THE ADOPTION OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES BY A LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN KAZAKHSTAN: BARRIERS AND SOLUTIONS

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Abstract. *The introduction of project management is increasingly perceived as a response to the declining performance of governments and ineffective programs. The goal of this article is to identify barriers to the implementation of project management tools in a local government in Kazakhstan and develop solutions for their mitigation. In-depth interviews and document analysis were utilized as research methods. Overall, the adoption of project management was evaluated as poor. The analysis uncovered four major hindering factors. The first barrier was an ineffective change strategy when bringing about this reform. Secondly, it was revealed that real changes in the government's management approaches were overshadowed by technical aspects of the project management adoption policy. Thirdly, project management methods were not tailored to the specifics of the government. The final obstacle was the ill-conceived distribution of responsibilities among government employees, which caused coordination and interaction issues. This paper contributes to the empirical enhancement of the existing body of knowledge on management reforms in the public sector.*

Keywords: *government; reforms; changes; public management; performance.*

Reikšminiai žodžiai: *vyriausybė; reformos; pokyčiai; viešasis valdymas; veiklos rezultatai.*

Introduction

Governments worldwide are increasingly being challenged to be more results-oriented and reactive to public needs. In recent decades, this has spawned debates on reconfiguring the public sector. One of response has been so-called "projectification," which involves the proliferation of project management (PM) practices and switching to a project-based mode of work (Hodgson et al. 2019). Motives for embracing project-based approaches are well known (Jalocha and Prawelska-Skrzypek 2017): they are expected to overcome issues that governments have been traditionally accused of, such as inflexibility and inefficiency. The diffusion of project-based forms of management has attracted unprecedented interest from both academic and expert circles in recent years (Kuura 2020). Projectification today goes beyond restructuring and organizational changes, and its conceptualization has broadened to include individual, digital, and even social dimensions (Hodgson et al. 2019). Meanwhile, the implications of PM proliferation in government settings are fragmentary and have not been sufficiently addressed (Jensen et al. 2018; Fred 2020). Projectification is sometimes associated with the increased innovativeness of public employees and upgrading communication and reporting practices (Fred 2020). On the other hand, it contradicts traditional organizational logic, since workers have to balance between their permanent functions and the temporality brought about by projects (Nesheim 2020). It is widely argued that adopting PM practices involves many complications which need to be investigated further (Jensen et al. 2018; Jalocha and Prawelska-Skrzypek 2017). Without a deeper understanding of the problems arising when applying PM methods, governments run the risk of the dispersion of human, time, and budget resources and reputational losses.

Kazakhstan, having inherited many features of the inefficient Soviet bureaucracy, did not avoid the wave of public management reforms and has been consistently introducing changes in the work of public organizations. In line with the Decree of the Kazakh Government (Adilet 2021), all public bodies have been instructed to apply modern PM methods when implementing programs. This was followed by the approval of PM rules and methodologies and the creation of PM offices within central and regional public organizations. However, the implications of these processes on governments' format of working have not been subjected to scrutiny. Thus, the problem which laid a basis for the present research is the lack of critical assessment of PM adoption efforts in public administration in Kazakhstan.

This research aims to identify problems in applying PM techniques based on the case of the Almaty city government and develop ways for tackling them. It uses in-depth interviews and document analysis to achieve these objectives. Previous research in this field has had a broader scope, looking at the institutional logic of projectification (Fred 2020), its politico-administrative rationality (Fred and Hall 2017; Gustafsson 2017; Jensen et al. 2013), its wider impacts on governance and people (Schoper and Ingason 2019; Wagner 2021), and its perspectives within traditional governance frameworks (Nesheim 2020). The novelty of this paper is that it is rather straightforward and essentially considers the change management reform specifically designed for adopting project-based methods in

government. It systematically tracks the reform throughout its realization and for one year after its formal completion. The findings complement existing knowledge of PM in a public context by adding some empirical insights which could be of use when developing and realizing projectification strategies.

Literature review

Although the concept of PM in its modern form started to gain momentum only a few decades ago, it has received considerable attention in the literature (Kuura 2020). PM has traditionally been driven by the private sector, but in the last few decades it has also become one of the most significant agendas for the public sector (Hodgson et al. 2019). Many believe that private projects are more challenging since businesses operate in a more dynamic environment, but, in truth, governments operating within regulatory and budgetary frameworks experience more pressure when executing projects (Wirick 2009). For this reason, the use of PM approaches in government settings deserves more attention.

PM is increasingly seen by governments as a response to bureaucratization and declining performance and trust amid budgetary and public pressure. This has caused a new trend labeled "projectification" (Hodgson et al. 2019). The driving factors of projectification are well documented, yet how it manifests in practice remains an insufficiently explored area (Jensen et al. 2018). Despite the enthusiastic perception of project-based methods in the public sector, their effects have been multifold. When considering these implications, the literature has mainly covered individual, organizational, and social dimensions (Kuura 2020). One important consequence is the changing mindset and behavior of civil servants. Olausson and Svensson (2019) argued that the increasing use of PM has contributed to the growth of political entrepreneurship and innovativeness among public servants. On the other hand, projectification processes do not automatically lead to the replacement of the traditional bureaucratic framework with project logic. Fred (2020) showed that these two institutional logics may not only coexist, but can also lead to "rebureacratization," as described by Hodgson (2004), strengthening bureaucracy and control. Furthermore, this layering of logics causes an unhealthy environment in public settings, since public servants have to balance between project-based and permanent jobs (Ballesteros-Sanchez et al. 2019). Recognizing this issue, Palm and Lindahl (2015) coined the term "deprojectification," which means making distinctions between project and line functions less observable. In line with this view are the findings of Godenhjelm et al. (2015), who advocated for the better alignment of permanent and temporary structures in the public sector in a European Union context.

When scrutinizing more specific challenges in incorporating PM into a government's work, weak commitment or communication, insufficient competencies, inappropriate methodologies, and inefficient IT systems are usually reported as important hindering factors (Lappi et al. 2019; Mihic et al. 2015). A broader look is found in Blixt and Kirytopoulos's paper (2017), which considered an operational environment as a major obstacle to realizing the potential of PM in the Australian public sector.

In the discourse on the diffusion of PM practices in the public sector, more administratively developed countries are usually discussed. This is quite expected, since in developing nations PM is yet to become an integral part of public management (Amoah et al. 2022). Research on introducing PM techniques in developing countries accordingly remains very limited and fragmentary (Amoah et al. 2022). When assessing the implications of applying PM in emerging states, many authors tend to focus on its mechanical side. Lawani and Moore (2016), for instance, noted that the existing research leans towards positivism by emphasizing the role of PM tools and other control systems, rather than the human aspect of PM. It has also become common to use PM maturity models for assessing the integration of PM in organizations (Pulmanis 2013; Narbaev 2015). While providing some rich data, maturity models mainly rely on pre-determined measures, and might not be appropriate for observing informal aspects of projectification. Lawani and Moore (2016) therefore encouraged the examination of PM practices through the lens of critical realism, i.e., by looking at the human aspect, organizational culture, beliefs, and interaction of people and leadership. This view is of particular relevance to a Kazakh context because many works have dealt with normative and regulatory aspects of adopting PM in the public sector, or have observed these processes very fragmentarily (Kartov 2020; Ibadildin et al. 2022: Tileubayeva et al. 2017).

The review of the literature indicates the ambiguity of the implications of projectification in the public sector. There have been discussions and debates on the perspectives of these processes. As Jensen et al. (2018) put it, public sector projectification carries inherent complications which need to be investigated deeper. Many reviewed studies provide valuable insights but hold a broader view, looking at the politics and sociology of projectification, while this research intentionally narrowed its scope to a single PM adoption reform to scrutinize it in a more holistic and detailed way. Another point is that similar studies investigated the use of PM in a public sector context, from the view of methodology and actual project delivery. In contrast, the present paper puts transitional problems at the forefront by tracking a PM adoption project in a traditional bureaucratic setting from its very inception. Lastly, there has been a dearth of empirical research devoted to the introduction of PM tools in developing countries. This paper attempts to address this gap in the literature and generate some new insights into projectification problems in the public sector.

Methods

Before describing the methods used in this study, it is appropriate to provide brief contextual information to familiarize readers with the case (Table 1). In 2021, the Almaty city government launched an initiative for adopting modern PM techniques in its departments and units. For ease of reference, this initiative will be referred to as the Reform throughout the text.

This paper uses a case study approach to address the research questions. The rationale for this was that a case study can help to obtain in-depth knowledge about a complex issue within its real-life context (Crowe et al. 2011). As shown in the literature review, the

practical introduction of PM in the public sector, particularly in developing countries, has not been studied extensively. Using Stake's (1995) characteristics of a case study, this article is instrumental since it explores a particular case to explore the broader phenomenon of applying PM in the Kazakhstani public sector. Since the purpose of the research was to garner a deeper appreciation of the issue, data collection methods included qualitative techniques such as interviews and document analysis. Two eligibility criteria were used to recruit potential participants: (1) having professional experience in the public sector or PM of more than 5 years; and (2) being directly involved in the PM Reform.

Table 1. *Brief Contextual Information*

Aim of the Reform: Reforming existing project management practices by adopting new project management methods in the Almaty city government (Akimat). Overall, 32 public bodies (departments) of the Akimat were covered by the Reform.
Place of the Reform: Almaty city, the Republic of Kazakhstan. Almaty is the largest city in Kazakhstan and the economic center of the country and the Central Asia region (Kangalakova and Sabden 2017). Kazakhstan is a unitary state, and regional governments (or Akimats) are subordinated to the central government on strategic issues, although Almaty enjoys a special status and has independence on some issues of local significance.
Background: In 2021, the Central Government of Kazakhstan adopted project management rules and procedures. Central and local public bodies were also instructed to use project management tools when implementing public programs and projects (Adilet 2021).
Period of the Reform: Formally, it lasted from June 2021 to January 2022, but the project management office continued its operations in 2022–2023.
Cost of the Reform: 90.2 million KZT (approximately 212,000 USD) were allocated from the local budget for the services of the YCG Ltd contractor (a consulting firm in Kazakhstan).
Key stakeholders:
Almaty city government – main governing body;
Department of Strategy and Budget (a structural unit of the Almaty Akimat) – author and sponsor of the Reform, supervised and monitored the implementation of the Reform;
YCG Ltd – a private consulting firm specialized in strategic management (referred to as the Consultancy). This firm was hired by the Department of Strategy and Budget to implement the Reform by providing consulting services, promoting project management techniques, etc.;
Project Management Office (PM Office) – an informal team consisting of representatives of Akimat's Departments. It acted as an operational headquarters and was led by Akimat employees and experts of the Consultancy.
How the work was organized: The sponsor of the Reform retained control functions, while the Reform was in fact implemented by the PM Office in conjunction with the Consultancy. Members of the PM Office were employees of the Akimat departments. The Consultancy worked mainly with members of the PM Office, who were then expected to disseminate PM practices in their structures. These persons were seen not only as contact points, but also as change agents in the public bodies they represented.

Source: Authors.

Overall, 15 individuals were approached for interview, 8 of whom showed interest and ultimately participated in the study. A more detailed classification is presented in Table 2, which provides only aggregate information related to age, gender, and position, since a breakdown by participants may compromise anonymity. These participants held responsible roles in the Reform, closely interacted with the 32 bodies of the Almaty city

Government (Akimat), and thus well represented the specifics and problems as well as organizational and individual problems in implementing the Reform.

The initial interview questionnaire was pretested on a small scale to check the appropriateness and validity of the questions. As a result, it was revised and simplified to include more essential and relevant questions. The interviews were conducted from October to December 2022, and were held both face-to-face and individually. The interviews had a semi-structured and conversational format. The participants were directly asked to assess the quality of the adoption of PM in the Almaty Akimat based on four descriptive grades developed by the authors (Table 3), and to share their views on the difficulties and nuances of this process. For research purposes, the authors also used openly accessible quarterly reports prepared by the Consultancy (6 reports in total, comprised of 681 pages) within the PM contract (Department of Finance of Almaty 2021).

Table 2. *Description of interviewees*

	Department (Company)	Type of Employment	Gender	Age (from 26 to 42)	Position
1	YCG Ltd	Temporary employment (service supplier)	5 men 3 women	Average age 31.3	Consultant
2		Temporary employment (service supplier)			Consultant
3	Strategy and Budget Department	Full-time employment			Chief specialist Head of divisions Deputy Director of Department
4	Ecology Department				
5	Construction Department				
6	Education Department				
7	Energy Department				
8	Entrepreneurship Department				

Source: Authors.

Table 3. *Assessment of the Adoption of the PM Reform*

Assessment	Description
Very good	Comprehensive transformation of PM practice in the Almaty Akimat. Local state bodies actively use methods and techniques of PM, which overall comply with internationally recognized standards (Prince2, IPM, etc.) at all stages of implementing projects. This transformation allows project goals to be delivered successfully.
Good	The Almaty Akimat has not experienced a full transition to new forms of PM. However, it has adopted some important instruments such as the agile approach, risk matrixes, and Gantt charts, and routinely employs them. This has helped the Akimat to improve its performance in terms of realizing projects.

Assessment	Description
Poor	The transition to new forms of PM has been very limited. Only a few PM tools are taken into consideration. However, this process was not consistent and has had an insignificant impact on existing PM practices in the Akimat.
Very poor	The Almaty Akimat has retained its management practices, and no changes have been observed. Techniques and methods promoted by consultants and the PM Office have not become a part of the Akimat's business processes.

Source: Authors.

The researchers conducted a thematic analysis to address the research questions and followed a classical framework (Figure 1). As a data management and analysis tool, NVIVO (https://www.qsrinternational.com/) was used. During this process, the authors thematically analyzed YCG reports and field notes to ensure data triangulation, gain a deeper understanding of research questions, and enrich the research (Denzin 1973). Any inconsistencies with the interview data were further interrogated to learn more about their nature and causal factors.
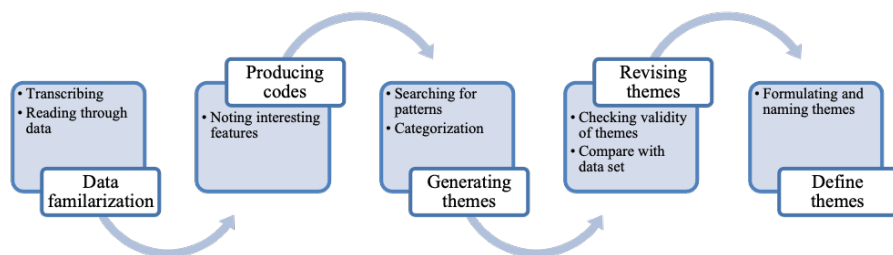

Figure 1. *Phases of Thematic Analysis*
Source: Adapted based on Kiger and Varpio (2020)

Results and Discussion

Before presenting the main findings, it is appropriate to observe an overall assessment of the Reform. Based on the rubric (Table 3), 6 participants (out of 8) evaluated the Reform as poor – interestingly, the two employees of the Consultancy were among them. The remaining two interviewees gave the Reform the lowest grade: very poor. Those who assessed the Reform as poor justified their view with the fact that there have been only slight changes, which are mainly related to the adoption of legal acts in the sphere of PM and the launch of the online PM platform. Despite these improvements, the Reform's impact on business processes and management practices was negligible. When it comes to the participants who evaluated this as very poor, they hold the view that even if there were changes, they were mainly superficial and did not affect behavior or culture.

It must be admitted that the Almaty government managed to build a basic regulatory framework for adopting PM. However, this did not transform the current state of affairs,

and public agencies retained existing PM practices. When discussing a government's failure to accept business-like practices, one would rush to blame sluggish bureaucracy which rejects any external intervention. However, the research showed that the problems here were primarily due to inappropriate approaches and tactics when realizing the Reform, rather than human-related challenges such as a lack of skills, knowledge, and an unwillingness to change, as usually reported (Ylinen 2021; Zurga 2018; Ribeiro and Domingues 2018; Zwikael 2020). The research identified 4 major barriers to this.

1. Ineffective Communication of Change

The analysis revealed that the failure to communicate both the need for change and the concrete benefits of applying PM was one of the key issues. After the formal inception of the Reform, the PM Office was established. Further actions included making sure that Akimat departments delegated their representatives to the office and conducting daily meetings with departments. Meetings centered on monitoring how well departments were filling in information about projects in the project information system. However, the supervisors and leaders of the PM Office did not practically set the groundwork for the Reform. First of all, before starting the Reform, Akimat departments were faced with the fact that the format of their work would be subjected to some changes. Akimat employees were not informed or consulted about why the current format of managing projects in the Akimat required revision. Furthermore, the supervisors of the Reform did not take reasonable steps to communicate the practical implications of applying PM tools. The Consultancy's operation plan within the Reform did not include any of these undertakings. Another issue was that no assessment of the existing format of managing projects in Akimat was made. During 2021 and 2022, the PM Office experienced frequent personnel changes, which was even recognized by the Consultancy (Department of Finance of Almaty 2021). This situation did not contribute to the consistent and productive implementation of the Reform. When it comes to PM policy, interviewees repeatedly noted that they felt as if they were treated like objects, rather than equal participants in the process. The findings in this context show that the "action learning" approach, a methodology for learning and acquiring skills while working and solving problems, clearly did not work.

It is argued that the failure to build a strong case for change and confidence in the Reform, as well as incentives for embracing new management techniques, isolated Akimat departments, which did not feel part of the change project and saw the Reform not as a promising opportunity, but as an administrative task. Consequently, the behavior of department leaders and employees indicated that PM was not seen as a priority. Support for such findings comes from studies by Ribeiro and Domingues (2018) and Nuottile et al. (2016), who observed a lack of commitment and resistance to change as important obstacles.

2. The Prevalence of Technicalities

The discussions and efforts of the PM office revolved around the PM information system, while reforming existing approaches and ways of managing projects was largely ignored. The data analysis illustrated that 8 out of 11 functions of the PM Office outlined in the report of the Consultancy were directly related to the PM information system (Department of Finance of Almaty 2021). The recommendations given to the 32 state bodies of Almaty were technical and did not entail more in-depth conceptual changes. For instance, in the final report of the Consultancy, the Department of Culture was recommended to keep information on project charters, objectives, and budget up to date in the system (Department of Finance of Almaty 2021). When the PM platform did not work or worked intermittently for technical reasons, the interaction between Akimat structures and the PM Office was practically paralyzed. This once again illustrates that the PM platform was central to the work of the PM Office. The software mentioned was based on the popular EasyProject platform, and represented an online PM tool. The PM Office attempted to digitize all projects implemented by Akimat by filling out relevant sections of the platform, which included information on project sponsors, deadlines, and budget. Employees felt overwhelmed because they did not expect extra paperwork. In contrast to this, Nuottila et al. (2016) pointed out that many wrongly assume that PM involves a complete rejection of documentation, while this remains an important practice even in agile methodologies.

However, it is argued that what concerned the Reform supervisors most were the technicalities and PM software, rather than the conceptual and institutional aspects of PM. Consuming significant time and human resources to fill up the information system with project information, while a real state of affairs was practically left untouched, gave rise to two parallels. Utilizing the information system of PM became an additional superstructure in the Akimat's already bureaucratic system. State bodies continued their practice of managing projects, and simultaneously followed the instructions of the PM Office related to the information system. Unlike Fred (2020) and Nesheim's (2020) studies, which showed that bureaucratic and project logic are not necessarily mutually exclusive and may co-exist, this research observed a clear asynchrony between these two working modes.

3. A One-Size-Fits-All Approach

The analysis of data indicated that the PM Office did not make adequate attempts to design tailor-made approaches for Akimat departments, operating in different fields and having different specifics. To illustrate, it is worth comparing the activities of some Akimat departments mentioned in the interviews – one of which is the Department of Religious Affairs, which is in charge of cooperation with religious organizations. The environment in which this department operates is relatively predictable and stable; therefore, it would be appropriate to apply more traditional PM methodologies to it. The departments of entrepreneurship, construction, public transport, and the energy sector, in

contrast, operate in much more dynamic settings, where projects may be liable to changes influenced by a variety of external factors. Therefore, for this type of state body, the Consultancy could offer more agile PM methodologies as opposed to linear approaches.

The inappropriateness of some PM procedures required by the Office was emphasized in another interview. Specifically, an overly detailed breakdown of project activities in the PM platform did not make a lot of sense in the Akimat departments, since when realizing a project the departments followed established practices. As a rule, they hire private companies to implement projects through tendering procedures and retain only control functions, while the actual realization of projects is performed by suppliers. Therefore, the EasyProject system might not be functional for them.

Another illustration of poor adaptation of the PM Reform is the fact that the Department of Construction, for example, has already been using an online public platform for developing and tracking budget documentation of projects for some time, and it was unclear how this platform interplayed with the EasyProject platform. Furthermore, planning and implementing multi-million-dollar projects is a comprehensive and strictly regulated process, and complementing EasyProject with project data according to the PM Office requirements had little in common with this process. The Reform overlooked these nuances and, despite being intended to improve efficiency, led to more bureaucracy, a paradoxical observation also reported by other authors (Mukhtar-Landgren 2021).

As a result, the insufficient customization of policies caused demotivation and disappointment among public employees, since they did not feel the practical implications of the Reform in their professional lives. This view accords with the findings of Murphy and Cormican (2015), who emphasized the role of psychological motives in adopting new management methods.

4. A Scheme of Interaction with Departments

The PM Office attracted different employees of departments who acted as change agents and were supposed to introduce and implement PM methods in the sending departments. Many were physically located in the office, but many representatives continued working in their departments and simultaneously carried out the functions of applying PM. Thus, the Reform created an additional administrative workload. This research also revealed that the appointment of PM office personnel was done on the leftover principle. In other words, departments appointed whoever was available as their PM representatives. However, the problem ran deeper. One vicious practice in the activity of local governments of the country is that when a person is designated as a coordinator for a certain project or task, they bear full responsibility for its success or failure. This creates disincentives for other involved employees who may show a merely formal attitude towards a common task, taking into account that ultimately it is the coordinator who will be held to account. This practice had similar consequences concerning the PM Office. Department representatives designated as coordinators for PM in their departments were fully responsible for it, while other units had minimal interest in this Reform. All interviewed PM office representatives mentioned that it was challenging to receive information from their colleagues, who were

reluctant to take part in the Reform pointing to workload. This observation is consistent with Boehm and Turner's paper (2005), which considered the unclear distribution of roles and workload as a real challenge for adopting PM changes.

With increasing responsibilities, public employees faced a dilemma about whether to continue performing their main functions or take up a new role in the PM Office. Since it was practically impossible to combine both, employees chose the former and looked at the PM Reform in a formulaic way because they would be held legally accountable for their main prescribed duties. These are consistent with the findings of Ekstedt (2019), who warned about the difficulties of balancing between project-related and main functions. One participant admitted that although they did not functionally work with projects, they were made responsible for PM in their department, and acted as an unnecessary intermediary between the PM Office and their colleagues from other divisions dealing with projects. Many PM representatives were "specialists," which was an entry-level position in the Akimat. This created an imbalance of power since they did not have a direct influence on higher-level officers and could not give them instructions. Thus, the burden of responsibility for the reform has been placed on individual workers, who for various reasons have not been able to channel PM policies to their departments. It is argued that a scheme of interaction based on liaisons, instead of directly involving relevant units, proved to be ineffective.

Conclusion

1. This analysis showed that the reform introducing PM in Kazakhstan was not able to bring about real changes. It is too early to state that it has become an integral part of business processes in Akimat, and until now it resembles a ritual and an end in itself.
2. The study allowed us to reveal four key barriers to adopting PM in Akimat structures. These included: a poor understanding of PM, an overreliance on the PM software, a one-size-fits-all approach for introducing PM tools, and a practice of using coordinators and their limited interaction with departments' other units.
3. Based on the research data, a set of strategic and tactical recommendations has been developed:
   3.1. Conduct an in-depth analysis of institutional and organizational barriers to using PM in a government agency. This may include looking at formal rules and practices for implementing projects and other regulations, which could be a real obstacle in using modern PM techniques. This analysis would help to design a better PM policy. The case of Almaty's Akimat clearly showed that action learning did not work in this context.
   3.2. It would be more appropriate to carry out such a reform as a pilot project by focusing only on a few departments, rather than attempting to apply PM simultaneously and everywhere. The introduction of PM could be tested on limited programs and departments. First, this would prevent the dilution of resources and would approach the issue comprehensively. Secondly, a pilot initiative would enable us to assess its viability and improve the approach and design of

the PM policy before rolling it out on a larger scale. In this scenario, it is recommended to abandon the idea of designating a single person responsible for PM in a department for the reasons described earlier. However, retaining a small but competent team of supervisors is important. The main function of this team might be to provide methodological support and guidance, and to evaluate the progress of introducing PM.

3.3. Design a communication strategy. For this one may look, for instance, at Kurt Lewin's (1947) classical unfreeze, change, refreeze change management model, or other approaches. As the name implies, before implementing the PM Reform, a public organization should create awareness of the need for change among employees and strengthen their willingness and motivation to adopt new management techniques. This would address potential resistance to change. Furthermore, such groundwork is critical for creating a sense of ownership of the process, which is an essential prerequisite for making change sustainable.

3.4. Prioritize real-world changes and limit the focus on PM software. The importance of IT technologies is not disputed. However, in this case, implementing and updating the EasyProject PM platform practically occupied the whole of the time of interactions between the PM office and the Akimat units. This situation overshadowed real changes and improvements in the activity of the Akimat.

Limitations and future research

The problems and recommendations discussed in this paper are not exhaustive; there are many other factors affecting the adoption of PM practice which may be explored further. Another limitation of this study is its homogeneous sample, which attracted only those who were directly involved in the Reform. Involving the upper management of the Almaty government, representatives of supplier companies cooperating with it, and independent experts would allow us to look at this issue from a variety of angles and enhance the study's validity. The scope of this research covered only Almaty city, which may limit its generalizability. However, it was intentionally limited to a single intervention at a regional level to obtain in-depth insights. Future research may concentrate on studying links between PM practices and strategic planning, budget policy, and human resource management in government settings. It is argued that the research findings may be a valuable source of information and guidance for national and regional governments seeking to introduce new management practices and techniques. Reflecting on potential difficulties in this way helps to design stronger policies and deliver better performance.

Funding statement

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KAZACHSTANO VIETOS SAVIVALDOJE PRITAIKYTA PROJEKTŲ VALDYMO PRAKTIKA: KLIŪTYS IR SPRENDIMAI

Anotacija. *Projektų valdymo įdiegimas vis dažniau suvokiamas kaip atsakas į prastėjantį viešosios valdžios darbą ir neefektyvias programas. Šio straipsnio tikslas – nustatyti kliūtis, trukdančias įgyvendinti projektų valdymo priemones Kazachstano vietos valdžios institucijose, ir sukurti sprendimus, kaip tas kliūtis sumažinti. Straipsnyje kaip tyrimo metodai buvo pasitelktas giluminis interviu ir dokumentų analizė. Atlikus analizę projektų valdymo pritaikymas vietos valdžios institucijose buvo įvertintas prastai. Analizė atskleidė keturis pagrindinius trukdančius veiksnius. Pirmoji kliūtis buvo neveiksminga pokyčių strategija įgyvendinant reformas. Antra, paaiškėjo, kad realius vyriausybės ir vietos valdžios valdymo požiūrių pokyčius užgožia techniniai projektų valdymo priėmimo politikos aspektai. Trečia, projektų valdymo metodai nebuvo pritaikyti vyriausybės ir vietos valdžios specifikai. Paskutinė kliūtis buvo neapgalvotas pareigų paskirstymas tarp valstybės tarnautojų, dėl kurio kilo koordinavimo ir sąveikos problemų. Straipsnis padeda empiriškai pagilinti žinias apie valdymo reformas viešajame sektoriuje.*

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