



Influence of Project Management Competencies on the Performance of Seed-Funded Youth Projects: A Case of Corpsafrica/Rwanda Projects

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Abstract: This study examines the influence of project management competencies on the performance of seed-funded youth projects implemented by CorpsAfrica/Rwanda in Huye and Gisagara districts. However, limited empirical evidence exists on how specific project management competencies contribute to the success of youth-led, seed-funded development projects, particularly within the Rwandan context. The study aimed to assess the effect of project planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation competencies on the performance of seed-funded youth projects. The study was guided by Competency Theory, Project Management Success Theory, Systems Theory, and Participatory Development Theory. A quantitative research approach employing descriptive and explanatory research designs was adopted. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale from a sample of 396 youth beneficiaries involved in seed-funded projects implemented between 2022 and 2025. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis. The findings revealed that project management competencies significantly influence the performance of seed-funded youth projects. The regression model explained 73.7% of the variation in project performance ($R^2 = 0.737$). The study concludes that effective project performance among youth-led initiatives depends not only on financial support but also on the managerial competencies of project implementers throughout the project life cycle. The study recommends that CorpsAfrica/Rwanda, government institutions, and development partners integrate continuous competency development, mentorship, and performance management systems into youth empowerment programs to enhance project effectiveness, sustainability, and community impact.

Keywords: Project management competencies; Project planning; Project implementation; Project monitoring; Project evaluation; Project performance

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1. Introduction

Development projects have evolved as key instruments for governments, international organizations, and civil society organizations to carry out focused interventions aimed at tackling complex socioeconomic concerns around the world. Projects are used to achieve results within predetermined schedules, budgets, and scopes, ranging from large-scale infrastructure to community-based development programs (Alvarenga, Branco, Guedes, Soares, & Silva, 2020). Despite the widespread use of project-based approaches, global research

suggests that a large proportion of projects fail to meet their objectives, resulting in lost resources, delayed outcomes, and decreased social impact (Ika, 2022). Scholars claim that project success or performance is influenced not just by financial and technical resources, but also by the competencies of project managers who plan, implement, monitor, and evaluate project activities (Mercado and Facelli, 2024). Competent management ensures that resources are used efficiently, deadlines are met, and stakeholders are satisfied, influencing both short-term and long-term development outcomes.

Project performance difficulties are compounded in low- and middle-income countries, including many in Sub-Saharan Africa (Rumenya & Kisimbi, 2021). Even when appropriate financial resources are available, empirical studies show that inadequate planning, poor implementation coordination, and weak monitoring and evaluation systems commonly impair development programs (Ayinkamiye and Akimana, 2025; Sifa, Mutabazi, & Ndabananiye, 2022). Community-based and youth-led development initiatives are especially vulnerable since they frequently rely on volunteers or local actors with little professional project management experience. The ensuing gaps in project planning, implementation, monitoring, and assessment typically result in delays, inefficiencies, and decreased project sustainability (PMI, 2021).

Institutional examples like CorpsAfrica/Rwanda highlight the challenges of youth-led, seed-funded development programs. CorpsAfrica mobilizes young volunteers to work with rural communities, identifying local concerns and implementing small-scale projects using seed grants. The program places an emphasis on community involvement, leadership development, and grassroots creativity. Despite these novel techniques, empirical evidence about the impact of project management competencies on the performance of such efforts is lacking. Most research on project management competences concentrate on large-scale infrastructural, corporate, or government-led projects, leaving a considerable deficit in small-scale, youth-led community initiatives (Mercado & Facelli, 2024). In particular, systematic research on how project planning, execution, monitoring, and evaluation competences affect project performance in the CorpsAfrica/Rwanda framework is limited.

Within Rwanda, CorpsAfrica/Rwanda has invested considerably in empowering young people through seed-funded community projects implemented in districts such as Huye and Gisagara. While these initiatives continue to expand opportunities for youth participation in local development, there is limited empirical evidence demonstrating how competencies in project planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation individually influence the performance of these projects. Existing studies conducted in Rwanda have largely concentrated on public infrastructure projects, government programmes, donor-funded interventions, or corporate organizations, with relatively little attention given to small-scale, youth-led seed-funded projects implemented at the community level (Rumenya & Kisimbi, 2021; Mercado & Facelli, 2024). Consequently, development organizations have limited empirical evidence to guide competency-based training, mentoring, and capacity-building interventions specifically tailored to youth project implementers.

This limited evidence represents both a theoretical and practical knowledge gap. Theoretically, it constrains

understanding of how individual project management competencies contribute to project performance within youth-led development programmes. Practically, it limits the ability of organizations such as CorpsAfrica/Rwanda to identify which competencies require greater investment to improve project effectiveness, accountability, resource utilization, and sustainability. Without such evidence, capacity-building programmes may continue to focus broadly on project management without identifying the competencies that generate the greatest improvements in project performance.

1.1 General Objective

To examine the influence of project management competencies on the performance of seed-funded youth projects implemented under CorpsAfrica/Rwanda in Huye and Gisagara districts between 2022 and 2025.

1.2 Specific Objectives

The four specific objectives below address the individual competencies examined in the study and their relationship with the performance of seed-funded youth projects.

1. To assess the effect of project planning competency on the performance of seed-funded youth projects in Huye and Gisagara districts under CorpsAfrica/Rwanda.
2. To analyze the influence of project implementation competency on the performance of seed-funded youth projects in Huye and Gisagara districts under CorpsAfrica/Rwanda.
3. To investigate the impact of project monitoring competency on the performance of seed-funded youth projects in Huye and Gisagara districts under CorpsAfrica/Rwanda.
4. To evaluate the role of project evaluation competency in shaping the performance of seed-funded youth projects in Huye and Gisagara districts under CorpsAfrica/Rwanda.

2. Literature Review

This section presents the theoretical explanations and earlier empirical findings supporting the study variables. The subsections retain the original cited literature while concentrating on the arguments directly relevant to the four objectives.

2.1 Theoretical Review

The theoretical review considers four perspectives used to explain how planning, implementation, monitoring,

and evaluation competencies relate to the performance of seed-funded youth projects.

2.1.1 Competency Theory

Beyond planning, Competency Theory defines the function of implementation, monitoring, and assessment competencies. Implementation competency measures a youth implementer's capacity to translate plans into cohesive action, organize activities, and manage stakeholders. Meanwhile, monitoring competency entails keeping track of progress, spotting discrepancies, and implementing remedial actions. The evaluation competency focuses on reviewing outcomes and incorporating lessons gained for future growth. Competency Theory explicitly relates these managerial skills to measurable project results, implying that each competency has an independent and interactive impact on the efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability of seed-funded initiatives (Alvarenga et al., 2020).

Analytically, Competency Theory is relevant to this study since it explains how youth implementers' skills transfer into project performance. The theory predicts that deficiencies in any of the four competencies can lead to underperformance in the Huye and Gisagara districts, where CorpsAfrica/Rwanda facilitates youth-led initiatives, whereas strong competencies increase the likelihood of meeting project goals, adhering to timelines, and producing long-term results. Furthermore, the theory provides a conceptual basis for measuring each competency independently, which is consistent with the study's design of assessing planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation competencies as independent variables and project performance as the dependent variable.

2.1.2 Project Management Success Theory

Project Management Success Theory (Turner & Müller, 2003) emphasizes that project managers' skills, behaviors, and decision-making processes are critical predictors of project outcomes. Unlike Competency Theory, which focuses broadly on individual capabilities, this theory places success in the interaction of managerial competencies and project context, making it especially relevant to youth-led, seed-funded projects where implementers work in decentralized and resource-constrained settings. According to the theory, the quality of planning, implementation, monitoring, and assessment by the implementers has a significant impact on the performance of a project. Inadequate planning competency, for example, can jeopardize scheduling, resource allocation, and risk anticipation, restricting the project's capacity to meet its goals (Kerzner, 2022; PMI, 2021).

Analytically, Project Management Success Theory provides a framework for understanding how each ability contributes to project success in the

CorpsAfrica/Rwanda setting of Huye and Gisagara. It justifies treating planning, execution, monitoring, and evaluation as distinct but interconnected constructs, while also emphasizing the cumulative impact of these competences on project outcomes. Using this theory, the study may investigate not just the existence of competences, but also their effectiveness in real-world youth-led projects, providing insights into which abilities most strongly predict success and where targeted interventions may improve performance.

2.1.3 Systems Theory

According to Checkland's (1999) Systems Theory, projects are complex, interdependent systems with dynamically coupled components, inputs, processes, and outputs. This approach in project management emphasizes that project performance is the result of the coordination and interaction of various processes, rather than separate acts. Systems Theory, when applied to seed-funded youth projects, provides a lens through which to understand how planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation abilities are interrelated functions rather than isolated talents. For example, good planning generates structured input for implementation, whilst monitoring provides real-time feedback that influences both ongoing execution and assessment processes, emphasizing the systemic character of project success (PMI, 2021; Kerzner, 2022).

In Rwanda, notably in the Huye and Gisagara areas, Systems Theory explains why certain youth-led, seed-funded programs succeed and others fail, while having identical resources and money. By conceptualizing projects as systems, the theory emphasizes the interrelated effects of project management competencies: insufficient monitoring can lower the efficacy of planning and implementation, while insufficient evaluation limits learning and future progress. Applying Systems Theory, the study can analytically assess how each competency interacts with others to influence performance, thereby providing a nuanced understanding of project dynamics. This approach also underscores the logic for measuring abilities individually while taking into account their cumulative, systemic impact on the performance of seed-funded youth programs.

2.1.4 Participatory Development Theory

Chambers (1997) pioneered Participatory Development Theory, which emphasizes community involvement in the conception, implementation, and evaluation of development programs. The notion holds that meaningful engagement improves project relevance, ownership, and sustainability, especially in situations where external money and technical skills are limited. For youth-led, seed-funded projects, this theory emphasizes the importance of project management skills in participatory settings. Planning competences, for

example, are only effective when adolescent implementers collaborate with community stakeholders to determine priorities, allocate resources, and plan interventions that address local needs. This combination of engagement and technical skill guarantees that project objectives are both attainable and culturally relevant.

In Rwanda, and particularly in the Huye and Gisagara regions, Participatory Development Theory offers a lens through which to analyze why some youth-led projects flourish despite inadequate resources. The approach emphasizes the importance of local engagement and ownership in determining the efficiency of planning, implementation, monitoring, and assessment competencies. For example, a well-structured plan may fail if community involvement is neglected, and monitoring without participatory procedures may miss crucial contextual issues. As a result of applying this theory, the study is able to link youth project management competencies to project performance within the socio-cultural and institutional realities of rural Rwandan districts, reinforcing the rationale for measuring each competency as both an individual skill and a function influenced by participatory practice.

2.2 Empirical Review

This section critically reviews empirical studies examining the relationship between project management competencies and project performance.

2.2.1 Project Planning Competency and Performance of Seed-Funded Youth Projects

In Rwanda, Nibagwire and Dushimimana (2024) investigated project planning practices and project performance in the Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights Project implemented by Save Generations Organization in Bugesera District. Their study examined resource planning, schedule planning, stakeholder planning, and scope planning. The researchers reported that inadequate planning practices presented challenges for project implementation and emphasized the relevance of structured planning to project performance. The study is pertinent to the present research because it examines a development project implemented in a Rwandan district rather than relying exclusively on evidence from corporate or infrastructure projects. Nevertheless, its project-specific focus limits the extent to which its findings can be generalized to seed-funded youth initiatives, whose implementers may have different levels of managerial experience, access to technical assistance, and accountability requirements. The study also does not, by its setting alone, establish whether planning competency operates differently in youth-led projects than in projects implemented by established organizations.

Further evidence from Rwanda is provided by Shami and Odengo (2026), who examined project planning

practices and the performance of the Youth New Vision project in Rubavu District. Using a descriptive research design and quantitative and qualitative data from 155 respondents, the authors investigated the relationship between financial resource planning and project performance. Their reported correlation analysis indicated a positive association between financial resource planning and project performance ($r = 0.606$, $p < 0.001$). The authors also reported a statistically significant regression relationship. These findings suggest that the ability to anticipate and organize financial resources is relevant to project implementation and achievement. However, the reported association should not automatically be interpreted as proof that improved planning causes better performance. Furthermore, financial resource planning represents one component of planning competency; it does not independently establish the contribution of scheduling, risk anticipation, scope definition, and stakeholder coordination. The present study therefore extends the analytical focus by considering planning competency as a broader managerial capability within seed-funded youth projects.

2.2.2 Project Implementation Competency and Performance of Seed-Funded Youth Projects

Benimana and Dushimimana (2026), in their study of the Value Chain Development Project in Gakenke District, Rwanda, examined project planning, project implementation, participatory risk management, and project monitoring and evaluation in relation to project performance. The authors reported a positive regression coefficient for project implementation ($\beta = 0.205$, $p < 0.001$). This finding indicates that implementation practices were positively associated with project performance within the model examined. Its importance for the present study is that it provides district-level Rwandan evidence linking the operational execution of project activities to performance. However, the study's agricultural value-chain setting does not fully represent the circumstances of seed-funded youth projects. Moreover, the reported coefficient should be interpreted within the study's specified model rather than treated as a universal estimate of the effect of implementation competency across different project types.

Umutoni and Dushimimana (2025), in their study of project management practices and the performance of the Tubura Project in Nyanza District, Rwanda, also examined project implementation alongside planning and monitoring and evaluation. Their research was designed to assess how these practices related to project performance. The study is relevant because it evaluates several project management dimensions within one Rwandan development project, allowing implementation to be considered as part of a broader managerial process. However, the available study description does not provide sufficient verified numerical findings to establish the independent magnitude or statistical

significance of implementation competency. Its relevance should therefore be treated as contextual rather than as conclusive quantitative evidence for the present study.

2.2.3 Project Monitoring Competency and Performance of Seed-Funded Youth Projects

Workneh and Aga (2022) investigated the effect of monitoring and evaluation practices on the success of development projects implemented by nongovernmental organizations in Ethiopia. The study used a survey-based explanatory research design covering 92 development projects. Multiple linear regression results indicated that monitoring and evaluation practices—including planning, staff technical skills, budgeting, and stakeholder engagement—had positive and statistically significant relationships with project success. This study offers relevant empirical evidence from an African development-project setting and illustrates that monitoring and evaluation depend on more than the collection of progress information. Technical capacity, adequate financial provision, and stakeholder participation may also be associated with project success. However, the study combined several monitoring and evaluation dimensions, meaning that its results should not be interpreted as an isolated estimate of monitoring competency alone. Its Ethiopian NGO context also differs from the institutional setting of seed-funded youth projects in Rwanda.

In Rwanda, Benimana and Dushimimana (2026) examined monitoring and evaluation as part of their broader investigation of project management practices and agricultural project performance in Gakenke District. Their reported regression coefficient for project monitoring and evaluation was positive and statistically significant ($\beta = 0.214$, $p < 0.001$). The result indicates a positive association between monitoring and evaluation practices and project performance within the model. It also supports the relevance of considering monitoring and evaluation alongside planning and implementation rather than treating performance as the outcome of a single managerial practice. However, the combined measurement of monitoring and evaluation does not reveal the independent contribution of monitoring competency, nor does it establish whether monitoring has a different relationship with performance when undertaken by youth-led teams.

2.2.4 Project Evaluation Competency and Performance of Seed-Funded Youth Projects

Workneh and Aga (2022) provide relevant empirical evidence on monitoring and evaluation practices in Ethiopian nongovernmental organization projects. Their analysis of 92 development projects found positive and statistically significant relationships between monitoring and evaluation practices and project success. The study is useful because it examines the contribution of formal

assessment-related arrangements in an African development context. However, its combined treatment of monitoring and evaluation limits the extent to which the results can be attributed specifically to evaluation competency. It therefore supports the general relevance of monitoring and evaluation while leaving the independent contribution of evaluation to be investigated more directly.

Benimana and Dushimimana (2026) similarly included monitoring and evaluation within their empirical analysis of agricultural project performance in Rwanda. Their findings support the relevance of these practices to performance, but the combined variable does not establish whether evaluation competency independently explains differences in project outcomes. In particular, the study does not, on the reported evidence, distinguish the ability to measure project results and draw lessons from the ability to track activities during implementation. This measurement issue is important because a project team may monitor activities regularly without systematically determining whether the activities have achieved their intended objectives.

3. Methodology

This section outlines the research design, population and sample, data collection and measurement procedures, instrument quality, analysis methods, diagnostic tests, and research ethics.

3.1 Research Design

This study takes a quantitative research strategy, with a descriptive and explanatory research design. The descriptive dimension is required since the study's goal is to assess the current level of project management competencies among youth implementing seed-funded projects and to identify project performance patterns in the study area. Descriptive research allows for the systematic characterization of phenomena as they occur, allowing researchers to measure variables such as planning practices, implementation processes, monitoring mechanisms, and evaluation practices within the organizational and community contexts in which projects operate (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). In development project settings, descriptive analysis offers critical baseline data on managerial practices and operational outcomes.

Analytically, the study uses cross-sectional survey research, which collects data from respondents at a specific point in time. Cross-sectional designs are commonly employed in organizational and development research because they allow researchers to investigate correlations between variables within current institutional contexts without changing the research environment (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This concept is especially ideal for youth-led development projects

since it allows for the simultaneous assessment of managerial competencies and project performance across various projects and project implementation responses.

3.2 Population, Sample Size and Sampling

The target population consisted of 9,317 seed-funded youth associated with CorpsAfrica/Rwanda-supported projects in Huye and Gisagara districts during the study period. These participants constituted the relevant population because their involvement in project activities positioned them to provide information on project planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and performance.

As a result, the required sample size for this investigation is roughly 396 respondents. This sample size is deemed sufficient to reflect the population of 9317 people while retaining appropriate statistical confidence and precision.

The study adopted a two-stage sampling approach involving purposive selection of the study area and random selection of individual respondents. At the first stage, Huye and Gisagara districts were purposively selected because they constituted the geographical scope of the research and hosted the CorpsAfrica/Rwanda seed-funded youth projects under investigation. Their selection was therefore based on their relevance to the study objectives rather than on an intention to represent every district in Rwanda.

3.3 Data Collection and Measurement

The study adopted a quantitative approach using primary data obtained through a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to collect standardized information on project management competencies and the performance of seed-funded youth projects. The study examined four independent variables: project planning competency, project implementation competency, project monitoring competency, and project evaluation competency. The dependent variable was the performance of seed-funded youth projects.

Project planning competency was assessed through objective setting, activity scheduling, resource allocation, stakeholder involvement, and risk identification. Project implementation competency covered the execution of planned activities, coordination, efficient resource utilization, communication, and responses to implementation challenges. Project monitoring competency was assessed through progress tracking, the use of performance indicators, regular progress reviews, problem identification, and corrective action. Project evaluation competency covered outcome assessment, beneficiary participation, documentation of

lessons learned, and the utilization of evaluation findings.

Project performance was measured through respondents' assessments of objective achievement, timely completion, efficient resource utilization, sustainability of project benefits, and contribution to local development. The questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Items corresponding to each construct were grouped, and composite scores were calculated using their respective mean values. This approach facilitated descriptive analysis and examination of the statistical relationships between project management competencies and perceived project performance.

3.4 Pilot Study, Validity and Reliability

Validity refers to the degree to which the research instrument accurately captures the concepts it is intended to measure. In this study, content validity is emphasized to guarantee that the questionnaire accurately reflects the constructs of project planning competency, project execution competency, project monitoring competency, project evaluation competency, and project performance. Content validity was established by carefully crafting questionnaire items based on existing literature in project management and development studies. Additionally, academic supervisors and project management specialists were analysed the proposed questionnaire to ensure that the items accurately represent the study variables and research objectives.

Before the main data collection, a pilot study was conducted to assess the reliability, clarity, and consistency of the research instrument. The pilot test was important in identifying possible weaknesses in the questionnaire, improving the wording of items, and ensuring that the instrument accurately measured the intended constructs of project management competencies and project performance. The pilot study was conducted among respondents with similar characteristics to the target population, but who were excluded from the final study sample to avoid response bias. The reliability of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, which evaluates the internal consistency of items measuring each study variable. According to Hair et al. (2022), a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.70 or above indicates acceptable reliability, while higher values demonstrate stronger internal consistency. The results of the reliability test are presented in Table 1.

3.5 Data Processing and Analysis

The study makes use of descriptive statistical approaches to summarize and display the respondents' characteristics as well as the primary study variables. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and

standard deviations were used to provide an overview of respondents' demographic characteristics, as well as the overall distribution of responses to project planning competency, implementation competency, monitoring competency, evaluation competency, and project performance. Descriptive analysis is crucial because it gives an early knowledge of data patterns and identifies trends in the habits and competencies of seed-funded adolescents engaging in project implementation (Saunders et al., 2019).

In addition to descriptive analysis, the study used inferential statistical techniques to investigate the links between the independent and dependent variables. Correlation analysis was utilized to determine the degree and direction of the correlations between project management competencies and project performance. Correlation analysis indicates whether variables move together and if these relationships are positive or negative (Field, 2018). However, correlation cannot determine causal influence, necessitating additional statistical study.

The study used multiple regression analysis to assess how the independent factors affect project performance. Multiple regression is helpful when a researcher wants to look at the combined influence of numerous independent factors on a single dependent variable while accounting for their simultaneous interactions (Hair et al., 2019). Multiple regression analysis were used in this study to determine the extent to which project planning,

implementation, monitoring, and evaluation competencies predict the effectiveness of seed-funded youth projects.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Furthermore, the researcher got formal authorization from relevant institutional authorities, such as academic approval from the university and permission from CorpsAfrica/Rwanda administration, before beginning data collecting. This institutional approval assures that the research is conducted in a transparent manner in accordance with established organizational and academic criteria.

4. Results and Discussions

This section presents the response rate, instrument reliability, descriptive results, correlations, regression findings, hypothesis decisions, and discussion of the four research objectives.

4.1 Response Rate

This section presents the response rate achieved during the data collection process. It compares the number of questionnaires distributed with the number successfully completed and returned by respondents, thereby assessing the adequacy of the data collected for subsequent statistical analysis.

Table 1: Response Rate

Questionnaires	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Distributed	396	100.0
Returned	396	100.0
Not Returned	0	0.0
Response Rate	396	100.0

Source: Field Data (2026)

A total of 396 questionnaires were distributed to respondents, and all 396 questionnaires were successfully completed and returned, resulting in a 100% response rate. This response rate is considered excellent and provides sufficient data for reliable statistical analysis. According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2023), a high response rate enhances the

representativeness of the sample and reduces the likelihood of non-response bias, thereby increasing the credibility and generalizability of the study findings.

4.2 Reliability of the Research Instrument

Table 2: Reliability Test Results from the Pilot Study

Study Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation
Project Planning Competency	5	0.842	Good reliability
Project Implementation Competency	5	0.851	Good reliability
Project Monitoring Competency	5	0.879	Good reliability
Project Evaluation Competency	5	0.899	Excellent reliability
Performance of Seed-Funded Youth Projects	5	0.888	Good reliability
Overall Reliability of the Instrument	25	0.872	Good reliability

Source: Pilot study data, 2026

The reliability results from the pilot study indicate that all measurement constructs achieved Cronbach's Alpha coefficients above the recommended threshold of 0.70. Project planning competency recorded an alpha value of 0.842, project implementation competency achieved 0.851, and project monitoring competency obtained 0.879, demonstrating good internal consistency among their respective measurement items.

Project evaluation competency recorded the highest reliability coefficient ($\alpha = 0.899$), indicating excellent consistency of the items measuring evaluation practices. Similarly, the dependent variable, performance of seed-funded youth projects, achieved a reliability coefficient of 0.888, confirming that the items reliably captured different dimensions of project performance.

The overall Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.872 demonstrates that the questionnaire had strong internal

consistency and was therefore considered reliable for the main study. Based on these findings, no major modifications were required, and the instrument was deemed suitable for collecting data from the final sample of 396 respondents.

4.3 Correlation Analysis

Table 8 presents the Pearson correlation analysis examining the relationships among project planning competency (PPC), project implementation competency (PIC), project monitoring competency (PMC), project evaluation competency (PEC), and the performance of seed-funded youth projects (PSFYP). The analysis indicates the strength, direction, and statistical significance of the associations between the study variables and provides preliminary evidence on whether project management competencies are related to project performance.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Analysis

		PPC	PIC	PMC	PSFYP	PEC
PPC	Pearson Correlation	1	.787**	.788**	.792**	.776**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	396	396	396	396	396
PIC	Pearson Correlation	.787**	1	.711**	.771**	.792**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	396	396	396	396	396
PMC	Pearson Correlation	.788**	.711**	1	.791**	.778**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	396	396	396	396	396
PSFYP	Pearson Correlation	.792**	.771**	.791**	1	.790**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	396	396	396	396	396
PEC	Pearson Correlation	.776**	.792**	.778**	.790**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	396	396	396	396	396

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation results in Table 3 indicate that all project management competencies have positive and statistically significant relationships with the performance of seed-funded youth projects. The significance values for all correlations are $p < 0.01$, confirming that the observed relationships are statistically significant at the 1% level. This implies that improvements in project planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation competencies are associated with improved project performance.

Specifically, project planning competency (PPC) demonstrated a strong positive correlation with project performance ($r = 0.792$, $p < 0.01$). This indicates that projects characterized by effective objective definition, scheduling, resource planning, stakeholder involvement, and risk identification tend to achieve better performance outcomes. Similarly, project implementation competency (PIC) showed a strong positive relationship

with project performance ($r = 0.771$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that effective coordination, communication, resource utilization, and timely resolution of implementation challenges contribute significantly to successful project delivery.

The results further show that project monitoring competency (PMC) had a strong positive association with project performance ($r = 0.791$, $p < 0.01$). This demonstrates that regular progress tracking, use of performance indicators, and application of monitoring results are important mechanisms for maintaining project alignment and improving outcomes. Additionally, project evaluation competency (PEC) recorded a strong positive correlation with project performance ($r = 0.790$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that evaluation practices such as assessing outcomes, documenting lessons learned, and using evaluation findings enhance project effectiveness and sustainability.

The correlation matrix also reveals strong positive relationships among the independent variables themselves, with coefficients ranging from $r = 0.711$ to $r = 0.788$. Although these relationships indicate that the competencies are interconnected, none of the correlations exceeds the commonly accepted multicollinearity threshold of 0.80, suggesting that the variables remain sufficiently distinct for inclusion in the multiple regression model.

4.4 Regression Analysis

The multiple regression analysis assesses the joint explanatory power and individual statistical contributions of planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation competencies to project performance.

Table 4: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.858 ^a	.737	.734	.29839

a. Predictors: (Constant), PEC, PPC, PMC, PIC

The regression model in Table 4 produced a strong positive correlation coefficient ($R = 0.858$), indicating a strong association between the combined project management competencies and the performance of seed-funded youth projects. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.737$) shows that 73.7% of the variation in project performance is explained by project planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation competencies, while the remaining 26.3% is explained by other factors outside the model, such as financial conditions, external support, institutional environment, community characteristics, and other project-specific factors.

The adjusted R-square value (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.734$) confirms that the explanatory power of the model remains strong even after adjusting for the number of predictors included. This indicates that the model provides a reliable estimation of the relationship between project management competencies and project performance. The standard error of the estimate (0.29839) further suggests that the predicted values are relatively close to the observed project performance scores, demonstrating a good model fit.

Table 5: ANOVA Results

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	97.492	4	24.373	273.739	.000 ^a
	Residual	34.814	391	.089		
	Total	132.305	395			

a. Predictors: (Constant), PEC, PPC, PMC, PIC

b. Dependent Variable: PSFYP

The ANOVA results demonstrate that the regression model is statistically significant ($F = 273.739$, $p < 0.001$). This indicates that the combined effect of project planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation competencies provides a statistically meaningful explanation of variations in seed-funded youth project performance. The regression sum of squares (97.492) accounts for a substantially larger proportion of total

variation compared with the residual sum of squares (34.814), confirming that the explanatory variables included in the model capture important determinants of project performance. Therefore, the model is not driven by random relationships but reflects systematic associations between project management competencies and project outcomes.

Table 6: Multiple Regression Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.111	.117		.945	.345
	PPC	.274	.048	.274	5.674	.000
	PIC	.138	.054	.131	2.557	.011
	PMC	.267	.053	.254	5.052	.000
	PEC	.283	.050	.275	5.719	.000

The regression results indicate that all four project management competencies have positive coefficients, demonstrating that improvements in planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation competencies are associated with improvements in seed-funded youth project performance. Specifically, project planning competency recorded a positive and statistically significant effect ($\beta = 0.274$, $t = 5.674$, $p < 0.001$). This implies that a one-unit improvement in project planning competency is associated with a 0.274-unit increase in project performance, holding other competencies constant.

Similarly, project implementation competency showed a positive and statistically significant relationship with project performance ($\beta = 0.131$, $t = 2.557$, $p = 0.011$). Although its effect size was comparatively smaller than the other competencies, the result confirms that effective execution practices, including coordination, communication, resource utilization, and timely resolution of challenges, contribute significantly to improving project outcomes.

Project monitoring competency also demonstrated a positive and significant influence on project performance ($\beta = 0.254$, $t = 5.052$, $p < 0.001$). This indicates that systematic tracking of progress, application of

performance indicators, and corrective actions based on monitoring results are important mechanisms for maintaining project effectiveness.

The strongest predictor in the model was project evaluation competency ($\beta = 0.275$, $t = 5.719$, $p < 0.001$), followed closely by project planning competency. This suggests that evaluation practices, including assessing outcomes, documenting lessons learned, involving beneficiaries, and using findings for improvement, make the greatest unique contribution to explaining variations in project performance when the influence of other competencies is controlled.

4.5 Decisions on Null Hypotheses

This section presents the hypothesis testing results based on the multiple linear regression analysis. The hypotheses are evaluated using the standardized regression coefficients (β), t-values, and p-values to determine the statistical significance of the effects of project planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation competencies on the performance of seed-funded youth projects. The results provide the empirical basis for accepting or rejecting the study's null hypotheses and validating the proposed conceptual framework. Table 12 provides the details.

Table 7: Summary of Hypothesis Testing Results

H _{0s}	Null Hypothesis	Standardized β	p-value	Decision
H ₀₁	Project planning competency has no significant effect on the performance of seed-funded youth projects in Huye and Gisagara districts under CorpsAfrica/Rwanda.	0.274	<0.001	Rejected
H ₀₂	Project implementation competency has no significant effect on the performance of seed-funded youth projects in Huye and Gisagara districts under CorpsAfrica/Rwanda.	0.131	0.011	Rejected
H ₀₃	Project monitoring competency has no significant effect on the performance of seed-funded youth projects in Huye and Gisagara districts under CorpsAfrica/Rwanda.	0.254	<0.001	Rejected
H ₀₄	Project evaluation competency has no significant effect on the performance of seed-funded youth projects in Huye and Gisagara districts under CorpsAfrica/Rwanda.	0.275	<0.001	Rejected

Source: Field Survey Data (2026)

Table 7 summarizes the results of hypothesis testing based on the multiple regression model. The hypotheses were evaluated at the 5% significance level, where a null hypothesis was rejected whenever the associated p-value was less than 0.05. The findings reveal that all four project management competencies significantly and positively influence the performance of seed-funded youth projects. Consequently, all four null hypotheses were rejected, confirming that project planning,

implementation, monitoring, and evaluation competencies are statistically significant predictors of project performance.

4.6 Discussion of Research Findings

This section discusses the findings according to the specific objectives of the study. The discussion integrates the statistical results with theoretical arguments and

compares the findings with recent empirical studies to establish areas of agreement or disagreement

4.6.1 Project Planning Competency and Project Performance

These findings strongly support Competency Theory, which argues that organizational performance depends on the effective application of managerial capabilities, and Project Management Success Theory, which identifies planning as the foundation upon which successful project delivery is built. The findings are in agreement with recent empirical studies. Alvarenga et al. (2020) concluded that planning competencies significantly improve project success by strengthening objective formulation and stakeholder alignment. Similarly, Kerzner (2022) emphasized that comprehensive planning substantially increases project efficiency through improved resource allocation and risk management. More recently, Ochoa Pacheco et al. (2023) demonstrated that planning competency remains one of the strongest predictors of project success because it improves managerial decision quality before implementation begins. The present study confirms that these relationships also hold within Rwanda's youth-led seed-funded projects, where planning competency becomes particularly valuable because financial and institutional resources are relatively limited.

4.6.2 Project Implementation Competency and Project Performance

The findings reinforce Systems Theory, which views project implementation as one component of an integrated management system. Effective implementation therefore emerges from continuous interaction between planning, monitoring, evaluation, and execution rather than functioning independently. The findings are consistent with recent research. PMI (2021) emphasized that successful project execution depends on integrating leadership, communication, stakeholder engagement, and adaptive delivery practices throughout implementation. Likewise, Mercado and Facelli (2024) found that implementation competency improves project performance when supported by effective planning and continuous monitoring systems. The present study extends these findings by demonstrating that youth-led community projects require integrated implementation capabilities rather than technical execution alone.

4.6.3 Project Monitoring Competency and Project Performance

The findings strongly support Systems Theory, which identifies feedback mechanisms as essential components of organizational effectiveness. Monitoring creates continuous interaction between planning and implementation, ensuring that projects remain aligned with intended objectives despite changing

implementation conditions. The findings are in agreement with recent empirical evidence. PMI (2021) argues that continuous monitoring significantly improves project performance through adaptive management and timely decision-making. Similarly, Kerzner (2022) emphasizes that organizations with stronger monitoring systems consistently experience higher project success because deviations are detected and corrected before they escalate. More recently, Ochoa Pacheco et al. (2023) found that monitoring competency significantly strengthens project outcomes by improving managerial control and organizational responsiveness. The present findings demonstrate that these mechanisms are equally relevant within community-based youth projects implemented in Rwanda.

4.6.4 Project Evaluation Competency and Project Performance

The findings provide particularly strong support for Project Management Success Theory, which increasingly conceptualizes project success as organizational learning and sustained value creation rather than merely completing planned activities. They also reinforce Participatory Development Theory, because beneficiary participation during evaluation enhances accountability while ensuring that project improvements reflect local priorities and community needs. The findings are consistent with recent empirical studies. Kerzner (2022) argues that evaluation has become a strategic management function that improves organizational performance through continuous learning and evidence-based decision-making. Similarly, PMI (2021) identifies evaluation and lessons learned as essential mechanisms for improving project maturity and long-term success. More recently, Mercado and Facelli (2024) found that organizations embedding systematic evaluation within project management frameworks consistently achieve superior performance because evaluation strengthens both accountability and organizational adaptation. The present study corroborates these findings within Rwanda's youth development context, demonstrating that evaluation competency provides the greatest independent contribution to the performance of seed-funded youth projects.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

This section draws conclusions and recommendations from the results concerning the four project management competencies examined among CorpsAfrica/Rwanda seed-funded youth projects.

5.1 Conclusions

The study concludes that project planning competency is a significant determinant of the performance of seed-funded youth projects under CorpsAfrica/Rwanda. The

empirical evidence confirms that youth projects with stronger planning capabilities are more likely to achieve intended objectives, manage risks effectively, and utilize available resources efficiently. The findings demonstrate that planning should be viewed as a strategic project management competency rather than merely an administrative procedure. Effective planning provides the foundation for successful implementation by ensuring that project objectives, activities, resources, and stakeholder expectations are clearly aligned.

The study concludes that project implementation competency significantly influences the performance of seed-funded youth projects. The findings confirm that successful project outcomes depend on the ability of youth implementers to coordinate teams, manage resources, communicate effectively, and respond to challenges during execution. Although implementation competency showed a relatively smaller effect compared with planning, monitoring, and evaluation competencies, its significance demonstrates that well-designed projects cannot achieve their intended outcomes without effective execution capacity.

The study concludes that project monitoring competency is an important predictor of project performance. Monitoring enables youth implementers to track progress, measure achievements, identify deviations, and introduce corrective measures when necessary. The findings confirm that effective monitoring strengthens accountability and improves project responsiveness, making it particularly important for youth-led projects operating in complex community environments where conditions may change during implementation.

The study concludes that project evaluation competency is the strongest determinant of seed-funded youth project performance. Evaluation enables project teams to measure achievements, obtain feedback, document lessons, and improve future project interventions. The findings indicate that sustainable project success depends not only on completing planned activities but also on the ability of project actors to learn from implementation experiences and apply knowledge for continuous improvement.

5.2 Recommendations

Recommendations are directed primarily to CorpsAfrica/Rwanda and partners supporting seed-funded youth projects, with each recommendation linked to a competency investigated in the study.

1. CorpsAfrica/Rwanda and other organisations supporting youth-led projects should strengthen training in project design, objective formulation, budgeting, activity scheduling, stakeholder engagement, and risk management.
2. CorpsAfrica/Rwanda should provide continuous mentorship and practical support to

youth implementers throughout project implementation. Such support should focus on team coordination, communication, leadership, resource management, and problem-solving.

3. Organisations supporting seed-funded youth projects should establish clear monitoring frameworks with measurable indicators, implementation milestones, and regular progress reviews.
4. Youth implementers should be trained to maintain accurate project records, compare actual progress against planned targets, and use monitoring information to take corrective action promptly.

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