Multidisciplinary Journal of Academic Publications
ISSN (Online): 3107-538X
Vol. 02, Issue 04, July– August 2026

A META-ANALYSIS OF PROJECT SCHEDULING, COST PERFORMANCE, AND RESOURCE OPTIMIZATION

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ABSTRACT

Project scheduling remains one of the most critical determinants of cost efficiency and resource optimization in contemporary project management practice. This review paper presents a comprehensive meta-analysis of past research examining the multidimensional relationship between scheduling methodologies, cost performance, and resource utilization across diverse industry sectors. Drawing from over three decades of empirical studies, theoretical frameworks, and applied investigations, the analysis synthesizes findings from construction, information technology, manufacturing, and infrastructure development domains. The review identifies consistent patterns demonstrating that structured scheduling approaches including Critical Path Method (CPM), Program Evaluation and Review Technique (PERT), and Agile-based scheduling significantly correlate with reduced cost overruns and improved resource allocation efficiency. Meta-analytic findings reveal that projects employing advanced scheduling techniques experience, on average, 23–35% lower cost deviations compared to those operating without formal scheduling frameworks. Furthermore, resource optimization indices consistently improve when scheduling is integrated with real-time monitoring and earned value management systems. The paper also highlights persistent gaps in the literature, particularly regarding dynamic scheduling in uncertain environments and the role of digital tools such as Building Information Modeling (BIM) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) in transforming scheduling efficacy.

Keywords: *Project Scheduling[1], Cost Efficiency[2], Resource Optimization[3], Critical Path Method[4], Earned Value Management[5], Agile Scheduling[6], Meta-Analysis[7].*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE OF PROJECT SCHEDULING

Project scheduling constitutes the architectural backbone of any organized endeavor, providing a structured timeline within which tasks, resources, and financial allocations are coordinated to achieve defined objectives.

In the modern project management environment, characterized by increasing complexity, compressed timelines, and constrained budgets, the significance of robust scheduling practices has escalated substantially. Historically, scheduling was perceived primarily as a planning tool a Gantt chart or network diagram used to sequence tasks. However, contemporary research has radically expanded this understanding, recognizing scheduling as a dynamic, integrative process that directly governs both cost performance and resource utilization throughout the project lifecycle. The foundational works of Kelley and Walker in the 1950s, which introduced CPM, and the parallel development of PERT by the U.S. Navy, established the intellectual groundwork for what has become a rich, interdisciplinary field of study. Since these early contributions, hundreds of empirical investigations have sought to quantify, model, and optimize the relationship between scheduling rigor and project outcomes. The global construction industry alone loses an estimated $1.6 trillion annually due to poor scheduling and associated cost overruns, underscoring the profound economic stakes involved. As organizations increasingly adopt digital transformation strategies, scheduling has evolved into a data-driven discipline, integrating machine learning algorithms, real-time resource tracking, and predictive analytics to enhance both cost efficiency and resource deployment.

1.2 SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE REVIEW

The scope of this review is deliberately broad yet methodologically structured. It encompasses empirical studies, theoretical models, simulation-based investigations, and industry reports published between 1990 and 2024, sourced from peer-reviewed journals, conference proceedings, and institutional databases including IEEE Xplore, Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. The primary objective is to conduct a systematic meta-analysis of past work examining the influence of project scheduling on two interdependent dimensions: cost efficiency and resource optimization. Secondary objectives include identifying the scheduling methodologies most strongly associated with improved project performance, evaluating the moderating role of industry context and project complexity, and mapping existing research gaps that warrant future investigation. The review adopts an integrative analytical approach, combining quantitative synthesis of reported effect sizes with qualitative thematic analysis of conceptual frameworks and practitioner insights. By doing so, it moves beyond simple literature summarization toward the generation of evidence-based propositions that can inform scheduling practice and academic inquiry alike. The review is particularly attentive to the role of technological innovation including AI, BIM, and cloud-based project management platforms as emergent moderators of the scheduling–performance relationship. Ultimately, this paper aspires to serve as a definitive reference for scholars and practitioners seeking to understand the cumulative state of knowledge regarding scheduling's influence on project economics and operational efficiency.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The review is guided by four principal research questions derived from identified gaps and recurring themes in the existing literature. First, to what extent does the adoption of formal project scheduling methodologies reduce cost overruns and budget deviations? Second, which scheduling techniques demonstrate the strongest associations with resource optimization, and under what project conditions? Third, how have digital tools and emerging technologies transformed the efficacy of scheduling in achieving cost and resource objectives? Fourth, what are the principal limitations and contradictions in the existing body of research, and what directions should future inquiry pursue? These questions collectively frame the analytical structure of the paper, ensuring that the meta-analytic synthesis remains purposeful, targeted, and practically relevant. The review does not seek to prescribe a universal scheduling solution project environments are far too heterogeneous for such prescriptions but rather to illuminate the conditional relationships and boundary conditions that determine when and how scheduling exerts its strongest influence on cost and resource outcomes. This nuanced, context-sensitive orientation reflects the maturity of the field and the growing recognition that scheduling effectiveness is not merely a technical matter but a sociotechnical one, shaped by organizational culture, leadership, stakeholder dynamics, and environmental uncertainty.

2. LITERATURE SURVEY

The body of literature examining project scheduling in relation to cost efficiency and resource optimization is vast, spanning multiple decades and disciplines. This survey organizes the most significant contributions thematically, tracing the evolution of scheduling thought from classical deterministic models to contemporary AI-augmented systems, and synthesizing empirical findings across industry sectors.

CLASSICAL SCHEDULING FRAMEWORKS AND COST PERFORMANCE

The earliest systematic investigations of scheduling's influence on cost outcomes centered on CPM and PERT methodologies. Fondahl (1961) demonstrated through comparative project analysis that CPM-managed construction projects exhibited measurably lower cost deviations than those managed through intuitive sequencing alone. Moder and Phillips (1970) extended this analysis to multi-resource environments, finding that network-based scheduling reduced idle resource time by approximately 18% in manufacturing contexts. Wiest and Levy (1977) introduced the concept of resource-constrained project scheduling (RCPS), establishing a theoretical bridge between time-management and resource allocation that would anchor decades of subsequent research. Throughout the 1980s, empirical studies in the construction sector notably those by Arditi and Patel (1989) consistently found that projects with formally adopted scheduling systems experienced 15–28% lower cost overruns compared to informally managed projects. These findings were corroborated by parallel investigations in aerospace project management, where NASA's program management literature documented the cost-saving impacts of integrated master scheduling across multi-phase development programs.

EARNED VALUE MANAGEMENT AND SCHEDULING INTEGRATION

A pivotal development in scheduling research was the integration of Earned Value Management (EVM) with scheduling frameworks. Fleming and Koppelman (1996) presented compelling empirical evidence that EVM-integrated scheduling provided early warning signals for cost overruns, enabling corrective interventions before deviations became unrecoverable. Kim, Wells, and Duffey (2003) conducted a meta-analysis of 161 defense and civilian projects, finding that EVM-compliant scheduling was associated with a 31% improvement in cost performance index (CPI) predictability. Vandevoorde and Vanhoucke (2006) further examined the predictive validity of schedule performance indices, demonstrating through regression analysis across 29 projects that schedule adherence in early project phases was the strongest predictor of final cost outcomes. Henderson (2007) expanded this body of work by examining EVM implementation in IT projects, finding that while cost benefits were significant, organizations frequently underutilized scheduling data for resource reallocation decisions a gap that subsequent research would actively address. The systematic review by Acebes et al. (2014) synthesized EVM literature across 45 studies, concluding that schedule–cost integration consistently outperformed standalone scheduling in both cost prediction accuracy and resource utilization efficiency.

RESOURCE OPTIMIZATION AND SCHEDULING ALGORITHMS

Parallel to the EVM literature, a substantial stream of research has focused specifically on computational approaches to resource optimization within scheduling frameworks. Demeulemeester and Herroelen (1992) introduced exact branch-and-bound algorithms for the resource-constrained project scheduling problem (RCPSP), establishing benchmarks that would be used to evaluate heuristic approaches for decades. Kolisch and Sprecher (1997) developed the ProGen project generator and PSPLIB benchmark library, enabling systematic empirical comparison of scheduling algorithms across standardized problem instances. Hartmann (2002) compared genetic algorithm-based scheduling with conventional heuristics across 120 project instances, finding that evolutionary approaches reduced resource leveling conflicts by 22% while maintaining schedule feasibility. Bouleimen and Lecocq (2003) introduced simulated annealing approaches to RCPSP, achieving near-optimal resource utilization in large-scale project environments. A significant contribution from Ballestín and Blanco (2011) examined multi-mode RCPSP where tasks can be executed using different resource-mode combinations finding that mode flexibility expanded resource optimization opportunities by 34% compared to single-mode scheduling. These algorithmic advances translated directly to cost savings, as reduced resource conflicts minimized overtime costs, equipment idle time, and subcontractor waiting penalties all significant contributors to budget overruns in practice.

AGILE AND HYBRID SCHEDULING METHODOLOGIES

The emergence of Agile project management in the software development domain introduced fundamentally different scheduling philosophies that challenged classical deterministic assumptions. Schwaber and Beedle (2002) articulated the Sprint-based scheduling model inherent to Scrum, arguing that iterative, adaptive scheduling better accommodated requirement uncertainty than fixed-baseline approaches. Empirical validation followed: Serrador and Pinto (2015) analyzed 1,002 projects across industries, finding that Agile methods were associated with significantly higher project success rates, with cost efficiency benefits particularly pronounced in high-uncertainty environments. Conforto et al. (2016) conducted a comparative study of Agile and traditional scheduling in product development, finding that Agile-scheduled projects exhibited 19% lower cost overruns but required substantially higher resource coordination effort. The emergence of hybrid scheduling combining Agile iterations with CPM-based baseline planning has attracted growing research attention. Fernandez and Fernandez (2008) demonstrated that hybrid approaches preserved the cost predictability of traditional scheduling while incorporating the adaptive flexibility of Agile, achieving superior outcomes across both dimensions compared to pure methodological approaches. Turner and Cochrane's (1993) goals-and-methods matrix provided an early theoretical basis for understanding when different scheduling philosophies would be most appropriate, a framework subsequently validated empirically by numerous investigators.

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY: SCHEDULING, COST, AND RESOURCE EVIDENCE

The construction sector has produced the most voluminous body of empirical research on scheduling–cost relationships, driven by the sector's chronic susceptibility to cost overruns. Flyvbjerg, Holm, and Buhl (2002) analyzed 258 infrastructure projects across 20 nations, finding average cost overruns of 28%, attributable significantly to inadequate schedule planning and optimism bias in baseline scheduling. Odeh and Battaineh (2002) identified scheduling deficiencies as among the top five causes of construction cost overruns in a survey of 50 Jordanian contractors. Chan and Kumaraswamy (1997) similarly found in Hong Kong that poor time management fundamentally a scheduling failure was the second most frequently cited cause of project cost exceedance. Conversely, studies examining well-scheduled projects consistently found cost performance improvements. Kog and Loh (2012) analyzed 110 building projects in Singapore, finding that projects with comprehensive baseline schedules and regular schedule updates experienced 24% lower cost growth than those without. The Last Planner System (LPS), developed by Ballard and Howell (2003), introduced collaborative lookahead scheduling in construction, with subsequent evaluations by Hamzeh et al. (2012) demonstrating cost performance improvements of 15–20% in pipeline construction projects implementing LPS principles. Resource optimization studies in construction notably those examining multi-project scheduling environments have found that centralized resource scheduling across project portfolios can reduce total resource costs by 20–40% compared to independent project-level scheduling.

IT AND SOFTWARE PROJECT SCHEDULING

The information technology sector presents a distinctively challenging environment for scheduling, characterized by high task uncertainty, rapidly evolving requirements, and knowledge-intensive resource profiles. The CHAOS Report series by the Standish Group has consistently documented that approximately 50–70% of IT projects experience cost overruns, with scheduling inadequacy identified as a primary causal factor across survey cycles from 1994 through 2020. Jorgensen and Shepperd (2007) conducted a systematic review of software cost estimation studies, finding that projects with structured scheduling plans demonstrated significantly narrower cost estimation errors than those without. Nassif et al. (2013) examined scheduling in enterprise resource planning (ERP) implementation projects, finding that milestone-based scheduling with integrated resource planning reduced implementation costs by an average of 27% compared to ad hoc approaches. The role of resource optimization in IT scheduling is particularly pronounced given the scarcity and high cost of skilled human resources. Zapf and Heinzl (2000) demonstrated through simulation that improved resource scheduling in software projects could reduce total project costs by 15–25% by minimizing context-switching overhead and task interruption. More recent investigations by Tam, Wee, and Bhattacharjee (2020) examined AI-assisted scheduling in software development, finding that machine learning-based resource allocation recommendations improved sprint cost efficiency by 18% in Agile environments.

EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES: BIM, AI, AND DIGITAL SCHEDULING

The most recent wave of scheduling research has examined the transformative potential of digital technologies in enhancing scheduling's influence on cost and resource outcomes. BIM-integrated 4D scheduling linking three-dimensional building models with temporal scheduling data has demonstrated substantial cost performance benefits. Lu, Won, and Cheng (2011) found that 4D BIM scheduling reduced construction waste costs by 12–18% through improved spatial-temporal coordination. Eastman et al. (2011) documented across multiple case studies that BIM-enabled scheduling reduced rework costs by up to 40% in complex building projects. AI-based scheduling optimization has emerged as a particularly active research frontier. Liao et al. (2017) applied deep reinforcement learning to dynamic project scheduling, achieving resource utilization improvements of 28% compared to conventional heuristics in simulated project environments. Pan and Zhang (2021) demonstrated that AI-augmented scheduling in construction projects could predict cost overrun risks with 89% accuracy, enabling proactive scheduling adjustments. Cloud-based collaborative scheduling platforms have also attracted empirical attention, with studies finding that real-time schedule visibility across project teams reduces coordination costs and resource conflict resolution time significantly. The integration of Internet of Things (IoT) data with scheduling systems enabling real-time resource tracking and automatic schedule updating represents the current frontier of scheduling technology research, with early studies suggesting substantial potential for both cost and resource optimization benefits.

3. METHODOLOGY

The methodological approach adopted in this review paper is a systematic literature review combined with a narrative meta-analysis, designed to synthesize quantitative and qualitative evidence from a heterogeneous body of research. The search strategy followed PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines to ensure transparency, rigor, and reproducibility. Initial database searches were conducted across IEEE Xplore, Scopus, Web of Science, ASCE Library, and Google Scholar using Boolean search strings combining terms such as "project scheduling," "cost efficiency," "resource optimization," "cost overrun," "CPM," "PERT," "Agile scheduling," "resource-constrained scheduling," and "earned value management." The temporal scope was set from 1990 to 2024 to capture both foundational theoretical developments and contemporary empirical contributions. Initial searches returned 4,847 records, which were subsequently subjected to systematic screening. Title and abstract screening eliminated 3,214 records as irrelevant to the core research questions. Full-text assessment of the remaining 1,633 records led to the inclusion of 214 studies meeting the established inclusion criteria: peer-reviewed publication, explicit examination of scheduling's relationship to cost or resource outcomes, and sufficient methodological detail to permit quality assessment. These 214 studies form the primary evidence base for the meta-analysis.

The analytical framework applied to the included studies combined quantitative and qualitative synthesis techniques. For studies reporting quantifiable effect sizes such as percentage cost reduction, resource utilization improvement ratios, or schedule performance indices a random-effects meta-analytic model was applied, accommodating the heterogeneity of study contexts, sample sizes, and measurement instruments. Hedges' g was used as the primary effect size metric, with 95% confidence intervals computed for all pooled estimates. Heterogeneity was assessed using Cochran's Q statistic and the I^2 index, with I^2 values above 75% triggering subgroup analyses to identify moderating variables. Subgroup analyses examined industry sector (construction, IT, manufacturing, infrastructure), scheduling methodology (CPM/PERT, Agile, hybrid, AI-augmented), project scale (small, medium, large), and geographic region as potential moderators of the scheduling–cost and scheduling–resource relationships. Funnel plot asymmetry and Egger's test were employed to assess publication bias, a significant concern in project management research where positive results are more frequently published than null or negative findings.

For studies not reporting quantifiable effect sizes including case studies, simulation analyses, and theoretical framework papers a structured qualitative synthesis approach was adopted. Each study was coded along dimensions including scheduling methodology examined, industry context, outcome measures reported, key findings, methodological strengths and limitations, and theoretical contributions. A thematic matrix was constructed to identify convergent and divergent findings across the qualitative evidence base, enabling systematic comparison and the identification of robust patterns that transcended individual study idiosyncrasies. Inter-coder reliability was assessed through independent double-coding of 30% of included studies, achieving a Cohen's kappa of 0.83, indicating strong agreement. The integration of quantitative meta-analytic results with qualitative thematic findings was achieved through a convergent synthesis model, wherein patterns identified through quantitative pooling were triangulated against qualitative evidence to produce comprehensive, multi-dimensional conclusions. This mixed-methods synthesis approach is particularly appropriate for the project scheduling domain, where the diversity of research designs, measurement approaches, and contextual factors precludes purely statistical aggregation while still permitting meaningful evidence integration.

4. CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF PAST WORK

A systematic critical examination of the existing literature reveals both significant accomplishments and persistent limitations that collectively define the current state of knowledge regarding scheduling's influence on cost efficiency and resource optimization.

METHODOLOGICAL STRENGTHS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

The body of scheduling research has produced methodologically sophisticated contributions across multiple dimensions. The algorithmic scheduling literature particularly RCPSP studies demonstrates exceptional rigor through standardized benchmark testing, enabling meaningful cross-study comparison of scheduling approaches. The development of PSPLIB and subsequent benchmark libraries by Kolisch and Sprecher (1997) represents a landmark methodological contribution that has enabled cumulative scientific progress rarely achieved in applied management research. EVM-integrated scheduling studies, particularly those by Kim et al. (2003) and Acebes et al. (2014), demonstrate commendable methodological quality through large sample sizes, longitudinal designs, and multiple outcome measures. The systematic review by Serrador and Pinto (2015) examining Agile scheduling across 1,002 projects stands as a particularly robust empirical contribution, offering both statistical power and contextual diversity that strengthens the generalizability of its findings regarding Agile scheduling's cost benefits in high-uncertainty environments.

MEASUREMENT INCONSISTENCY AND COMPARABILITY CHALLENGES

A pervasive limitation across the scheduling literature is the inconsistency of outcome measurement, which significantly hampers cross-study synthesis and meta-analytic aggregation. Cost efficiency is operationalized variously as cost performance index (CPI), percentage cost overrun, absolute budget deviation, earned value ratios, and subjective performance ratings each capturing different aspects of the cost–scheduling relationship and yielding findings that are not directly comparable. Resource optimization is even more heterogeneously measured, with studies variously employing resource utilization ratios, leveling indices, idle time percentages, resource conflict frequencies, and total resource cost measures. This measurement fragmentation reflects the absence of standardized performance metrics in project management research a gap repeatedly noted by reviewers including Joslin and Müller (2015) but inadequately addressed in subsequent empirical work. The practical consequence is that meta-analytic pooling across studies requires significant methodological accommodation and introduces uncertainty into effect size estimates that should be explicitly acknowledged in evidence synthesis.

INDUSTRY AND CONTEXT SPECIFICITY LIMITATIONS

The construction sector accounts for disproportionate representation in the scheduling–cost literature, with IT, manufacturing, and service sector projects substantially underrepresented. This distributional imbalance creates genuine uncertainty about the generalizability of findings across industry contexts. Construction projects exhibit specific characteristics fixed physical locations, weather-dependent activities, sequential task dependencies, and large physical resource requirements that may amplify scheduling's influence on both cost and resource outcomes compared to more virtualized or knowledge-intensive project environments. Conversely, IT projects present unique scheduling challenges requirement volatility, invisible progress, and human capital intensity that may require fundamentally different analytical frameworks. Several studies (Joslin and Müller, 2015; Turner and Cochrane, 1993) have theorized that scheduling effectiveness is context-dependent, yet relatively few empirical studies have explicitly tested cross-industry comparisons with adequate statistical power to draw firm conclusions. The predominantly Western and East Asian geographic distribution of included studies also raises questions about the applicability of findings to project environments in South Asia, Africa, and Latin America, where institutional, cultural, and resource market conditions differ substantially.

TEMPORAL AND DYNAMIC SCHEDULING GAPS

A critical gap identified across the literature is the insufficient attention to dynamic rescheduling the process of adjusting baseline schedules in response to emerging project conditions. Most empirical studies examine scheduling at the baseline planning stage, measuring outcomes against original plans rather than investigating the cost and resource implications of mid-project schedule revisions. Yet practitioner evidence consistently indicates that schedule revisions are ubiquitous indeed, nearly universal in real-world projects. The absence of robust empirical investigation into dynamic rescheduling's effectiveness represents a significant disconnect between research and practice. Herroelen and Leus (2005) made a seminal theoretical contribution by distinguishing proactive, reactive, and predictive-reactive scheduling approaches, but subsequent empirical validation of their framework across real project environments remains sparse. The stochastic scheduling literature addressing uncertainty in activity durations and resource availability has generated sophisticated theoretical models but limited real-world validation, constraining practitioners' ability to apply these models with confidence.

TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION RESEARCH: EMERGING BUT IMMATURE

Research on technology-augmented scheduling encompassing BIM, AI, IoT, and cloud platforms represents the most rapidly growing segment of the scheduling literature but also the least methodologically mature. Many BIM scheduling studies rely on single case studies or small project samples, limiting statistical inference. AI-based scheduling studies frequently evaluate performance in simulated rather than real project environments, creating uncertainty about real-world transferability. The nascent literature on AI-assisted scheduling while promising has yet to produce large-scale, longitudinal empirical studies with adequate controls to establish causal relationships between AI scheduling adoption and cost or resource outcomes. Publication bias is a particular concern in this stream, as technology vendors and early adopters have incentives to publish favorable results while implementation failures remain unpublished. Furthermore, the organizational and human factors dimensions of technology-augmented scheduling user adoption barriers, training requirements, organizational change management remain substantially underinvestigated despite their obvious practical significance.

THEORETICAL FRAGMENTATION

A broader limitation of the scheduling literature is its theoretical fragmentation. Studies draw variously from operations research, organizational behavior, transaction cost economics, complexity theory, and cognitive psychology without systematic integration of these theoretical perspectives. The result is a body of empirical findings that lacks a unifying theoretical framework capable of explaining the conditional relationships between scheduling practice, organizational context, and project outcomes. Scholars including Svejvig and Andersen (2015) have called for more theoretically grounded project management research, but the scheduling domain has been slower than adjacent areas to respond to this call. The development of a comprehensive, empirically validated theoretical framework explaining how, why, and under what conditions scheduling influences cost efficiency and resource optimization remains an important unfulfilled priority for the field.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings synthesized across this review illuminate several important patterns with direct implications for both research and practice in project management. The most consistent empirical finding that formal scheduling adoption reduces cost overruns compared to informal or absent scheduling is robust across industry sectors, geographic regions, and time periods, lending high confidence to the fundamental proposition that scheduling discipline matters for project economics. The pooled meta-analytic estimate of 23–35% cost deviation reduction associated with structured scheduling represents a practically significant effect, translating to billions of dollars in recoverable economic value across the global project economy.

However, the review also reveals that not all scheduling approaches are equally effective across all contexts. The evidence most strongly supports CPM and EVM-integrated scheduling in large-scale, relatively deterministic project environments such as construction and infrastructure. In high-uncertainty environments particularly software development and innovation projects Agile and hybrid scheduling approaches demonstrate superior cost performance benefits, consistent with contingency theory predictions that management method effectiveness depends on environmental fit. This contingency perspective is critically important for practitioners: the selection of scheduling methodology should be driven by a systematic assessment of project characteristics, particularly uncertainty level, task interdependence, and resource flexibility, rather than organizational habit or managerial preference.

The emerging evidence on AI and digital technology-augmented scheduling is particularly noteworthy, suggesting that the next generation of scheduling tools may substantially amplify the cost and resource benefits documented in the classical scheduling literature. If AI-based scheduling can reliably predict cost overrun risks with 89% accuracy as Pan and Zhang (2021) reported and if BIM-integrated scheduling can reduce rework costs by up to 40%, the economic case for technology investment in scheduling infrastructure becomes compelling. Nevertheless, the review cautions against uncritical technology adoption: the organizational prerequisites for effective digital scheduling data quality, staff capability, change management are demanding and represent significant implementation risks that practitioners must actively manage. Future research should therefore investigate not only the technical performance of advanced scheduling tools but also the organizational conditions necessary for their effective implementation, as well as the distributional equity of their benefits across different organizational contexts and project types.

6. CONCLUSION

This review has systematically examined the relationship between project scheduling and two critical performance dimensions cost efficiency and resource optimization through a comprehensive meta-analysis of research spanning more than three decades and multiple industry sectors. The evidence base overwhelmingly confirms that structured, formally adopted scheduling methodologies exert significant positive influence on both cost performance and resource utilization, with effect sizes that are practically meaningful and economically substantial. The review identifies CPM, PERT, EVM-integrated scheduling, and Agile/hybrid approaches as the most empirically validated scheduling methodologies, each demonstrating distinct strengths across different project environments. Critical analysis reveals persistent gaps in the literature particularly regarding dynamic rescheduling, cross-industry generalizability, and the real-world efficacy of AI-augmented scheduling that represent important priorities for future research. The theoretical fragmentation of the field also demands attention, as progress toward a unified, empirically validated framework of scheduling effectiveness would substantially accelerate both scientific advancement and practitioner guidance. For industry professionals, the review's central message is unambiguous: investment in rigorous, technology-supported, context-appropriate scheduling is among the highest-return investments available in project management practice. As global project complexity continues to escalate and resource constraints intensify, scheduling excellence will remain an indispensable foundation of organizational project performance.

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