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Managing Labor Shortages in Civil Engineering Project Execution

Anmar Yaseen Almaliki

Department of Civil Engineering, College of Engineering, University of Baghdad, Baghdad, Iraq

Abstract: This study investigates strategies for managing labor shortages in civil engineering project execution, focusing on their impact on project timelines, costs, safety, and overall performance where in our study Using a mixed-methods approach involving surveys and interviews with professionals from 15 civil engineering firms, the research analyzes labor availability trends, mitigation techniques, and the adoption of technological solutions such as construction management software and prefabrication as well as our Results reveal that labor shortages significantly delay project schedules and increase costs, while training programs, safety improvements, and worker incentives enhance retention and productivity in addition to found The study underscores the critical role of effective workforce management, safety compliance, and innovative scheduling in mitigating labor scarcity, providing actionable insights for improving operational efficiency and safety practices in civil construction projects.

Keywords: Shortages ,Project Execution ,engineering ,analyzes labor ,mitigation techniques, operational efficiency.

INTRODUCTION

In light of all these challenges, it is clear that civil construction companies suffer dire consequences in terms of operations and profitability. Schedule delays: The shortage of construction workers prevents the agreed-upon delivery dates from being met, affecting the company's reputation and relationships with clients and investors. Increased operating costs: To compensate for the shortage of construction workers, it is common to have to pay additional wages or hire more expensive specialists, which increases the costs of each project[Vandegrift, R. A. 2020; García de Soto, B. *et al*., 2022; Calvetti, D. *et al*., 2020]. Reduced production capacity: With limited equipment available, companies are forced to decline new contracts or reduce their workload, slowing growth. Finally, increased labor turnover and the burden on existing employees: Active workers are needed to the maximum extent possible, which can lead to burnout, decreased productivity, and increased labor turnover, making the problem worse [Fargnoli, M., & Lombardi, M. 2020].

The construction sector has recognized this problem and is currently activating several focus groups focused on recruiting new workers. Currently, there is no systematic synergy to address this issue, and therefore, a common policy has yet to be defined for all members of the construction sector to implement. [Galić, M. *et al*., 2014; Ceric, A., & Ivic, I. 2020; Karimi, H. *et al*., 2018; Aiyetan, O. A., & Das, D. 2018].

Some argue that construction schools should serve as an incentive not only to enhance the skills and qualifications of those already working in the sector, but also to meet young people who wish to enter the sector.

Training is undoubtedly a key component of the construction sector's growth, but in recent years, new entrants to the sector have viewed it as a waste of resources. However, over time, workers have quickly realized that training is essential to increasing their competitiveness in the job market. [Nikolov, A. *et al*., 2018; Giorgio, B. *et al*., 2019; Azeez, M. *et al*., 2019; Azeez, M. *et al*., 2019; Ho, P. H. 2016]. Focusing on training and programs that introduce employees to the world of work is undoubtedly a practical option.

The success of any project is closely linked to its optimal management—that is, how the project management architecture is structured and organized. It goes without saying that using the appropriate tools is also essential to help adhere to schedules and deadlines, organize the activities of the entire team, and resolve any unforeseen problems or events. There is no doubt that construction management software is the basic tool for managing all project management engineering activities. [Chang-Richards, Y. *et al*., 2017; Akomah, B. B. *et al*., 2020].

METHODOLOGY

In order to investigate strategies for managing labor shortages in the execution of civil engineering projects, this study used a mixed-methods approach. Surveys and structured interviews with project managers, site supervisors, and human resources personnel from 15 civil engineering firms operating in various geographic regions were used to gather primary data. The survey evaluated the prevalence of labor shortages, their effects on project timelines, costs, and quality, as well as the effectiveness of various mitigation strategies. The study also analyzed

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***Corresponding Author:** Anmar Yaseen Almaliki

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secondary data on workforce metrics and project records over the previous five years to find trends in labor availability, turnover rates, and productivity levels. Finally, the study assessed the use of technological tools like construction management software and prefabrication techniques as part of labor shortage management.

Quantitative statistical methods were used in the data analysis to link the severity of the labor shortage to project delays and cost overruns. Transcripts of interviews were subjected to qualitative thematic analysis in order to glean information about incentives, workforce planning, training programs, and managerial responses.

Case studies of initiatives that effectively addressed labor shortages through capacity-building initiatives, creative scheduling, and cross-functional workforce deployment were also conducted. These validated best practices and offered real-world examples.

RESULTS

Table 1: Survey Respondents' Demographics and Firm Characteristics

Characteristic	Frequency (n=15 firms)	Percentage (%)
Firm Size (Employees)		
- Small (<50)	4	27
- Medium (50-200)	7	47
- Large (>200)	4	27
Geographic Location		
- Urban	9	60
- Suburban/Rural	6	40
Project Types		
- Infrastructure	10	67
- Commercial Construction	5	33

Table 2: Prevalence and Impact of Labor Shortages on Project Performance

Impact Indicator	Frequency (%) Reporting Negative Impact	Mean Delay (weeks)	Average Cost Overrun (%)
Project Timeline Delays	80	6.2	12.5
Increased Overtime Costs	73	N/A	15.3
Reduced Work Quality	67	N/A	N/A
Increased Subcontracting	53	N/A	7.8

Table 3: Adoption of Technological and Scheduling Solutions

Strategy	Firms Implementing (%)	Perceived Effectiveness (1-5)
Construction Management Software	87	4.3
Prefabrication/Modular Components	60	4.1
Advanced Scheduling Tools	73	4.0
Real-time Labor Monitoring	67	3.8

Table 4: Training and Workforce Development Programs

Program Type	Participation Rate (%)	Effect on Retention (Positive Feedback %)
Skills Upskilling Courses	67	78
Cross-training Initiatives	53	72
Apprenticeship Programs	47	81
Safety and Compliance Training	87	85

Table 5: Worker Engagement and Incentive Schemes

Incentive Type	Adoption Rate (%)	Impact on Productivity (1-5)	Impact on Retention (1-5)
Performance Bonuses	73	4.2	4.0
Recognition Programs	67	3.9	3.8

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Flexible Scheduling	60	3.8	4.1
Health and Safety Improvements	80	4.5	4.4

DISCUSSION

First of all, it should be noted that during the study period, the work was found using different methods and that it was implemented in various contexts that analyse factors that influence the planning. Therefore, it has been demonstrated that there is a large number of research on aspects that affect private construction projects that may be at one of the project's implementation stages, regardless of design, planning, implementation, or evaluation. In this sense, Jahangir [5] aimed at the Asian continent, identifying the causes of delays in construction projects, identifying them through field studies, highlighting errors and inconsistencies from the perspective of design and planning documents and from the perspective of the effective project program of the contractor. Rashid and Aslam on the same continent in 2013 [Silva, G. A. S. K. *et al*., 2018] We developed a study to investigate the causes of delays in construction projects. The effects of several factors have been identified. In this context, Owolabi et al. [Azar, A. D. *et al*., 2018] presented the work where the causes and impact of delays in delivery times for construction work in Nigeria, Africa was investigated by a random sample of 150 people. The results identified several factors that lead to delays in construction projects. However, the following factors need to be emphasized: Lack of funds for the final funding of the project, changes to drawings, lack of effective communication between stakeholders, lack of information from consultants, slow decisions and bankruptcy from contractors, climate change[Dhal, M. 2020; Eurostat, 2020]. These factors are used throughout the construction process. The diagnostics were developed during the planning, design and construction phases, and after the sale of two specific projects, the potential causes of delays were determined by capturing planning and design problems that had negative impacts on the entire implementation phase of the project, particularly the next phase [Oesterreich, T. D., & Teuteberg, F. 2016].

CONCLUSION

This study has made information available on factors that influence the construction of various countries on almost every continent. This indicates that civil engineering is an area of interest. At the same time, when referring to these factors, it should be emphasized that all studies will reschedule and highlight their ability to delay the achievement of proposed goals within the estimated time frame of the IPO. Another interesting aspect is that in 71.7% of case factors associated with administrative causes, design, project execution, and economic aspects are highlighted as the most important factors affecting compliance planning and compliance. This highlights the importance of technical estimation in the design of a particular plan, allowing the goals of a citizen design project to be achieved within a planned time frame.

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