

# Project management in the times of Covid-19 pandemic

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# Research design and research questions

## Research design

- respondents: Erasmus+ Polish project leaders
- institutions: public, non-governmental and private sector
- timeline: Q4 2020

## Research methods

- quantitative study
- CAWI (questionnaire of 70 inquiries)
  - sample: 990 valid answers

## Key research questions:

1. Which competences are useful in the management of Erasmus+ projects?
2. Which competences are especially useful in the management of Erasmus+ projects in the times of Covid-19 pandemic?
3. Which factors and leaders' characteristics might have led to suspension or prolongation of the project in the times of Covid-19 pandemic?

# Research results (I) – respondents' competence profile

| Competences                    | Dimensions   | Average level of competence (scale 1–5) |
|--------------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Digital and technical</b>   | The use of computer in everyday work                 | 4.37                                    |
|                                | Work with online documents                           | 4.18                                    |
| <b>Managerial</b>              | Cooperation with people                              | 3.77                                    |
|                                | Team coordination                                    | 3.86                                    |
| <b>Cognitive and thinking</b>  | Pro-activeness, innovation, openness to challenges   | 3.96                                    |
|                                | Relations and emotions                               | 3.94                                    |
| <b>Social and psychosocial</b> | Adaptability and managing stress during the pandemic | 1.74                                    |
|                                | Maintaining contacts, cooperation                    | 3.96                                    |
|                                | Communication  | 3.63                                    |

# Research results (II) – leaders' competences and project sustainability

| <b>COMPETENCES</b>   | <b>A</b><br>Average for<br>suspended or<br>prolonged projects<br>because of COVID19<br>pandemic<br>(N = 283) | <b>B</b><br>Average for<br>projects during<br>implementation<br>(N = 583) | <b>C</b><br>Average for<br>successfully finished<br>projects<br>(N = 124) | <b>C-A</b><br>Difference between:<br>successfully finished<br>projects and<br>suspended or<br>prolonged projects |
|--|--|---|---|--|
| <b>Cognitive competence: proactiveness, innovation, openness to challenges</b> | 3.88   | 3.98  | 4.06  | 0.18   |
| <b>Social competence: relations and emotions</b>                               | 3.91   | 3.94  | 4.00  | 0.10   |
| <b>Social competence: adaptability and managing stress during the pandemic</b> | 1.58   | 1.80  | 1.82  | 0.24   |
| <b>Social competence: maintaining contacts and cooperation</b>                 | 3.89   | 3.98  | 4.02  | 0.12   |
| <b>Social competence: communication</b>  | 3.60   | 3.64  | 3.65  | 0.05   |
| <b>Managerial competence: cooperation with people</b>                          | 3.76   | 3.76  | 3.89  | 0.13   |
| <b>Managerial competence: team coordination</b>                                | 3.79   | 3.88  | 3.95  | 0.16   |
| <b>Digital competence: the use of computer in everyday work</b>                | 4.32   | 4.40  | 4.34  | 0.02   |
| <b>Digital competence: work with online documents</b>                          | 4.15   | 4.18  | 4.26  | 0.12   |

# Research results (III) - moderators

## The relationship between leaders' competencies and project status for the following moderators:

- Age
- Level of experience
- Gender
- Level of education
- Type of institution
- Number of project partners
- Project budget
- Number of completed projects
- Sector of education

| Moderator                         | Relationship Description  |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Type of institution</b>        | NGO sector scored higher in both dimensions of managerial competence in comparison to other sectors and leaders from NGOs have slightly higher competence in managing stress, however, it is private sector that has significantly fewer suspended or prolonged projects (18% of suspended or prolonged projects in this category in comparison to average 29%).  |
| <b>Number of project partners</b> | The more partners in a project, the higher social competence in reference to maintaining contacts and cooperation. The category of 5 or more projects suffered significantly fewer suspensions or prolongations (18% of suspended or prolonged projects in this category in comparison to average 29%).   |
| <b>Project budget</b>             | Leaders of projects with highest budgets (EUR 200.000 or more) have significantly higher competence of managing stress with the score of 2.01 in comparison to average 1.74, in this group the ratio of suspended or prolonged projects is only 8% in comparison to average 29%.  |
| <b>Sector of education</b>        | No relations between educational sector and competences levels were observed but in Higher Education and Adult Education significantly lower ratios of suspended or prolonged projects were reported: 10% and 20% respectively in comparison to average 29% whereas Vocational Education Training sector suffered mostly with ratio of 37% of suspended or prolonged projects in comparison to average 29%, however, it was mostly due to objective hindrances to perform vocational trainings and activities that require face-to-face interactions. |

# Research results (IV) - predictions

## Significant predictors

| Predictors   | B      | Significance | Exp(B) |
|--|--------|--------------|--------|
| Cognitive competence: pro-activeness, innovation, openness to challenges                           | -0.465 | 0.004        | 0.628  |
| Social competence: adaptability and managing stress during the pandemic                            | -0.540 | 0.000        | 0.583  |
| Only person managing the project   | 0.416  | 0.005        | 1.516  |
| Professional time spent on project management:   |        | 0.004        |        |
| Professional time spent on project management: 20–75%  | -0.439 | 0.006        | 0.645  |
| Professional time spent on project management: more than 75%                                       | -0.970 | 0.010        | 0.379  |
| Project budget: more than EUR 200,000  | -1.433 | 0.000        | 0.238  |
| Length of service at the institution where the surveyed project was implemented: 10 years and more | 0.449  | 0.006        | 1.567  |

## Chance of project suspension and significant predictors

| Predictors   | Exp(B) | Decrease of a chance to suspend project | Increase of a chance to suspend project |
|--|--------|---|---|
| Cognitive competence: pro-activeness, innovation, openness to challenges                           | 0.628  | 37%                                     |   |
| Social competence: adaptability and managing stress during the pandemic                            | 0.583  | 42%                                     |   |
| Only person managing the project   | 1.516  |   | 52%                                     |
| Professional time spent on project management:   |        |   |   |
| Professional time spent on project management: 20–75%  | 0.645  | 35%                                     |   |
| Professional time spent on project management: more than 75%                                       | 0.379  | 62%                                     |   |
| Project budget: more than EUR 200,000  | 0.238  | 76%                                     |   |
| Length of service at the institution where the surveyed project was implemented: 10 years and more | 1.567  |   | 57%                                     |

## Research results (V) - conclusions

- Leaders' competences and project sustainability
- Relation between ability to manage stress and project sustainability
- Relation between leaders' personality traits and project sustainability
- Adaptation and flexibility of leaders and strategic management in the context of relationship and network paradigm in management
- The impact of extra-competence factors on project sustainability
- Other research and new business models

Paweł Poszytek

# The **COMPETENCES 4.0**



as Facilitators in the Realisation,  
Management and Sustainability  
of Erasmus+ Projects  
in the Times of the COVID-19 Pandemic

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