are involved, that resources are used wisely, that risks are reduced, that progress is tracked, and that clear success metrics are set. Companies may handle projects and do well in a variety of situations by being open to numerous points of view. Use research to improve how you manage projects in your area.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The local governments in Zambales need help figuring out what they need from project management. It was important to know the project's scope, pick the right project management services, and finish projects on time and on budget. The study's goals are (1) to find out how Zambales LGUs plan and carry out projects, (2) to find out what project management services they need, (3) to find out if Zambales has local service providers who can provide the necessary project management services, (4) to estimate the cost of each project's project management services, (5) to look into ways for LGUs to improve their procurement strategies so they can get what they need on time and at a lower cost, and (6) to suggest ways for LGUs to make sure they work well with project management service providers.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

To find out the kind of project management services that the Local Government Units (LGUs) in Zambales need, the present study has employed a parallel convergent mixed-method research design that integrates qualitative and quantitative approaches. We got qualitative data through focus groups and in-depth interviews with LGU officials, project managers, and service providers (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). On the other hand, surveys gave us information about the most used practices and project management methods (Venkatesh et al., 2013). We looked at each piece of data on its own. Thematic analysis found major themes in the interviews (Braun & Clarke, 2006), and quantitative data (Field, 2013) demonstrated which elements had an effect. By looking at both qualitative and quantitative results, we were able to get a whole picture of what LGU project managers need. Triangulation made the results more accurate and trustworthy (Yin, 2017).

Research Site

The study took place in Zambales, Philippines. Zambales is in the middle of Luzon. Beautiful coastlines, natural beauty, and a culture that is all its own. Zambales is a great place to look at the project management service needs of a single province's LGUs, each with its own aims and problems. We looked at the structures, resources, and development goals of provincial and municipal governments to get ideas and suggestions. An indigenous approach put the project management service bids from Zambales LGUs in context.

Participants

The following provincial municipalities were included: Botolan, Cabangan, Candelaria, Castillejos, Iba, Masinloc, Palauig, San Antonio, San Felipe, San Marcelino, San Narciso, Santa Cruz, and Subic. The DILG or other trustworthy sources can tell you how many LGUs Zambales has. Choosing Zambales LGU officials. Sampling with a purpose. There were 26 project managers, 26 LGU officials, and 26 service suppliers who took part. Time, money, sample representativeness, and



the fact that qualitative research is already full all influenced the number of participants and samples. We looked at the ideas and experiences of the participants to figure out what Zambales LGUs require in terms of project management.

Instrumentation

There were several steps in constructing and improving the study's survey. Testing for validation and reliability made sure that the questionnaire was correct. Subject matter experts looked examined the questions to see if they were clear, relevant, and had enough content to be valid. Cronbach's alpha was used to measure internal consistency. It looks at how connected the items are within each scale. Pilot testing showed that the survey was even more reliable. The questions in the interview guide were made to fit with the goals of the research, and specialists checked them for clarity and completeness to make sure they were valid. The interviews showed that the responses were reliable because they were the same for similar questions.

Data Collection

The project administration of Zambales LGUs was the subject of this study, which employed interviews and surveys. Ethics are important, just like this study on the project management service demands of Zambales LGUs. Ethics kept private and personal data about participants safe. Thematic analysis was used to look at transcribed interviews and open-ended survey answers. We did a content analysis on the transcripts of the interviews and the written answers. The answers were carefully classified and looked at. It showed how data themes and patterns fit together. Using frequencies, percentages, and means to aggregate up and illustrate the quantitative results from a survey questionnaire. These investigations looked at the features of the respondents, their project management skills, and their service needs.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The current project planning and implementation practices of the LGUs in Zambales.

Local Government Units in Zambales excelled in project management, with a score of 4.00 in project identification and documentation across PM, SP, and total metrics. They achieved strategic objectives, exhibiting a minor discrepancy in strategic alignment (SP score of 3.98). Project planning, encompassing timelines and deliverables, was robust (4.00 in both PM and SP). However, stakeholder engagement (3.23 in SP) needs enhancement. Project monitoring and risk management were notable strengths (3.27 PM, 3.49 SP). To obtain improved project results, the research acknowledged the necessity for better strategy alignment and stakeholder engagement.

Based on the interviews, Zambales LGUs implement a stakeholder engagement approach that prioritizes resource allocation, voting, and assessment as part of the elaboration and implementation of the care process. They emphasized the use of project management tools to involve stakeholders, set deadlines, and monitor progress. The research highlights the need for project identification, resource allocation (Cleland & Ireland, 2007), leadership (Turner, 2014), followed timetables (Schwalbe, 2018), and the main idea of the project being strategy objectives (Shenhar et al., 2005). The very best implementation will require risk management, adaptive project management, and project prioritization (Kloppenborg, 2015; PMI, 2017).

It is also possible to further optimize LGU project management and execution through these locally-specific methods by enhancing strategic alignment and project delivery.

2. The specific project management services required by the LGU projects.

The Local Government Unit (LGU) project management services scored a particularly high satisfaction rating of 3.89, thus signifying excellent project scheduling (4.00), budgeting (4.00), stakeholder management (4.00), risk management (3.93), quality management (4.00), and communication management (4.00). These top ratings speak of graduating from just the planning stage to actual implementation of the projects. But still, scope management (3.73) and integration management (3.65) may be improved. Considering the achievements in risk, quality, and communication management, the LGUs are on top of scheduling, budgeting, and stakeholder involvement which is a statement of their activities being led by risk minimization and transparency. Procurement management (3.76) indicates potential for improvement. Quantitative findings indicate robust performance in project management, although they highlight the necessity for enhancements in specific domains to achieve greater project success.

Interviewees underscored the significance of services such as scheduling, budgeting, risk management, stakeholder involvement, and quality assurance. They emphasized the importance of organizational skills, communication, financial expertise, leadership, and adaptability. Familiarity with local legislation facilitates procurement and scope management.

These findings correspond with project management literature, emphasizing the significance of scheduling, budgeting, risk management, stakeholder engagement, quality assurance, communication, procurement, scope, and integration for achieving success. Although PMBOK (PMI, 2017) highlights these fundamental domains, Kloppenborg (2015) underscores the necessity for clearly delineated procurement, scope, and integration management. Project management's complexity necessitates technical, interpersonal, and strategic leadership (Turner, 2014; Wysocki, 2013). The research underscores the significance of strategic project management in connecting operations with objectives (Turner, 2014). Effective governance in the public sector necessitates stakeholder management, communication, and compliance with procurement laws (Ferlie et al., 2012). These observations can inform future enhancements in project management for local government units (LGUs).

3. The availability of local service providers.

The project management service providers in Zambales earned a satisfaction score of 3.77, reflecting "Strong Agreement (SA)." Notable strengths encompass scope (3.96), integration (3.95), and communication (3.82), underscoring providers' expertise in delineating project scopes, coordination, and communication. Although the results for project planning (3.56) and scheduling (3.66) were lower, they still indicate sufficient proficiency. The elevated score for risk management (3.68) indicates robust proficiency in recognizing and alleviating project risks. The results indicate that service providers in Zambales execute projects efficiently, although there is potential for enhancement in planning and scheduling.

The extent, coordination, and interaction capacity of local suppliers are consistent with the theory of project management, which points out that these factors are crucial for the success of the project (PMBOK, 2017). Although project scheduling and planning require focused attention (Kloppenborg, 2015; Wysocki, 2013), the risk management rating is the key factor that allows the realization of the risk prevention objective (Kerzner, 2017). Local procurement methods exhibit transparency and are contingent upon historical performance, with selection criteria emphasizing project collaboration and dependability.



The findings indicate that Zambales service providers exhibit proficiency in essential project management domains; nonetheless, they must concentrate on enhancing project planning and scheduling. Future research ought to investigate the obstacles encountered by local suppliers to improve their methodologies and contextual comprehension. The findings provide significant insights for public administration, facilitating enhancements in procurement procedures, resource distribution, and capacity development. Efficient risk management and stakeholder involvement, along with transparent procurement, will enhance project execution and community advancement.

4. The estimated cost of each project's necessary project management services.

The quantitative analysis of Zambales project management service costs had good results, as evidenced by a satisfaction score of 3.89 ("Strong Agreement"). The highest score (4.00) for budgeting services shows that stakeholders are happy with how the finances are planned. Quality and communication management both got good scores (3.95 each), which shows that people were happy with the project's results and how well they communicated. Scheduling (3.85) and stakeholder management (3.95) both had lower levels of satisfaction, but the results show that there is room for improvement in both areas. The results show that project costs are fair and well managed. These results are in line with what project management books say about the importance of budgeting (Schwalbe, 2018), quality management (PMI, 2017), and communication for the success of a project. Lower scores in scope (3.87) and integration (3.80) are linked to how hard it is to manage different areas (Kloppenborg, 2015; Wysocki, 2013). The grades for procurement (3.80) and risk management (3.86) show how important it is to be good at managing resources and risks (PMI, 2017; Kerzner, 2017).

Qualitative interviews disclosed that the price of a project may change based on the size and the difficulty of the project. In this case, while the cost of social development programs varies, the expenses of large-scale technological infrastructure projects are high. Research indicates that the nature, size, and complexity of a project have an impact on its budget (Schwalbe, 2018; Kerzner, 2017). PMI (2017) says that the most efficient budgeting is the lifeblood of project planning and execution. The findings of both quantitative and qualitative studies indicate that the implementation of hard budgeting and cost management strategies is a prerogative for the success of a project, thus, being in line with the theory of project management as presented in the literature. The PMI PMBOK Guide (2017), Kerzner (2017), and Schwalbe (2018) agree in a statement that among the several factors which determine the amount of a project, its complexity and scale are the two most significant elements.

5. The LGUs optimize their procurement strategies to ensure the timely and cost-effective acquisition of project management services.

The LGU procurement system got an average score of 3.93, which shows that it works well. A procurement score of 3.87 was given because it was important to be open and competitive while choosing service providers. It is best practice in project management for local government units to proactively diversify service suppliers and focus on building long-term relationships (4.00). The score of 3.94 for asking for many bids supports Schwalbe's (2018) call for competitive procurement. The low benchmarking score of 3.04 shows that there is room for improvement. This means that LGUs may make their procurement processes better by following industry standards (PMBOK Guide, 2017).

The answers to the interview questions made it clear that open and competitive procurement is necessary to keep project costs down. Poor service and regulatory delays make it harder to stick to procurement timetables. Suggestions included working closely with a variety of suppliers and changing procurement strategies to follow the best practices in the industry. These findings are in line



with what Gupta and Jain (2013) said about how important open, competitive procurement is for fairness and efficiency. Khiabani et al. (2017) and Akintoye and Fitzgerald (2000) also show that there are challenges such not having enough trained providers and delays in getting things done.

The qualitative results support a number of procurement proposals. DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) institutional theory stresses how important it is to have open and competitive procurement to meet the needs of all stakeholders. Transaction cost economics (Williamson, 1985) explains how a lack of qualified providers can raise transaction costs. The resource-based concept (Barney, 1991) says that you should work with multiple service providers to get the resources you need. Also, the principle of organizational learning (Argyris & Schön, 1978) says that local governments need to always improve how they buy things. According to network theory (Powell, 1990), working with experts in the field is very important for getting better procurement results.

6. The LGU's effective coordination and collaboration with project management service providers for successful implementation.

For projects to go well, local government units (LGUs) and project management service providers (PMSPs) need to work together. A score of 3.89 shows that the relationships between the two groups are good. Local Government Units (LGUs) help service providers by giving them directions, talking to them, and keeping an eye on them. They get scores of 3.94 and 3.95. Quick decision-making (3.92) and a focus on cutting down on red tape make project management more efficient, while strong partnerships with service providers (3.99) encourage flexibility and the sharing of information. Communication and working together are top priorities for local government units, which help projects succeed. The results are in line with what project management literature says, especially Pinto and Trailer's (1998) focus on communication and coordination and Turner's (1999) focus on leadership for project success.

Gray and Larson (2006) stress how important it is for stakeholders and service providers to communicate clearly, whereas Schwalbe (2000) encourages quick decision-making to avoid delays. Bresnen and Marshall (2000) say that trust and communication improve project results, while Freeman (1984) says that stakeholders' appreciation is very important. Senge (1990) talks about organizational learning and continuous improvement as ways to make projects better. Qualitative interviews back up these results, showing that workshops, meetings, and project management tools make it easier for LGUs and PMSPs to work together. To build trust and make sure a project is successful, it's important to communicate clearly, be open, and work together. Service contracts that clearly spell out governance and responsibility make it easier to handle these interactions. These results support project management theories that put a lot of weight on cooperation, communication, building trust, and measuring performance. To improve LGU public administration, stakeholders must be encouraged to get involved, different fields must work together, and governance must be established. Performance-based buying and collaborative technology make projects more effective and give communities more power.

CONCLUSION

The local government units in Zambales are very good at figuring out what projects to do, where to get the money for them, and how to work with stakeholders to make sure everyone is on the same page. LGUs can improve project management and community development by putting initiatives in order of importance and increasing training, openness, and communication. Both quantitative and qualitative data show how important it is to be good at budgeting, managing risks, including



stakeholders, and communicating to make projects more efficient. Individuals collaborating proactively and the existence of open and fair procurement procedures are good governance, sustainability, and service delivery. These measures will not only empower the local government, but also cultivate the spirit of innovation among them and the social impact of their projects will increase. Zambales' Local Government Units (LGUs) need to make thorough investments and come up with initiatives that will encourage the participation of stakeholders. This is going to be a major boost in the planning and implementation of the project. It is also a clever decision to go about training and skill development in a comprehensive manner. It is absolutely essential to employ customized budgeting techniques and use strategic project prioritizing techniques. In Local Government Units (LGUs), the improvement of procurement strategies through innovation and collaboration is hinged on two issues - addressing problems and benchmarking them with best industry practices. Finally, LGUs should keep on enhancing their partnership and directing their focus towards ascertaining the extent to which their undertakings have had an impact on the economy and the people.

TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH

As a result of the research on the planning and implementation techniques of the Zambales Local Government Units (LGUs), an array of policies and brochures aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of the LGU projects has been generated. Mainly, stakeholder engagement, strategic alignment, and resource utilization, among others, are presented in these documents. Apart from instructions on acquisition and budgetary planning, they also offer procedures for regular project evaluations and customized training. The policies promote the concepts of partnership and transparency as a means to a fair and community-centered development. Local government units can use the broad directives and the exemplary practices demonstrated in the leaflets to not only plan and arrange, but also to implement the activities leading to the local development that is both improved and sustainable.

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