



Project Manager Competencies in managing International Development Projects

The Project Managers' Perspective

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SUMMARY

This research studies the competencies of International Development (ID) project managers from their perspectives, taking into consideration the contextual factors and the challenges that they face when managing ID projects.

The study adopts a constructionist ontological viewpoint and an interpretivist epistemological philosophical assumption. The nature of the research is exploratory with an inductive approach, using qualitative research method. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews with experienced project managers in International Development projects. Template analysis strategy was used to analyse the data.

The findings show that contextual factors have a significant influence on the challenges that ID project managers face when managing projects. Contextual factors are operating environment, large network of stakeholders and intangible goals of ID projects. Five challenges were identified as the results of the context, namely *stakeholder management challenge*, *beneficiary needs analysis challenge*, *the challenge of balancing strategic and operational views*, *capacity building and training challenge* and *sustainable funding challenge*. To overcome these challenges, seven ID project manager competencies were identified *management skills*, *personal qualities*, *interpersonal skills*, *stakeholder engagement skills*, *capacity building skills*, and *change management skills*. These competencies are found to be interrelated and complementary. While the role and responsibilities of ID project managers were also uncovered during the research, the findings on contextual factors, challenges and competencies help to better understand the ID project manager role and responsibilities.

This study makes the contributions from both theoretical and practical point of view. With regards to theoretical contribution, our findings expanded on ID project manager competencies as well as relating them to the context and challenges in ID projects. The role and responsibilities of ID project manager is another theoretical contribution in this study. From a practical point of view, this thesis's findings would be useful for various organizations who deliver ID projects, particularly human resources management. In addition, it can act as knowledge sharing with ID project managers and help in designing and enhancing educational programmes in ID project management. Overall, this could result in better delivery and overcoming the challenges of International Development projects.

Keywords: International Development projects, project manager competencies, project success, critical success factors, International Development project challenges, development management

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADB – Asian Development Bank
AIDS – Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CBU – Community Based Units
CDD – Community-Driven Development
CSFs – Critical Success Factors
EMOSC – Emergency Management of Strategic Care
EU – European Union
GFI – Grassroots Focus Index
HIV – Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICB – IPMA Competence Baseline
ID – International Development
INGO – International Non-Governmental Organisation
IPMA – International Project Management Association
MSPME – Master in Strategic Project Management (European)
NGO – Non-Governmental Organisations
ODA – Official Development Assistance
PMCD – Project Manager Competency Development
PMD Pro – Project Management in Development
RBM – Results-Based Management
UNDP – United Nations Development Programme
WaSH – Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WB – World Bank

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1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the background of our research problem and relevant concepts in existing literature about International Development projects and their characteristics, critical success factors and the competencies of a project manager when managing those projects. From the current literature, gaps were identified and the research question was formulated and presented with the study's purpose and objectives. The chapter ends with literature search process.

1.1 Background

International Development (ID) projects are key instruments for non-governmental organisations (NGOs), development banks, intergovernmental organizations, and government agencies to deliver aid initiatives in developing countries (Watkins et al., 2013, p.30). These projects' main purposes are to improve living conditions and quality of life around the globe, such as enhancing agricultural, health, or educational systems (Landoni & Corti, 2011, p.45; Watkins et al., 2013, p.30). Despite the importance of International Development projects in reaching those purposes and objectives, in 2010, 39% of ID projects carried out by World Bank¹ were unsuccessful according to the Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) (Chauvet et al., 2010, as cited in Ika et al., 2012, p.105). Similarly, another study by McKinsey and Devex (Lovegrove et al., 2011) found that ID projects are ineffective in achieving projects' objectives from the perspective of professionals in International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) and development agencies. Thus it appears that many ID projects from various agencies and organisations are not meeting the initial objectives and goals.

Grady et al. (2015, p.5128) pointed out that the failure of the associated projects to meet intended objectives is due to many reasons such as limited local insights from project executer, over-ambitious project goals within a short timeframe, or not being able to sustain the project success in post-implementation phase. These challenges can be attributed to the context in which ID projects operate. Golini and Landoni (2014, p.124) highlighted that ID projects are in difficult, complex and risky environment. Furthermore, there is a high number of stakeholders involved together with presence of intangible project outputs, which can be difficult to define and measure.

Firstly, the implementation of those projects is carried out in a complex operating environment characterized both by wide geographical and cultural separation between project actors and challenging technical and operating conditions (Crawford & Bryce, 2003, p.364). Furthermore, due to the operating environment in developing countries, there is often short of supply in all resources, specifically human resources (Youker, 2003, p.1). Secondly, ID projects typically involve a great number of different stakeholders such as donor agencies, government organizations, civil society, and local beneficiaries from different locations working together (Diallo & Thuillier, 2004, p.19-20). Muriithi and Crawford (2003, p.309) indicated that due to the difference in national

¹ The World Bank Group is a multilateral agency providing financial and technical assistance to developing countries around the world (The World Bank Group, 2016).

values and culture, these stakeholders usually have different perspectives. In addition, Rusare and Jay (2015, p.243) also found that aid industry projects are prominent by their focus on social change, are political and involving a wide range of stakeholders (Crawford & Bryce, 2003, p. 364). In addition, due to the social and non-profit nature (Khang & Moe, 2008, p.72), ID projects are often characterised by “the intangibility of the developmental results”. These projects’ purposes vary substantially and deal with different types of responses to perceived situational needs, income-generating activities, investments with specified economic returns, or sequences of activities (Ika & Lytvynov, 2011, p.88).

In the presence of the contextual factors affecting ID projects, the responsibility of managing, executing and delivering project outcomes falls under the project manager (Golini & Landoni, 2014, p.125). ID project managers are found to face a lot of challenges as the result of the context that these projects are in (Crawford et al., 1999; Abbott et al., 2007). These challenges include the dilemma of balancing between operational and strategic mind-sets (Crawford et al., 1999, p.173), the thorough consideration of all contextual and environmental factors (Abbott et al., 2007, p.199; Golini & Landoni, 2014, p.126), the struggle between different focus on the quantity and quality aspect of the project results (Ika & Lytvynov, 2011, p.89; Ika, 2012, p.33).

Empirical studies have sought to address these challenges by identifying the critical success factors driving success within ID projects. However, as project success within ID sector can vary depending on the perspective taken by the various stakeholders (Yalegama et al., 2016, p.645), different studies were carried out to understand the critical success factors of ID projects from various perspectives of project stakeholders (Diallo & Thuillier, 2005; Khang & Moe, 2008; Ika et al., 2012; Rusare & Jay, 2015; Yalegama et al., 2016; Bayiley & Teklu, 2016). Across these research, the project manager competencies and skills, and the way they manage ID projects place an important role in driving project success and delivering project outcomes.

While there is a large number of work done on general project manager competencies, limited research has been conducted in terms of understanding these competencies in more detail in light of the context and challenges of ID projects. Within the academic literature, to the best of our knowledge, there are only two main papers studying the competencies of project managers in ID sector, namely, Abbott et al. (2007) and Brière et al. (2015a). These studies take the perspectives of project managers within the ID sector about the competencies required to manage projects within this context. In addition, from a professional and practical point of view, the project management competency framework within the PMD Pro Guide (PM4NGOs, 2013) was also another attempt in highlighting international development project management competencies. These studies provide a good foundation in understanding the ID project manager competencies. However, in light of other previous work on the challenges of ID projects (see Crawford et al., 1999; Ika et al., 2012; Brière et al., 2015b), the existing studies on ID project manager competencies have not explored in depth the link between the competencies and the contextual factors with challenges of ID projects.

1.2 Research gap

International Development (ID) projects' objectives are poverty reduction and social transformation (Ika & Donnelly, 2017, p.45; Khang & Moe, 2008, p.74). They are not profit-driven and the final outcomes are intangible and difficult to measure (Hermano et al., 2013, p.23). In addition, ID projects usually involve a large number of stakeholders from different locations and backgrounds (Youker, 2003, p.1), which makes the process more complicated and difficult to manage the relationship and interaction between stakeholders (Prasad et al., 2013, p.54). Furthermore, the operating environment of ID projects in developing countries presents challenges in terms of natural, political, or social factors (Golini et al., 2015, p.651). Due to all these factors, the effectiveness of ID projects is still questionable (Ika, 2012, p.27) and a lot of work has been done to understand the project success within ID sector, including success criteria and critical success factors (for example Diallo & Thuillier, 2004; Khang & Moe, 2008; Denizer et al., 2013). Several studies have identified that the critical success factors within ID projects are mostly related to the competencies of project manager (see Bayiley & Teklu, 2016; Müller & Turner, 2010; Crawford, 2000; Denizer et al., 2013; Rusare & Jay, 2015).

In the literature addressing the competencies of project managers there appears to be a lack of research exploring these competencies within the ID project field (Brière et al., 2015a, p.166). Furthermore, Brière et al. (2015a, p.167) have also stressed that the majority of studies on project manager competencies are quantitative, therefore they do not necessarily illustrate the nuances of the competencies such as leadership and communication skills typical to ID projects. In addition, we believed that the contextual factors and challenges play an important role in understanding the skills and competencies, especially from the perspective of experienced practitioners. Thus, we decided to fill in this theoretical gap by exploring the skills and competencies in dealing with challenges and managing ID projects from a project manager point of view.

Hence, this can be considered as an under-researched area, these findings can be classified as neglect gap-spotting (Sandberg & Alvesson, 2010, p.28).

1.3 Research question and purpose

The research question identified is based on the gaps found in existing literature. We identified an under-researched area on the skills and competencies of project managers within International Development sector from their perspective. In order to address the gap found, we intend to answer our following research question:

What are the competencies needed to overcome challenges in International Development projects from the perspective of project managers?

The research will focus on taking into consideration the contextual factors as well as the nuances of the competencies required for delivery of ID projects.

In answering the research question, we aim to make the contributions from both theoretical and practical point of view. With regards to theoretical contribution, our

findings would add value to the project management body of knowledge in terms of competency required for a project manager, especially in the context of ID projects. In addition, the study is potentially valuable in that it could add to existing theories across multiple areas, such as leadership, management and human resources.

From a practical point of view, this thesis would be useful for various organizations who deliver ID projects, in human resources, particularly relevant in recruitment, selection and training of project managers. In addition, it can assist project managers in preparing and developing themselves to potentially enable project success within International Development industry. Furthermore, this study would also be valuable in designing and enhancing educational programmes for ID project management. Overall, this could result in better delivery and overcoming the challenges of International Development projects.

1.4 Literature search

The research question served as the guide for our literature search and helped us identify relevant literature (Jesson et al., 2011, p.18). Based on the findings of our initial literature search, we refined the research question which provide focus for our research. An overview of the process we adopted for literature review can be found in Figure 1.

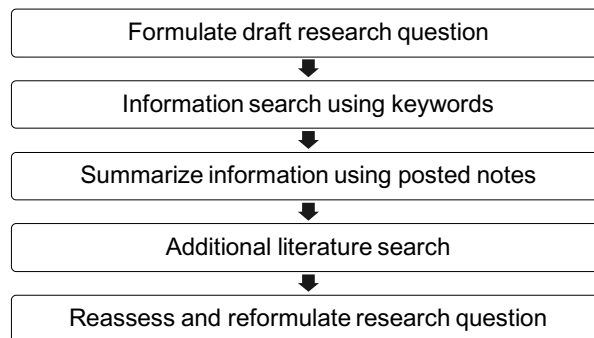


Figure 1 – Literature review process

Firstly, using the draft research question, we identified the following themes that could give us a better understanding of the area of ID project management: ID management, ID projects and their characteristics, Challenges within ID projects and project managers' competencies within ID sector. Therefore, several keywords were used to carry out the search: International Development projects, project manager competencies, project success, critical success factors, NGO projects.

Several databases were used, namely Umea University Library, Heriot-Watt Library (our previous university) and Google Scholar, including both electronic resources (peer reviewed journal articles and e-books) and non-electronic resources (text books and reference books). In addition, relevant conference papers, Masters dissertations and information from websites were also used. Additional articles were chosen through the suggestion feature of electronic databases. When reviewing selected journal articles, further sources were identified through their literature review sections and reference lists. This also helps us to avoid secondary referencing wherever possible as we are

aware that we are reading someone else' interpretation of the information, which might differ from the original sources. However, in certain cases where we could not find the original sources, secondary references were used.

The information from relevant literature were extracted as 'posted notes' and arranged in table format. The purpose of this is to keep memories and serve as a point of reference when needed. We examined the relevance of the journal article to our research topic to determine whether it should be included in our literature review or not. Using the selected articles, we established relationships between different sources to compare and contrast different ideas, views and perspectives. Based our analysis of the posted notes, we carried out an additional literature search on other relevant areas. Reviewing the analysis of the posted notes, we identified a gap within the literature, which helped us to reassess and reformulate our research question. In addition, we had a conversation with a practitioner within the ID field to deepen our understanding of the nature of this industry, this assisted us in refining the scope of our research question.

2. THEORETICAL FRAME OF REFERENCE

This chapter presents relevant theoretical concepts that form the foundation for the research. The definition and concept of International Development (ID) projects are first reviewed, following by challenges within ID sector as well as those faced by project managers themselves. A brief discussion on project success and critical success factors related to ID projects is presented, leading to the finding of project managers' competencies and skills as a critical success factor in ID projects. The chapter then ends with literature review on ID project manager's competencies.

2.1 International Development Projects

Overview of ID Projects

International Development (ID) projects are one of the main mechanisms to deliver significant economic progress in developing countries (Watkins et al., 2013, p.30; Hermano et al., 2013, p.22) and improve living conditions in terms of economy, education or health (Golini et al., 2015, p. 650). An ID project may either stand alone or belong to a subset of a program or a long-term development plan with the range of five to ten years (Ika & Saint-Macary, 2012, p.427). Ika and Lytvynov (2011, p.88) illustrated further that ID projects come in different forms as “responses to perceived situation needs, income-generating activities, investments with specified economic returns, or sequences of activities”. ID projects are very diverse in nature (Watkins et al., 2013, p.30) and they are medium to large size public projects and/or programs in all sectors in developing countries (Youker, 2003, p.1). These projects cover almost every project setting: “infrastructure, utilities, agriculture, transportation, water, electricity, energy, sewage, mines, health, nutrition, population and urban development, education, environment, social development, reform and governance, etc” (Ika & Donnelly, 2017, p.45).

The operating environments of ID projects in developing countries are usually difficult (Youker, 2003, p.1) in terms of natural, political, or social factors (Golini et al., 2015, p. 651). This includes a lack of infrastructure, large web of stakeholders and external forces (Youker, 2003, p.1), socio-political instability, geographic and cultural separation among actors (Hermano et al., 2013, p.23). Other work (Ika & Hodgson, 2014, p.1186; Ika & Donnelly, 2017, p.46) expanded this view of context specific of institutional and sustainability problems in developing countries to include corruption, capacity building setbacks, recurrent costs of projects, lack of political support, lack of implementation and institutional capacity and overemphasis on visible and rapid results from donors and political actors. Thus these projects face serious problems leading to the institutional failure of ID projects (Ika & Hodgson, 2014, p.1186).

There are at least three separate key stakeholders involved in ID projects: *the funding agencies*, who finance the project through loans or outright grants but do not receive project deliverables; *the implementing units* who are involved in their execution; and *the target beneficiaries*, who expect some benefit from them but do not fund the project (Khang & Moe, 2008, p.74). However, in reality there is a much more complex network of stakeholders in ID projects, depending on organisation structure and arrangement. ID

projects are usually delivered by donors with different types of funding and collaboration (Crawford & Bryce, 2003, p.363). The funding for ID projects comes from various sources such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), development banks, inter-governmental organizations, government agencies (Watkins et al., 2013, p.30). ID projects are implemented either by recipient government through bilateral agreements with the donor country, or through a “middleman” – usually a non-governmental organization (NGO) or professional contractor (Hermano et al., 2013, p.22; Crawford & Bryce, 2003, p.363).

Many of the literature found in ID sector have been done on World Bank projects specifically (see Ika et al., 2010; Denizer et al., 2013; Diallo & Thuillier, 2005; Ika, 2012; Ika, 2015). However, ID projects can be carried out under different organisational structure such as non-governmental organisations or governmental agencies. For example, in World Bank projects, the stakeholders comprise the *national project coordinator* – the person responsible for operations and leading project team; the *project team* under project coordinator’s leadership; the *task manager* of multilateral development agency to supervise and make sure compliance of project national management unit to the agency’s guidelines; the various *firms* such as engineers, subcontractors, consultants, etc. (Diallo & Thuillier, 2005, p.239). From another perspective of ID projects by non-governmental organisations (NGOs), Golini and Landoni (2014, p.125) identified a different set of stakeholders: *project manager* who is in charge of the project, *NGO* who implements the project, *Donors*, *Organizations implementing project in the same area*, *Multilateral agencies* who are International agencies that monitor the project progress, *Local government and institutions*, *Beneficiaries*, *Location population & Local implementing partners*.

The large number of stakeholders involved makes the process more complex and thus the task of managing interactions between a range of parties can be complicated (Prasad et al., 2013, p.54) and post several implications. Firstly, as highlighted by the authors, the real “client” or target “customer” – the beneficiary – does not appear in the stakeholder list used in the project design phases (Diallo & Thuillier, 2005, p.239). This is due to the difficulty of involving the local beneficiary stakeholders in project discussions because of literacy, volume, distance and communication problems (Youker, 2013, p.1). As a consequence, these “clients” are often missing in the project design phases with an inadequate beneficiary needs analysis, leading to fatal errors in the execution of the project (Ika, 2012, p.32). In addition, the stakeholders involved in ID projects are usually from different countries with different backgrounds and cultures. As Youker (2003, p.1) highlighted that the recipient country has their own systems and each donor may have its own systems and all may have key differences. Furthermore, local community or beneficiaries may have different value structures and cultures. Thus, the coordination between different stakeholders can be a very challenging task. Thirdly, some stakeholders such as donors and political leaders may manipulate and interfere ID projects for political gains because of the lack of market pressures and the intangibility of project objectives (Khang & Moe, 2008, p.74). This include strategic misrepresentation or misinformation about costs, benefits, risks such as pitching initial budgets low and overestimating benefits (Ika & Hodgson, 2014, p.1182).

The goals within ID projects may often seem to be ‘hard’ with a tangible deliverable of a physical infrastructure, yet this physical infrastructure must relate to a need or value of

the beneficiaries (Ika & Hodgson, 2014, p.1185-1186). This “hard” element is normally viewed as a means to some developmental end (Crawford & Bryce, 2003, p. 36). While Ika and Donnelly (2017, p.45) see the ultimate goal of ID projects is to reduce poverty, Khang and Moe (2008, p.74) view developmental projects as having “soft” goals in achieving sustainable social and economic development. In either view of poverty alleviation or social transformation, ID projects do not have the usual profit motive like projects in other sectors (Hermano et al., 2013, p.23), thus they are not driven by market pressures. The final products or outcomes are often more intangible and difficult to measure (Ika & Donnelly, 2017, p.46), and the target customer or beneficiary is a community in a developing country with boundaries that are not clearly defined (Golini et al., 2015, p.651).

Within our review of the literature, we have identified three key features associated with the context of ID projects, namely operating environments in developing countries, large network of stakeholders and intangible goals, which could present challenges and have a negative impact on the outcome of these projects. The responsibility of executing the project and delivering outcomes to the target beneficiaries, and meeting objectives or goals set by the funding agencies, often falls under the implementing unit. Depending on the organization of the implementing unit and the arrangement with the funding agencies, the project team’s roles and responsibilities vary. Nevertheless, the team usually consists of the project manager, who is in charge of the project, managing the project, achieve objectives and meet stakeholders’ interests (Golini & Landoni, 2014, p.125), and the project team, who support and execute the project together with the project manager. The turbulent environment that ID projects operate in might impose a lot of challenges on the Project Manager role to manage these projects. This will be further reviewed in the next section through practitioners’ perspectives on project performance and possible causes.

Performance of ID Projects from Project Managers’ Perspective

Despite the importance of International Development projects in social transformation and poverty reduction, a study done by McKinsey and Devex (Lovegrove et al., 2011) found that almost half of the respondents do not think that ID projects are efficient or effective in helping the poor. This study was done through asking the view of professionals in the development community, who work at headquarters and on the ground for International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) and development agencies, on the effectiveness of their own agencies and of the development sector overall. Similarly, Marwanga et al. (2006, p.2311) carried out a comprehensive external review of 133 completed World Bank projects to determine their level of success based on bank criteria and assessments, and found that about half of projects failed to meet the intended and unintended goals of the project. In the same view, Prasad et al. (2013, p.53) pointed out that many donor countries, agencies and various stakeholders think that developmental projects are poorly implemented based on the fact that resources are not reaching the intended beneficiaries, while there are cost overruns and unnecessary delays.

Many previous works have pointed out reasons for failure of international development projects to meet intended objectives. For example, Grady et al. (2015, p.5128) suggested several reasons for this failure, such as project implementers’ insufficient

local knowledge, too many goals and objectives in limited time space, or lack of social capital or support to maintain project success after implementation.

On the other hand, many recipient countries criticise that donor agencies do not take into account the local conditions, the local stakeholders are not involved and resources provided are insufficient. In addition, most developmental projects are implemented by personnel that might have expertise in functional areas but have little training or experience in actually managing projects (Prasad et al., 2013, p.53). Furthermore, all resources in International Development projects are often in short supply, especially human resources like trained accountants (Youker, 2003, p.1).

Managerial issues of ID projects are also highlighted as part of cause to fail: imperfect project initiation, poor understanding of the project context, poor stakeholder management, “dirty” politics, delays during project execution, cost overruns, poor risk analysis, inadequate monitoring and evaluation failure, etc (Ika & Donnelly, 2017, p.45).

From the perspectives of practitioners within ID professionals’ community, there are many causes of failures for some ID projects, such as failure to meet the needs of beneficiaries and projects’ goals and objectives, cost overruns and delays, lack of capacity, and poor stakeholder management. These will be explored in more detail from the project manager’s perspective in the following section.

Challenges in ID Projects from Project Managers’ Perspective

When reviewing literature on project managers within International Development sector, there is little work done on this subject except Crawford et al. (1999) and Abbott et al. (2007). Crawford et al. (1999) presented a series of practical notes from several development managers, highlighting challenges they face during day-to-day operation. Those managers are struggling everyday with significant and overwhelming questions, and endless stream of problems that they have to filter and resolve somehow. The notes reveal the conflicting and contradicting dilemma that development managers face: on the one hand, they need to see the bigger picture in the limitation of their own capacity; on the other hand, they have to deal with the “day-to-day nitty-gritty”. One example is the practical notes from Matthias Mwiko (Crawford et al., 1999, p.173) mentioning his struggles on how to meet the community needs while trying to retain reputation from outsiders such as donors. Crawford et al. (1999)’s work brings out the reality of development managers in an objective manner. However, it only presents the empirical findings without analysing or interpreting the data, making it difficult for readers to understand the challenges at a more abstract and meaningful level.

Abbott et al. (2007)’s research has similar interest in understanding the development manager's perspective in non-governmental organisations, and they have taken a further step in examining and analysing these perspectives. This study highlighted the local context and history to be a factor influencing development management. Also, empowerment of the local community, sustainable development and capacity building are the key in development intervention and bringing about changes. There appears to be an enormous challenge posing to practising development managers in adjusting themselves between deep personal and organisational values of equity and social justice

with other external wider forces (Abbott et al., 2007, p.199). As discussed by the authors, the managers “grapple with everyday ethical issues within their immediate context, attempting to deal with issues such as how to listen to clients, how to interpret correctly local cultural norms and values and ask questions regarding their roles and the legitimacy of working as a northern NGO in poor countries” (Abbott et al., 2007, p.196).

The differences between values and cultures due to the involvement of different countries in the same project are also found to be one of the major challenges for managers in development projects (Golini & Landoni, 2014, p.126). In their literature review, the authors note that these differences can be a major source of conflict among parties and raise challenges for a manager to deal with, and may affect managerial processes. Even though these issues have been highlighted in several researches, “it is still difficult for a project manager to understand all the culture-related problems in advance of a project, and personal experience is most often the main source of this type of information” (Golini & Landoni, 2014, p.126). Relationship management between the local communities and the state, and between donor and recipient is also a potential challenge for development managers due to the unequal power distribution between different stakeholders (Abbott et al., 2007, p.198).

Another challenge for ID project managers is about accountability towards donors. Results-based management (RBM) has been used for more than a decade as an approach and a tool in ID projects with two functions: accountability-for-results for external stakeholders and managing-for-results for internal management decision-making processes to achieve better results (Ika & Lytvynov, 2011, p.89). However, often the times, there is too much of emphasis on strong procedures and guidelines from the donor’s side to ensure accountability for results (Ika, 2012, p.33) and as a measurement for performance and project success. Therefore, the demonstration of results has the tendency to dominate project management processes and is indirectly seen as the end result (Ika & Lytvynov, 2011, p.89). Project managers thus have the incentives to focus on monitoring and evaluation, associating them with a group of success criteria (Ika, 2012, p.34) including conformity of goods and services, national visibility of the project, project reputation within ID agencies, and probability of additional funding for the project (Diallo & Thuillier, 2004, p.24).

The papers reviewed above on the perspectives of ID project managers, provide a good foundation of the challenges when managing ID projects. These challenges relate to the task of balancing between operational and strategic mind-sets, the task of balancing between the quantity and quality aspect of the project results and the deep consideration of all contextual and environmental factors. However, when contrasting this with the characteristics and performance of ID projects, there appears to be gaps, that are not mentioned such as lack of funding, human resources shortage and issues related to delays and cost-overruns, which could potentially be challenges. These challenges could influence project performance and success. The factors impacting ID project success will be further explored in the next section.

2.2 ID Project Success and Critical Success Factors

Defining ID Project Success

A large volume of existing literature deals with project success in the field of project management. Alam et al. (2008, p.224) found that these studies fall into three major categories: those who deal with project success criteria, others who deal with project success factors, and those that confuse the two. In differentiating the two aforementioned concepts, Lim and Mohamed (1999, p.243) defined “the criteria of project success are the set of principles or standards by which project success is or can be judged”, while “project success factors are the set of circumstances, facts, or influences which contribute to the project outcomes”.

The concept of success within the ID projects remains ambiguous, inclusive and multidimensional and context-specific (Ika et al., 2010, p.71). It is often based on perception and perspectives – different stakeholders at different times may perceive project success differently (Lim & Mohamed, 1999, p.244). For example, the donor agency or the recipient government may view the project as a success, yet the beneficiaries may not perceive the project in the same way (Ika et al., 2010, p.72). Freeman and Beale (1992, p.8) claimed that project success is not a simple unitary concept but is dependent on the stakeholder assessing success as each would have different points of view regarding project success: “An architect may consider success in terms of aesthetic appearance, an engineer in terms of technical competence, an accountant in terms of dollar spent under budget.” Stakeholders perceive project success base on criteria that meet their own interest or objectives of the party they represent (Diallo & Thuillier, 2004, p.29).

ID Project Critical Success Factors

Reviewing the early literature on project success within the ID sector, Kwak (2002, p.116); Khan et al. (2003, p.227); Vickland and Nieuwenhujis (2005, p.95); Struyk (2007, p.63) have identified multiple critical success factors. However, these studies did not establish a relationship between the critical success factors and project success. Furthermore, these studies were not based on stakeholder perceptions, but rather on analysis on secondary data, specifically ID project reports and data. As highlighted by Ika et al. (2010), Lim and Mohamed (1999), Freeman and Beale (1992) and Diallo and Thuillier (2004), project success is dependent on the various stakeholders’ perspectives, therefore, these studies were not reviewed in detail for the inclusion in our research.

Subsequent research within this field was reviewed and is summarized in Table 1. The studies presented are based on the perspectives of various stakeholders, which include project manager, donor, project team, beneficiaries and project partners. It includes their perceived critical success factors.

Table 1 - Summary of Critical Success Factors in ID projects based on stakeholders' perceptions

Author	Diallo & Thuillier (2005)	Khang & Moe (2008)	Ika et al (2012)	Yalegama et al. (2016)	Jay & Rusare (2015)	Bayiley & Teklu (2016)
Sample	Project Task leader and local project coordinator	Project managers, project team members, officials at donor agencies, government agencies and international non-governmental organizations (INGO)	World Bank Project Supervisors	Community Beneficiaries and Project Managers	Project beneficiaries (local communities)	Project team, local government, NGOs
Projects	ID projects by WB, EU, ADB, UNDP, governments & others	Official Development Assistance (ODA) and INGO projects	World Bank projects	World Bank Community-driven development (CDD) projects	Grassroots Focus Index (GFI) projects	European Union (EU) funded projects
Location	Sub-Saharan Africa	Vietnam and Myanmar	Various locations around the world	Sri-Lanka	South Africa, Nigeria & Camaroon	Ethiopia
Critical Success Factors (CSFs)	Trust Communication	Understanding of environment Effective Consultations Compatible development priorities Effective consultations with planning Adequate supports High motivation and interest Adequate resources and support Effective consultations during implementing Effective consultations during closing	Monitoring Coordination Design Training Institutional environment	Enabling a community environment Measurable Project management outcomes Community Engagement	Project Mission and goals Technical tasks Personnel Monitoring and feedback Trouble-shooting Project schedule and plan Top management support Client consultation Client acceptance	Intellectual capital Sound Project Case Key manpower competency Effective Stakeholder engagement

Evaluating the perspectives from project task team leaders and local project coordinators, Diallo and Thuillier (2005, p.248) showed that trust and communication affect project success. This was also confirmed by later research by Ika et al. (2010). Good communication between the coordinator and his/her task manager and trust among team members are crucial to facilitate project success within ID projects (Diallo & Thuillier, 2005, p.248). Khang and Moe (2008, p.79) expanded on this research, by adding additional success criteria for ID projects carried out by NGOs in Vietnam and Myanmar. Based on perspectives of project manager, project team, governmental agencies and donors, they have found that effective consultation with stakeholders proved to be the most influential factor on project management success within ID projects (Khang & Moe, 2008, p.79). Consultations allow for better alignment between the project and the needs of stakeholders, improving collaboration through building trust and enables innovative problem-solving (Khang & Moe, 2008, p.82).

From the perception of project supervisors, Ika et al. (2012, p.105)'s study identified five critical success factors, namely monitoring, coordination, design, training, and institutional environment, which have a significant relationship to project success. Within the context of this research, project coordination would refer to the leadership of the project manager (Ika et al., 2012, p.112). Given the very particular context of World Bank projects, the project supervisors only design, supervise and support the national project coordinators. Project supervisors are not involved in the day-to-day project operations, which are entirely in the hands of the national project coordinators, who are the "true" project managers (Ika et al., 2012, p.114). Taking the perspective of success from the national project coordinators, Yamin and Sim (2016, p.489) applied success criteria developed by Ika et al. (2012) within the Maldivian context. Amongst five critical success factors, coordination was rated the highest by the local project team members, following by monitoring, design, institutional environment and training. The findings also showed that all five critical success factors had a statistically significant positive relationship with project success.

Beneficiary view is especially important because delivering ID projects to meet beneficiary requirements is more critical than delivering on time, on budget, and to scope (Morris, 2013, p.20). Yalgama et al. (2016, p.655) identified three critical success factors for ID projects in Sri Lanka, from a 'micro-view' by adopting a community perspective. Enabling a community environment was identified as the first factor, which emphasized the need for providing close support, training, technical assistance, monitoring, and direct funding. The second factor, was measurable project management outcomes by a committed staff of the village organizations to achieve project targets and enhance social capital. The last factor was community engagement throughout the project implementation process to ensure transparency in the processes, proper project selection and draw community support during implementation (Yalgama et al., 2016, p.655). Also taking the perspective of beneficiaries, Rusare and Jay (2015, p.246) research found similar factors, as well as identified additional factors, like personnel, management support, trouble-shooting, technical support, project mission and goals, etc.

Bayiley and Teklu (2016)'s research on European Union (EU) funded projects within Ethiopian NGOs, taking the perspective of both the project manager and project team, identified a specific set of four critical success factors. These factors include intellectual

capital, sound project case, key manpower competency and effective stakeholder engagement (Bayiley & Teklu, 2016, p.562). The findings highlight intellectual capital as most significant factor, which includes human capital (knowledge, skill and flexibility), stakeholder capital (continuous support and follow up) and social capital (compatible development priority and local absorptive capacity) (Bayiley & Teklu, 2016, p.571). Furthermore, this literature is supported by research by Denizet et al. (2013, p.302); Crawford (2000, p.12); Müller and Turner (2010, p.440), who identified similar factors like knowledge, skills, competencies and leadership attributes having a significant impact on project success.

The concept of project success within the ID sector remains ambiguous and is highly dependent on which stakeholder's perspective is taken. Thus it is important to gain an understanding these various stakeholders' views. Different points of view regarding the critical success factors are summarised in Table 1. The table illustrates that success factors are different based on the various stakeholders' perspectives. The majority of the papers focus on the project leaders, supervisors or managers, while two studies include target beneficiary views. Yalegama et al. (2016) and Jay and Rusare (2015) focused on the perspectives of beneficiaries, however the critical success factors found are related to the project managers and leaders. For example, Yalegama et al. (2016) identified measurable project management outcomes to achieve project targets and enhance social capital as one of the critical success factors. This is one of the tasks of the project managers as they are accountable for project outcomes and performance. Rusare and Jay (2015) also identified critical success factors which are directly related to the project managers, which include management support, trouble-shooting, technical support, project mission and goals.

In addition, other papers' findings also support the fact that delivery of the critical success factors is in the hands of the project managers. This is further illustrated by the follow selected CSFs: Understanding of Environment, Effective Consultations (Khang & Moe, 2008), Trust and Communication (Diallo & Thuillier, 2005), Monitoring and Coordination (Ika et al., 2012), and Key Manpower competency (Bayiley & Teklu, 2016). Across all the paper, most of identified CSFs are related to stakeholder engagement, for example, Effective Consultation through project life cycle (Khang & Moe, 2008), Community Engagement and Enabling a Community Environment (Yalegama et al., 2016), Client Consultation (Rusare & Jay, 2015), Effective Stakeholder Engagement (Bayiley & Teklu, 2016).

Therefore, across the five papers, the majority of the critical success factors appear to focus on the competencies and skills of ID project managers, especially on the ways they manage the projects to achieve project objectives and outcomes. The next section will explore and discuss the concept of competencies and skills of ID project managers within existing literature.

2.3 ID Project Managers' Competencies

Defining Competencies

McClelland and Boyatzis (1982, p.742-743) defined competency as encompassing knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors that have a causal relationship to superior job

performance. This definition has been since extended further by focusing on the value add that competencies bring, this is illustrated in the following expanded definition, “the ability to mobilise, integrate and transfer knowledge, skills and resources to reach or surpass the configured performance in work assignments, adding economic and social value to the organisation and the individual” (Takey & Carvalho, 2015, p.785). Therefore, it is not sufficient to have knowledge and skills, but also application in valuable deliveries also matters (Takey & Carvalho, 2015, p.785). However, there is debate amongst researchers on how this term is interpreted (Dainty et al., 2004; Cheng et al., 2003). The consensus, is that the terminology best describes the personal attributes that individuals draw on as part of their work activities, compared with competence, which relates to a person’s ability to comply to a range of externally agreed standards (Cheng et al., 2003, p.885).

In addition, within the literature, there are two main types of competence; the first type is described by Heywood et al. (1992, p.21) as an attribute-based competence, which includes knowledge, skills and experience, personality traits, attitudes and behaviors. Researchers following this approach, defines competency as an “*underlying characteristic of an individual that is causally related to a criterion-referenced effective performance in a job or situation*” (Spencer & Spencer, 1993, as cited in Ofori, 2014, p.199). These competencies include knowledge, the information a person has in specific areas, and skills, the ability to perform a certain physical or mental task. These are considered as surface competencies and are developed and assessed through training and experience (Ofori, 2014, p.199). The second type, referred to as a performance-based competence, assumes that competence can be inferred from demonstrated performance at predefined acceptable standards in the workplace (Gonczi et al., 1993, p.6).

Defining Project Managers’ Competencies

Similarly, within Project Management field there are various views regarding the definition of the competencies of the project manager. Crawford (2007, p.682) defined ‘project manager competence’ as a combination of knowledge (qualification), skills (ability to do a task), and core personality characteristics (motives, traits, and self-concepts) that lead to superior results. Frame (1999, p.52) split this definition into two main constructs: knowledge-based competence and trait-based competence. Knowledge-based competencies are the objective knowledge that individuals are expected to possess in order to carry out their jobs effectively. The trait-based competencies are more subjective and focus on abilities such as being politically savvy, having good judgment and human relations, as well as having an awareness of the organization’s goals (Ofori, 2014, p.199). From a practical point of view, The International Project Management Association's Competence Baseline — ICB (IPMA, 2006) definition follows a similar argumentation, competence as “a collection of knowledge, personal attitudes, skills and relevant experience needed to be successful in a certain function”.

The culmination of views from both the practical and academia has been further developed through the Project Manager Competency Development (PMCD) Framework which incorporates the three dimensions of project management indicated by Crawford (2007, p.682) (see Figure 2 below). First, competence is what individual project

managers bring to a project or project-related activity through their knowledge and understanding of project management referred to as Project Management Knowledge (that is, what they know about project management). Second, it refers to what individual project managers are able to demonstrate in their ability to successfully manage the project or complete project-related activities known as Project Management Performance (that is, what they are able to do or accomplish while applying their project management knowledge). Finally, competency deals with the core personality characteristics underlying a person's capability to do a project or project activity. This dimension is called Personal Competency (that is, how individuals behave when performing the project or activity; their attitudes and core personality traits) (Ofori, 2014, p.200).

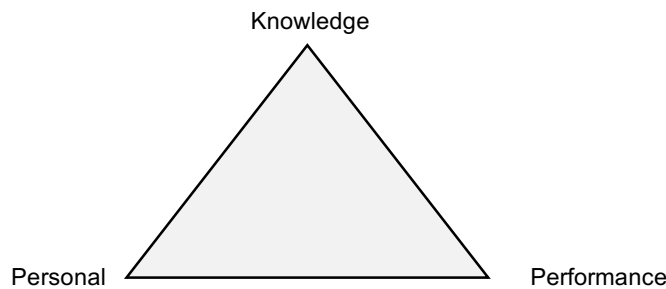


Figure 2 - Project Manager Competency Development Framework – Adapted from Crawford (2007)

From the literature review, Project Management competency could be understood as the combination of three dimensions in terms of knowledge, performance and personal competency. These dimensions are not mutually exclusive but related and together forming the complete view of Project Management competency. The Project Management competency includes personal attitudes and traits (IPMA, 2006; Ofori, 2014, p.200). In addition, it can be obtained through knowledge acquired by training, and skills developed through experience and the application of the acquired knowledge (Ofori, 2014, p.199).

While numerous studies have focused on uncovering the competencies of project managers within the private sector, there is limited research on this area within ID sector, especially taking into account the contextual factors and challenges that project managers face when managing these ID projects. This will be explored in the following section.

ID Project Managers' Competencies

Within academic literature, the only known research specifically on competencies required when managing ID projects is the work of Brière et al. (2015a). Abbott et al. (2007) is another work exploring the perspectives and experience of managers within ID sector. Even though their work did not specifically discuss the skills and competencies of those managers, some valuable insights can be drawn from this study.

With interest in understanding development management practices through reflections of development managers, Abbott et al. (2007) studied 62 projects from Master students, who were practitioners, on the taught part-time Master Programme in

Development Management at the UK Open University. Brière et al. (2015a) were also interested in perceptions of project managers on specific competencies. They conducted a research with NGO ID project managers using in-depth interviews and discussed specific competencies in connection to project managers' situations.

These studies provide the perspectives of project managers within the ID sector and specifically the competencies required to manage projects within this context. In addition, from a professional and practical point of view, the project management competency framework within the *Project Management for Development Professionals Guide* (PM4NGOs, 2013) was reviewed, highlighting international development project management competencies. This research can be summarized in the Table 2 below:

Table 2 - Literature review of project managers' competencies

Competencies	Academic		Practical
	Abbott et al. (2007)	Brière et al. (2015a)	PM4NGOs (2013)
Adaptability	+	+	+
Management skills		+	+
Communication skills		+	
Personal Qualities	+	+	
Interpersonal skills		+	+
Leadership	+	+	
Ethics	+	+	
Stakeholder management	+	+	+
Capacity Building	+	+	
Change Management		+	
Span of abilities		+	

A total of 11 competencies and skills have been identified across the reviewed literature, these competencies and skills are discussed in more detail below.

Adaptability

Across the reviewed literature, adaptability was the most cited competency from both an academic and practical point of view. Brière et al. (2015a, p.120) identified the ability to adapt to the field's reality as the most mentioned competency amongst international development project managers. This refers to specifically to the reaction speed, when conditions are harsh as well as cultural adaptability. Furthermore, tools have to be customized as well as solutions, which was highlighted by both Abbott et al. (2007, p.196) and Brière et al. (2015a, p.120). From a practical perspective, adaptability was also highlighted as a key competency, specifically understanding the environment and navigating complex development environments was identified as a required competency for project managers within the ID sector (PM4NGOs, 2013, p.14).

Management skills

From ID project management perspective, several management skills are required at the same, which include: project management skills, financial management skills, people and human resource management skills (Brière et al., 2015a, p.120). The project manager, requires to have a combination of all these skills as they are used simultaneously (Brière et al., 2015a, p.120). In addition, practical risk management and analysis skills is also identified as a key competency (PM4NGOs, 2013, p.14).

Communication Skills

Diallo and Thuillier (2005, p.237) communication and trust between the ID project manager and the stakeholders within NGOs as critical in terms of delivering project success. Brière et al. (2015a, p.121) findings further elaborated on this important competency by focusing on written and oral communication, listening skills and the ability to clearly communicate ideas. Also, within this research, project managers stressed the importance of good language skills within an intercultural context with locals (Brière et al., 2015a, p.121).

Personal qualities

Brière et al. (2015a, p.122)'s research studies based on ID project managers' experience, many felt that self-management skills specifically to work under harsh conditions and stress management were critical. Personal qualities such as humility, patience and thoroughness were also necessary qualities for project managers in this sector (Brière et al., 2015a, p.122). Project Manager's learning abilities was also identified as competency, specifically related to seeking indigenous knowledge and innovative learning (Abbott et al, 2007, p.196).

Interpersonal skills

Working with others in a culturally sensitive manner, was viewed as a key competency by ID project managers within Brière et al. (2015a, p.122) research study and this is further supported by professional documentation and guidelines in terms of competency frameworks for Development projects, which highlights cultural sensitivity when working with multiple project stakeholders (PM4NGOs, 2013, p.14). In addition, negotiation and the ability to build trusting relationships within an intercultural context are vital interpersonal skills when managing ID projects (Brière et al., 2015a, p.122).

Leadership

Both Brière et al. (2015a, p.122) and Abbott et al. (2007, p.197) found that ID Project managers believe that leadership encompasses problem solving and having a strategic vision. Strategic vision is of particular importance due to the intangibility of results within the ID sector. Leadership differs from conventional leadership concepts as success is achieved through an understanding of others, presenting a vision and working towards a solution (Brière et al., 2015a, p.122). Strategic vision also includes sustainable development as this is the main goal of many ID projects (Abbott et al., 2007, p.195).

Ethics

Within the literature, ethical considerations were raised in terms of interactions with all stakeholders and when dealing with financial matters (Brière et al., 2015a, p.122). ID Project Managers also emphasized the daily ethical challenges within their ID context, with particular references to dealing with issues such as understanding local cultural norms and the legitimacy of working in poor communities (Abbott, 2007, p. 196).

Stakeholder management

Stakeholder management was identified as the most cited competency across the reviewed literature. Multiple authors have provided different perspectives on the stakeholder management within the ID sector. One perspective focuses on the ability to engage with stakeholders throughout the project lifecycle, use local know-how and having a local contact network (Brière et al., 2015a, p. 122). While Abbott et al. (2007, p.195) add an additional perspective by focusing on collaboration, relationship building and partnerships with key stakeholders. From a practical perspective, the professional documentation, presents the ability to understand stakeholders' roles and loyalties (PM4NGOs, 2013, p.14).

Capacity Building

Brière et al. (2015a, p.123) identified two levels of capacity building. The first level can be done through project managers supporting organisations and local partners. The second level is through different training for staff. Abbott et al. (2007, p.195)'s findings support this view and mentions that capacity building should be initiated internally rather than externally. Furthermore, this research also provides deeper understanding on how to support key stakeholders through empowerment within existing structures (Abbott et al., 2007, p.195).

Change management

The development of change and executions of change management strategies was identified as a required competency with Brière et al. (2015a, p.124) research study amongst ID project managers. It was particularly relevant due to the “*double-client-system*”, referring to the local community as well as donor.

Span of competencies

Brière et al. (2015a, p.124); Abbott et al. (2007, p.197) and PM4NGOs (2013, p.14) have all alluded to the importance of the project manager having a large span of competencies to achieve various tasks. From both a practical and theoretical point of view, authors have pointed out that Project Management skills are not sufficient and highlighted the importance of using the various competencies in combination to deliver ID projects.

Limited research from both an academic and practical point of view exists within this area, specifically related to ID project management competencies. While the findings presented in the literature research provides a good foundation in understanding the ID project management competencies, there is opportunity to explore these in more detail

and the nuances related to the context as well as potentially uncovering new competencies. This was highlighted by Brière et al. (2015a, p.124), specifically calling for further research within this field to comprehend the ID project management competencies within more detail specifically within the Southern NGOs, from developing countries. While Brière et al. (2015a) highlighted the importance of specific situations of project managers in understanding the specific competencies, there was no clear connection between the context, the challenges, success and competencies in the interview questions. In addition, this study did not mention the knowledge related competency mentioned by Crawford (2007). Thus, this presents us an opportunity to carry out a research to further explore competencies in relation to the context and challenges from the experience and perspective of ID project managers.

3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter explains the viewpoints and research methodology that the authors take to carry out their research. It starts with a pre-understanding of the research topic based on the authors' background of previous working experience and education. After that research philosophy regarding the worldviews and how knowledge is created is presented, together with nature of research, research method, approach, and strategy.

3.1 Pre-understanding

The topic of this thesis comes from a common interest between us - the authors on Project Management in International Development sector. Currently, we are studying Master in Strategic Project Management (European) (MSPME) at Umeå University. In this master program, we have been taught about project management in general with application of its tools and techniques. The strategic element of project management is a highlight of this program and courses such as Strategic Project Management, Strategic Change, Strategic Decision Making are provided to deepen students' understanding of project management at strategy level. Furthermore, subjects regarding human competencies were also included in the program such as Leadership and sessions on soft skills like communication, teamwork, cultural understanding and adaptation.

In addition, the program also provides us with cross-cultural experience when working with colleagues from 16 different countries. Thus, we have good understanding of project management in general and human competencies required for managing different types of projects. This can be considered as an advantage since it helps us to understand the topic better and at a faster pace. However, this is also a disadvantage since we may carry with us preconceptions and subjectivity about human competencies in project management. These can prevent us from exploring the issues further to enrich the study (Saunders et al., 2009, p.151).

The Master program is embedded in Western's values and perceptions about project management, which in turn has a significant influence on our views about the subject. Moreover, one of us even though grew up in a developing country, has undergraduate education and working experience in a developed country. Thus she is bound by a more Western experience. The other author, on the other hand, has been living, studying and working in South Africa and carries with him South African culture, values and beliefs.

From another perspective, our understanding is mainly of commercial projects. One has university education in project management field and working experience in construction projects. The other was specialised in Consumer and marketing research and has experience in managing research projects in retail industry. International Development projects are something which we both do not have prior knowledge or experience about. Thus, even though we are value bound in the view of project management and human competencies within this field, we would like to stay objective in carrying out study to explore and understand them within International Development projects context.

3.2 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy refers to the development of knowledge and the nature of that knowledge and it contains assumptions about the way that a researcher views the world (Saunders et al., 2009, p.107). This is also known as worldview – a basic set of beliefs that guide actions (Creswell, 2013, p.6). It is important to understand and be clear what is included in a worldview with primary focus on a researcher's thoughts about the nature of research (Morgan, 2007, p.52) as this will influence on the topic researchers choose to study and how they conduct it through his/her chosen research strategy and methods (Saunders et al., 2009, p.107).

There are two main ways of thinking about research philosophy, namely ontology and epistemology which will be presented below.

3.2.1 Ontological Assumptions

Ontology is concerned with the nature of reality and deals with assumptions researchers make about how the world operates (Saunders et al., 2009, p.110). Two main ontological positions are objectivism and constructionism (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.22). In considering our research topic, we would like to take viewpoint of a constructionist. This is due to the nature of our research in exploring and understanding a social phenomenon of project management in ID sector and this reality is constructed and accomplished by active involvement of social actors who are different stakeholders of ID projects, such as project managers, project team, donors, beneficiaries, etc. The social interaction between different stakeholders has a direct influence on the social phenomenon of interest and this is a dynamic and continuous process. By looking at the environmental and context factors in International Development projects, we would be able to understand their influence on the challenges as well as competencies of an ID project manager as a social actor. It thus can be argued that objectivism position does not suit our research as this viewpoint considers the world to be independent of social actors (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.22), which is opposite to our position.

3.2.2 Epistemological Assumptions

Epistemology deals with the question of what constitutes acceptable knowledge in a field of study (Saunders et al., 2009, p.112; Bryman & Bell, 2007, p.16). There are four epistemological positions: positivism, realism, interpretivism and pragmatism. We would like to carry out our study from an interpretivist's standpoint because other positions are not in line with our views.

According to Saunders et al. (2009, p.116), interpretivism advocates that it is necessary for the researcher to understand the differences between humans in our role as social actors. In our study, we believe that “social actors” – or in a more practical term – humans – play a very important part in this world. Particularly in the case of ID projects, different stakeholders play different roles in various ways that are according to their own interpretation. For example, two different project managers in similar projects may have different interpretation on their own duties and roles, and thus act differently. With the same job title and responsibilities given by an organisation, one may believe that he/she needs to manage the project within the constraints of time, cost and budget

whereas the other may think that the quality of final project outcome is of more importance to him or meeting the needs of the beneficiaries. These different meanings they give to their roles lead them to act in different ways. In a setting of an ID project, different stakeholders from many regions and cultures come together at a specific time under a particular circumstance, and work towards a set of goals and objectives. This brings to ID projects an element of complexity and uniqueness that requires researchers to observe, understand and interpret different actions and interactions happening there. Taking the position of an interpretivist, we are also aware that it is important for us to adopt an empathetic stance when entering the social world of our research subjects – ID project managers and understanding their world from their point of view (Saunders et al., 2009, p.116).

3.3 Nature of Research

The classification of research purposes is the threefold one of exploratory, descriptive and explanatory (Saunders et al., 2009, p.139). An exploratory study's aim is to find out "what is happening; to seek new insights; to ask questions and to assess phenomena in a new light"; while a descriptive research is a means "to portray an accurate profile of persons, events or situations". On the other hand, the nature of an explanatory research is to establish causal relationships between variables may be termed (Robson, 2002, p.5; as cited in Saunders et al., 2009, p.139-140).

Exploratory research is used when the research problem or question is badly understood. The research design should be effective in producing the wanted information within the constraints put on the researcher, for example time, budgetary and skills constraints (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2010, p.55).

Our research is more of an exploratory study because of the aim of the study to find out the competencies of a project manager within ID project context. We would like to clarify our understanding of the competencies found in the literature and seek insights into the perspective of ID project managers within their context.

3.4 Research Approach

There are two ways to establish what is true or false to draw conclusions, induction and deduction. Induction is based on empirical evidence, while deduction is based on logic (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2010, p.15). Due to the nascent and exploratory nature of our research area an inductive approach is most suitable (Edmondson & McManus, 2007, p.1170). Limited research and empirical evidence has been compiled to understand the competencies of project managers within the context of ID projects, by employing an inductive approach, we aim to add to existing theories. Using the inductive approach, we will draw general conclusions from our empirical observations and follow the following process: observations through interviews, analysis of findings, theory building (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2010, p.16). We will seek to uncover themes in data that does not exist in the literature, through a process of tracking back and forth between theory and data (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.20). The literature review findings informed the design of our interview guide and the key areas we would like to investigate further. It also established the link between ID project success and the project manager competencies. Since this link has been established, it allowed us to place greater

emphasis on the digging deeper into the challenges and the project manager competencies in our interview guide. Our findings could be incorporated back into existing knowledge to improve theories within this nascent area. Inductive approaches tend to rely on qualitative methods, which will be discussed in the next section.

3.5 Research Method

The objective of our research study, is to understand the challenges faced by projects managers of ID projects and the competencies required to overcome these challenges. A qualitative research approach would be most suitable as we would like to understand the experiences of project managers through their eyes (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.386). Qualitative methods there is a tendency or pre-disposition towards a reflection of an interpretivist and constructionist position (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.386). The choice of qualitative research method is aligned to our epistemological assumptions, as interpretivist stance, as we seek to understand the perspectives of the project manager based on their experiences. Furthermore, is supported by ontological assumptions underlying as constructionism, as the social phenomenon is constructed by the various stakeholders, e.g. beneficiaries, donors, project manager and project team and these stakeholders have an important role in delivering the outcome of ID projects.

3.6 Research Strategy

A semi-structured interview approach has been selected as it allowed for greater flexibility. Due to the exploratory nature of our topic, to uncover the competencies of project managers within ID projects. This approach enables us to understand the challenges and competencies and skills in more detail, through in-depth probing of respondents' answers as well as providing them with the opportunity to explain and build upon their responses. By adopting an interpretivist epistemology, we are particularly concerned to understand the meanings that project managers ascribe their experience in managing ID projects (Saunders et. al., 2009, p.324).

Respondents may use certain words, concepts or terminology during the interview, by using the semi-structured interview approach we are able to probe specific meanings, which could add significance and depth to our data. Furthermore, it may lead to new areas of discussion, which we might not have considered but could be significant in terms of addressing our research question (Saunders et. al., 2009, p.324). Using this approach, we provide the respondent with a platform to express their views and perspectives freely. Adopting a more structured interview would limit the richness of the data we would be able to obtain, which would defeat the purpose of our research given our research question (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.404). The semi-structured interviews also minimize the risk of imposing inappropriate frame of reference on the respondent and researchers' influence on their perspectives (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.406).

4. RESEARCH DESIGN

This chapter presents the research design process taken place in this study. Firstly, the population for research is defined and sampling choice is established and justified. After that, the way of design and the development the interview guide is explained. Thirdly, the process of interview including the pilot interview is illustrated with different steps involved. The limitation regarding the interviews is highlighted, following by data analysis strategy and ethical considerations taken in this research.

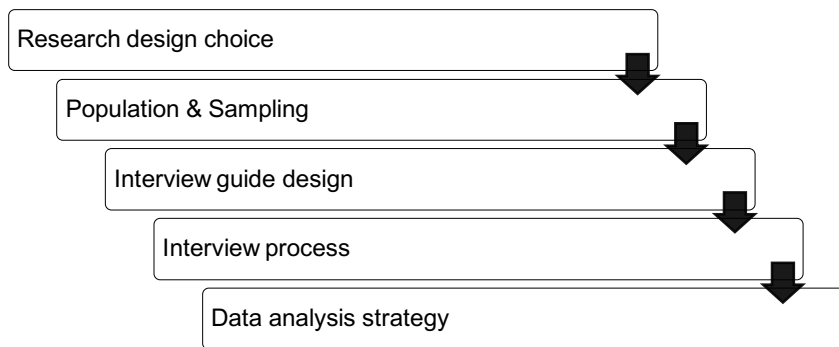


Figure 3 – Research design steps

4.1 Research Design Choice

The research design provides a framework for data collection and analysis, and also reflects decisions regarding the key priorities within the research process (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2010, p.66). A cross-sectional research design has been selected for this research study, where we collected data from multiple respondents at single point in time, to understand themes, patterns and associations (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.53). Our research aims to understand project managers' perspectives based on their past experience. Therefore, we are interested in reflection from project manager's past career in managing ID projects. In addition, we would like to understand their experiences within their current social context (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.40). Understanding their changing perspectives regarding the challenges and competencies in managing ID projects over a period of time is beyond the scope of this research. Therefore, due to the reflective nature of our research question, a cross-sectional design, is highly appropriate. The following sections will explore research design framework in much more detail, starting with population and sampling procedures.

4.2 Population & Sampling

Our research population consists of individuals who are currently or have managed ID projects in the past as they are responsible for managing the project, achieving objectives and handling stakeholders (Golini & Landoni, 2014, p.125). Given the number of large number of ID projects and time constraints, collecting data from the entire population would not be feasible. We have therefore, selected a sample of this population describe above in the presence of the limitations faced. Furthermore, we have narrowed the sample to individuals that managed projects based in Africa, as our

sampling frame, due a large number of ID projects taking place there. In addition, we are particularly interested in those individuals who have extensive professional experience in managing ID projects within Africa. As we believe that having an average of 10-year professional experience or more in managing ID projects, respondents are able to provide detailed accounts of the challenges and the competencies and skills required in this sector. Furthermore, as the duration of the International Development project and programme generally run for the range of five to ten years (Ika & Saint-Macary, 2012, p.427), therefore an individual who have an average of 10-year professional experience would be likely to work through two or more projects. Therefore, they would be able to provide rich insights based on their experiences.

A sampling frame is a listing of respondents from which the actual sample is drawn. We have identified two sampling frames. The first sampling frame comes from references through personal contacts (*Research sampling frame 1*). We reached out to our personal networks to get in touch with potential interviewees who met our criteria mentioned above. The second sampling frame is the intersection of three different populations as follows: our research population, LinkedIn population, and English speaking population who have experience working in Africa (Refer to *Research sampling frame 2* in the Figure 4). As mentioned, our research populations comprise individuals who are currently or have managed ID projects in the past. LinkedIn is a professional social network, that has a detailed profile of individuals and their working experience. Using this tool, we are able to find suitable and potential interviewees managing ID projects within Africa. In addition, as the study was conducted entirely in English, we would like to speak to those who are proficient in English.

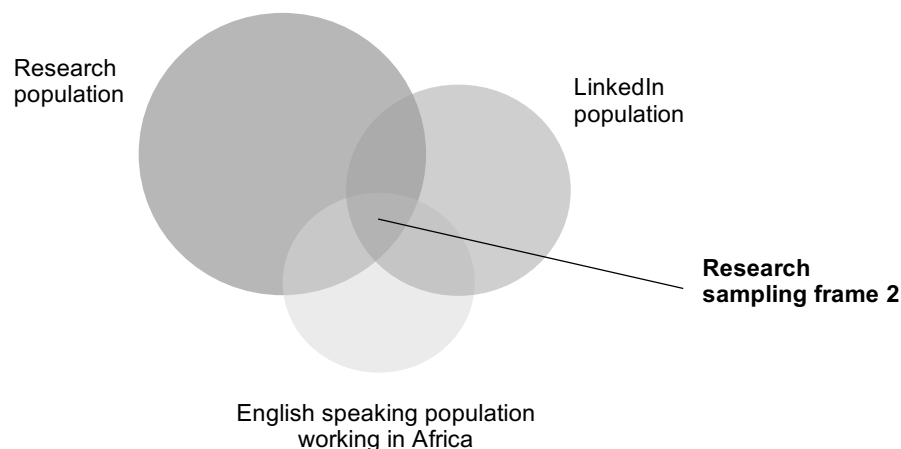


Figure 4 - Research sampling frame 2

Upon identifying our sampling frames, we proceeded to choose sampling procedures. There are two main types of sampling procedures, namely probability sampling and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling is a process whereby the sample is selected randomly, to ensure that each individual in the population has an equal chance of being selected. This sampling technique allows for statistical inferences about the population. While non-probability sampling, is a process where individuals are not randomly selected, therefore there is a strong likelihood that some individuals have a greater chance to be selected than others (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2010, p.140).

Non-probability sampling techniques has been chosen, as we do not seek to understand any statistical inferences regarding our target population. There is however a possibility to generalise from non-probability samples about the population, but not on statistical grounds (Saunders et al., 2009, p.213). Using probability sampling will not add value to answer our research question, as we aim to understand project manager's experience and perspectives, using qualitative research methods. The purpose of our research is not to establish statistical evidence but rather to explore and gain insight to the experiences of individuals managing ID projects. Furthermore, this is supported by our underlying philosophical ontological, constructivism and epistemological, interpretivist assumptions. We are interested in understanding the roles and social actors within their context.

A combination of two non-probability sampling techniques is selected, namely judgemental sampling and snowball sampling to improve our response rate. Judgemental sampling is based on the researcher's judgement to selected potential cases who will best answer the research question and meet the research objectives (Saunders et. al, 2009, p.237). Using our *sampling frame 2* with LinkedIn as the main search tool and adopting judgemental sampling, potential interviewees were reviewed and selected. This was done through an extensive search process, whereby we used various ID or donor organisations as keywords to find project managers working on projects and who had a relationship to the organization. The search results on LinkedIn were examined in detail by focusing on the following: the location of the projects they have worked on, their years of experience, their titles, qualifications as well as their English language proficiency.

The selected interviewees were contacted and invited to participate in the research study through email communication. The second non-probability sampling technique used, is snowball sampling, whereby the researcher makes initial contact with a small number of people relevant to the research question and use these contacts to establish leads to potential interviewees (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.192). This technique was employed in both sampling frame 1 and 2 to improve the response rate and increase the sample size.

Sample size is dependent on the research questions and objectives, what researchers need to answer, what will add value to the search, and what will be credible and what is possible for researchers within their available resources (Saunders et al., 2009, p.234 - 235). A total of 40 people has been identified through our sampling techniques and contacted (refer to Figure 5 below).

	Number of people contacted	Number of people responded & interviewed	Notes
Sample from Sampling frame 1	11	3	Original sampling frame 1 – Snowball technique
	8	3	From one respondent in Sampling frame 2 - Snowball technique
Sample from Sampling frame 2	21	2	Judgmental sampling technique
Total	40	8	

Figure 5 – Results of sampling techniques

From Sampling frame 1, 11 people were identified and contacted, of which three people responded and participated in the interviews. From Sampling frame 2, 21 people were contacted with two people replied and took part in the study. One of the respondents interviewed in Sampling frame 2 snowballed other 8 potential respondents, which resulted in another three interviews. Therefore, the response result is eight completed interviews and four people who showed interest in participating in our research, but due to the unavailability, these interviews did not take place.

Our final sample size is eight interviews, of which one is used as pilot interview, therefore, the findings in the paper are from seven interviews. We decide on this sample size of seven because of the availability of potential respondents that are willing to participate in this research and the time constraint. According to our thesis timeline, we have two weeks for data collection and transcription, 28 November 2016 till 9 December 2016. This limits us in terms of the quantity of interviews conducted as well as our analysis. Although we acknowledge that a bigger sample size has greater credibility, as we are collecting qualitative data, the value that we can derive from the data is more dependent on the data collection and analysis skills (Patton, 2002, as cited in Saunders et al., 2009, p.234). Furthermore, due to the exploratory nature of our research, we are interested in getting in-depth and rich information through data collection. This leads us in taking a semi-structured interviews with detailed probing, enabling to collect rich data from a smaller sample size. Table 3 gives an overview of respondent profiles about the sector they have worked in, the years of experience and locations of those projects they have been involved in. The sector and location of project was an outcome based on the respondents who agreed to participate in our study.

Table 3 - Overview of respondent profiles

Respondent code	Sector	Years of experience	Location of projects
R2	Health & Medical Care	12 years	Zimbabwe & South Africa
R3	Social Development	10 years	Kenya & Uganda
R4	Health & Medical Care	10 years	Zimbabwe & South Africa
R5	Health & Medical Care	8 years	Nigeria
R6	Social Development	9 years	South Africa
R7	Social Development & Agriculture	11 years	Uganda
R8	Social Development & Humanitarian	15 years	South Sudan, Kenya, Congo, Tanzania, Burundi

4.3 Interview Guide Design

The interview guide is designed to be flexible and open-ended to allow respondents to express their views and perspectives freely. It is also to allow for opportunities to uncover new areas that have not been discovered before. The interview guide flow follows a ‘funnel-approach’, the initial questions are broad and the subsequent questions go in deeper into specific areas. A copy of the interview guide comprising of the four questions can be found in Appendix I.

The first part of the interview guide, provides the respondent with information regarding the research study’s objectives and aims, obtains respondents’ consent for recording and assurance that responses will only be used for research purposes and confidentiality will

be maintained. Next, respondents were asked to confirm their current role, title and current organization.

To create a coherent design, the most critical connection is with the research question, which is based on an empirical connection (Maxwell, 2013, p.116). The research question was dissected into four main questions, to provide structure for the second part of the interview guide. Please see the aims of each of the questions below:

Question 1 and 2 helps us to understand the respondents' level of experience and professional background in managing ID projects. It was also an opportunity to put the respondents at ease and start the discussion by them speaking casually about their professional career in ID sector. Furthermore, by asking these two questions, the respondents are placed into their context, which facilitates framing future questions for both the respondent as well as us as researchers. These questions are easy and positive-type and placed first in order to make the respondents feel comfortable and the discussion flows freely (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2011, p.125).

Question 3 aims to understand the challenges faced by project managers when managing ID projects, from their perspective. This question prepares the respondents to answer *Question 4* on how they could overcome the mentioned challenges and discuss what skills and competencies required in these situations.

In addition to the four main questions, each of them is asked in such an open-ended manner, allowing for in-depth probing for deeper understanding of the issue, concept or idea being discussed.

4.4 Pilot Interview

A pilot interview is conducted with the first respondent to test the validity of the questions in terms of the respondent's understanding, the difficulty level of the questions as well as the sensitivity and time to answer the question (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2011, p.125). Interview with respondent R1 was used as a pilot interview and the resultant data was not included in the empirical findings, however it provided insights to help us improve the design and effectiveness of our interview guide.

Based on the outcome of the pilot interview, we realized that the original question 4, which discuss the skills and competencies required to overcome the challenges, was difficult for the respondent to answer. This is because this question is a big move from a very general question (question 3) to a very specific issue. This created a disruption in the discussion flow and caused confusion to the respondent. Thus, question 4 was split into 2 sub-questions (4.1 and 4.2) to solve the issue. Another question on the current position, organisation and years of experience was also added upfront to make sure that the respondent meets the sampling criteria. Pilot interviews are important in qualitative studies as they help develop an understanding of the concepts and theories held by our target respondents (Maxwell, 2013, p.67). The pilot interview provided more knowledge and an understanding of several key concepts within ID projects, which helped with probing in subsequent interviews. In addition, these concepts were in the language of the respondent and using concepts prevalent within the industry (Strauss,

1987, p.33). This is particularly helpful as it helped us to clarify the meaning of these concepts, the events and the people who are involved in these actions and real life events. This is essential for the purposes of our research as we are particularly interested in understand project manager's perspectives and a lack of understanding, our theories about what is taking place could be incomplete (Maxwell, 2013, p.67).

The pilot interview was also used to test the respondent's reaction about potentially sensitive topics such as project details, donor funding or person challenges. However, this did not appear to be a problem during this interview.

Another purpose of conducting the pilot interview is to test the interview duration. Our initial plan was to have one-hour interview with respondents so that we have enough time to probe information details. In addition, an hour interview is considered to be suitable when taking into account the busy schedule of respondents. The pilot interview lasted exactly one hour, which met our initial requirement. Thus, timing required to conduct the interview was not an issue for us.

Based on the above findings from completing the pilot interview, we revised our interview guide accordingly. The data collected from the pilot interview was excluded from findings and data analysis presented in this study in order to ensure the consistency and quality in data.

4.5 Interview Process

The interview process comprises of the following stages: planning and preparation of how to approach potential respondents, arranging time and date, the medium for interviews (Skype, telephonic or face-to-face) and preparation for the interview using the interview guide. This process started on the 28 November 2016, where we selected and initiated first contact. Interviews took place from 29 November 2016 till 6 December 2016.

Email was used as the main medium to contact potential respondents as well as communication. A short introductory cover email was developed and sent to potential respondent (please see Appendix II). This cover email briefly introduced researchers, the purpose of research, invitation for interview with duration and key themes we would like to discuss. Upon receiving a reply, a suitable time and date was arranged to accommodate schedule of respondents, also the most convenient medium for interviews are also discussed (refer to Table 4 for interview schedule). This type of arrangement facilitates a better collaboration between us the researchers and the respondents in the carry out this study (Maxwell, 2013, p.92).

Table 4 - Interview schedule

Respondent Code	Interview Date	Interview medium
R1 (Pilot interview)	29 November 2016	Skype
R2	29 November 2016	Skype
R3	30 November 2016	Face-to-Face
R4	30 November 2016	Skype
R5	1 December 2016	Skype
R6	2 December 2016	Skype
R7	5 December 2016	Skype
R8	6 December 2016	Telephonic

Of the total eight interviews was completed, one was conducted face-to-face in Umea, one was via a telephonic call and six were conducted using Skype, a software programme, facilitating communications through Internet. The choice of medium of interviews was based on what was convenient for the respondent. Using Skype, was also beneficial as we were able to contact respondents in geographically isolated areas in Africa (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p.98). Furthermore, respondents could participate in the comfort of their homes or in the location of their choice, making them feel more at ease during the interview process (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p.98). For the face-to-face interview, the respondent happened to have a business meeting near our location, thus we were able to conduct the interview face-to-face. For one telephonic interview, due to poor internet connection at respondent's location, Skype call was not possible and a telephonic interview was used as an alternative.

At the start of the interview, the researchers greeted and expressed their gratitude to respondent. A brief introduction of our current education programme and the research purpose was also given to the respondents. To comply with the ethical guidelines, the interviewees were also informed that their identities are strictly kept confidential and kept anonymous. We asked for the participants' permission to record the interviews for later analysis and all of the respondents gave their consent.

The interviews were conducted based on the Interview Guide and probing questions were asked depending the themes or ideas mentioned by the respondent. The interview was conducted in a casual manner, to allow the respondent to speak openly about their experiences in managing ID projects.

Even though audio recordings were carried out for the full duration of the interview, interview notes of the respondents' comments were recorded on a hard copy of the interview guide. This was beneficial during the transcribing process to identify the key themes and concepts mentioned as well as a summary of the responses from each respondent. The interview duration varied depending on the respondent, lasting anywhere from approximately 45 minutes to one hour.

Immediately, after each interview, the following contextual data was recorded: the location of both interviewers and interviewees, the date and time, the duration of the interview, the setting of the interview, background information about the respondent, our immediate impression of how the interview went and brief overview comments about the interview and data collected (Saunders et al. 2009, p.334; Braun & Clarke, 2013, p.93). A copy of the contextual data record template can be found in Appendix III. Each respondent was coded, with a unique code for later transcribing purposes and to maintain the respondent's anonymity.

In qualitative research, the relationship the researcher has with the respondent is critical as it is the means in which the research gets done (Maxwell, 2013, p.91). This was particularly important within our research, we established a courteous and transparent communication upfront to establish trust, this encouraged respondents to speak freely and opening about their experiences. Thank-you notes were sent to all respondents upon completion of the interviews to express gratitude for their participation. This has resulted in some respondents providing us with more potential interviews as well as many showing interest in receiving our final thesis.

Within three days of completion of interviews, transcription took place. A transcript includes both what has been said and who said what (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p.93). Each interviewer was transcribed in full, with every word recorded using transcription software, InqScribe. All verbal utterances from all speakers was recorded, including both actual words and non-semantic sounds ('um', 'er', 'uhuh' and 'mm') (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p.163). The aim was to provide clear and complete record of feedback during the interview process. This process was crucial for the data analysis stage, even though it was a time consuming process (transcription took on average eight hours) the data was transferred into readable and easy to assess format. Each transcript was printed and reviewed for data analysis.

4.6 Interview Limitations

Two out of the eight interviews conducted had a few disruptions due to poor signal and quality of the call, this was partly due to the respondents' location in remote areas in Africa. The majority of the interviews ran smoothly, with no interruption and clear communication between the interviewers and the respondents. The audio recordings were clear, but with two instances where there was some inaudible and unclear snippet of the audio file due to the poor quality of the respondent's internet connection.

Due to different accents, there were few instances where clarification was needed to understand the main idea the respondent was relaying. Due to the exploratory nature of the research and open-ended question, specifically the first and second question, there were a few cases, where the respondent would wander off topic, however, they were not interrupted as we wanted to understand their views and not impose our views.

While most of the interviews was carried out according to the agreed time, there were a two cases, where interviews had to be re-scheduled due to the respondent busy work schedule. Differences in time-zones between the respondents and us, this also caused some confusion in terms of the interview schedule.

4.7 Data Analysis Strategy

There are several available tools to analyse qualitative data: data display and analysis; template analysis; analytic induction; grounded theory; discourse analysis; narrative analysis (Saunders et al., 2009, p.502). The most appropriate tool selected for this study is template analysis. Template analysis involves a list of the codes or categories that represent the themes revealed from the data that have been collected (Saunders et al., 2009, p.505). This is based on an inductive approach, as all the data analysed and placed into the themes, patterns and shows relationships as uncovered from the data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p.178). This tool is appropriate as it best addresses our research question which aims to reveal the competencies required to overcome the challenges managing ID projects. Using this approach, we are able to identify key themes in terms of the respondents' perspectives of competencies and group related themes into hierarchy.

Template analysis is also highly relevant due to the open-ended nature of our interview guide the resultant data. The raw data is based on multiple perspectives and expressed in

various ways, therefore assessing the data in this form is challenging. By adopting the template analysis, we are able to make sense of this data by combining and rearranging the data, in a more meaningful way. Furthermore, this will enable us to present the competencies in richer and more in-depth manner.

Based on the transcriptions of all the interviews, we employed the following template analysis strategy to analyse the data. The process of data analysis is a combination of both top-down and bottom-up approach as illustrated in Figure 6. The main topic of our research was derived from our research question, which guided the whole data analysis process. All the transcripts of this research study was reviewed in detail by both researchers together with the Interview notes. Relevant verbatim responses were extracted and placed into a matrix with columns showing the questions based on the Interview Guide (context, challenges, solutions and competencies) and rows showing responses with respondent codes. This assists in bringing all the data together to make sense of it. In addition, during the early stage of this analysis, similar responses were grouped together, and responses that were tied together in answering several questions were disentangled (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.127). Each verbatim response was carefully interpreted and discussed between both researchers and coded using a theme based on our knowledge gained from findings of the literature review process. This was done through a complete coding process, whereby everything and anything within our data relating to our research question was coded (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p.206). This table was printed in hardcopy and each response was cut out. These verbatim responses were arranged and sorted by each researcher into an additional layer in terms of the hierarchy of themes.

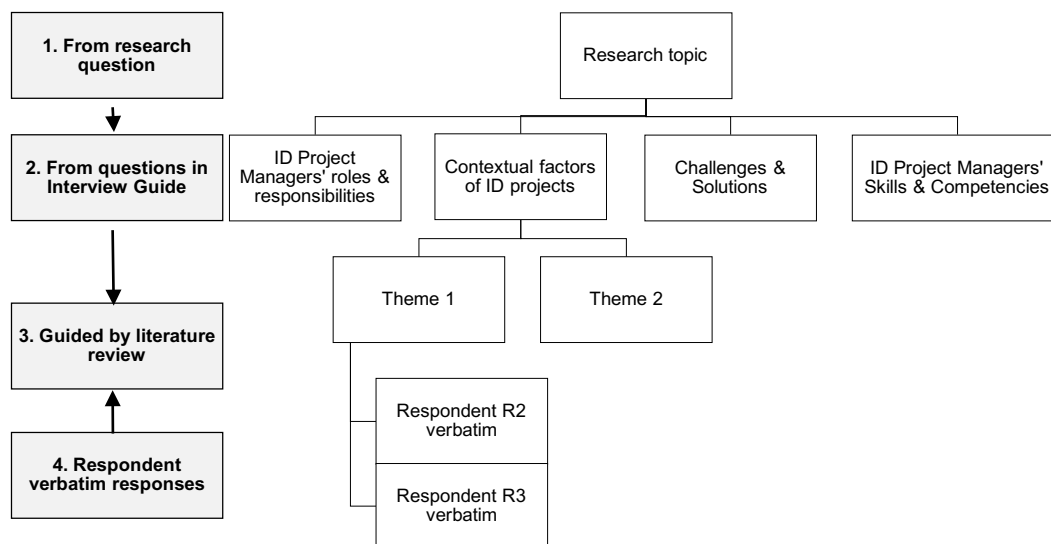


Figure 6 - Data analysis process

In addition, throughout the data analysis process to keep track cumulative thinking and brainstorming, memos were recorded and diagrams were drawn (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p.118). These memos and diagrams evolved over time and were used to track

progress, keep open dialogue between the researchers and ensure analysis ideas were not lost.

4.8 Ethical Considerations

Qualitative inquiry brings with it special issues pertaining to participant consent and maintenance of participant anonymity. Three basic principles guide researchers, namely beneficence, respect and justice, when conducting research (Sieber, 1992, as cited in Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.289). Firstly, regarding, beneficence, researchers should strive to maximise a good outcome for science and humanity and minimise the risk to individuals in research (Lapan et al., 2013, p.22). The identity of the respondent was not revealed to protect their identity and maintain confidentiality, this was done through a respondent coding process, disguising information relating to their organization and donors and well as any demographic information was also not shown in the empirical findings. The confidentiality was ensured at the start of the interview process, by informing respondents that their information will be reported in a way that their data cannot be traced back to them (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.291). Respondents were also informed that the interview will be recorded for later transcription and analysis purposes and were asked whether they were comfortable with this. Issues relating to sensitive topics was masked to further maintain the anonymity of respondents, but at the same time the issue would be raised in terms of building awareness as well as providing transparency. Davis (1991, as cited in Richards & Morse, 2007, p.213), argues that by removing too much contextual information may render the research useless or invalid. We have tried as much as possible to reach a balance when presenting our research, however our main obligation is the protection of the identity of our respondents.

The second principle relates to respect, researchers should treat the people in their study with respect and courtesy (Lapan et al., 2013, p.23). Research respondents should be allowed to participate freely within the research and to withdraw without penalties (Lapan et al., 2013, p.23). All respondents were invited to participate, asked for informed consent to participate and were allowed to decline or accept without any cost to them (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.290). To maintain transparency, respondents were informed about research purpose, the researchers' educational programme and organisation and that the research would be used for academic purposes only (Richards & Morse, 2007, p.237). This was to ensure we received informed consent from respondents, that they fully understanding who we are as researchers as well as the nature and purpose of research (Yin, 2011, p.46). No promises were made to respondents which we could not fulfil. We have promised confidentiality, which we have ensured in the data analysis, where we have maintained respondent's confidentiality and anonymity by using a responding coding process in the interview transcript and data analysis. All interview transcripts have been treated strictly confidential and has not been shared or reviewed by any other individuals except for the researchers. In addition, upon request by respondent have we promised to share the final thesis document with them. Respondents profiles were reviewed on LinkedIn to determine their proficiency in the English language, this was a critical means to establish a clear and good communication with respondents, as all the interviews were conducted in English. This ensures that the respondents are comfortable with the language being used in the interviews, as well as showing a level of cultural sensitivity

towards respondents. All interviews were conducted at a day, time and method of communication for the interview was based on what was convenient for the respondent.

The third principle relates to justice; this is defined as the process of ensuring that the respondents who participate in the research benefits from the research. Selected respondents requested the final thesis document to review the results, as they felt it would be of interest and beneficial to their working career within the ID sector. Justice is achieved by using processes that are reasonable, non-exploitative, carefully considered and fairly administered (Lapan et al., 2013, p.27). Given the nature of the respondents we were interested in speaking with, many were hard to reach, due to their busy schedule, however we tried to contact as many as possible to provide all qualifying respondents with an equal opportunity to participate. Furthermore, with regards to data analysis, all respondents' responses were dealt with in a transparent way and fair manner, specifically when presented in the empirical findings (Silverman, 2006, p.327).

5. EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

This chapter presents the empirical findings collected from semi-structured interviews. The findings are presented according the questions within the Interview guide. The first part of this chapter provides contextual information about ID project managers we have interviewed. The subsequent sections present the responses for each of respondents for each questions in a narrative and summary form.

Empirical findings presentation strategy

The empirical findings will be grouped according to the questions in the Interview Guide as we believe the importance of the contribution from different respondents. By presenting the data in this format, we are able to derived the most value, as we are interested in understanding the holistic view of ID project management and its contextual factors affecting the projects. Splitting the data from all the questions by respondent will result in the isolation of their responses and will focus on the unique features and difference of the projects, sectors and respondent, which is not the aim of our research study.

An overview of responses to each of the questions are provided in a summary and narrative form. This gives the reader an overview of a chain of evidence to illustrate the source of the data and with supporting examples in the form of direct quotations (Lapan et al., 2013, p.29). In addition, this enables the provision of a balanced and fair view of all the perspectives given by all respondents in this research study (Lapan et al., 2013, p.29). The sentence fillers such as “hmm, ah, eh, ...” and “pause”, together with repeating phrases in the transcription will not be reported here to make the quotations more readable while the main part of respondent’s answers are still kept intact. In addition, the sign [...] represents the left out parts not being cited due to the reason that the ideas and concepts have been already mentioned in the narrative summaries.

The first part of this chapter (corresponds to question 1 of the Interview Guide) provides sufficient details regarding respondent's background and experience. This allows the reader to determine as to whether or how the findings from the study might transfer to their own context (Lapan et al., 2013, p.29). However, to ensure the anonymity of the respondents’ profile and personal information, organisation names and job titles were masked and omitted intentionally from the findings presented here.

The second part (corresponds to question 2 of the Interview Guide) presents the roles and responsibilities of the respondents in the capacity of project managers. The third part shows the challenges as well as solutions to overcome these challenges when managing ID projects (corresponds to question 3 and 4.1 of the Interview Guide). The answers to the two questions are presented simultaneously to ensure that both challenges and solutions could be understood in full when putting them together. The last part (corresponds to question 4.2 of the Interview Guide) shows the skills and competencies of ID project managers from the respondents’ perspectives.

5.1 Overall Experience in managing ID Projects

At the start of the interviews, respondents were asked to briefly describe their experience and professional background in managing ID projects. They have grown and developed their careers across various roles and responsibilities. Ranging from development officer, project coordinator, project manager, programme manager and country director. All of the respondents have an average of 10 years of experience in different types of ID projects and in different locations within Africa. These projects' scopes range from social development, humanitarian to health & medical care, agriculture. Therefore, respondents were able to provide valuable perspectives and views based on their experiences in managing ID projects.

Respondents R2, R4, R5 and R6 have much experience in community healthcare projects. These projects include HIV testing and prevention programmes, nutrition projects and malformed children.

R2: (I started) doing large scale projects, multi-funded, donor projects, that built the continuum of care from HIV testing & prevention programmes, reference refugees, retention care. [...] In the beginning, it was mainly HIV, then it moved onto diabetes and hypertension to include other chronic diseases.

R6: It's an International NGO where I was managing projects to do with nutrition, like malnutrition. Then I was doing project around safe motherhood, [...], some emergency intervention courses - EMOSC - emergency management of strategic care, [...] assisting with the provision of surgical intervention for malformed children, like the child was born with handicapness.

Respondents R3 and R7's main experience in ID sector is within social development programmes. R3 focuses on social development issues such as equality across societal groups and gender within both the respondent's country and the partner African country, and provides solutions to solve them using projects. R7 experience focuses more on social development programmes that target beneficiaries' needs such as supporting orphans, widows, helping farmers to achieve sustainable agriculture, and promoting HIV AIDS prevention among young people.

R3: I think it's back from where I started the project. (Name of the organization) has several African projects. We have had since 2007 a project with Uganda, with that municipality. And we have had since 2007 also project with (city name) in Kenya. [...] And right now we have one in Uganda and we are applying a new one with (city name).

R7: This was really about supporting orphans and vulnerable children, and widows [...]The second project was Sustainable Agriculture, where we were focusing on empowerment for farmers, using organic sustainable agriculture farming practices. [...] So initially I'm doing Project Manager for the youth organisation. This project was promoting HIV AIDS prevention, adoption of risk avoidance behaviour, behaviour change among the young people.

Respondent R8 has a vast experience in managing complex development and humanitarian programmes, such as nutrition, WaSH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene), working with churches and community development and social cohesion type projects.

5.2 ID Project Managers' Roles and Responsibilities

Upon briefly describing about their experience within ID sector and projects, the respondents were then asked to talk about one project of their selection that they have been involved in the most in terms of project management activities. They first gave project details such as project names, location, sector and time period. In addition, project goals and objectives were also highlighted as important information in order to understand further about the project contexts. The interviewees also talked about their roles and responsibilities as Project Managers in these projects, together with their day-to-day activities being in that position.

Respondents R2, R5 and R6 selected health care projects that they have been involved in. However, their roles and responsibilities are quite diverse and different.

Respondent R2 selected the project of treatment adherence clubs in this question. This project aims to ensure that people who have been on any chronic disease treatment for at least a year will be provided medication, without standing in a long queue. The patients can have easy access to different types of medication such as antiretroviral medications, diabetes medication or hypertension medication. This project also helps to decongest health care facilities. The respondent's activities mainly involved many meetings at both a strategic level and operational level.

R2: Where I get to interact with people at a strategic level discussing how we can best grow the project, how we can best implement that particular project, what strategies are working in terms of treatment of patients and what can be done differently [...] Then at an operational level, I will be looking at how best can we meet the targets, how can we best build relationships with key stakeholders, be it at health facilities or a community level or society.

Respondent R5 spoke about an HIV treatment adherence project with the aim to help as many people as possible to have a HIV test, let them know their status and get them enrolled in care and treatment. Intensive adherence counselling also took place to ensure that patients do not default on their medication intake. Respondent R5 was part of the committee that offered adherence counselling and training.

R5: So we join the medical professionals also who are also employed by the respective health care facilities, [...] We do the collation of data of these patients. We collect the data, which is done every month. [...] we do all the processing of the sample and we forward to the laboratory where it is internalised and get the results back to the patient. Get the patient documented and filed. So they can use it going forward.

Another health care project was selected by Respondent R6, Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision project. The project's aim is to encourage males to participate in medical circumcision in order to reduce the transmission rate of HIV through the sexual activity.

R6 was responsible for allocating budget, managing supply of necessary tools and equipment to the operational team, monitoring and control of the whole process.

R6: And then follow up also on some of the claims, and the quality of service. Then compare the strategy and report to the national office, and then manage conflicts, and then negotiate for the doctors to be released from the hospitals.

Respondent R7 selected a HIV AIDS prevention project of which the main goal was to promote and create awareness of HIV AIDS and ways to prevent it, and promote the adoption of risk avoidance among young people. In the capacity of the project manager, R7 was in charge of activities planning from annual to quarterly, monthly and weekly plans. Other responsibilities include budget control, activities organising, technical support, leadership, report writing, etc.

R7: And then also coordinating, monitoring and evaluation to ensure the quarterly review of the progress of the activities that we do.

Respondent R3 was a Project Leader for “Youth for Democracy and Human Rights” project. This is a three-year partnership project between the respondent’s country and its partner African country. The project goals include bridging the gap between the youth and high ranked politicians and empower the youth to voice their opinions and make them heard. The role of Project Leader involves writing and communicating to different stakeholders such as the funder, the project manager in the partner country, the project team comprising youth and politicians. However, respondent R3 emphasized the importance of encouraging and empowering the youth to take lead in this project. It should be also noted that different from other respondents, R3 did not work full time in ID projects. Rather, these projects were part of strategy by R3’s organisation and R3 volunteered to lead these projects.

R3: We travelled a lot with youth from their country to our country, and from our country to their country [...] And also to always encourage the youth to make activities, and to take place, to show them, to write in paper, to write on the internet, talk to the Youth Council.

Respondent R4 spoke about the Training & Capacity Development project which aims to develop counsellors in terms of knowledge and skills in engaging communities to speak about HIV and AIDS. R4’s activities were attending meetings both internally and externally and report writing from time to time. There were also day-to-day activities to run the project, forming the programme supervision process. R4 also took part in feedback process to the programme director, stakeholder engagements, budgetary considerations and resource management.

Respondent R8 took a different approach in answering the question of project management experience. Due to the large number of projects involved throughout the career, R8 described the experience from the beginning was monitoring and evaluation of projects, to medium projects with various technical experts and currently providing strategic oversights of a project portfolio.

5.3 Challenges and Solutions when managing ID Projects

This section aims to uncover the challenges from the perspective of project managers when managing ID projects, especially in their context and throughout their career. Challenges mentioned vary from micro-level or operating and implementing projects on the ground, to macro-level looking at strategic issues when managing whole ID programs and project portfolios. These are different across respondents due to different roles and experience they have in ID sector.

After talking about the challenges, respondents were asked about ways to overcome these challenges from their perspectives based on their experience.

Respondent R2's biggest challenge of all is around the acceptability and buy-in from all stakeholders. R2 used the metaphor of "professional beggars" to talk about this challenge.

R2: I always say that, programme managers are professional beggars. Because all the time we are trying to beg people to understand that what you are saying is relevant, is important, it is going to drive change, it is the best way to go and your best way is not always the best way for everyone that is around the table.

In response to this issue, R2 emphasized on the importance of attending different meetings to engage different stakeholders and get their buy-in. Understanding people's personal needs and knowing how to appeal to them at the individual level is also key to overcome this challenge.

R2: You need to come up with the benefits that appeals at an individual level, at a personal level as compared to benefiting the system. They are not about financial gains, but we are talking about reducing your stress levels, you know, those are the kind of things that appeal to him. You need to study the psyche behind that particular individual. And understand exactly do they want and want to achieve and come up with something that is appealing to them.

R2 also mentioned other normal challenges that usually faced in managing projects such as budgetary constraints, timeline.

R2: There is no way that you can be an NGO and have all the money in the world.

Language barrier due to relocation was another challenge that R2 faced. In order to overcome this language issue, R2 sent local staff into the local community in order to conduct a research using voice recording and transcription to English. Through analysing the data collected, R2 was able to understand the community's needs and concerns and come up with strategies on how to best engage them.

From the perspective of respondent R3, the challenges involve maintaining transparency with many different stakeholders in the community to ensure their buy-in. Especially when the projects R3 involved in were under municipality's umbrella and funded by a

government institution. To overcome this challenge, R3 used different channels of communication to advertise and market the project information to all social groups.

R3: We talk to school about the project because we know when the kids come home, they tell their parents. It's an easy way to get. And we met the pension council, and we met all the political councils, and youth councils, and handicapped councils. [...] And once we had guests from Kenya, [...] the guests could tell about the project.

The second issue in managing ID projects highlighted by R3 was about how to initiate a conversation and discuss difficult topics mainly due to cultural differences, especially with older individuals who have high political power. An example given in the interview was about the case of inappropriate behaviour of a high rank officer with a young girl in the project. Dealing with this difficulty, R3 used a predetermined code of conducts and discussed them with all potential project members before starting the project. It is very important to lift up the issues and discuss them openly.

R3: Because, we always like to talk about success, what is the best, what have I done, this is good. But you always have to lift other things and talk about it.

Time was another issue in R3's perspective. Since R3 as well as other project members do not work full-time for previous projects, managing time to carry out all activities while having other tasks at hand, proved to be a difficulty for them. In the last project that R3 was involved, there was one incident where the project manager from the partner country was relocated overnight due to some sensitive political issue, the project was put on hold immediately as the key person was affected. After talking to the mayor, the issue was resolved by relocating the project manager to the original municipality. Reflecting on this issue, R3 recognized the issue of having just one key person in the project and recommended to have more than one person as a back-up solution.

Respondent R4 thought that workload and time frame are amongst the challenges in managing ID projects. Also, due to the complexity and dynamics of the work, the original plan might be revised and changed quite often to adapt to the situation. This is partly due to the differences in financial year between R4's organisation and the donor organisation. In addition, there are certain situations where R4 entered the beneficiary community and found out that there also are needs from them that were not necessarily funded for.

Speaking about how to overcome those challenges, R4 pointed out several ways. Firstly, stakeholder engagement is essential as one would need to understand about the donor organisation and carry out trend analysis in order to accommodate the differences between the two organisations. Secondly, human resource management and time management also played important roles in solving issues around workload and time pressure. Human resource management deals with allocation of resources in the optimum way while time management is about setting priorities among activities.

R4: Just allocating the resources depending on the needs. But it ensures that you are well-positioned so that anything happens you have the resources to deal with those challenges, those unexpected challenges that come up as the programme progresses.

[...] It is really about prioritizing work in such a way so you are able to get the best out of the team members.

Experienced in managing many health care projects, respondent R5 thought that the major challenge was the sustainability of these projects, essentially the funding to keep the projects running. To illustrate this point, R5 mentioned that when overseas donors or sponsors enter the country and bring in the fund to support a project initiative, the government no longer sees this field as a priority and thus shift the allocated budget to other areas. However, funding from donors will not last for a long period but gradually reduce over the years. This became an issue in sustain the project in R5's case. The project objective was to provide medication for patients with liver diseases. It was important to carry out liver function test to ensure that side effects did not harm the patients. Initially patients were able to do many tests using high cost equipment. However, when the fund was reduced by donors and not supported by the government, those tests were no longer possible to carry out and in consequence, impacting the project objectives and sustainability.

Facing this challenge, R5 emphasized that stakeholder engagement and promoting the idea of project ownership amongst stakeholders were key to ensure the buy-in. Stakeholders include various government agencies, health facilities, health care workers, patients and local communities.

R5: So the definition of the programme, is to say this is not their project, this is our project, this is our patients, they are not their patients. That is one area we are trying to work very seriously on to ensure that everyone takes ownership of the programme and going forward in a way we can reach sustainability of the programme.

Another challenge that R5 identified is that there were other needs associated with the target beneficiaries, which might impede project objectives but not necessarily funded. For example, R5 managed a project which aimed to provide medication to HIV AIDS patients. In order for the drugs to be effective, the patients need to have enough nutrition intake. However, the majority of them were poor and did not have money to get food, let alone the issue of nutrition. Stigma and discrimination were also faced by patients, which might affect the buy-in and support from the local community in project implementation process.

R5: So in a way, if the patient does not have food to take, it does not make sense for the patient to take the drugs.

In terms of the additional associated needs of the beneficiaries, R5 stated that there were limitations in providing help as these needs were not covered in the project scope. Meetings and discussions were held on an interval basis to discover ways that beneficiaries and their families could improve their economy and sustain themselves. Medical and health education was provided in the communities through Community Based Units (CBU) to reduce the discrimination issues faced by patients. In addition, peer-education with key people in the community was another strategy to change the community's attitude and support.

The first challenge in ID project management for respondent R6 was about managing various dimensions of the project, both internal and external, in order to achieve the objectives. Within this regards, dealing with stakeholders that have different interests and expectations proved to be challenging task. For example, in an HIV treatment project, a supplier is interested in making profit while patients want to have low cost drugs with good quality. On the other side, the politicians might use the project for political gains while the donor prohibit anyone to take political credits for things that they do not involve. To manage and handle all these difference, R6 stressed:

R6: But one of the things you need to do is to understand people, understand their motivation, and then know how to manage.

When being relocated to a new country, R6 recognized that there were different work ethics and R6 needed to use different ways to motivate subordinates to work towards the goals. Similar to managing stakeholders, understanding people's goals and motivations is the solution for this challenge.

R6: the work ethics are different, people are different. [...] At some places that you work, people are willing to do their job, and push. [...] But in some areas, you really need to push people, and they start not to like you. [...] People have different interests and priority.

Respondent R7 discussed about challenges in managing donor's expectations and performance measure. As a way of measuring the results and determining if the project meets the goals, donors often want to see the quantifiable targets achieved. R7 used the example of a project about promoting awareness of HIV prevention among the youth, where the donor was more interested in knowing the number of youth that received the HIV prevention messages, rather than the actual quality of the way the message is delivered. This creates a pressure towards implementers on the ground. R7 experienced cases where educators sent in the communities focused more on getting as many youths as possible to attend the workshops, while shortening the duration of those workshops. The pressure went to the peak where some people forged the activities for purpose of meeting the targets. To overcome the challenge, R7 emphasized on clear communication with donors about the needs and quality aspects of project implementation. There is a need for project managers to stand firm and state what the donors should pay attention to – the quality of project results, rather than just what they want to hear – the targets achieved.

If the project involving multiple donors, according to R7, reporting activities could potentially become a challenge where the implementer organisation does not have a standard reporting format and rely on the donors' format. For example, in a project involving three different donors, each donor would like a periodic report using their own format. The project manager might end up do three different reports with exactly the same content, which can be a waste of time and effort. R7 recommended organisations to have their own approved report formats with certain flexibility to accommodate donors' requirements.

R7: But if you come and say this is my organisation, in our organisation, this is the approved reporting format, so maybe you can look at, and if you think there is something missing, we can add there but it becomes our reporting format.

Limited training and capacity building for staff was another challenge for R7. In ID projects, staff development is usually not seen as a crucial issue. Even though R7 believed that the core investment is people as they are the ones who deliver the project. Thus when staff is not well-trained and lacking of skills, the quality of work can be compromised.

R7: So investing in people is to empower the people, they are going to empower the rest of the community.

R7: Because the donor overtime has a lot of requirements, they have things like logical framework matrix. How do you put your project proposal in that language, what's the relationship between your goals, your objectives, your outcomes, inputs and all that, it's a technical, that not every person can be able to develop.

R7 saw some limitation in the decision-making power in being a project manager of the implementer organisation. This is due to the nature of cooperative agreement between them and the donors, restricting the power of implementer to adjust the project activities.

One more challenge that R7 faced was the difficulty in communicating the complicated realities on the ground to the donors. There were few instances in the past that R7 used as examples to illustrate this point. Once the electricity went off in R7's facility in Africa and R7 could not send the report out on time. The donor in the US had a hard time in understanding the situation on why there was no power in the country. Another issue was about the requirement of providing official receipts in every expenditure. However, in rural areas, there were informal and unregistered businesses which were unable to provide any record or receipts. Through experience, R7 realized the importance of putting the project activities in the context of circumstances, environment and situation and include them in the reports to the donors, together with evidences in the form of photographs and videos. Situation analysis in terms of geography and culture will better prepare the donors in understanding the context of implementation phase.

Respondent R8 listed four major challenges in managing ID projects. The first challenge is the context that projects operate in. Since ID projects are implemented in developing countries, and in Africa in R8's case, there are many micro-economic issues, security and political stress that can affect the society and community.

R8: The problems mainly centre on a contextual front, specifically, security, economic issues, political stress that affect the society and community.

R8 highlighted the need of good understanding of the local conditions, what works and what does not work in that context. In addition, one should be able to look at the issues at a strategic level, and think of a more long-term solution to humanitarian or development challenges.

Second challenge is staffing and capacity issue where it is difficult to have the right people with the required skills to run the projects. Due to regulation, projects are required to recruit local staff, yet there is scarcity in terms of high quality local staff. Especially in developing countries where there is very low investment in education, local community is not sufficiently trained and resulting in shortfall of skills in the country. In addition, high rate of unemployment also forces people to move to other areas that they are not specialised in but have higher chance to find a job. Furthermore, training and staff development involves high cost which many donor organisations are not willing to spending money on.

R8: Staff capacity is a macro-issue, not one person or individual who can resolve it easily.

In order to cope with this difficulty, R8 used a recruitment policy that allows wide variety of applicants to increase the chance of getting the right fit to the job. In this respect, having a strategy to lower the required credentials for a job is also necessary for local recruitment. Furthermore, in R8's experience, a pre-planned emergency response roster is useful to fill the gap of skills in urgent situations. Another important way to overcome the capacity issue is to include in project proposal to the donor additional allocation for local training and capacity development in order to achieve project objectives.

Lack of funding presents another challenge to manage ID projects. Also conducting needs assessment where a proposal is prepared without proper consultation of the community might end up not getting funded. Donor mapping and good proposal writing were recommended by R8 to solve the issue of shortfall in funding projects.

R8: You can rely on strategic donors, but sometimes it is tied to political issues to foreign policy and to security concerns and is short-term.

The fourth challenge is about conducting needs assessment. Often the proposals are prepared without consulting the community of target beneficiaries.

R8: So you come with ready-made solutions to a problem, that is ready to be solved but nobody is going to fund them to do that.

5.4 ID Project Manager's Competencies and Skills

This part focuses on what the respondents, in the capacity of Project Managers, think about skills and competencies required to overcome those mentioned challenges from their own perspectives.

In respondent R2's opinion, the first skill is relating to the stakeholder buy-in, which can be broken down into several skills such as marketing skills, industry specific skills and technical competencies that are directly related to the field of project, generic management skills and understanding stakeholders.

R2: You actually position yourself strategically, because you would understand the person that you are working with. You come up with something that appeals and has a business sense to the person you are talking with.

With regards to project management skills, R2 mentioned planning skills, resource management skills, monitoring and controlling skills. Skills in planning are for both short-term and long-term are also important. Resource management skills are in terms of human resource management and budget management: such as organising staff into teams that best complement each other to deliver the project objectives, and organising budget in such a manner to reach a certain target. Another important skill to manage project process is monitoring and control.

R2: Controlling is about putting in control mechanisms, on the budget side to ensure we are adhering to stipulate budget allocations, performance appraisals side, whereby you are ensuring that people are conscious of what is needed from them, line of authority, delegation authority, those are the aspects that come to play to the controlling aspects.

R2 also thought that it is vital for project managers to take leadership role in motivating staff at work, selling them the idea of the project to get their buy-in and support, as well as taking a position in chairing the meeting and leading the team to the right direction.

R2: Otherwise the ship will start to control itself, you need to sit down and take charge of the project.

As ID projects often operate in a turbulent environment, it is also essential for project managers to have the political awareness and sensitivity surrounding the project at all levels – community level, district level and national level and make sure that the project is on a good political standing.

The key skill, in R2's perspective, is the conceptual skill. This means that one needs to come up with good ideas, knows how to package them in the best way that can persuade another. This skill is of great significance when dealing with all stakeholders, including selling the project ideas to the potential donors to secure funding, getting buy-in from staff to ensure their commitment towards project goals, getting support from community, etc. Communication skills in terms of written form were stressed as in fund raising process for ID projects, in most cases, starts with written communication. Only after successfully appealing to the donor by writing, project managers then communicate with donors face-to-face in order to persuade and convince them to buy-in the project ideas.

R2: You must think and then from there, how to best package this, so that even the Eskimos can say they need ice. It might be cold outside, but the Eskimo will say your ice is the best ice I have ever found.

Similar to R2, respondent R3 also emphasized on communication skills by choosing the right words in order to market the projects in the best way to the stakeholders. Otherwise it might affect negative the projects. Maintaining a good contact and relationship with stakeholders is also an important skill in managing ID projects. Within the project team, project managers should have the skill to make sure continuous

communication among project members, so that discussions can take place to exchange ideas, opinions and experience for learning purposes.

Another significant attribute that R3 mentioned is honesty in all respects. Firstly, the project manager needs to be honest with oneself and look at things objectively, recognizing the good as well as bad points in the project. In addition, honesty also helps in identifying problems so that the team has opportunity to openly discuss and find solutions.

R3: You know, if you are project leader, what do you want for the project? Yes, we want it to be success. And you can sit and think "this is really great". But you also have to open your eyes and say "oh this is not so good".

For respondent R4, project managers in ID sector need a combination of skills and competencies to deliver projects. Firstly, one should have knowledge in project management, both in theory and in practice, and programme specific knowledge which refers to the project and program information such as objectives, goals and work plans, deliverables and beneficiary communities.

R4: So once you are able to master the donor objectives and requirements and that coupled with the knowledge you have of project management as a skill as well as knowledge of the programme in its entirety as well as the needs of the clients you are serving.

Secondly, skills of time management and human resource management are needed to prioritize time and organizing project members in an efficient manner. Thirdly, it is about the stakeholder management skill that one should have in order to understand and connect to people, engage them in the discussion and present the issue in a sincere manner to get the buy-in from them and create a good network. Relating to issues around stakeholder engagement, R4 suggested that project managers should have interpersonal skills, enabling them not only to build meaningful and purposeful relationships but also to sustain them. Furthermore, being tolerant, being able to compromise, actively listening and being good in both verbal and non-verbal communication are useful in forming trust and building good relationships with stakeholders.

The more specific skill related to the nature of ID projects is the needs assessment skill, according to R4. This is essential for project managers as it affects directly the project goals and objectives.

R4: So I think one skill that you need to do a form of needs assessment that actually goes beyond the current challenge, when you go into communities you find that people are actually affected by HIV and there are other issues.

From experience, respondent R5 stated that the biggest skill required for managing ID projects is excellent communication skills. Since the ultimate objective in those projects is to address needs of target beneficiaries, project managers need to be good at communicating, persuading and counselling with the beneficiaries in order to ensure their participation in the project.

R5: So by the time you have excellent communication skills and are able to make people convinced that you have HIV does not mean a death sentence. This does not mean the end of the road. Such a person is convinced; such a person is ready to live again. And somehow you have to prolong the life of the person.

Being a project manager requires one the ability of multi-tasking, stated R5. There are many tasks and responsibilities that project managers have to deal at the same time period.

R5: You are trying to work with pregnant women with HIV, testing patients with a high viral load, you are also going into the community to make sure that you know communities based insurance programme, health insurance programme, so stuff like that. You need be able to multitask, so many things at a time and put so many things together.”

Strong analytical and problem solving skills are essential because due to the dynamic and complex situations that projects are in, issues might arise which requires project managers need to think innovatively about solutions. Adding to the list of competencies and skills, R5 highlighted the fact that the majority of programmes today are target-driven with a lot of pressure on time and performance, thus being results-driven and being good at managing stress are also helpful for project managers to survive in this sector.

R5: You don't give excuses. If you want to succeed, there is no excuse for failure. You don't have an option, so you have to work under pressure.

Finally, R5 discussed the ability to use one own initiative to develop new ideas and seek opportunity to change and transform the ways of working for a better performance.

Respondent R6 noticed that communication and people management skills are the key to deliver the project. For R6, in any project of any scale and at any location, both locally and internationally, the actual job is not difficult but managing people. Once one masters the skill of people management through understanding and making people feel important, the job of managing project becomes easier because people are the ones who determine the success of the project. Conflict management can be considered as another important component that project managers need to have in managing people, especially the project team.

R6: One thing that I have noticed tend to work with everyone, everywhere, is that when you make the person feel important, people want discussion. When you listen to a person, they open up, they allow you into their space. The moment you don't listen, they create a circle around themselves and you don't penetrate and then nothing gets done.”

Negotiation skill, in R6's opinion, is necessary in managing the budgets and dealing with donor organisations due to the differences in perspectives and views about project finance. Most of ID projects deal with sensitive issues such as humanitarian issues, poverty, diseases, thus it is easy for people to get involved emotionally. Recognizing

this challenge, R6 emphasized the skill of self-awareness and quality of emotional intelligence so that project managers are able to work objectively.

In line with other respondents (R2, R3, R4, R5, R6), respondent R7 also paid attention on communication skills when managing ID projects. While being able to listen and communicate in a harmonious manner with stakeholders, project managers should also stand firm on their position and be assertive if the message is very important that the donors or stakeholders need to receive. The second skill or competency mentioned by R7 is the ability to manage stakeholder relationship, in terms of donors as well as target beneficiaries. It is essential to build trust with them through effective communication such as timely reporting, clearly explanation with good evidence, and inviting to participate. Report writing skill is thus important in facilitating the effective communication process with donors. R7 discussed the need of expanding the scope of reports to include the context that project activities, with analysis on the geographical and cultural factors that influence the project.

On the one side, project managers need to continually communicate to convince the donors that the project is progressing and worth their investment. On the other side, those managers should also possess good negotiation and persuasion skills in order to maintain the fund stream as well as raise more fund to sustain the project in the long-term.

R7: They may say we are going to close this phase after 2 years, how do you convince them to extend, so it's that persuasion, negotiation and being able to maintain, establish and build credibility for them.

Fund raising skill also involves proposal writing skills in order to catch potential donors' attention and create opportunities to discuss the project proposals with them. The 'winning formula', as R7 put forward, lies at the unique and innovative value proposition that make the project proposal stands out from the large number of other proposals submitted to donors.

With regards to beneficiaries, counselling skills are very helpful for project managers to communicate with them. The reason, added by R7, is about the emotional issues that beneficiaries often are associated with due to their circumstances. Thus, one needs to be patient and understanding towards the local situation, be open and listening to the communities' needs and concerns so that he/she could address them better. However, project managers need to be emotional intelligent in not let themselves being emotional involved.

Speaking about skills and competencies required to overcome challenges and manage ID projects, respondent R8 first stressed that there are numerous skills depending on sector.

R8: The skills are vast and multi-sectoral, there is no one size fits all.

R8 then listed five major skills and competencies from experience: understanding of local condition, cooperating and networking skills, fund raising skills, standard project management skills and long-term strategic vision skill. Firstly, it is significant for

project managers to have a good level of understanding of the local conditions, what works and what does not work specific to that context. Secondly, skill in building and sustaining relationship in cooperation and networking is important in all aspects of partnership: it can be partnerships with local communities, with local authorities and with beneficiaries in order to get everyone's support and participation to achieve project objectives. Fund raising skills are found to be useful in R8's perspective to resolve lack of funding issue. Under this skill, R8 discussed different related components such as donor mapping strategy – knowing the principle in a particular context, knowing the objectives and being able to write an appealing proposal with viable solutions to solve the needs of beneficiaries, and knowing how to get in touch with the donors. Project management skills such as planning, organising, communicating, allocating resources, managing and monitoring budget are absolutely important as well. The last skill discussed by R8 is the ability to think strategically about a long-term solution to resolve existing humanitarian or development challenges. Even though there are fixed goals in the short-term, long-term and overarching vision is extremely important in guiding and directing the project to achieve its objectives

R8: Critical thinking, oversight and thinking long-term goals are absolutely important.

6. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The findings are arranged, analysed and discussed according to different themes and supported by relevant literature. Firstly, the roles and responsibilities of ID project managers were discussed, following by the contextual factors that affecting ID projects. Subsequent sections look at the challenges and solutions, as well as ID project managers' competencies and skills. The chapter ends with summary of the relationship between contextual factors, challenges and competencies of ID project managers.

6.1 ID Project Managers' Roles and Responsibilities

In the literature search, there is limited research on ID project managers' roles and responsibilities. Thus our research attempts to provide more insights into this area and deepen our understanding on what project managers do in managing projects on a day-to-day basis.

The project managers are required to operate at both operational and strategic level, which was also highlighted by Crawford et al. (1999). They are found to be involved in strategic activities of developing a vision and strategic oversight. Strategic issues relate to high-level strategies of implementing the project, and strategic oversight over project portfolio. In addition, leadership and empowerment are also their key responsibilities. Empowerment is about enabling the team to take the lead in the project, coaching and mentoring. Leadership involves technical support, guidance to the team and direction for the project.

During project execution and implementation phase, there are other project management responsibilities such as activities planning, budget management, resource management, communication with stakeholders through verbal and written forms, and monitoring and controlling project process. These findings expand the ID project manager role in Golini and Landoni's research (2014, p.125).

The aspects of technical expertise in the specific field that project managers operate in are very important and influencing their roles and responsibilities. The required knowledge and understanding of both technical field and local situation enable them to adapt to the context of ID projects, which will be explored further in the next section.

6.2 Contextual Factors of ID Projects

The contextual factors identified through analysis of empirical findings mirror those discussed in the literature review, operating environment, large network of stakeholders and intangible goals.

Firstly, the environment in which ID projects take place might create many issues, in terms of economic, political, security, socio-cultural. This is supported by Youker (2003, p.1); Golini et al. (2015, p.651); Ika & Donnelly (2017, p.46); Ika & Hodgson (2014, p.1186); Hermano et al. (2013, p.23), who have raised similar issues due to the difficult environment within developing countries, which could lead to the failure of ID projects, highlighting the importance of these factors. However, these studies did not

elaborate clearly on these factors, thus our findings aim to add further insights. Economic issues are mainly related to the economic status of the local community, poor infrastructure and inadequate education systems as well low level of education. Political factors can have an influence on project objectives, whereby political powers steer outcome to serve their own self-interest. The level of security can negatively influence their perception of a particular country as well as project implementation. Socio-cultural factors also play a role in terms of creating language barriers and conflicts due to differences in values and behaviours.

Secondly, our findings confirm previous research (Golini & Landoni, 2014, p.124; Youker, 2003, p.1) that ID projects involve a large number of stakeholders, including donors, local community, political powers, project team, project partners (suppliers, contractors, other NGOs, etc.), government and beneficiaries. Different stakeholders have different interests, expectations, priorities and agendas which can have a big impact on the project outcomes.

Another contextual factor relates to the project goals which are usually intangible and difficult to define, specifically at the design stage of the project. In certain cases, the 'true' beneficiary needs become visible at project execution. Ika (2012, p.32) and Youker (2013, p.1), raise a similar issue relating to inadequate beneficiary needs analysis at the project design phase. Furthermore, there appears to be a conflict between short-term (operational) and long-term (strategic) orientation relating to the objectives of the project.

These contextual factors, have a significant influence on the project outcomes and create many challenges for ID project managers. These challenges will be discussed in the next section of this chapter.

6.3 Challenges and Solutions when managing ID Projects

Based on the analysis of the empirical findings, five main challenges together with solutions were identified, namely stakeholder management challenges, beneficiary needs analysis challenge, the challenge of balancing strategic and operational views, capacity building and training challenge and sustainable funding challenge (refer to Table 5 below).

Table 5 - Summaries of Challenges and Solutions

Challenges	Description	Solutions	Respondents
Stakeholder management challenge	Differences in cultures and values; various expectations and agendas	Communicating, convincing, getting buy-in and support across all stakeholders	R2, R3, R5, R6, R7
Beneficiary needs analysis challenge	Immediate needs are addressed without a consideration for a long-term and more holistic solution	There could not be one solution that can resolve all the problems	R4, R5, R7, R8
Challenge of balancing strategic and operational view	Juggling different project dimensions, both strategic and operational levels	Project managers need to evaluate and decide; take into consideration of contextual factors	R2, R3, R4, R6, R7 & R8
Capacity Building and Training challenge	Difficulty in finding people with the appropriate skills and with willingness to stay in the project; challenges in training	Reviewing of recruitment policy; inclusion of staff training and development in the project proposal to donors	R7, R8
Sustainable funding challenge	Constant lack of funding to meet project objectives and to sustain the project in the long run	Continuously search for a variety of funding sources	R2, R5, R7, R8

6.3.1 Stakeholder Management Challenge

The challenge of stakeholder management encompasses two dimensions: differences in cultures and values between different stakeholders, as well as their various expectations and agendas towards the project outcomes.

Firstly, stakeholders might come from different cultures and backgrounds, with different values and beliefs. Golini & Landoni (2014, p.126) also identified a similar cultural issue as a major challenge which could be a source of conflict, affects managerial processes. Due to the cultural differences and issues raised above, Khang & Moe (2008) suggest that coordination between different stakeholders can be a very challenging task.

Secondly, the large number of stakeholders poses a challenge in managing stakeholders in terms of meeting and satisfying their agendas, expectations and goals.

With regards to donors, they have high expectations and requirements on the project outcomes, with time constraints and unrealistic deadlines. Grady et al. (2015, p.5128) raised this as one of the reasons which could lead to ID project failure. The performance measurement imposed by donors or funders focuses mainly on the quantitative aspect in terms of targets. Project managers are thus under pressure to meet targets, rather than paying attention to the ultimate aim and quality of project deliverables. In addition, donors usually demand a high accountability in terms of use funds and project activities. As the donors often come from another country, communication of the complicated reality on the ground becomes challenging for the project manager.

The local communities are also powerful stakeholders as their perception would impact the project implementation and the beneficiaries. In addition, the project manager entering the community as an outsider also, poses further challenges. This impacts both communication as well engagement with local stakeholders.

In terms of political leaders and governmental agencies, their political agendas could have a negative influence on the project direction and implementation. Khang & Moe (2008, p.74) and Ika & Hodgson (2014, p.1182) discussed this challenge, whereby stakeholders may manipulate and interfere ID projects for political gains because of the lack of market pressures and the intangibility of project objectives. They further added that this could also include strategic misrepresentation or misinformation about costs, benefits, risks such as pitching initial budgets low and overestimating benefits. Project team is another important stakeholder that the project manager needs to get their buy-in and support, as they are the ones who execute the project.

The key solution to solve this stakeholder management challenge is about communicating, convincing, getting buy-in and support across all stakeholders. An ID project manager needs the involvement of all stakeholders across different levels. If there is a lack of support from any stakeholder, the project objectives might not be achieved.

6.3.2 Beneficiary Needs Analysis Challenge

As highlighted before, ID projects are characterised by having intangible goals which are difficult to define and measure. Initial project goals often address the immediate needs or surface issues relating to the beneficiaries without a consideration for a long-term and more holistic solution. These are usually found out by project managers only during execution and implementation phase. This issue was highlighted in previous research as a challenge due to lack of involvement of local community in project design discussions, due to literacy, volume, distance and communication problems (Diallo & Thuillier, 2005, p.239; Youker, 2013, p.1). Our findings expand the list of reasons for this challenge by adding the impact of economic situation of the beneficiaries. Usually the beneficiaries come from a low-income community, thus they have various needs to be satisfied, which can be out of the project scope. There could not be one solution that can resolve all the problems, which could potentially create moral and emotional dilemmas for project managers in deciding how best to tackle them.

6.3.3 Challenge of Balancing Strategic and Operational View

ID project managers need to juggle different dimensions of the project, both strategic and operational levels simultaneously. They have to deal with the details of day-to-day activities, dealing with each and every stakeholder such as beneficiaries, project staff and donors as well as the local community. At the same time, the project manager should also be able to step back and have a big picture view of the project. This creates the conflicting and contradicting dilemma in terms of both short-term and long-term implications of the project. Crawford et al. (1999) mirrors similar challenges and further illustrates the everyday struggles, project managers face, which include significant and overwhelming questions, endless stream of problems which needs to be resolved. Project managers need to evaluate and decide what they should do in the limitation of time and their own capacity, whether to solve the short-term problems (operational) or to look at the long-term (strategic) solutions. In addition, consideration of the contextual factors is also essential in resolving this challenge.

6.3.4 Capacity Building and Training Challenge

Managing an ID project requires not only a good understanding of general project management knowledge but also a strong knowledge of actual project activities. A lack of understanding and knowledge results in loss of control and respect from the project team. In contrast, Prasad et al., (2013, p. 53), found that, in most developmental projects are implemented by personnel that might have expertise in functional areas but have little training or experience in actually managing projects. Similarly, our empirical findings suggest that lack of skills is a persistent challenge in ID field in terms of finding individuals with the appropriate skills and with willingness to stay in the project. This is partly due to contextual factor of poor economic situation and poor education system that could not provide adequate skilled labour force. Further complexity is added due to contextual factor of local regulatory issues which require to hire local staff. Another related issue is the lack of funding and reluctance of the donors to support project staff training and development. In addition, time constraints and limited human resources worsen this problem. Potential solutions comprise reviewing of recruitment policy, inclusion of staff training and development in the project proposal to donors.

6.3.5 Sustainable Funding Challenge

The ID industry is synonymous with constant lack of funding, which presents the challenge for project managers to meet project objectives with limited funding streams. Financial constraints places restrictions in terms of meeting the objectives and delivering what the donor wants and the community needs. While there is strategic funding available from large international development organizations, these are often associated with many bureaucratic processes, foreign policies, security concerns, political issues and is often short-term in nature. In addition, sustainability of funding during and even after the project is another related issue impacting the sustainability of projects. This challenge was not specifically mentioned in previous research, however, it is pointed as a pertinent issue that project managers need to continuously search for a variety of funding sources to sustain the project in the long run.

6.4 ID Project Managers' Competencies and Skills

This section presents the analysis of empirical findings on the project manager competencies and skills. Seven competencies have been identified by respondents as shown in Table 6.

Table 6 - ID Project Manager Competencies & Skills

Competencies / Skills	Description	Respondents
Management skills	Project management, Time management, Human Resource management, Planning and controlling	R2, R3, R4, R5, R8
Personal qualities	Honesty, Initiative, Stress Management, Emotional Intelligence & Self-Awareness, Multi-tasking skills	R3, R5, R6, R8
Interpersonal skills	Conflict management skills, Culture and Ethics management skills, Negotiation skills, Leadership Skills, Networking Skills	R2, R3, R6, R7, R8
Stakeholder engagement	Understanding Stakeholders, Obtaining Buy-in, Relationship Building, Communication, Convincing	R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7, R8
Capacity Building skills	Skills development and Training	R6, R7, R8
Change management skills	Ability to cope with changes within Context	R2, R4, R7
Contextual analysis skills	Needs assessment and analysis and Local condition assessment. Political sensitivity and awareness	R2, R4, R7, R8

While we analyse the skills and competencies according to different themes, the skills and competencies should not be viewed independently, but rather they are interconnected through analysis of the empirical findings. This is further confirmed within existing literature, where Brière et al. (2015a, p.124); Abbott et al. (2007, p.197) and PMD Pro Guide (PM4NGOs, 2013, p.14) expressed the importance of the project manager having a large span of competencies and highlighted the importance of using the various competencies in combination to deliver ID projects. ID project managers therefore require a good combination of these skills to effectively manage projects. Project Manager Competency Development (PMCD) Framework (Crawford, 2007, p. 682), further supports the interconnectivity between different competencies. The framework also helps to better understand the seven competencies. The three dimensions of this framework (Knowledge, Personal and Performance) are evident across the seven identified competencies. Personal skills are directly related to the Personal Competency in the framework, while Knowledge and Performance Competency are related to the remaining identified competencies. Each of the seven competencies will be discussed in conjunction with challenges faced by ID project managers.

6.4.1 Management Skills

Managing ID projects requires project management skills as well as complementary management skills, including Time Management, Human Resource Management, Planning and Controlling. This mirrors the critical success factors identified in existing literature: *Monitoring, Coordination and Design* (Ika et al., 2012), *Monitoring and feedback, Trouble-shooting, and Project schedule and plan* (Rusare & Jay, 2015), *Measurable Project management outcomes* (Yalegama et al., 2016).

Time Management comprises prioritizing daily activities and organizing the team's work schedule, to ensure productivity and efficiency in order to cope with time constraints and pressure imposed by the large number of stakeholders with different goals and expectations. On the other hand, Human Resource Management involves allocation of resources to form teams that best complement each other to deliver the outcomes of project, especially in the scarcity of skilled labour in this field. The third aspect of management skills concern Planning both at strategic and operational level, as well as short, mid-term and long-term planning. Project plans should be very detailed, structured and critical as it is the starting point of the project or programme, yet there needs to be an element of flexibility to adapt to change when needed. Thus, planning ability helps to overcome the challenge of being immersed in the project detail as well as having a holistic view of the project. Controlling is also another dimension of management skills, which includes both financial controls (budget allocations) and people controls (performance appraisals, line and delegation authority) at both internal and external level. At internal level, the project manager always needs to keep track of project progress, display a sense of ownership and assertiveness, otherwise one could lose sight. In addition, there are external control mechanisms such as performance measurement mechanisms imposed by many donors that the project manager needs to be aware of.

Brière et al., (2015, p.120) research amongst ID project managers, identified similar competencies as mentioned above. However, practical risk management and analysis competencies based on the PMD Pro Guide (PM4NGOs, 2013, p.14) was not identified in the empirical findings as a competency. Since the majority of our sample were familiar with the local conditions and context and experienced in dealing with complexity of the environment, the need of risk management and analysis might become a routine and part of life, and therefore not being highlighted through our research.

Our findings confirm the previous research that the project managers need a combination of all these management skills simultaneously. In addition, our research has broadened management skills to deepen the understanding of Controlling aspect at different levels and mechanisms. Controlling does not stop at internal level such as project progress, project team performance but also include tracking against the targets imposed by donors, etc. Furthermore, knowledge about project management as well as industry, sector and technical knowledge was found in our study to be an important part in terms of delivering the project. This is similar to the critical success factor *Technical tasks* identified by Rusare and Jay (2015). The finding expands the Knowledge Competency from PMCD Framework by adding industry, sector and technical knowledge.

6.4.2 Personal Qualities

Personality characteristics is an important part of Project Managers' competency, beside knowledge and skills (Crawford, 2007, p.682). Personal qualities are found in our study to encompass Honesty, Initiative, Multi-Tasking Ability, Stress Management, Self-Awareness and Emotional Intelligence.

Honesty relates to being with oneself and stakeholders, through transparency about important issues and courage to speak about them. This is especially useful in dealing with different stakeholders in order to get their buy-in and support for the project, and have good reputation and reliability.

Using one's own initiative and thinking out-of-the-box entails developing new ideas or change the way something has been done to improve it. This is particularly important due to the dynamic and complex nature of ID projects which present many challenges and difficulties to project managers.

The tasks of ID project managers are numerous thus requiring multi-tasking ability to complete many activities at once as well as bringing different dimensions of the project together. This ability impacts Stress Management which is the ability to work under pressure due to the difficult environment of ID industry. This is supported by Brière et al.'s research (2015, p.122) which also identified self-management skills specifically to work under harsh conditions and stress management were critical.

Emotional intelligence is another critical personal quality, with regards to being aware of one own emotions and other people surrounding. ID project managers often deal with difficult situations where beneficiaries are personally immersed with emotions from their economic and social situations. This is also highlighted in the work of Crawford et al. (1999, p.173) as a constant challenge for ID project managers. Therefore, there needs to be a balance between appropriate level of empathy and objective decision making. The appropriate level of empathy is required to effectively engage with the realities of local communities and not to alienate individuals from a different economic status.

In addition to the personal qualities presented in our study, Brière et al. (2015, p.122) identified additional Personal qualities such as humility, patience and thoroughness as necessary qualities for project managers in ID sector. Humility and patience are related Emotional Intelligence quality while thoroughness was seen indirectly through detailed planning. ID projects presents enormous challenges to project managers with numerous responsibilities. Thus they need to possess these personal qualities together with internal drive and passion in order to work in ID industry.

6.4.3 Interpersonal Skills

Interpersonal skills relate to abilities to work with people, specifically Negotiation skills, Networking skills, Conflict Management skills, Culture and Ethics management skills and Leadership skills. The negotiation skills concern with financial matters, when dealing with donors, specifically regarding setting budgets and for extension of funding for long-term programmes. This is because ID projects usually face the lack of funding and sustaining the project over a long-term. Negotiation skills are based on persuading,

maintaining, establishing and building credibility. ID Project managers within in Brière et al (2015, p.122) research, mentioned the importance of inter-cultural context when conducting negotiations. Networking skills include building partnerships and cooperating with local communities, local authorities, community-based organizations, beneficiaries and knowledge sharing with other related projects and programmes within the sector, which is similar to the research by Abbott et al. (2007, p.195). Networking skills are useful in overcoming the challenge of financial resources and help to find new partners to meet communities' needs.

Conflicts are often present when dealing with a large number of stakeholders in ID projects, thus require the skill of managing conflict from the project managers. The stakeholders also involve multiple cultures with different values and beliefs, therefore, it is important for project managers to possess culture management skills. Culture sensitivity was also highlighted as a competency in both Brière et al. (2015, p.122) and PMD Pro Guide (PM4NGOs, 2013, p.14), professional guidelines for ID projects. Having mechanisms such as a code of ethics and conduct and gaining buy-in from all project stakeholders is on way of effectively way to managing issues related to culture and ethics. Leadership refers to the ability to motivate staff and provide direction to the project and team to ensure project goals are met, with an emphasis on the importance of having a long-term strategic vision. High motivation and interest was also mentioned as a critical success factor for ID projects (Khang & Moe, 2008). This is particularly relevant for ID project managers as many of the outcomes materialise in the long-term, not in immediate short-term. This resonates with the leadership competencies identified by Abbott et al. (2007, p.197) and Brière et al. (2015, p.122).

While Brière et al. (2015) discussed Leadership and Ethics as separate competencies, this competency is presented here as part of Interpersonal skills as these two competencies are both strongly related to dealing people. Our research expands the boundaries of Leadership to include getting the buy-in from project team into the project strategic vision.

6.4.4 Stakeholder Engagement Skills

Within the list of findings, the most cited competency is Stakeholder Engagement. According to our research, stakeholders have a big influence on the project performance as well as present a big challenge to project managers during implementation stage. There is always a large web of stakeholders such as donors, beneficiary communities, local communities, governmental agencies, project team and other development agencies. Thus, stakeholder management is the key to ensure a smooth delivery of project objectives. In addition, many previous studies have identified stakeholder management as an important critical success factor in ID projects (Khang & Moe, 2008; Yalegama et al., 2016; Rusare & Jay, 2015; Bayiley & Teklu, 2016). While the findings confirm previous research (Abbott et al., 2007; Brière et al., 2015a; PM4NGOs, 2013), our study adds more depth and better understanding of the nuances in this competency.

Stakeholder Engagement skills are about listening and understanding the needs of stakeholders, communicating, convincing and obtaining buy-in through offering project ownership, maintaining and building meaningful relationships through collaboration and partnerships and maintain good contact. This reflects findings within the literature

search where stakeholder management was the most cited competency (Diallo & Thuillier, 2005, p.237; Brière et al., 2015, p.122; Abbott et al., 2007, p.195; PM4NGOs, 2013, p.14).

The project managers need to actively listen and understand different stakeholders and know what appeals to them and their motivations in order to engage them. Actively listening, being tolerant and creating a platform for stakeholders to express themselves are ways of effective communication with stakeholders. Similar finding was identified by Diallo and Thuillier (2005, p.237) where communication and trust between the ID project manager and the stakeholders within NGOs as critical in terms of delivering project success. They also highlighted the importance of observing non-verbal communication. Ineffective listening can have a negative impact in terms of project deliver.

The project managers then need to communicate with stakeholders in the most appropriate manners, with consideration of intercultural context and a suitable level of emotional intelligence. Project managers within Brière et al. (2015, p.121) research, also stressed the importance of good language skills within an intercultural context with locals when communicating. Brière et al. (2015, p.121) research also emphasised on this importance of communication competency by focusing on written and oral communication, listening skills and the ability to clearly communicate ideas.

Through clear and strong communication skills, both in verbal and written forms, they are able to convince and get the buy-in and support from stakeholders. This is particularly important to reach sustainability of the programme in the long-run through continuous support from the donors, governments, communities and other stakeholders. Stakeholder Engagement skills are necessary for project managers overcome the challenge of managing various expectations and demands from all stakeholders. However, the communication and convincing strategies differs by stakeholders. For example, a casual, comfortable and open platform encourages team members to speak freely.

6.4.5 Capacity Building Skills

Building capacity in terms of staff development is a way to overcome the lack of skills within this industry, to ensure the sustainability of projects, constant capacity building is required. It comprises guiding and developing staff, providing training to staff as well as finding people with appropriate skills (strong project management skills and project specific knowledge) to deliver the project. Both Brière et al., (2015, p.123) and (Abbott et al., 2007, p.195) has identified similar capacity building skills within their research. Capacity building was also highlighted in critical success factors in research of Bayiley & Teklu (2016) as *Intellectual capital* and *Key manpower competency*, Rusare and Jay (2015) as *Personnel*, Ika et al. (2012) as *Training*, Khang and Moe (2008) as *Adequate resources and supports*.

6.4.6 Change Management Skills

Because of the complexity nature and turbulent environment that ID projects operate, the constant change and revision to original plan is unavoidable for project managers.

Thus, managing ID project requires the change management skills to cope with this issue. While change management was identified as a competency within Brière et al., (2015, p.124) research amongst ID project managers, this competency specifically focuses on the changes due to stakeholders. Our research found that Change Management skills also entail the adaptation to the change in environment in terms of economics, political and social situations.

6.4.7 Contextual Analysis Skills

It is very important for a project manager to possess the analytic skill to assess the context of the project. This includes identifying the real needs of target beneficiaries, understanding the local conditions and context, and also the political situation which the project operates in from the design and proposal stage of the project. Similar to the findings, critical success factors related to contextual analysis skills have been found in previous work, including *Understanding of environment* and *Compatible development priorities* (Khang & Moe, 2008), *Institutional environment* (Ika et al., 2012), *Sound project case* (Bayiley & Teklu, 2016). Often when entering the implementation phase of a project and going to the community of target beneficiaries, the project managers find out that there are more hidden needs that are not within the project objectives. One way is to refer these needs to other relevant organisations. In addition, the importance of understanding and analysing the local conditions, context and testing what works and does not work within the project environment. Awareness of the political environment and situation is another key skill, particularly when dealing with governmental stakeholders. This could negative consequences if not dealt with in sensitive manner.

Our findings confirm many of the competencies identified by the most recent research within this field by Brière et al (2015a). While many competencies had strong similarities, there were slight nuances due to the differences due to the context our research study. Our research has identified new competencies which have not been discussed within existing literature before within the ID context. These competencies and skills include: Interpersonal skills in terms of Networking skills, and Contextual Analysis skills. In addition, our research has also expanded upon Stakeholder Engagement skills, providing further insights into these skills and competencies.

There is one competency, Adaptability, which exist within the literature, however it has not been mentioned directly by the ID managers in our study. From Abbott et al. (2007, p.196) and Brière et al. (2015a, p.120), adaptability refers to the ability to adapt to the reality of the project context. Adaptability was discussed indirectly through ways of dealing with challenges arising in new environment: Human Resource Management strategy to solve of language barriers and customization of working with local staff. This further illustrates that one cannot compartmentalise competencies as they are all interrelated. ID project manager competencies are found in critical success factors in existing literature, therefore these competencies play an important role in delivering project success.

6.5 Summary of Analysis

Based on empirical findings and analysis, ID Project Manager competencies and skills are identified as shown in Figure 7 below.

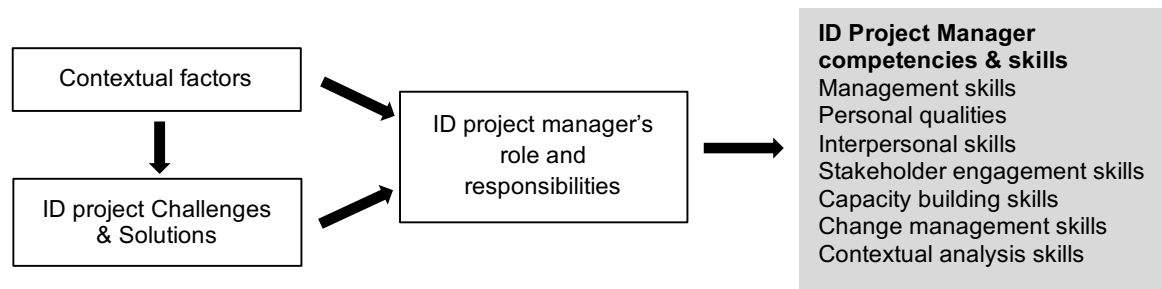


Figure 7 - Project manager competencies in relation to contextual factors, challenges and ID project manager's roles and responsibilities

The ID project managers' roles are both at strategic and operational levels. Key responsibilities include leadership, empowerment, project management related activities, together with technical expertise with the field. These project managers work within the constraints of contextual factors of operating environment, large network of stakeholders and dealing with intangible goals of the project. These factors have a significant influence on the project outcomes and create many challenges for the ID project managers, namely stakeholder management challenges, beneficiary needs analysis challenge, the challenge of balancing strategic and operational views, capacity building and training challenge and sustainable funding challenge. Their responsibilities are to overcome these challenges through providing solutions in order to deliver project outcomes. In order to do that, the ID project managers need a combination of skills and competencies, which comprise Management skills, Personal qualities, Interpersonal skills, Stakeholder engagement skills, Capacity building skills, Change management skills and Contextual analysis skills.

7. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we first conclude the research findings and use them to answer our research question. Research contributions in terms of theory and practices are then presented, followed by the call for future research identified based on our study. Issues that might impact our research are discussed, together with strategies to prevent or minimize them. The chapter ends with discussion on the research limitation.

7.1 Concluding Remarks

International Development (ID) projects aim to deliver significant economic progress, improve living conditions, education or health in developing countries (Watkins et al., 2013, p.30; Hermano et al., 2013, p. 22; Golini et al., 2015, p. 650). However, the difficult environments within developing countries poses many challenges when managing ID projects (Youker, 2003, p.1). Through literature search, the common key driver of project success within ID projects across and overcome the challenges appears to be the project manager competencies (Denizer et al., 2013, p. 203; Bayiley & Teklu, 2016, p.537). However, the existing literature has not fully explored and studied these specific competencies within ID projects (Brière et al., 2015a, p.166). Our research aimed to fill this gap by asking the following research question:

What are the competencies needed to overcome challenges in International Development projects from the perspective of project managers?

In answering the research question, we conducted a study with experienced project managers within ID sector across Africa as our sample. Through data collection and analysis, we have identified seven competencies and skills from the perspective of ID project managers: Management skills, Personal qualities, Interpersonal skills, Stakeholder Engagement skills, Capacity building skills, Change management, and Contextual analysis skills. These findings confirmed the findings from limited existing literature, as well as adding new competencies and enriching the understanding of these skills by putting them into context of projects. However, the skills and competencies should not be seen as being independent of one another, but they are complementary and related. Project managers within ID sector should have a good combination of these skills mentioned above to overcome the challenges and deliver the project. The contextual factors, together with challenges faced by ID project managers and their competencies help to inform their roles and responsibilities when managing ID projects.

7.2 Research Contributions

Our research makes contributions from both theoretical and practical point of view. From the theoretical point of view, our study added knowledge of managing International Development projects from the perspectives of project managers. As mentioned in previous chapter, we aimed to fill the theoretical gap by exploring and added the skills and competencies of project managers working in ID sector to the existing body of knowledge. Even though there are similarities in findings between previous studies and our study, we believed that the findings of skills and competencies in our research are discovered in a detailed manner and placed in relevant context,

specific to ID sector. In addition, during the research process, we uncovered the roles and responsibilities of project managers in ID sector and the challenges faced by ID project managers. Previous literature has discussed about the challenges in ID projects and general responsibilities of project managers (for example, see Ika & Hodgson, 2014; Ika & Donnelly, 2017; Grady et al., 2015). However, they are still generic and broad with limited examples and illustrations to put them into context. Our study took a different approach in exploring in detail the perspectives of managers regarding specific challenges, ways to overcome as well as their day-to-day activities when managing these projects. The stories told by many respondents allow readers to have an in-depth understanding of managers' challenges, paving the way for a deeper understanding of skills and competencies related to those challenges. Furthermore, by connecting the contextual factors with the challenges and ID project manager competencies, our study furthers the understanding of the role and responsibilities of project managers within ID sector.

From a practical point of view, this would be useful for many organizations involved in International Development projects in terms of human resource management. The findings of skills and competencies can be particularly relevant in recruitment, selection as well as training and capacity building of project managers. In addition, it can help project managers or those who would like to move into this field in preparing and developing themselves within International Development industry. Overall, this could result in better delivery and overcoming the challenges of International Development projects. Furthermore, challenges and ways of overcoming them highlighted by respondents can become a source of knowledge for others working in this industry. Professionals within ID field could potentially learn and adapt different ways to deal with difficulties in their context. These findings also assist in building awareness of the nature of ID sector and highlight the important role of project managers in terms of delivering projects. The findings of this study could be used in designing and enhancing education programmes on International Development management as well as project management.

7.3 Research Limitations

Our research is subject to several limitations. Firstly, the time constraint that we had to carry out this study, especially in data collection and analysis, limited us in obtaining a bigger response rate. As mentioned before, we had two weeks for contacting potential respondents, conducting the interviews and transcribing the interviews in full. Thus taking into account the time spent on all these activities, there is a limit in number of responses that we could have, leading to the limitation in generalizability of the findings. The second limitation lies at snowball sampling technique used in sampling procedure. Through contacts from one of our first respondents, we were able to have more participants for interviews. Those contacts were limited to the same ID sector, which might result in a certain limitation in the diversity of the sector and types of projects that respondents were in. However, other respondents were from many different sectors, which somehow reduces this limitation. Lastly, due to the template analysis approach adopted, there is a focus on uncovering themes and patterns across the data. Therefore, there could be occasions, where individual respondents' views could get lost (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p.180). To reduce this effect of this limitation,

respondents' responses were summarized and shown for each question within Empirical Findings Chapter.

7.4 Call for Future Research

Our study aimed to address the gap found in literature in terms of skills and competencies required for project managers to manage ID projects. While trying to establish and ensure the validity of the research, there are certain areas we have identified that might be of interest to future research and adding valuable contribution to the literature. Since our sample size is limited to those project managers who have experienced in Africa, future research could potentially expand the sample to include more responses from other geographical regions. Furthermore, expanding the research sample might enable researchers to discover the role of different contextual factors in skills and competencies of project managers. Also, it might be interesting to look further into certain key skills and competencies that are most cited and very specific to ID sector, and the roles and responsibilities of ID project managers.

7.5 Validity of Research

Validity concept for a research refers to the correctness or credibility in terms of description, conclusion, explanation and interpretation of the results and findings (Maxwell, 2013, p.122). Validity plays an important role in our research design in identifying different alternative ways in interpreting the data and setting strategies in addressing them. There are two main types of threats to validity of a qualitative research, namely researcher bias and reactivity, which refers to the influence of the researchers on the individuals involved in the study (Maxwell, 2013, p.124). These two types are directly relevant in our research.

With regards to researcher bias, we acknowledge that our background and education in project management might influence the way we conduct the study and conclusions. Our preconceptions might impact and lead us in the bias of selection of data fitting into our existing theory and understanding, and also selection of data that confirming our preconceptions, ignoring the important data that is disconfirming or going against our belief (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.263). In dealing with this threat, we tried as much as possible to keep the original data intact through audio recordings and full transcription of all the interviews. During the data extraction process, direct verbatim responses are extracted without changing the words to ensure the originality of data. All data responses to all questions in the interview were presented in Empirical Findings chapter in the most transparent manner, with supports by relevant verbatim responses. We took the strategies and steps taken to minimize the negative impacts of the bias. In the data analysis process, all data was still kept intact without interpretation, and discussed between us the researchers on how best interpreting and analysing the data to prevent any potential bias from both researchers. Our meetings with the thesis supervisor provided another objective point of view which helped to reduce the researcher bias. In addition, we believe that it is important to be transparent in the whole research process by presenting in this study our guided philosophy, nature of research, how we approached this research and research strategy. Every step involved in research design is also discussed in this study, from choice of time horizon to how we carried out

sampling procedure, interview guide, design, pilot interview, interview process and ethical considerations.

The other threat to our validity is the potential influence we had on the interviewees during our data collection process through semi-structured interviews. We were part of the interview process; thus it was impossible to remove completely our influence on the respondents. All respondents' answers can be argued to be impacted by our Interview Guides, our probing questions and our reactions during the interviews. To illustrate this, our initial Interview Guide has a question on "What are the competencies required to overcome the challenges faced when managing ID projects?". We realized in the Pilot Interview that this question could lead the respondent to think that only competencies can overcome the challenges, while ignoring other solutions. Therefore, we split the question into two parts on "how they overcome the challenges", followed by "what are the skills and competencies required to overcome the challenges". In addition, we designed our Interview Guide in a manner that creating an open platform for respondents to express their views. The questions were designed to be open-ended, not fixed on any predefined concepts or issues. For example, general words were used to ask the interviewees such as '*your experience in managing projects*', '*challenges*', '*how could you overcome*' or '*skills and competencies*'. These broad and open phrases allow participants to discuss freely their perspectives and uncover possible areas that are never mentioned before in the literature.

Furthermore, there might be another bias in a way that respondents, knowing our research aims and objectives, might "switch into an on-stage role or special persona, a presentation of self to the outsider" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.265; Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011, p.102). The respondents may not be willing to share detailed information about their projects or experience, or may answer the questions in the way that make them look good. While this bias is difficult to overcome and sometimes beyond our control, we used different measures to minimize it. These measures comprise creating an open and friendly environment for respondents to feel comfortable, and informing them about us keeping strict confidentiality on their identities.

We are also aware of the possible flaws of previous literature that we used to build the theoretical frame of reference for our research. When carrying out the literature search using electronic databases, there is a possibility that not all journal articles are available in electronic format, or not subscribed to (Jesson et al., 2011, p.23). Thus, we might miss some views within the research area. Peer reviewed journal articles were used as reliable sources in the literature review to increase the creditability of the information. However, there are potential drawbacks when using this source as many peer review articles are judged by experts whose preconceptions might be a barrier for new and unconventional ideas (Jesson et al., 2011, p.21). Furthermore, there could be potential publication bias as researchers might not share all their findings with the wider community, specifically negative findings (Jesson et al., 2011, p.22). Nevertheless, it is hard for us to assess these flaws and we tried to incorporate as many sources and views as possible to balance the biases in the literature review.

Our research sample is limited to practitioners in ID projects in Africa. This could have an impact on the generalizability and applicability of our findings to other practitioners

from different geographical regions. To enhance our research's generalizability to other groups of people and other contexts, we have provided a rich description and analysis of the context of respondents, the settings and the circumstances so that readers can evaluate potential application of our results to other contexts and other people (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p.282).

APPENDIX I - INTERVIEW GUIDE

Respondent:

Start time:End time:

Date:

INTRODUCTION

Welcome and thank respondent for participating
Introduce ourselves and the focus of our research

- We are students of MSPME – Strategic Project Management
- We are in the process of writing our master thesis in exploring the human competencies in International Development Projects from project managers' perspective
- That's why we are very thankful that you agree to meet us today
- We would like to record this interview for later analysis. But all the information and your identity will be kept strictly confidential (none of your responses will be traced back to you)
- Could you please confirm your title, role and current organisation that you are at?

Title :

Organisation:

Years of experience:

WARM-UP

To gain an understanding of their level of experience and their professional background in terms of ID sector, previous and current roles.

Q1. Could you please tell us briefly about your experience in International Development projects?

Probes:

- Types of project
- Sector
- Years

Q2. Among those projects, could you please tell us about the project that you have been involved the most as a project manager / coordinator / leader?

Involved the most: project that they have been involved in many phases (design, planning, execution, monitoring & evaluation and closure).

Probes:

- Project name
- Location
- Objectives
- Project activities / tasks
- Sector
- Beneficiaries
- Donor
- Implementer
- Roles & responsibilities
- Time period

CHALLENGES WITHIN ID PROJECTS

Understand the challenges faced when leading ID projects, from the project manager's perspective. This will potentially highlight any contextual challenges.

Q3. In your experience, what are the challenges that you think someone in your role faces in managing ID projects?

Probes:

- Describe them in detail
- Asking for examples / illustrations
- Reasons why these challenges important
- Are these specific to your sector?
- Are they context dependent? Specific to type of project?

PROJECT MANAGER'S SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES WITHIN ID PROJECTS

Understand their competencies in detail, their relevance as well as how these competencies have been obtained.

Q4.1 From your perspective, how could one overcome those challenges?

Q4.2 What are the skills and competencies required to overcome the challenges faced?

Probes:

- Describe them in detail
- Reasons why they are relevant
- How these skills and competencies can overcome the challenges
- Do you have any examples, please describe in detail?
- Do you think that there is a lack of these skills within the ID sector? Why?

CLOSURE

Thank respondents for their participation and close interview.

Demographic information (to be observed and recorded by interviewer)

Could be used to determine whether there are any differences between respondents.

- Education
- Training within organisation
- Professional certification

APPENDIX II – INTRODUCTION EMAIL

Dear,

I trust that this email finds you well.

We are Van and Brent, students enrolled in an Erasmus Mundus International Master of Strategic Project Management, currently based in Umea University, in Sweden. We are in the process of writing our Master thesis which aims to uncover the competencies of Project Managers within International Development projects within Africa.

We believe that your experience within this field would add significant value to our research. We would really appreciate it if we could spend one hour with you to gain a better understanding of your experiences. We are flexible and would be able to meet at any time within the next two weeks at your convenience. We are able to do either a Skype meeting or telephonic interview, depending on which suits you best.

Please be ensured that all responses and your identity would be kept confidential and will be used for academic purposes only.

Thank you in advance and we are looking forward to your favourable reply.

Best regards,

Brent & Van

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/brent-michael-adams-15675325>

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/vantran307>

APPENDIX III – RESPONDENT PROFILE RECORD TEMPLATE

TRANSCRIPT

RESPONDENT PROFILE

<i>Respondent</i>	
<i>Gender</i>	
<i>Date</i>	
<i>Time</i>	
<i>Education</i>	
<i>Respondent location</i>	
<i>Current position</i>	
<i>Years of experience</i>	
<i>Organization</i>	
<i>Sector</i>	
<i>Interview method</i>	
<i>Respondent setting</i>	
<i>Respondent source</i>	
<i>Interviewer location</i>	
<i>Interviewers</i>	
<i>Interviewers setting</i>	
<i>Interviewers' notes</i>	

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