

INTERNAL ORGANIZATION ENVIRONMENT AND PROJECT PERFORMANCE IN NAIROBI CITY COUNTY PROJECTS

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Abstract: The devolved units were created upon the presumption that they will enhance the service delivery to the citizens. However, despite billions of shillings being directed towards development projects; devolved units such as Nairobi City County have accounted for a mere 30% success rate in the project execution. This study sought after the effect of employee competency, organization structure, organization culture and resource capability on project performance. The resource-based view theory and the contingency theory guided the research. The study employed descriptive research design. The study examined projects being undertaken across the 11 departments in Nairobi County. The sample population was 55 personnel in Nairobi. A census sampling technique was employed utilizing both primary and secondary data collected with the use of semi-structured questionnaires and the annual county development plans and Auditor General report. The study utilized both descriptive and inferential statistics (using SPSS 24) in analysing the collected quantitative data. An 89% response rate was attained. The correlation results indicated a positive and significant effect of employee competency, organization structure, organization culture and resource capability on project outcomes. The regression results showed that 45.3% of the project performance in Nairobi County Government are determined by the internal organization environment. The study concluded that employee competency, organization structure, organization culture and resource capability significantly impact the outcomes of projects. Its recommendations will be key when formulating policies within the county government to promote the expansion and proper management of county government projects. Recommendations were for county governments to improve the internal environment through fostering capacity building for the staff, enhancing resource and reputational capabilities, enhancing organization structure and culture which can be integral to increasing project performance.

Keywords: Employee Competency, Organization Structure, Organization Culture, Resource Capability, Project Performance.

1. INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

The Project Management Institute (2010) defines a project as an impermanent attempt that is undertaken by people so that they can create unique services and products at an already established budget and time frame and in order to produce particular desired results. In this regard, to attain optimal project performance, project managers have to exhibit appropriate skills, knowledge, techniques and tools ensuring that the projects achieve their goals. Projects that are successful in terms of implementation brings in together resources, people and tasks that are relevant to enhance attainment of project objectives in the work plan (Kerzner, 2013). Different stakeholders come together to make sure that the project is moving as intended so as not to compromise on quality of intended results (Liu, Keller, & Shih, 2011).

During project execution, the presence of a right mix of technical expertise and skills that endeavors to provide needed management capabilities and competencies during project implementation ensures overall positive project performance. This possession is a vital form of human capital that if well utilized can lead to smooth attainment of project goals thus enabling optimal project performance in the long run (Blackman, Buick, O'Donnell, O'Flynn, & West, 2013). Wachnik (2015) deduced that project managers need to effectively manage project resources so that projects can continue in operation even after external resources are exhausted. This will in turn enhance project continuity that then leads to optimal performance due to minimization of disruptions. The adoption of individuals who possess good project management skills and good leadership traits steer adopted projects to prosperity as they readily endeavor to enhance the attainment of both productivity and sustainability. The manner in which project managers undertake to influence superiors and immediate juniors by adopting appropriate participatory interactions in turn affects project performance as leadership skills definitely define projects probabilities of either succeeding or stalling (Alford & O'Flynn, 2012).

Organizational environment consists of both the internal and external factors which have direct influence on the firm's decision-making process hence its productivity. These factors include the economy, management capability, organization culture, government policy, and social factors affect the firm's likelihood of survival (Greenwood, 2007). Chan, Suhaiza, and Yudi, (2008) examined critical factors affecting project performance and concluded both internal and external factors positively influence performance of projects. The researchers opined that management competency, stakeholder involvement and proper financing influence the project performance. Mulwa (2013) examined factors affecting project sustainability included project planning, financing, management competency and external environment positively influenced project sustainability. Wachnik (2015) indicated that environmental factors influencing project performance constitute of both the external and internal aspects. This study conceptualized environmental factors through management expertise, stakeholder influence, political factors and project financing. The project performance was measured in terms of attainment of projects goals, increased enrolment rates, increased retention rates and enhanced learning facilities. The current study examined the contribution of the organization structure, culture, the employee competency and resource capability on the project performance.

Musyoki and Kilika, (2017) examined how micro-environmental variables impact project implementation among industrial training institutions in Kenya with results indicating that staff competency, the level of skills, the culture and structure of the organization positively influenced the project performance within the training projects. Kamau and Mohamed (2018) assessed the impact of Monitoring and Evaluation measures on project outcomes, determining that attributes of monitoring and evaluation impacted the success of county projects. Further the researchers noted that enhanced management support and effective organization structure were key explanatory variables of project success.

Statement of the Problem

Kenya's devolution in its first three years of 2013/2014, 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 has been characterized by poor service delivery by the County Governments ranging from low absorption of expenditure which has averaged 35% for development and 85% for recurrent expenditure and the composition of the administrative costs that have gone high compared to service delivery where County Governments cumulative allocation for health and agriculture have gone higher than the National Government allocation prior to the setup of devolved units (Controller of Budget, 2017). Again, there have been only a handful of counties that reached the 30% percent threshold of development spending as revenue collection from counties were below targeted expectation in majority of the counties as well as low project success within county governments in the country (Auditor General Report, 2016). Despite this there has been limited examination of how the county government internal environment influences service delivery in the project execution hence this study assessed how the internal environment determines the productivity of Nairobi County projects. Kimani (2016) indicated that there was extensive failure in implementation of projects within Nairobi County which were largely influenced by lack of employee involvement, misuse of resources, poor leadership, lack of organization culture and structure. Mwaniki,(2017) notes that atleast 70% of infrastructure projects have failed within Nairobi City county due to resource wastage, political interference and poor leadership capacity. The current research sought to expand the available knowledge by studying how the firm's internal environment affects productivity of Nairobi City County projects.

Objective of the Study

To examine the influence of internal organization setup on project performance in Nairobi City County projects.

Specifically, the study focused on;

- i. To determine the effect of employee competency on the productivity of county government projects within NCC
- ii. To establish the effect of organization structure on the productivity of county government projects within NCC
- iii. To determine the effect of organization culture on the productivity of county government projects within NCC
- iv. To establish the influence of resource capability on the performance of county government projects within NCC.

2. THEORETICAL REVIEW

Formulated by Penrose this theory argues that organizational resources have to be valuable, inimitable, rare and not easy to substitute to become a source of strategic competitive advantage. If organizations are to prosper, they ought to bring in new innovations since the business environment is constantly changing. Barney (1991) projected that firm owned funds have a constructive influence on performance. The theory argues that the key resources owned by a firm can be converted into sources of competitive advantage. Barney (1991) asserts the theory can be easily translated as; the more valuable a firm's resources the more strategically placed it is to remain competitive in the long run. The value of these resources is determined by the characteristics of these resources which should be non-substitutable and inimitable. Better competitive advantage leads to better productivity. Hence in the current study the theory was fundamentally important in linking how the management competencies can be leveraged as tools of enhancing the performance of projects.

Contingency theory attempts to study organization behavior and how external and internal factors such as technology and culture influences decision making and as a result performance of the organization (Woods, 2009). This theory's main assumption is that it is not possible to apply a single type of organizational structure/culture across all organizations since factors such as the technology adopted affect its effectiveness and how effective the technology is towards assisting the company to achieve its goals, the level of volatility towards its environment, size, design, features and the information system it has employed (Tillema, 2015). To study organizational design it is, therefore, necessary to study contingency theory (Donaldson, 2001). For effective structural design of the organization, the contingencies must fit. According to this theory, structural contingency theory is dependent on statics, meaning that a static state of fit between structure and contingency determines project outcome (Woods, 2009). The relevance of the theory to the study is that it guided when examining how the structure of the organization and its culture affects performance of county government projects.

3. EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Employee Competency and Project Performance

Jolly, Isa, Othman, and Ahmdon (2016) examined effect of capability of the management, marketing and competitive positioning affect productivity of Malaysian construction projects. After sampling 420 managers, the study hypothesized that management capability, marketing team and the competence level of the employees directly impact project performance. The study was, however, Malaysian-based as opposed to Nairobi County Government projects. Sinesilassie, Tabish, and Jha (2017) conducted a study among Ethiopian-based engineers on the critical factors which affect schedule performance. Using a descriptive research design, the researcher concluded that personnel competence has a significant contribution productivity of Ethiopian firms. The study indicated that emerging disagreements during the project execution timeline and poor human resource management negatively affected project performance. The study sampled engineers within the project execution whereas the current study sampled the project execution team within Nairobi County government. Kibet and Sile (2017) assessed how firm culture and qualification of the staff influence credit scoring implementation at KWFT. Questionnaires were the main sources of data upon which descriptive statistics analysis on the data was undertaken. Correlation and multiple linear regression analysis models were applied to determine how organization culture, and staff competences influence the implementation of credit scoring. Findings showed that staff competency was directly related to the implementation of credit scoring. The research further showed that enhancing the staff capacity was key in attaining better project performance. The study however was limited to KWFT.

Organization Structure and Project Performance

Demirkesen and Ozorhon, (2017) studied the impact that integration management has on productivity of construction projects. Data from construction professionals working on 121 projects was sourced with the use of questionnaires. Structural equation modeling was used in analysis. The researcher was able to determine that effective integration and assignment of roles and responsibilities were key predictors of the performance of the project. The study indicators

however failed to consider other internal factors of the organizations. Akanni, Oke, and Akpomemie, (2015) assessed the impact of environmental factors on outcomes of building projects in Nigeria. The study targetted the management of government and private projects. Collecting the data using structured questionnaires, the researcher found out that enhanced coordination within the organization influenced the project performance. The researchers also concluded that utilization of better effective control mechanism also contributed to positive effect on project performance. Musau and Kirui, (2018) researched Machakos county in an attempt to identify management practices that impact project performance. The researchers adopted a descriptive research design utilizing descriptive and regression analysis with findings showing that lack of internal coordination and poor structure within the county governments negatively impacted the project execution within the county governments. The study however did not analyze how the internal work environment affects productivity within Nairobi County.

Organization Culture and Project Performance

Nguyen and Watanabe, (2017) used structured questionnaires to examine how culture affects productivity of construction projects in Vietnam. The research utilized a mix of descriptive and inferential statistics with results indicating that proper goals formulation, commitment among the contractors and employee commitment enhance project performance. Oyewobi, Abiola-Falemu, and Ibronke (2016) examined effects of rework and organizational culture on project outcomes. Adopting a mixed method research and data analysis using both descriptive and inferential statistics, study findings showed that the management style, the communication style and organization culture components were key in enhancing the project execution and service delivery. The study was conducted within Nigerian federal organizations as opposed to the current study which is Kenyan-based. Waweru and Omwenga, (2015) looked into how strategic management practices impact construction project outcomes in Kenya. Findings showed that enhanced personnel recognition was key in determining the firm productivity. Additionally, findings showed that personnel commitment and effective communication and feedback systems influenced firm productivity. The study examined private construction firms whereas as opposed to county government performance. Njeri and Were, (2017) assessed afactors determining performance among Kenyan NGO projects with findings showing that project culture significantly and positively influence the performance of NGO projects. Furthermore, empowering supervisors by delegating duties and aligning firm structure and policies with organization goals were also noted to improve project outcomes.

Resource Capability and Project Performance

Nkamelu (2011), conducted a Botswana based study determining that upon project initiation, the time lost in awaiting project financing and approval significantly impacts the completion of the projects. Although the funding is approved, they are received at different times depending on different projects which begin and end at different times. The government sometimes provides funding for some projects but this proves to be questionable because most people see them as politically motivated rather than for the development of the nation. Kagiri and Wainaina, (2017) examined the time and cost overruns in Kenyan power projects. The results of the data analysis indicated that the project equipment costs, salaries and wages of the personnel and maintenance costs were key aspects that affected the attainment of the project goals of KENGEN. Mrongo and Iravo, (2016) investigated the influence of capital budgeting strategies on outcomes of Kenya rural roads authority projects. The study employed descriptive analysis with findings showing that an organization's financing capability had a positive influence on the project performance within KURA. Essential to the financing of a project is adequate resource allocation, timely disbursement, effective utilization and compliance to best financial management practices (Ochieng & Tubey, 2013).

4. METHODOLOGY

This research adopted the positivist philosophy that believes that the truth is steady and can be portrayed from a target perspective without meddling with the phenomenon being observed (Creswell, 2008). A descriptive research design was applied (Cooper & P. Schindler, 2010), since it supports the adaptation of quantitative approaches in the examination of the association between variables. Further, the design allowed for the study to examine the phenomena within their natural environment. The study unit of analysis was the projects being undertaken within the 11 main departments within the Nairobi City County government. The departments were selected as arms of the devolved unit they have a jurisdiction to perform their independent projects. The unit of observation was 55 senior managers in charge of the executive departments in the county.

The study applied a census sampling of all the participants to foster their representation in the research. Primary was sought after using self-administered questionnaires while secondary was sought from financial reports. This enhanced the quality of available data. Furthermore, the instrument is easy and convenient to utilize in data collection and it enabled quantitative and qualitative data to be collected. Journals, periodicals and government reports provided secondary data. After collection the questionnaires, the research sorted and edited them before coding into SPSS version 23 and then analyzing the data. Descriptive analysis was carried out through a mix of measures of central tendency such as means, percentages, standard deviation and frequencies. Inferential statistics was carried out through estimation of a linear regression model.

5. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Correlation Test

The study focused on establishing how the independent variables impact the dependent variables. This was implemented through correlation analysis at 95% confidence level and findings are presented in the correlation matrix below.

Table 1: Correlation Matrix

		Project Performance	Organization structure	Organization culture	Resource Capability	Employee Competency
Project Performance	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
	N	160				
Organization structure	Pearson Correlation	.544**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000				
	N	160	160			
Organization culture	Pearson Correlation	.488**	.606**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000			
	N	160	160	160		
Resource Capability	Pearson Correlation	.615**	.626**	.572**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		
	N	160	160	160	160	
Employee Competency	Pearson Correlation	.522**	.461**	.524**	.579**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	160	160	160	160	160

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

The findings showed that organization structure improves project performance in Nairobi County Government ($P = .544$, $Sig = .000 < .05$). Consistent with our findings Demirkesen and Ozorhon, (2017) also showed that clear integration, development of clear roles and responsibilities is vital to improved project performance. On the second objective, findings showed organization culture significantly impacts project completion ($P = .488$, $Sig = .000 < .05$). The findings are in line with Nguyen and Watanabe, (2017) who revealed that clear formulation of goals and enhancing commitment within the organization team fosters project performance. Resource capability was also noted to significantly impact the outcomes of county government projects ($P = .615$, $Sig = .000 < .05$). Nkamelu (2011) also suggested that improving resource allocation and mobilization is vital to supporting effective project execution. On the final objective, employee competency levels were found to positively influence project completion ($P = .522$, $Sig = .000 < .05$). These findings are supported in the empirical literature by Jolly, Isa, Othman, and Ahmdon (2016) found out that management capability and competence has been an instrumental factor to enhancing the project performance. Sinesilassie, Tabish, and Jha (2017) also revealed that personnel competence significantly improves project execution.

Regression Analysis

The study adopted a multiple linear regression analysis to establish the magnitude of the influence of the internal organization environment on project performance.

Table 2: Regression Summary

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.673 ^a	.453	.439	2.50815

a. Predictors: (Constant), Employee Competency, Organization Structure, Resource Capability, Organization Culture

The results indicate the regression analysis yielded a coefficient of determination ($R^2 = .453$) which implied that holding all other factors constant internal organization environment predicts 45.3% of the project performance in Nairobi County Government. The findings show that other factors not considered in the research can determine 54.7% of changes in project outcomes.

Table 3: ANOVA Summary

ANOVA ^a						
	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	806.614	4	201.654	32.055	.000 ^b
	Residual	975.079	155	6.291		
	Total	1781.694	159			

a. Dependent Variable: Project Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Employee Competency, Organization Structure, Resource Capability, Organization Culture

The ANOVA analysis was conducted to establish the statistical significance of the regression analysis adopted in the research. The findings indicated a F -value $32.055 > 2.76$, $Sig = .000 < .05$. These results indicated there was a statistically significant relationship between internal organization environment (*employee competency, organization structure, resource capability, organization culture*) and the project performance in Nairobi County Government.

Table 4: Regression Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	5.421	1.651			3.284	.001
	Organization Structure	.232	.096	.200		2.414	.017
	Organization Culture	.176	.086	.272		2.886	.007
	Resource Capability	.283	.073	.334		3.900	.000
	Employee Competency	.278	.107	.199		2.611	.010

a. Dependent Variable: Project Performance

The results showed a resulting regression model;

$$Y = 5.421 + .232x_1 + .176x_2 + .283x_3 + .278x_4 + 1.651$$

The findings showed a regression $\alpha = 5.421$ which was statistically significant as indicated by $Sig = .001 < .05$. The coefficients of the variable organization structure $\beta_1 = .232$, $Sig = .017 < .05$, which implied that a change in organization structure can lead to a .232 change in the project performance. Musau and Kirui, (2018) made similar findings, suggesting that fostering coordination and structure can support better project execution. Further findings indicated a coefficient of organization culture $\beta_2 = .176$, $Sig = .007 < .05$, which implied that a change in organization culture can lead to a .176 change in the project performance. Waweru and Omwenga, (2015) are in agreement, and they showed that commitment among personnel and effective communication and feedback was a significant predictor of performance.

The research also noted a coefficient of resource capability $\beta_3 = .283$, $Sig = .000 < .05$, which implied that a change in resource capability can lead to a .283 change in the project performance. These results are supported by Mrongo and Iravo, (2016) also showed that organization's financing capacity significantly influences project outcomes. The analysis also resulted in a coefficient of employee competency of $\beta_4 = .278$, $Sig = .000 < .05$, which implied that a change in employee competency can lead to a .278 change in the project performance. Kibet and Sile (2017) in a study in Kenya also established that employee competencies and skills were a key determinant of effective implementation of projects at KWFT.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The study concluded there is a positive and significant effect of internal organization environment on the project performance within Nairobi County government. Employee competency was determined to significantly determine project performance. Thus, the research concluded that improving the financial skills of employees, technical skills, staff capacity and ensuring there is effective recruitment and selection can significantly improve the project performance. Similar findings were made on organization structure, leading to the conclusion that improving coordination mechanisms, leadership qualities, and delegation of duty and control will be vital to improving project outcomes within the county.

The research concludes that organization culture significantly impacts project performance. The results affirmed that effective communication, better rewards systems, employee recognition and improved employee training will be vital to on-time completion, client satisfaction and cost efficiency within county government projects. The study further concluded that resource capability significantly impacts project execution. The findings indicated that having adequate infrastructure, improving resource allocation and utilization will be vital to improved completion of county government projects.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that the county government should internalize these results to improve the policy tools in place within the devolved unit. County governments are advised to liaise with the national government to assist in development of sustainable policies that will improve the attainment of project outcome through improving the structure and culture within the county. Further, the county government should develop alliances and improve involvement of donor agencies which can help achieve better financing for county projects and improve resource utilization. Concerning the organization structure the study recommends that county governments should ensure there are clear roles and responsibilities defined across all departments as this improve decision making and have defined levels of authority which can improve efficiency and institution functions. The study further recommends that the county can improve on reputational capabilities which can improve relations with stakeholders and the citizens which can be a predictor of better project implementation. The research also recommends that the county government should develop capacity building practices which will help in improving the human capital knowledge, skills and abilities that can be ideal to better project outcome. The study also recommends should seek to institute effective service delivery norms viewed as unwritten practices, rules, standards of conduct of people in processes or requirements in the county that will support project execution.

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