

CONTRACTOR COMPETENCE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ROAD CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS UNDER KENYA URBAN ROADS AUTHORITY IN NAIROBI COUNTY IN KENYA

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Abstract: Construction projects outsourced by various Kenya Urban Roads Authority contractors are facing main difficulties. This is due to the statistics showing that projects that have been contracted over the previous 5 years have not been finished within the given constraints, lacking service quality and thus increasing the expenses associated. The study aimed at determining the impact of contractor competence on road construction projects implementation. This study was conducted through a descriptive design. From 2013 to 2017, the target population was road building projects under the Kenya Urban Roads Authority in which five projects were studied. 60 participants were the target. A census was conducted of 60 participants. Questionnaires were given to all participants. Statistics of description and regression were used to analyse quantitative data. The established a positive relationship between contractor competence and implementation of projects. It was concluded that contracts are obviously negotiated with all contracts at the service level that have been established and the choice of contractors is based on abilities, reliability and credibility. The study recommends that the contractor's credibility be sought first before the organisation concludes a contract with the contractor.

Keywords: Contractor Competence, Project Implementation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Projects can be regarded as a collection of operations to be finished in line with particular goals involving the use of the funds of a company (Schultz, Slevin & Pinto, 2011). According to Pearce and Robinson (2016), implementing a project plan is the method by which a set of accepted timetable of job is translated into functional and operational objectives. Anton (2013) argues that in order to determine whether a project has been carried out efficiently or better yet, if the project has been successful, it is necessary to go back to the original project goals and evaluate the magnitude of their individual achievement. Ocharo and Kimutai (2018) observed that there is usually a lack of clear policies for project execution in government institutions to guide the process and promote vendors to do company with them. The current rules, for example, prevent the growth of suppliers and collaborations due to the most companies' short-term nature.

Pinto (2011) shows that the implementation method of the project is complicated, requiring comprehensive and collective attention to a broad range of human, budgetary and technical considerations. In addition, projects often have a particular set of critical success factors that will increase the likelihood of efficient execution if discussed and considered. On the other side, Slevin and Pinto (2011) note that failure of the project could result unless these factors were taken seriously. Today, business operates under elevated levels of uncertainty, projects are open to all types of external impacts, unexpected events, ever-increasing demands, changing constraints and fluctuating flows of resources. This clearly shows that if projects are implemented and action is not taken to deal with them effectively and efficiently, there are high chances of failure..

The process of constructing a project must be managed effectively. Client, competition, and regulatory agency requirements have grown quickly (Crowley & Hancher, 2009). These problems pose a paradox: few of these demands directly contribute to the physical construction of the project, but failure to manage them properly can lead to problems

for the entire project and construction team. Choosing an appropriate construction contractor increases the probability of successful completion of a project (Alhazmi & McCaffer, 2010). It can also fulfill client goals and keep the timetable for cost, time and quality. The selection of a appropriate contractor in the construction management process is therefore very crucial.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Kenya's government and it continues to allocate its growth partners enormous economic resources to finance these Parastatals' managed projects. However, owing to many ineffective project implementation, the expected advantages are partially or never realized. The Kenya Urban Roads Authority (KURA), which receives financing from the Kenya Roads Board (KRB), is responsible for keeping roads in Kenya. However, by participating road contractors, KURA delegates road maintenance (Kenya Roads Board, 2017). In Kenya, the performance of many highway contractors has failed.

Statistics indicate that most projects outsourced by various contractors in the Kenya Urban Roads Authority (KURA) face main difficulties that have resulted in a absence of completion of the project within the given moment, quality of service and hence increased expenses. Nyamwaro (2011) conducted a survey on project execution problems at the Ministry of Roads Projects and discovered that bad communication and absence of understanding were the primary difficulties facing the execution of the project. Haron, Devi, Hassim, Alias, Tahir and Harun (2017) studied project management practices and their impact on project success in the construction industry in Malaysia and revealed a significant impact between project management practices and project success.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Study by Enshassi, Mohamed and Abushaban (2009) concentrated on variables influencing building project efficiency in the Gaza Strip. The results of the study show that all 3 organizations agree that the most significant variables influencing project efficiency are: delays due to the closure of borders / roads leading to material shortages; funding unavailability; low project management capacity; higher material prices; unavailability of highly qualified and experienced employees; and poor quality of accessible equipment and raw materials. A study conducted by Akomah and Jackson (2016) on variables influencing contractors ' performance on construction projects in central Ghana using a census method to select contractors indicated that: project money flow, cost of materials and the primary factors influencing contractors ' effectiveness in building projects are equipment, quality of equipment and raw materials, quality training and meeting, and the organisational quality assessment system..

Marzouk, El Kherbawy and Khalifa (2013) research on variables affecting subcontractor selection in building projects used a questionnaire distributed to building specialists to determine the significance of variables considered by the principal contractor in selecting the most appropriate subcontractor discovered that inappropriate choice of subcontractors during job advancement could lead to many issues. Study by Githenya and Ngugi (2014) examined the evaluation of the determinants of housing project execution in Kenya discovered that driven project team and skills in project management have a critical effect on the execution of housing projects in Kenya. Project control measures with a correlation coefficient of 76.6 percent component affecting execution housing projects in Kenya were discovered to be the most important.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted through a descriptive design of studies. KURA organization was the target populations whereby a census was conducted of 60 participants. The research used an open-ended and close-ended questionnaire. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviations. Analysis of regression was used to assess the relationship between dependent variable and dependent factors at a confidence point of 95% and an error term of 5%.

5. Findings

The findings of the influence of contractor competence on project implementation are indicated in Table 1.

Table 1: Contractor Competence

Statement	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (M)
The organisation guarantees a clear distinction between its key operations and those contracted	3.75	1.566
Credibility of the contractor is first attempted before the organisation concludes a contract with the contractor	3.98	1.045

There are clear negotiations with all the service-level agreements that have been concluded	4.22	1.397
The selection of contractors is based on reliability and credibility	4.67	0.579
The contractors are chosen on the basis of project management knowledge	4.75	0.517
Aggregate Score	4.27	1.021

The results in Table 1 show that the respondents strongly agreed that contractor competence influence the implementation of road construction projects under Kenya urban roads authority in Nairobi County in Kenya as shown by the aggregate mean of 4.27 with a significance variance of 1.021. A research conducted by Akomah and Jackson (2016) on variables influencing contractors ' efficiency in construction projects in the Central Region of Ghana, using a census method to select contractors, disclosed a favorable and substantial impact between contractors ' competence and project execution.

Most of the participants strongly agreed that contractors are selected on the basis of project management expertise and that contractors are selected on the basis of reliability and credibility as shown by mean of 4.75 and 4.67 respectively and a standard deviation of 0.517 and 0.579 respectively. Study by Marzouk, El Kherbawy and Khalifa (2013) on variables affecting subcontractor selection in building projects research discovered that inadequate subcontractor choice could lead to many issues during job advancement. These include poor work quality and delay in the duration of the project. The study concluded that selecting the best subcontractor in construction projects is a vital process..

The participants agreed that clear negotiations with all service level agreements are conducted, contract credibility is first attempted before the organisation enters into agreement with the contractor and that the organisation guarantees a clear demarcation between its key operations and those contracted, as shown by mean score of 4.22, 3.98 and 3.75 respectively and standard deviation of 1.397, 1.045 and 1.566 respectively. A Study by Githenya and Ngugi (2014) discovered that driven project team and project leadership skills have a major impact on the execution of residential projects in Kenya.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research concludes that contracts are obviously negotiated with all the service level agreements that have been established and that contractors are chosen based on skills, reliability and credibility. This facilitated the execution of road building projects in KURA in a positive and significant way. The research recommends that Kenya Urban Roads Authority should guarantee a clear demarcation between the organization's key project operations; the contractor's credibility should be sought first before organisation contracts with the contractor. Contracts with all service-level contracts should clearly be negotiated and chosen on the basis of competence, reliability and credibility.

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