



Research Paper

## Exploring Artificial Intelligence Competence For Project Managers And Impact Of Project Risk Management Domain In The Construction Industry In The United Kingdom: A Review

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### Abstract

**Background:** The evolving business environment and technological advancements in the UK construction industry, particularly Artificial Intelligence (AI), are reshaping project management processes, including risk management (RM). As the industry continues to evolve, project managers need to develop AI competencies to effectively mitigate emerging risks.

**Background:** The UK construction industry is undergoing a transformation, driven by technological advancements, particularly the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI). This shift is reshaping traditional project management practices, including risk management (RM). With the increasing complexity of construction projects and evolving risks, it is essential for project managers to develop AI competencies to effectively navigate and mitigate emerging risks.

**Aim:** This review aimed to evaluate the significance of AI competence for project managers and its impact on risk management practices within the UK construction industry.

**Methods:** Using diverse databases including ProQuest, MEDLINE, and IEEE Xplore, a comprehensive literature review was conducted focused on studies from 2010 to the present related to AI competencies for project managers and risk management in the UK construction industry. The articles were initially screened based on relevant and specific keywords including Boolean operators and followed by full-text review to determine final choice articles used for this review. The findings were summarized using the narrative synthesis approach to report the findings in line with the review objectives.

**Results:** The findings of this review highlight the critical role of AI competence among project managers in enhancing risk management (RM) practices within the UK construction industry. While AI integration improves decision-making, efficiency, and accuracy while reducing human error, the effectiveness of these benefits hinges on project managers' ability to competently utilize AI tools. The findings were thematically categorized into: (1) AI in the construction industry, (2) AI integration in RM practices, (3) benefits and challenges of AI adoption, and (4) assessing project managers' AI competencies. Case studies, such as IBM's Watson Explorer and RiskLens, underscore the necessity of AI competence for optimizing RM strategies.

**Conclusion:** AI is revolutionizing RM practices by offering data-driven insights and predictive risk analysis within the UK construction industry. To harness AI's full potential, project managers must develop AI-related competencies. However, for successful adoption of AI in construction, addressing challenges related to competency, ethics, and cost is crucial. AI competencies development among project managers is key to maximizing AI's benefits, ensuring effective risk management and successful projects.

**Keywords:** Artificial Intelligence, Risk Management, Project Managers, Construction Industry, AI Competence

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## **I. Introduction**

Evidence suggests that the evolving business environment continue to impact and create new challenges for successful delivery of projects within the constraints of time, budget, and scope [1]. Whyte [2] also agreed that the constantly changing landscape, including technology, has brought about significant changes in project management processes with emphasised reference to the construction industry [3,4]. This technology, specifically Artificial Intelligence (AI) which Hamet and Tremblay [5] regarded as a generic term that describes the use of a computer to simulate human intelligent behaviour and started as a robots' invention, is used by 81% of organisations in project management practices [6] and transforming the existing project management practices [7]. Essentially, traditional project management processes and responsibilities continue to evolve with the advancing adoption of AI technology.

Of the project management processes, PMI [8] described risk management (RM) as essential while APM [9] defined it as an important proactive process to identify, assess, and respond appropriately to threats necessary to bolster the resilience of a project [10]. In agreement, Zou, Kiviniemi, and Jones [11] maintained that though AI introduction is transforming project management practices, risk management remain a critical practice to determine project success as incidences not managed can be severe with impact to lives and project evolution, thus project manager role includes to ensure that imminent risks present in every project are minimized, if not eliminated [12]. These submissions list RM as a key project management practice that guarantees project success. With the construction industry regarded as a most impactful and contributor to UK economy [13], with 353,365 companies [14] employing 9% of total national workforce and contributing 6.7% of the country's total economy [15] to a gross value of £128.9 billion in 2022 which represents a 6% increase over the previous year [16], and incremental economic contribution of 1.6% volume increase reported in June 2023 [17], the importance of RM for this industry cannot be over-emphasised.

As AI adoption increases in different phases of the construction industry [18,19], the nature of risk in this industry especially for complex and data-intensive projects also changes [12] and project managers' expertise to identify, assess and mitigate the new risks are challenged. To overcome this challenge that could impact the construction industry, organisations aiming to prevent potential risks and enhance positive outcomes of projects introduce and adopt AI to its RM processes [12,20,21].

PMI [8] demonstrated that certain competencies are required to successfully overcome challenges in project management processes, while effectively accomplishing the desired objectives [22]. With the growing need for AI adoption in risk management (RM) processes [23,24], driven by its ability to analyze vast amounts of data in real time and generate valuable insights for proactive risk identification, assessment, and strategy formulation, there is an equally urgent need to redefine and enhance the competencies required of project managers to effectively leverage AI technology. El Khatib and Al Falasi [25], likewise, summarily recorded that project management experts and professionals must understand the significance of AI to maintain their competitiveness and effectively utilise emerging technologies.

With the absence or improper RM reportedly having adverse effects on projects [26] up to the company's insolvency or liquidation [27] depending on the value of the project and organisation, RM has been described as a critical element of project success [28, 29]. RM is, particularly, important in the construction industry due to its contribution to the economic and social infrastructure development of any nation [30, 26]. Van Thuyet, Ogunlana, and Dey [31] equally submitted that, while risk factors vary based on the project, RM is critical for project success. The complexity of modern projects adopting AI in its processes thus requires alternative RM approaches to traditional risk assessment and mitigation approaches, thus, birthing the need to embrace technologies, particularly AI, to enhance RM practices. AI-driven RM has been identified to provide more accurate, proactive, and data-driven insights into potential risks and opportunities [32, 33].

Although project management continues to be identified as a critical profession to resolve challenging and complex organisational matters [34, 35], the continuous technological advancement and increasing integration of AI technology into project management practices are revolutionising the functional roles of project managers [36] requiring the project managers to possess AI competence and understand the significance of this competence in project RM to drive project success. [37,38,39]. The rationale for this research on assessing the significance of AI competence for project managers, hence, stems from primary factors which include the evolving project managers' role due to the increasing adoption of AI technologies in project management and the change in project RM practices from the traditional RM approaches. This extended research, therefore, aims to evaluate the significance of AI as a competence for project managers and its impact on RM practices in the UK construction industry. It seeks to assess the synergies between AI technology and AI competence in project managers to continually drive RM for project success in this technology-driven project environment in the United Kingdom.

## **II. Methodology**

A robust methodology is essential for ensuring the validity and reliability of research findings. This study employed a narrative literature review approach to explore the significance of AI competence for project managers and its impact on risk management (RM) practices in the UK construction industry. The following sections outline the research design, data sources, search strategy, inclusion and exclusion criteria, data extraction, and synthesis approach.

### **2.1 Research Design**

This study adopted a narrative literature review to synthesize existing research on AI competence in project management. A narrative approach was chosen due to its ability to integrate diverse findings from multiple studies into a coherent discussion while allowing for an in-depth thematic analysis. Unlike systematic reviews, which follow a rigid protocol, a narrative review provides contextual insights by analyzing literature across different study designs, methodologies, and theoretical perspectives. Given the evolving nature of AI in project risk management, this approach enabled the study to capture emerging trends, challenges, and competencies required by project managers.

### **2.2 Data Sources and Search Strategy**

A comprehensive search of academic literature was conducted using three major electronic databases:

- ProQuest (for business, technology, and management-related studies)
- MEDLINE (for health and safety aspects of AI in project management)
- IEEE Xplore (for technical and engineering perspectives on AI applications)

The search was conducted between 2014 and 2024 to capture the most relevant studies on AI competence and its implications for RM practices. To enhance the precision of results, the study utilized Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) terms [40-43], which are standardized keywords assigned by database specialists. The primary MeSH terms used included:

- ‘Artificial Intelligence’
- ‘Project Managers’
- ‘Construction Industry’

These terms were prioritized over author-generated keywords to ensure greater consistency and accuracy in retrieving relevant studies.

## **III. Findings**

### **3.1 AI in the Construction Industry**

According to Mich et al. [44], John McCarthy's group first proposed the idea of AI in 1959 with the belief that machines could stimulate human intelligence. This belief was adopted in AI definition by Abioye et al. [45] and Hamet and Tremblay [5] describing AI as a replication of human intelligence in machines built to think and learn like humans. Wan, Liu and Zhang [46] definition of AI as a technologically intelligent machine that emulates human intelligence capable of performing complex tasks autonomously and efficiently equally supports the concept of AI is to mimic humans with the advantage of reducing human error as well as time and cost savings to execute tasks that normally require some human- like intelligence to be performed [47]. Recording that AI application in projects improves business and project processes and offers automated advantages, Abioye et al.'s [45] definition of AI recorded that AI encompasses subfields such as machine learning, natural language processing (NLP), computer vision, and expert systems which are all aimed to emulate humans in their different applications to improve current processes. These various definitions point that AI in whatever form is machine/tools created to replicate human intelligence through continuous learning and problem-solving to improve productivity and lower error rates in tasks across a variety of domains.

Although Öztürk [48] submission acknowledges that AI is beneficial for current ongoing easy and complex project tasks, it also identifies that AI impact determines the future of organisation with both theoretical challenges and opportunities. In agreement, Mich et al. [44] recorded that AI technology, though regarded as a transformative field with the potential to bring about significant advancements is not without its critiques and challenges. A major challenge of AI according to Öztürk [48] impacting all industries and processes lies in its rapid development which is increasingly becoming an autonomous AI system with own reflex and intentional action, requiring zero human interaction with the potential to result in significant challenging changes in existing need for human management and organisations [49]. This will result in declined human capabilities/expertise if there is no need to increase or apply knowledge, job displacement leading to unemployment and eventual negative impact on the societal economy [50]. Gries and Naudé, though, queried AI negative impact citing historical low record of unemployment and high GDP in many advanced technically advanced economies, agreed that AI adoption is witnessing stagnation in wages and productivity with increase in inequality [51].

The cost of implementing AI is a challenge in the UK construction industry especially as less than 1% of UK Construction Company is regarded as big companies with the multiple financial resources employing over three hundred (300) employees and the majority of 81.8% are small organisation with less than 4 employees [14]. Other concerns regarding AI adoption in the construction industry after its implementation are ethical considerations relating to biased recruitment and personnel allocation using previous data on record with little option to update project requirements and new members [52,53,54]; difficulty in determining liability and accountability between AI systems, operator, or company process for safety errors/accident [54]; and concerns about privacy of confidential personal and company data to prevent breach and unauthorized access [53, 54] are concerns of AI requiring commitment to responsible AI adoption.

### **3.2 RM in the Construction Industry**

Risks refer to the likelihood of harm, loss, or damage [55] which is acknowledged as numerous and always occurring in the construction industry [56,57] either as internal risk within the project manager's control to prevent or mitigate or external risks [26, 57]. For the effective management of these risks, the significance to implement necessary different RM techniques after assessing the identified risks has been advocated as either Prevention RM to manage risk before the start of projects, Remediate RM used during project execution for existing risk [57] or the Enterprise RM which advocate that all risk should be comprehensively managed [58]. The management of these risks is described by APM [9] as an initiative-taking process to identify, assess and respond appropriately to risk. It plays a crucial role in successful project execution by identifying potential threats or uncertainties that may hinder goal attainment [59] PMI [8] in its definition of risk as an uncertain incidence with either a positive or negative impact; recorded RM as the process of fore-planning, identifying, analyzing, preventing, monitoring, and controlling identified risks with the aim of either increasing the occurrence and impact of positive risks or reducing the occurrence and impact of negative risks as the impact determines the success of a project [59, 26] and thus an important responsibility for the project manager.

Despite the significance of RM in determining the level of success of a project, there are concerns that undermine its effectiveness. RM has been recorded to disregard arising risk due to scope change and ambiguity using a simple but generalised risk analysis for all risk types [60,61]; assuming a one-size fit all strategies for all arising risks from project changes or unclear risks leave projects vulnerable to unplanned complications, potential misunderstanding and underestimating of the impact of such risks. Fernandes [60] also criticise risk management for misaligning risks following manipulating definition of risks from multiple stakeholders to suit their different objectives. Chatterjee et al. [62] in recommending strategies to manage emerging risk in the construction industry agree that there would remain hidden risks from having different stakeholders especially as these risks impacts cost, resulting in time delays and quality of projects.

These criticisms highlight the criticality for RM to adapt and address new challenges posed by scope change or risk ambiguity. With the incorporation of AI into project practices and emerging new risks, the need for a more flexible, holistic, and proactive RM to improve an organisation's ability to navigate the uncertain project environment is increasingly pronounced. Thus, as AI adoption in project practices especially modern RM increases, it is necessary to draw insights from past literature to inform a more holistic perspective.

### **3.3 AI Integration in Project Management: A Focus on RM Practice**

Project management, the core to manage the dynamic and ever-evolving landscape of business and industries, is defined by APM [63] as the utilisation of set processes, skills, and experience to achieve expected results/objectives within set timeline and budgets. PMI [8] stated that it involves efficient planning and organisation of resources to achieve predetermined goals while effectively managing risks as one of its essential practice. Marnewick and Marnewick [64] in defining Project management cited various definitions from PMI and APM with summarised definition as the use skills, tools, and processes aimed at achieving specific project objectives within specified constraints. The growth of technology, particularly artificial intelligence (AI), which is intended to restructure all domains, necessitates a well-structured project management approach to guide organisations ensuring that objectives are achieved within scope, time and cost.

AI has emerged as a transformative technology that holds the potential to revolutionise various domains of human activity [65]. Its impact on project management practices, specifically in the realm of RM, is an area that requires extensive study and analysis. Taboada [66] and Kabanda [67] submitted that there has been growing interest in integrating AI technologies into project management practices, in recent years, as organisations strive for greater efficiency and effectiveness when dealing with uncertainties and risks. The Harvard Business Review report [68] acknowledged that the constantly evolving technology results continue to witness patterns of AI adoption into project and business plans albeit at a low rate thus resulting in only 35% of successful projects. The report attributed the low project success rate to the low technology experience in this field with a prediction of increased utilization of AI by year 2030 especially for risk forecasting and assessment [68].

Kabanda [67] also reported that AI technologies have immense potential to enhance risk-management processes through intelligent solutions encompassing Identification, analysis, and mitigation measures. He, further, emphasized that Project managers are responsible for managing risk [67] and are thus able to leverage AI competencies with AI technologies in RM. Jöhnk, Weißert and Wyrski [65] collaborated that Project managers can generate data-driven insights by using recent innovative methods including automated risk identification predictive analysis amongst others in addition to conducting comprehensive analyses, incorporating existing literature reviews, relevant case studies, and industry practices.

Whilst Pournader, Kach and Talluri [69] reported some unresolved challenges with AI adoption including substandard and inaccurate inputs leading to flawed decision-making, Ahmad et al. emphasized that there seems to be a clear positive trajectory relating to technologies Integration within project management entities, particularly for risk detection [70]. Statistical records from Gov UK [71] showed that although only 15% of companies within the UK and only 13% of construction companies have adopted at least one AI technology into its operations, El Khatib et al. [72] survey indicated that 68% of UK companies that have integrated AI into its processes use AI technologies for risk assessment and prediction. This indicates an increasing recognition among businesses regarding the benefits that could potentially result from adopting AI into project management practices, specifically concerning RM.

One prevalent case is IBM's Watson Explorer platform, which integrates NLP algorithms to effectively analyse large volumes of unstructured data sourced including contracts to extract pertinent information, thereby enabling the detection of risks and associated threats such as contractual obligations or compliance issues more efficiently than traditional manual methods [73]. RiskLens, another software application, employs both advanced analytical tools and machine learning principles in its predictive capability to quantify the impact/prospective losses and priority levels of various uncertainties and risks in specific projects. It, thus, enables organisations to prioritise their areas of focus [62].

Apart from the shift in conventional models and new methodologies characterised by the advent of AI technological intelligence, other noteworthy illustrative embracing change propagated according to Kabanda [67] is the multiple innovative predictive risk analysis advantage of AI experienced by organisations that have adopted AI. Calkin et al. [74] reiterated that undeniably AI-driven predictive risk analysis has gained significant traction within the realm of project management practices in relation to acknowledging the importance of quality decision-making processes and overall success rates. Companies are leveraging these technologies by employing machine learning algorithms capable of analysing extensive datasets encompassing information pertaining to previous projects' risk likelihoods, including potential over-budget undertakings, or scheduling to make decisions that ensure successful project results [74].

By identifying keywords associated with various risk sentiments attached to them through rigorous scrutiny, NLP-based systems provide early warnings concerning impending hazards previously undetected via traditional approaches [65]. The adoption of predictive risk analysis in project management is supported by empirical statistics, demonstrating its increasing popularity. Other empirical statistics demonstrating the increasing popularity of adopting predictive risk analysis in project management include Fitzsimmons et al. [75] study to accurately estimate risk boundaries and risk analysis in project scheduling and planning of 302 construction projects and 10 case studies in the UK with the use of machine intelligence (a subset of AI); the study examined the influence of predictive risk analysis on project outcomes. The research found that organisations employing AI-powered predictive risk analysis tools experienced 54.4% more accuracy in risk prediction resulting in lower levels of cost overruns and schedule delays compared to those relying solely on traditional methods.

Of particular importance are studies that examine real-world applications integrating technology into managing risks effectively evidence predictive risk analysis utilizing historical data alongside algorithms to forecast potential risks impact on project outcomes with improved accuracy. Labinsky et al. [76] agreed that integrating AI technologies into organisational RM practices enhances decision- making capabilities. Abioye et al.'s [45] comprehensive survey among construction companies operating in the UK evaluated adopting diverse AI technology within various areas related to project management practices-including whether it was employed for predictive risk analysis in which 70% reported successful adoption of at 5 of the 6 different versions of AI in their RM practice (Table 1).

	AI Subfields					
Construction Areas	Machine Learning	Computer Vision	Robotics	Knowledge based systems	Natural Language Processing	Optimisation
Health & Safety	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Scheduling	✓			✓		✓
Cost Estimation	✓			✓		✓

Legal	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Supply Chain & Logistics	✓			✓		✓
Site Monitoring	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Material Mgt	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Offsite Assembly	✓		✓			
Plant & Equipment Met	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Project Planning	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Knowledge Mgt	✓	✓		✓		
Design	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Risk Mgt	✓			✓	✓	✓
Temporary Structure	✓					✓
Bids/Tenders	✓		✓	✓		
Energy Mgt	✓		✓			
Sustainability	✓			✓		

Table 1 AI adoption in UK project management practice (Construction Industry)

Source: Adapted from Abioye et al. [45]

Similarly, although Jallow et al. [18] contrary opinion decries the popularity of AI use in the construction industry, the case study equally indicates full implementation of AI predictive analytics tools as part of a broader approach towards identifying and mitigating potential risks faced during construction projects undertaken within the United Kingdom. The report concluded that AI in construction is used for RM in three ways: Asset management handling tasks that human staff members would normally be endangered to do, Health and Safety automatic risk evaluations for onsite risks and risk mitigation detect risks that human staff would not be aware of [18]. Likewise, companies like Balfour Beatty have implemented effective real-live AI-driven systems focused explicitly on managing risks [77]. Apart from construction, other studies include AI technology in airline industry with the adoption of machine learning algorithms and predictive risk analysis to determine flight cancellation risks were illustrated by Zoutendijk and Mitici [78] and Yazdi et al. [79]. By analysing historical data such as weather conditions, maintenance records, and crew availability, their AI system accurately forecasts potential disruptions. Consequently, proactive decision-making becomes possible while enabling the implementation of mitigation strategies beforehand to reduce inconvenience for passengers and minimise financial losses. These AI systems analyse real-time project data to identify patterns and trends indicative of potential risks as they arise continuously, utilising machine learning algorithms for evaluating different project parameters such as budget allocation, resource utilisation, and schedule adherence [72]. By combining historical data from similar projects with up-to-the-minute information regarding ongoing ones, these integrated AI systems generate accurate predictions about potential risks along with their expected impact on overall project outcomes.

### **3.4 Benefits and Challenges of AI Implementation in UK Construction Industry Project Management**

#### **3.4.1 Benefits**

One of the benefits of integrating AI as a competence for project managers is improved decision-making. By harnessing AI technologies capable of processing vast amounts of data, identifying patterns and trends, and providing valuable insights, project managers in construction industry can make more informed and accurate decisions [80]. This enhanced decision-making ability significantly improves project outcomes by enabling early identification of potential risks, effective evaluation of their impact, and development of appropriate mitigation strategies [81]. Other industry's empirical evidence supports the positive impact achieved through integrating AI into RM decision-making processes: Rodriguez-Espíndola et al. [82] study in digital manufacturing and Paul, Riaz and Das [83] research in the supply chain space examined how AI-based tools are implemented to assess and manage risks. The studies highlighted advanced analytics capabilities such as machine learning algorithms, which facilitated better identification of risks through analysis involving vast datasets related to similar projects or occurrences from historical data sources.

Improved efficiency and productivity are identified as other benefits resulting from incorporating AI technology into RM practices. Abioye et al.'s [45] research demonstrated higher levels of efficiency when utilising AI tools compared to traditional methods employed solely on projects without such integration. Similarly, research by Yaseen et al. [84] illustrated how using Machine Learning algorithms enhances human capability, leading towards quicker identifications and strategising processes, thereby making them efficient at handling day-to-day routine activities like report generation. Furthermore, Endsley [85] suggested that AI automation leads to

efficiency as it saves valuable time and improves the accuracy of risk assessment. AI technologies, according to Ribeiro et al. [86], simplify and facilitate the automation of routine tasks such data gathering and analysis, report production, and resource allocation, thus resulting in more time for project managers to focus on more complex aspects of RM.

Another advantage is the potential for reduced human error through AI integration in RM. Ribeiro et al. [86] submission maintained that AI technology automation not only simplifies routine tasks ensuring efficiency, but also reduces human error rates. Human errors can have significant consequences for project success failure [87] due to cognitive biases, misinterpretation of data, or lapses in attention or judgment. Incorporating AI mitigates these risks by accurately processing large data without subjective biases humans may exhibit when interpreting information [88]. In conclusion, integrating AI into project management in the construction industry offers potential benefits in decision-making processes, enabling early identification and evaluation of risks as well as improving efficiency and productivity through automation and reducing human error [89].

### **3.4.2 Challenges**

The implementation of AI in RM for project managers presents numerous benefits; however, its successful integration faces several challenges that hinder progress [80]. Abioye et al. [45] in the demonstration of the impact of AI from benefits to opportunities reported that AI adoption is challenged by numerous factors which primarily revolve around two major issues: the lack of understanding and expertise among project managers [12], as well as resistance to change [72], especially within the organisation [90]. One significant barrier is the limited comprehension of AI technology and its application in RM by many project managers. This lack of understanding often leads to skepticism or hesitation when it comes to embracing AI tools and techniques [76]. Project managers may struggle with grasping how AI algorithm's function, resulting in difficulties interpreting the outputs generated by these systems. Without sufficient knowledge and expertise, they fail to fully leverage the capabilities offered by AI for identifying and mitigating risks effectively.

Moreover, organisational resistance poses another challenge for integrating AI into RM practices. The Implementation of such technologies typically requires restructuring within an organisation, along with redefining traditional roles and responsibilities [82]. Employees fearing job displacement or changes in their workflows can impede the successful adoption of AI tools in RM processes. Strong leadership support is crucial within organisations alongside effective change management strategies addressing employee concerns about job security while emphasising how adopting AI can enhance their role as project managers [82]. As highlighted by a survey conducted by Benbya, Davenport, and Pachidi [91], majority of surveyed organisations cited recruiting of efficient human talent as a primary challenge for implementing initiatives related to AI due to a lack of skills, understanding, and training. The data suggests this inadequate preparation prevents many from embracing the new competencies required. Moreover, in one case study focusing on the construction industry reports that 38%-45% of construction roles would be completely automated by 2030 as stated by Araújo et al. cited in Regona et al. [92] thus eliciting resistance when attempting to introduce an artificially intelligent predictive analytics system designed specifically for identifying potential risks. A company aimed at implementing this innovative solution but encountered considerable pushback from project managers accustomed to using traditional risk assessment methods. Resistance arose from concerns regarding the accuracy and trustworthiness of the AI system's outputs.

### **3.5 Assessing Project Managers' Competencies in Utilizing AI for RM**

Defining competence as the skillset to understand and employ contextually relevant knowledge and psychosocial factor like beliefs, attitudes, and willingness to undertake tasks efficiently, Vitello, Greator, and Shaw [93] described it as a significant factor to determine success. It is a key factor in determining success because it represents a holistic combination of knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviours [8] including the capacity to adapt and innovate performance effectively and efficiently. The increasing integration of AI tools in business processes is a clear reflection of this technologically driven era, a trend that is also visible in project management, which is regarded as the lead of organizational operations [94] and RM practices [83]. Consequently, it becomes imperative for project managers to possess the necessary competences and understanding that enable them to effectively utilise AI tools for RM.

In the context of this research, competence is the possession of knowledge, skills, and capabilities required to effectively understand, utilize, and manage AI technologies within the construction project management domain. AI competency for project managers is the ability to use AI tools, evaluate AI-generated insights, and make educated decisions to reduce risk and effectively achieve project success. Exploring this topic provides valuable insights into what project managers require to leverage AI technologies and maximise their potential benefits while mitigating associated risks. In this, three key areas (figure 3.1) emerge as particularly important: technical proficiency with AI tools, domain expertise related to risk principles, and effective human managerial skills.

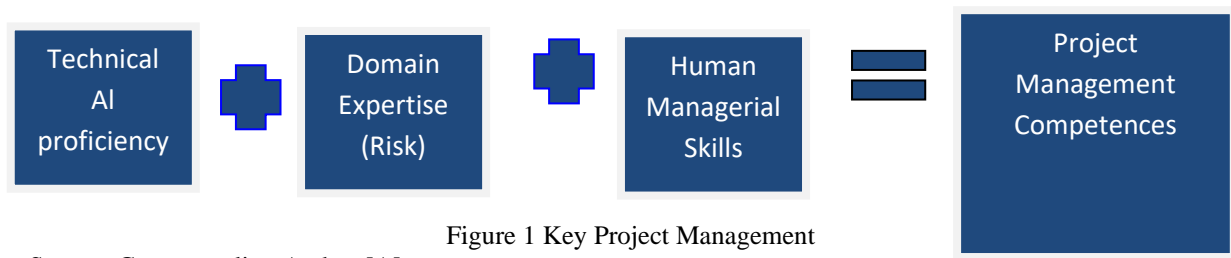


Figure 1 Key Project Management

Source: Corresponding Author [A]

Technical proficiency stands out as a fundamental knowledge area required by project managers seeking to effectively utilise AI tools for RM purposes. Verma et al.'s [95] study emphasised that possessing a strong understanding of AI tools' technical aspects is crucial when aiming to harness their full potential in managing risks within projects. By having technical proficiency with these tools, project managers are better equipped to accurately assess risks through pattern identification and data-driven processes facilitated by machine learning algorithms - exemplifying their capability to analyse large volumes of historical data and efficiently identify trends or anomalies suggestive of potential hazards. Project managers who excel at interpreting algorithm-generated results make informed decisions based on reliable information derived from these outputs; they understand different algorithms' inner workings along with parameters affecting performance quality alongside sensitivity towards changes encountered concerning input datasets [96, 80]. Ashtari et al.'s [94] case study also highlighted the importance of technical competence among construction-based project manager teams working with implemented systems. The study focused on how effectively using AI technical competence can help with accurate hazard identification, prioritisation according to severity metrics, and the development of effective mitigation strategies.

Another focal area demanding attention is competencies around domain expertise of fundamental RM practices and principles. According to Yabanci [97] research, high-level proficiency in particular domain knowledge/expertise as crucial. The research described domain expertise as possessing a deep understanding of the industry or field-specific aspects under which a project(s) operates. Although AI tools provide valuable assistance via analysis involving large data volumes while detecting patterns and trends indicative of possible risks; nevertheless, lacking relevant context renders these insights without their due relevance- a project problem addressed by project managers who have access to domain experts' understanding and interpretations, enables them to make well-informed decisions impacting the development of effective mitigation strategies. Developing a profound knowledge base pertaining to RM principles provides project managers with solid foundations, which enables them to monitor threats/hazards in different initiatives that are linked to specific sectors, industries, or fields and to better understand their intricate complexity [98]. These skills enable them to recognise potential risks as they arise across the lifecycles of ongoing project operations, accurately determining likelihood levels and associated potential impacts, and creating effective response strategies.

Beyond the technical competencies necessary for implementing and effectively using AI in project RM are the traditional managerial skills that are critical to maximising AI's potential in a project. The importance of critically reviewed and necessary project manager's competence has been stressed since the emergence of project management, with different competencies established and maintained over the evolution years [99]. McGrath and Kostalova [100] reported that although there is a fundamental ongoing shift in project management with empirical evidence of increased reliance on AI tools, techniques, and procedures, project management success is enabled by a combination of all factors, including the human factor, such as creativity, innovation, decision-making team spirit, and communication.



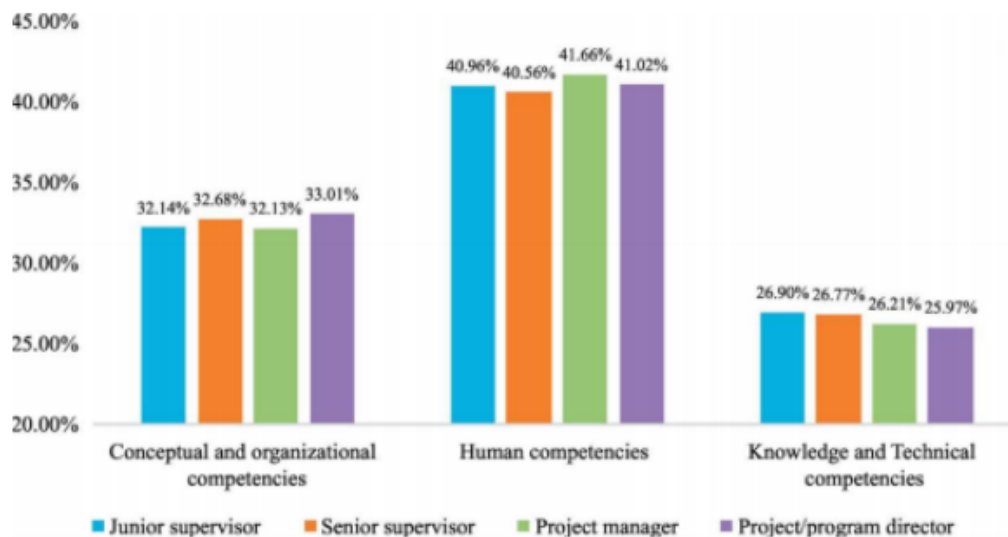


Figure 2 Competency levels based on project managers' professional expertise.

Source: Chen et al. 2019 [101]

Chen et al. [101] and Ahmad and Imam [102] agreed that although it is necessary to combine all the required key project management competencies (Figure 3.1) including the general technical skills of the industry in varying degrees dependent on the level of the project manager (figure 3.2); the evolving changes ongoing with AI integration in project management and particularly in project RM practices require new technical competencies.

#### IV. Conclusion

This review underscores the increasing adoption of AI in project management practices, especially RM, as demonstrated earlier, as well as the relevance of RM in determining project success and the project manager's responsibility to reduce, if not eliminate, project risks, drive the importance of conducting the study. Empirical evidence from past literature pointed out that whilst there seems to be a clear positive trajectory relating to technology adoption within UK- based project management entities due to its relative benefits such as improved efficiency and productivity, reduction of human error and improved decision making, especially in protocols governing risk identification, there remain some unresolved challenges including resistance to change for fear of job loss and lack of understanding and expertise of project managers.

##### 4.1 Recommendations

This extended research provides valuable insights with contribution to existing literature revealing the significance of AI competence for Project Managers and its importance in influencing project. RM practices within the construction industry in the United Kingdom with transferable insight into other industries and countries. The research enriches the practical understanding of project managers changing responsibilities in an AI-driven project landscape, adapting to the change by embracing technology, enhancing skills, and evolving roles. By investigating the significance of AI competence for project managers, the study provides insights into how to navigate the challenges posed by complex contemporary projects and devise appropriate strategies to manage the risk evolving from these projects; like the application of risk tools like stakeholder mapping and analysis to identify real- time key players, their concerns and identifiable risk management supports to address one of the major concern of having multiple stakeholders with different priorities in a complex contemporary projects.

This research further highlights the necessity for project managers to continually upskill and receive AI competency training to identify and utilise the evolving adaptive effects of AI-driven technologies on RM and other project management practices. Consequently, the evaluation of the influence of AI on project RM provides guiding patterns for a positive adoption of AI across the project lifecycle from planning to completion. The significance of this research extends beyond project teams and managers to impact the entire organisation and provide theoretical implications for the professional industry. Through empowering project managers with AI competency necessary for RM, organisations can improve their success rating card, optimise resource allocation, and maintain a competitive edge. The insights from this research would aid organisations in implementing strategic AI trainings/programs that would foster effective RM practices, foster innovative reasoning leading to sustainable project success and AI advancement in the project management lifecycle. The study further supports the inclusion of a theoretical framework on the hypothesis the project managers' intent to learn and adapt to change

is important; this is because the empirical reviews evidenced that the successful integration of AI into project management practices is dependent not only on technological capabilities but also on the project managers' knowledge, as well as the positive impact of combining human expertise with AI technologies on risk management, decision-making and project success. This certifies project managers to understand, accept and adapt to new processes and responsibilities in the context of accepting innovative practices or technologies in the construction industry.

### **Competing Interests**

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

### **Authors Contribution**

All authors contributed to the review process.

### **Final Approval of Manuscript**

All authors

### **Ethics Approval and consent to Participate**

Not Applicable

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