

# EFFECT OF PROJECT MANAGER'S COMPETENCY ON EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF REAL ESTATE CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS IN KAJIADO COUNTY, KENYA

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**Abstract:** The main purpose of the study was to examine the effect of project manager's competency on effective implementation of real estate construction projects in Kajiado County, Kenya. The study was guided by the following four Theories: Project management competency theory, Resource based view theory, Management by objectives theory and Iceberg theory of success. The study employed descriptive research design since it minimizes biasness. The study focused on five on-going projects from each of the 52 registered real estate construction firms in Kajiado County. Therefore, the target population was 260. The unit of observation was the real estate project managers and project supervisors. The study used 20% of the target population and thus the sample size was 104 respondents. This study used primary data which was collected using questionnaires for the real estate construction projects. Simple random sampling was used to sample the project managers and project supervisors. The research instruments were validated by use of a pilot study, which was assessed by the supervisor. Data collected was analyzed by use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Computer Package version 22 to produce frequencies, descriptive and inferential statistics which were used to derive conclusions and generalizations regarding the population. A multiple regression model was used to show the relationship between the independent variables to the dependent variable. The study found that project manager's competency had a positive and significant effect on the effective implementation of real estate construction projects in Kajiado County. The study recommends that the project managers should have the required competency in order to effectively implement and manage projects. Competency is therefore critical to the effective implementation of Real estate construction projects.

**Keywords:** project manager's competency, real estate construction projects, effective implementation, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), Kajiado County.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### Background of the study:

The real estate construction industry plays a fundamental role in the development of a nation and helps in meeting one of the society's basic needs of shelter. The industry contributes up to 10% to a country's gross national product. Globally, there has been increased demand for houses and this has a lot to do with demographics but the necessary competency to implement the projects has been lacking. The real estate construction industry is dynamic in nature due to the increasing uncertainties in technology, budgets, and development processes. Nowadays, building projects are becoming much more complex and difficult and hence project teams are facing unprecedented changes.

Project manager's competency is critical because if absent delays on implementation will arise. Delays in project completion are a common problem in the construction industry not only with an immeasurable cost to society but also with debilitating effects on the contracting parties. The concept of delay in the substantial completion of real estate construction projects is a global phenomenon. The impact of delays is that funds committed on projects do not benefit intended recipients and subsequently results in cost and time overrun. Lindhard and Wandahl (2014) investigated the principal causes of project delay in Denmark construction projects through the Last Planner System theory. The most frequent causes of project delay are found to be lack of proper project manager competencies, connecting work, change in work plans, workforce, external conditions, and material and construction design. Ideally, projects should be designed and managed by highly trained construction professionals and executed by qualified contractors selected on the basis of their capability to meet the project performance goals. These goals are in terms of the contract period, budget, quality, environmental sustainability and client satisfaction.

### **Statement of the problem:**

Construction Projects are referred to as part of the main pillars contributing to economic growth, since they are the life line of construction programs. The concept of delay in the substantial implementation of real estate construction projects is a global phenomenon. In Kenya, real estate construction projects are facing challenges of delays and non-completion. Delays in project implementation are a common problem in the construction industry not only with an immeasurable cost to society but also with debilitating effects on the contracting parties Lindhard and Wandahl (2014).

It is worth noting that maintaining steady implementation and completion of real estate construction projects has been an issue of serious concern to the private developers', clients, contractors and the different stakeholders (Hass, 2015). In Kenya, counties have for about 3 years now carried out various projects successfully with counties like Machakos, Meru and Kericho reporting up to 12% per annum positive projects implementation, but a number of the 47 counties like Kajiado County have failed on the way due to various prevailing factors. A report by the World Bank (2014) shows that Kajiado County is among the counties that seemed not to have delivered major real estate projects, outlining only 10.7 % of the real estate construction projects have been completed on time and within the approved budgets, citing lack of proper project manager's competency as one of the reasons.. The impact of delays is that funds committed on projects do not benefit intended recipients and subsequently results in cost and time overrun.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Empirical review:**

Competence is the ability of an individual to do a job properly. A competency is a set of defined behaviors that provide a structured guide enabling the identification, evaluation and development of the behaviors in individual employees (Chan and Mohan 2009). Competencies are also what people need to be successful in their jobs. Job competencies are not the same as job task. Competencies include all the related knowledge, skills, abilities, and attributes that form a person's job. This set of context-specific qualities is correlated with superior job performance and can be used as a standard against which to measure job performance as well as to develop, recruit, and hire employees. A project manager's role is to manage the day to day activities of a project such that the outputs are delivered on time using the agreed level of resources (including the budget). The project manager should have the necessary project management skills to enable them to discharge this function efficient and effectively (Hass, 2009). The Project Manager is responsible for reporting the progress on the delivery of the project. Trivellas and Reklitis (2014) used a sample of 132 male and female managers in Greek firms to measure both leadership roles' competencies and managerial effectiveness. Structured questionnaires were used to collect data. The study established that managers characterized with high levels of job performance excel in practicing all leadership competencies while gender does not exert significant impact on job performance.

The project manager is a key stakeholder in a construction project and his competence is a critical factor affecting project planning, scheduling, and communication. The project manager must remember the importance of team building and the phases of team development: forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning. The project manager is a team leader and should determine the best methods to enhance the project success and performance of the team through team building activities, rewards and recognition, training, appraisals, co-location, support, direction, feedback and performance appraisal. The different goals and objectives of PM, senior management and functional managers are a major

and constant source of conflict due to disagreements therefore, to facilitate effective implementation of projects they should be brought together. Competence is therefore a prerequisite for the success of construction projects. The component includes utilization of up-to-date technology, proper emphasis on past experience, multidisciplinary or competent project manager, and awarding bids to the right designer/contractor.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

Here the research part deals with which and how the methods are used in the study, it provides a comprehensive discussion by outlining how the data was obtained, validated and treated, the population of the study, sampling frame and sampling techniques, research design strategies. Zikmund (2007), descriptive design allows the researcher to gather information, summarize, present and interpret data. A research design is therefore a plan that outlines how, when and where data are to be gathered and analyzed. The study adopted a descriptive research design in examining the effects of project manager's competency on effective implementation of real estate construction projects in Kajiado County.

The target population for this study was the ongoing real estate construction projects in Kajiado County. The study focused on 5 ongoing projects for each of the 52 registered real estate construction firms in Kajiado County. Therefore the target population was 260 (5\*52). The unit of observation was the project managers and project supervisors from each project since they were actively involved in the implementation of real estate construction projects. Mugenda and Mugenda (2008) opine that for any meaningful study, a sample of 10% to 30% of the target population is adequate. 104 respondents were randomly selected for this study. This therefore formed 20% of the target population.

#### Data Processing and analysis:

Questionnaires were used to gather data because the information was collected from a large sample and a diverse area, in addition confidentiality was upheld. Questionnaires were administered to all the respondents. The people who were sampled filled in the questionnaires provided while being assisted by research assistants where they were unable to interpret the questions during any scheduled meetings, otherwise, the research assistants dropped and picked the questionnaires as agreed. Secondary data was collected through published scholarly articles, journals, newspapers, books and other relevant literature. Issues covered were sequenced and worded to make the data collected systematic.

Data analysis was carried out by use of Statistical package for the social Scientists (SPSS) to obtain descriptive statistics, a summary regression and a multiple linear regression model. SPSS software version 22.0 was used to produce frequencies, descriptive and inferential statistics were used to derive conclusions and generalizations regarding the population. The particular descriptive statistics produced frequencies, mean scores and standard deviation. A multiple linear regression model was used to test the significance relationship of independent variables against the dependent variable.

### 4. CONCLUSIONS

From the study, the results show that the study established a positive correlation between project manager's competency and effective project implementation. The study concluded that project manager's competency was positively related to the effective implementation Real Estate Construction projects in Kajiado County. Competency is therefore essential as it will ensure efficiency and effectiveness in the implementation of the projects as well as early corrections will be made by having the required project manager's competency.

#### Recommendations of the Study:

The study recommends that a competent project manager should be given the responsibility to oversee the implementation of real construction projects to ensure projects are effectively implemented. Real estate construction projects play an important role in development of a country; hence the most competent project managers should be put in place to ensure effective project implementation. The study also recommends that the project managers should have the required competency in order to effectively implement and manage projects. Competency is therefore critical to the effective implementation of Real estate construction projects.

#### Suggestion for further research:

The research attempted to unveil the effect of project manager's competency on effective implementation of real estate construction projects in Kajiado County, on the Kenyan soil which provided the researcher with more information that was important to be used for academic reference.

The overall effective implementations of projects have uncountable research papers. Scholars have therefore not exhausted areas of effective implementation of real estate construction projects. Further studies can be done in other counties for the purpose of making a comparison of the findings with those of the current study. Scholars in this field should go ahead to ascertain other different variables, their uniqueness and connection to effective implementation of real estate construction projects.

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