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Muteti, C. N., & Mutiso, J. M.

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INFLUENCE OF CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS ON PROJECT PERFORMANCE IN NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN KENYA

Muteti, C. N., [1*] & Mutiso, J. M. [2]

*[1] Master Scholar, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture & Technology [JKUAT], Nairobi, Kenya
[2] Lecturer, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture & Technology (JKUAT), Nairobi, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Project management efficiency and effectiveness has profound implications on any organization's ability to meet its customer's demands, its reputation, and its overall financial success. Project critical success factors present the single biggest opportunity for operational efficiency in any organization; therefore, their adoption is paramount in project management. The purpose of the study was to examine influence of cost metrics management on project performance in NGO's in Kenya with an aim of making recommendations on proper use. To achieve this, the researcher reviewed both theoretical and empirical literature and proposed the research methodology that addressed the gaps identified in literature as well as answer the stipulated research questions. The study employed a descriptive research design, targeting the 168 project managers. The 2018 NGO coordination board directory had a listing of all the 168 NGO's spread all over the country. As a rule of thumb if the total population is less than 200, census is used. The researcher preferred this method because it allowed an in-depth study of the subject. Data was collected using self-administered questionnaires. Structured questionnaire was used to collect data. Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Quantitative data was analyzed using regression analysis. The qualitative data generated was analyzed by use of Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS). The response rate of the study was 71%. The findings of the study indicated that cost metrics management has a positive relationship with project performance in NGO's in Kenya. Finally, the study recommended that NGO's should embrace cost metrics management so as to ascertain the realistic capacity of projects handlers and ensure that there is consistency in reducing cost to improve project performance and further researches should to be carried out in other institutions to find out if the same results can be obtained.

Key words; *Cost Metrics Management, Project Performance*

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INTRODUCTION

Critical success factors are considered an important catalyst in the project performance in company's world over. This is why the critical success factors concept has captured the attention of all sides of commerce and industry, as well as that of academics. The large number of academic articles being published in this area is a testimony to the high level of interest in critical success factors issues (Callendar & Mathews, 2010).

During the past decade, critical success factors have become one of the most important organizational strategies for achieving competitive advantage. Improving the critical success factors with which an organization can deliver its products and services is critical for competing in an expanding global market. Critical success factors begin with the primary assumption that employees in organizations must cooperate with each other in order to achieve the needs of the customer. One can achieve this by controlling manufacturing/service processes to prevent defects (Kingori, 2012).

The direct link of operational efficiency and particularly the project management, to the overall organizational project performance therefore makes the adoption of critical success factors crucial to today's organizational success. The study of critical success factors and how they can be effectively integrated into the organizational strategy is therefore valuable to today's business leaders (Lysons & Farrington, 2012).

In today's economic environment doing what you have always done even if you are to do it very well is no longer acceptable, under pressure to contain both costs and produce results despite challenging circumstances, project managers must transform rather than simply improve your operation. That means adopting the philosophies, methods and processes that will make your organization best in class (Mugerwa, 2010). What makes an organization best in class will vary from each company but there are strategies that leading companies are adopting. Project management represents a stage in evolution of civilized human relationships since it enables a desired object to be obtained by training rather than conquest, plunder or justification (Rambo, 2012).

Despite the large number of articles and books on critical success factors, it remains a hazy, ambiguous concept. Various teams provide companies with the structured environment necessary for successfully implementing and continuously applying the critical success factors (Chopra & Meindl's, 2011). Critical success factors training is conducted and the improvement of processes executed through a well-planned team structure. The ultimate goal of the team approach is to get everyone, including contractors, designers, project managers, subcontractors, and owners involved.

In response to increased global pressures, customers' demanding superior products and services, the global market place has become very competitive. The development of a project critical success factors blueprint that may be applied to all organizations, irrespective of the contexts in which they operate has been quite a challenge. Indeed, no such conclusive blue print may claim to be applicable in all environments or organizational operational contexts. This is because of the existence of a myriad of 'objective realities' and conceptual lenses from which different observers may perceive their own realities, even on issues that may rely on hard or empirical data (Christine, 2010).

As Watermeyer (2013) posits, the adoption of project critical success factors is shift away from traditional project management practices and must therefore be approached from a 'value opportunity' standpoint rather than a process standpoint. There must a shift away from the rudimentary project management such as soliciting a minimum number of bids and selecting the cheapest one which as Wittig (2012) suggests, carries risks which includes missed opportunities for maximum value. Project

management critical success factors equivalent is therefore continuous and rapid movement as well as benchmarking, where an organization measures itself against other 'best-in-class' organizations (Mullins, 2013). However, several characteristics of project critical success factors for management are identified across many high performing organizations.

Having its roots partly in the USA, it was primarily adopted by some companies in the decades immediately after World War II. With the greater successes of American companies, companies all over the world found that it was necessary to have good project critical success factors in order to stay competitive (Miller & Dess, 2011). There is need for organizations to go beyond the internal or institutional analysis of their project management systems and processes and into adoption of critical success factors through such strategies as benchmarking (Arnott, 2011).

In the African continent, most countries have adopted project critical success factors in many sectors but differences occur in the manner in which they are applied. Project critical success factors are concerned with the management of a significant proportion of the non-pay expenditure and ensuring that the best possible value for money is obtained when committing organization expenditure (Amayi, 2011).

The project critical success factors are concerned with obtaining the required goods and services from appropriate project managers to enable the institution to meet its strategic objectives in an economic, efficient and effective manner. In Uganda, according to Kotabe and Murray (2010) the project critical success factors are measured through timeliness, process efficiency, process effectiveness and adhering to green project management policies.

Project management in Kenya has come a long way and evolved from a system with no regulations governing its operations to an orderly legally regulated system (PPOA, 2010). In Kenya, there are some manufacturing companies that have successfully embraced the use of project critical success factors. For instance, Cadbury (K) Limited has embraced key project project performance indicators as the company focus on gaining competitive advantage and improving on project performance (Kioko, 2014).

According to Makau (2012) developing countries in Africa, such as Kenya have failed to achieve project critical success factors goals due to application of poor implementation processes. The study found that poor project performance of many manufacturing firms in Kenya is greatly influenced by low emphasis on the employed project management skills in manufacturing processes could play an important role towards development of country's economy. A large number of organizations both large and small in the project management sector suffer from lack of information in the field of project critical success factors and they need theoretical and practical training in this field (KIPPRA, 2010).

Statement of the Problem

According to the World Bank (2011) non-governmental organisations (NGO's) are usually non-profit entities that obtain at least 90% of their funding from private sources. Usually, NGO donors requires that a firm be clear on financial regulations that are in line with those of the parent offices, with strong laid down internal controls (Transparency International, 2010). It faces escalating pressure to do more with less, to maximize resources, lower costs and meet the needs of diverse stakeholders (Amayi, 2011).

NGO's are constantly struggling to maintain their autonomy and control over their own objectives and programs, while at the same time balancing pressure from their donor, government and other partners (KPMG, 2012). KIPPRA (2016) observes that NGO's are donor driven and each donor will come up with terms and conditions which influence their activities such as allocation of funds. By virtue of resources,

donors are strategically placed to exercise enormous influence on policies and practices (Strickland, 2015).

In Kenya, Jhuthi (2015) indicates that more than half of all projects carried out by NGO's are not sustainable and collapse in less than one year after the exit of the donors. For example, the NGO's coordination board (2015) closed about 956 NGO's due to financial malpractices. According to Nyanje and Wanyoike (2016), poor project performance in NGOs' projects can be explained by lack of critical success factors. For instance, 40% of the projects implemented by NGO's were facing time overrun due to poor management and lack of timely allocation of resources. There has been a rise in complaints by the public, professionals and other stakeholders about the meagre 40% project performance within the NGO's in Kenya. The opinion of many is that project management within the institutions are way below the stakeholders' expectations (UNESCO, 2014). A strategic partnership between a contracting authority and the contractor emphasizes direct, long-term association and encourages mutual planning and problem solving efforts (PPOA, 2010). NGO's in Kenya have for a long time been struggling with serious issues of poor project management where cases of 80% misappropriation of resources have been reported due to lack of knowledge on project critical success factors which have affected the level of service delivery offered and more so efficiency and effectiveness of the projects implemented (KNBS, 2012).

Previous research by McGrath and MacMillan (2010) in the UK, on the survey of the use of critical success factors in project management, shows that use of the critical success factors in their processes improved project performance in non-governmental organizations by 72%, while in Kenya, no empirical research has been undertaken to reliably quantify the influence of cost metrics management on project performance. It is against this backdrop that this study intends to look at the influence of cost metrics management on project performance in non-governmental organizations in Kenya.

Objective of the Study

To examine the influence of cost metrics management on project performance in non-governmental organizations in Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Lean Theory

Lean is a functional model which basically discounts the value of economies of scale and focuses on how to reduce costs as a result of small, incremental and continuous improvement. Lean operations have certainly become increasingly significant in cost management. Initially organizations involved in manufacturing of products used to involve themselves in lean manufacturing techniques, this has ceased as lean has expanded beyond manufacturing (Fawcett, Gregory & Mathew, 2008). Lean operations law seeks to explain how organization should manage its project management system and needs. It states that project management can be used as a strategic differentiator by the organization and further goes on to say that not all project management is about waste (Finch, 2014).

The theory stated that project management strategies developed by an organization should support the customer's need and expectations. Project management strategies should not be a driver on how much and when a product will be delivered to a customer, rather, the customers' expectations should be understood and transport strategies is designed purposely to meet those expectations. Real savings can only be realized through day to day management and optimization of operations requirements variability. This therefore implies that cost associated with project management cannot be achieved through inconsistent project management network designs (Fisher, 2010). This theory is relevant to the study because cost management is a key

component in effective and efficient project performance of projects.

Resource Based Theory

Resource based theory is the study of how the resources of an organization affect the project performance in the organization. The utilization of resources such as plant and equipment is a significant tenet of both the strategic and tactical management of any organization, an implication in the project management efficiency of the sourcing firms especially in tapping into the connection with project managers as their important and dependable associates through resources such as just in times systems of delivery (Reed, Bowman & Knipper, 2015).

Thus this theory props up the concept of asset utilization management, resource based theory proposes that actors lacking in crucial resources will seek to create organizational policy with others in order to acquire required resources such as human capital resources. Just like sellers on buyers for precious markets and buyer will depend on project managers for resources (Qu & Brocklehurst, 2013).

Also, organizations endeavor to alter their reliance relationships by lessening their own reliance or by increasing the dependence of other organizations on them. Within this viewpoint, organizations are viewed as coalitions alerting their structure and patterns of behavior to acquire and maintain required resources (Lacity, Willcocks & Rottman, 2008). Acquiring the resources required by an organization comes by diminishing the organization's reliance on others and by increasing other's reliance on it, that is, modifying an organization's influence with other organizations which in this case entails lowering ordering costs, avoiding stock out costs, credible quality index and reducing ordering cost.

This theory emphasizes the firm's resources as the fundamental determinants of competitive advantage through forecasting the usage rate for stocks and its management (Busi & McIvor, 2008). The resource based view is an efficiency based explanation of project performance differences. Gabbard (2014) explains that organizational project performance is attributed to resources such as demand and supply forecasting techniques, credible quality index and having intrinsically different levels of efficiency in the sense that they enable the firms to deliver to their customers at different project performance levels.

This theory is relevant to the study because one thing depends on another thing to be effective. For better project performance in the not for profit institutions effective asset utilization management especially techniques for lowering ordering costs are put in place in the project management department. The overall value of these sourcing interactions includes the minimization of economic costs incurred from managing a nexus of sourcing transactions, as well as maximizing the value of network connections and other knowledge gained from sourcing relationships and transactions; this is very applicable in project management functions.

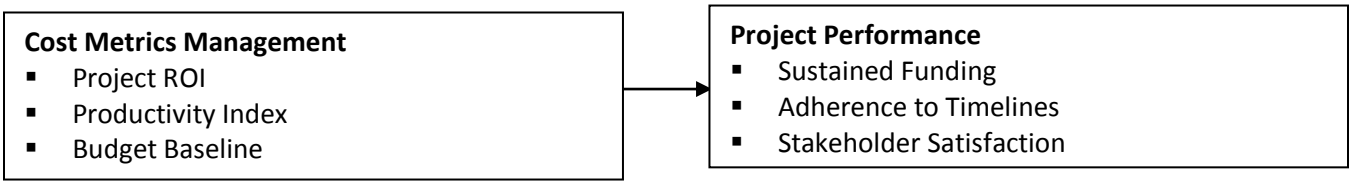

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Empirical Review

While Atkinson had shown as cited in Nzuve and Njeru (2013) that task difficulty, measured as probability of task success was related to cost management in a curvilinear inverse function with the highest level of effort occurring when the task

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was moderately difficult and the lowest levels occurring when the task was either very easy or very difficult. He did not measure personal project performance goals. They found a positive linear function with the highest or most difficult goals producing highest levels of effort and project performance. Project performance leveled off or decreased only when limits of ability were reached or when commitments to a highest difficult goal lapsed (Mbua & Sarisar, 2013).

Letangule and Letting (2012) found that when goals are self-set, people with higher self-efficacy set higher goals than do people with lower self-efficacy. They also are more committed to assigned goals, find and use better task strategies to attain goals and respond more positively to negative feedback than people with low self-efficacy.

Consequently, leaders can raise the self-efficacy of their subordinates by ensuring adequate training to increase mastery that provide success experiences, role modeling or finding models with whom the person can identify with and through persuasive communication that express confidence that a person can attain the goal (Kinanga & Partoip, 2013). Research in goal setting led to the development of high project performance cycle which explains how high goals lead to high project performance, which in turn leads to rewards such as recognition and promotion. Rewards result in high satisfaction as well as high self-efficacy regarding perceived ability to meet future challenges through setting of even higher goals.

According to a study done by Obongo (2011), the key objectives for introducing cost management in the not for profit sector are: to promote responsiveness; improve efficiency by focusing resources on the attainment of key national policy priorities of not for profit sector; institutionary of project performance oriented culture in the not for profit sector; to measure and evaluate project performance; linking rewards to measurable project performance; competency development; to oversee the governance systems in not for profit organizations; to allow for bench marking with the best practices; learning and innovation; stakeholder involvement and promote accountability.

The above objectives ensure that not for profit organizations are working in harmony with regard to key policy areas like planning, budgeting, evaluation and measurement, reporting and management of not for profit resources with a view to improving results. Cost management policy requires that each not for profit entity must design and publish a service charter, also known as the service delivery charter (Rotich, 2010).

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive research design. The target population was project managers in the 168 NGO's spread over different locations in Kenya. The sampling frame was a list of all the 168 NGO's operating in Kenya. The study employed a census approach to collect data from the respondents hence no sampling techniques was used. As a rule of thumb if the total population is less than 200, then census is used (Kothari, 2014). According to Larry (2013) a census is a count of all the elements in a population. The sample size was taken from 168 respondents.

Both quantitative and qualitative data was collected in this study. Data was collected mainly through questionnaires. The collected data was analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. In analyzing the qualitative data, the study used descriptive statistics using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The Pearson correlation coefficient is a correlation coefficient that in this study was used to indicate one on one association between the independent variable to the dependent variable. Regression analysis was used to analyze the relationship between the dependent and independent variables.

RESULTS

A sample of 168 respondents were interviewed using questionnaires that allowed the researcher to drop the questionnaire to the respondents and then collect them at a later date when they had filled the questionnaires. A total of 168 questionnares were distributed to project managers as shown by table 1. Out of the population covered, 120 were responsive, respresenting a response rate of 71%. This was above the 50% which is considered adequate in descriptive statistics according to Kothari (2014).

Table 1: Response Rate of Respondents

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Actual Response	120	71
Non-Response	48	29
Total	**168**	**100%**

Descriptive Statistics

Cost Metrics Management and project performance

The first objective of the study was to assess the influence of cost metrics management on project performance in non-governmental organizations in Kenya. The respondents were also asked to comment on statements regarding cost metrics management influence on project performance in non-governmental organizations in Kenya. The responses were rated on a likert scale and the results presented in Table 4.6 below. and was rated on a 5 point Likert scale ranging from; 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. The scores of ' strongly disagree' and 'disagree' have been taken to represent a statement not agreed upon, equivalent to mean score of 0 to 2.5. The score of 'neutral' had been taken to represent a statement agreed upon, equivalent to a mean score of 2.6 to 3.4. The score of 'agree' and 'strongly agree' had been taken to represent a statement highly agreed upon equivalent to a mean score of 3.5 to 5. Results indicated that majority of the respondents 86% agreed on the statement that project ROI plays a significant role in sustained funding. Results also indicated that 90% of the respondents were in agreement that productivity indexing plays a significant role in sustained funding. Results indicated that majority of the respondents 100% agreed on the statement that adhering to the budget baseline plays a significant role in sustained funding.

Results indicated that majority of the respondents 90% agreed on the statement that project ROI plays a significant role in adhering to timelines. Results indicated that majority of the respondents 96% agreed on the statement that productivity indexing plays a significant role in adhering to timelines. Results indicated that majority of the respondents 95% agreed on the statement that adhering to the budget baseline plays a significant role in adhering to timelines. Results indicated that majority of the respondents 92% agreed on the statement that project ROI plays a significant role in improving stakeholder satisfaction. Results indicated that majority of the respondents 91% agreed on the statement that productivity indexing plays a significant role in improving stakeholder satisfaction. Results indicated that majority of the respondents 85% agreed on the statement that adhering to the budget baseline plays a significant role in improving stakeholder satisfaction. The average mean of the respondents was 4.27 indicating that majority of the respondents agreed with statements regarding cost metrics management influence on project performance in non-governmental organizations in Kenya. However, the responses were varied as shown by a standard deviation of 0.86. These findings imply that cost

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metrics management was an important aspect in project management in the NGO's. The findings agree with David (2014) that using cost metrics management when managing a project can save an organization a lot of unnecessary costs.

Table 2: Cost Metrics Management Influence on Project Performance in NGO's

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Deviation
Project ROI plays a significant role in sustained funding	3.0%	6.0%	5.0%	57.0%	29.0%	4.0	0.9
Productivity indexing plays a significant role in sustained funding	4.0%	4.0%	2.0%	43.0%	47.0%	4.3	1.0
Sticking to the budget baseline plays a significant role in sustained funding	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	56.0%	44.0%	4.4	0.5
Project ROI plays a significant role in adhering to timelines	4.0%	4.0%	2.0%	44.0%	46.0%	4.2	1.0
Productivity indexing plays a significant role in adhering to timelines	1.0%	2.0%	1.0%	48.0%	48.0%	4.4	0.7
Sticking to the budget baseline plays a significant role in adhering to timelines	2.0%	2.0%	1.0%	48.0%	47.0%	4.4	0.8
Project ROI plays a significant role in improving stakeholder satisfaction	2.0%	2.0%	1.0%	39.0%	56.0%	4.5	0.8
Productivity indexing plays a significant role in improving stakeholder satisfaction	4.0%	4.0%	1.0%	48.0%	43.0%	4.2	1.0
Sticking to the budget baseline plays a significant role in improving stakeholder satisfaction	6.0%	6.0%	3.0%	45.0%	40.0%	4.1	1.1
Average						**4.27**	**0.86**

Correlation Analysis

Table 3: Summary of Pearson's Correlations

Variables	Project performance	
Cost metrics management	Pearson Correlation	.761**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Pearson Correlation coefficient was computed and tested at 5% significance level. The results indicated that there is a positive relationship (r=0.761) between cost metrics management and project performance in non-governmental organizations. In

addition, the researcher found the relationship to be statistically significant at 5% level (p=0.000, <0.05).

Regression Analysis

The results of regression analysis revealed there is a significant positive relationship between dependent variable (project performance in non-governmental organizations) and the independent variable (cost metrics management). The independent variable reported R value of .846 indicating that there is perfect relationship between dependent variable and independent variable. R square value of 0.716 which means that 71.6% of the corresponding variation in project performance in the non-governmental organizations can be explained or predicted by cost metrics management which indicated that the model fitted the study data.

Table 4: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	. 846[a]	.716	.704	.149

a) Predictor: (Constant), Cost Metrics Management

b) Dependent Variable: Project Performance in Non-Governmental Organizations

Table 5: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.342	1	1.342	72.435	.000[b]
	Residual	2.124	118	0.018		
	Total	3.466	119			

a) Predictors: (Constant), Cost Metrics Management

b) Dependent Variable: Project Performance in Non-Governmental Organizations.

Table 6: Coefficient of Determination

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.240	0.260		4.769	0.000
	Cost Metrics Management	0.462	0.073	0.463	6.329	0.000

a) Predictor: (constant), Cost Metrics Management

b) Dependent Variable: Project Performance in Non-Governmental Organizations

Y=1.240+ 0.462 Cost Metrics Management

The significance value was 0.000 which was less than 0.05 thus the model is statistically significance in predicting how cost metrics management influence project performance in non-governmental organizations. The study therefore established that cost metrics management influence project performance in non-governmental organizations.

The regression equation above established that taking Cost Metrics Management into constant at zero, project performance in non-governmental organizations will be an index of 1.240. The findings presented also shows that a unit increase in cost metrics management will lead to a 0.462 increase in project performance in non-governmental organizations. The P-value was 0.000 which is less than 0.05 and thus the relationship was significant.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study findings, the study concluded that project performance in non-governmental organizations can be improved by cost metrics management. The regression coefficients of the study

show that it has a significant influence on project performance in non-governmental organizations. This implies that increasing levels of cost metrics management by a unit would increase the levels of project performance in NGO's. This shows that cost metrics management has a positive influence on project performance in non-governmental organizations.

Drawing on this research, lack of cost metrics management in the non-governmental organizations is leading to poor project performance. Though the non-governmental organizations are striving hard to improve their project performance there are still issues of high cost of operations. Thus, it is evident that cost metrics management was an important critical success factor that influenced the project performance in non-governmental organizations.

To ensure that non-governmental organizations have better performance they should focus more on using cost metrics management, so as to ascertain the realistic capacity of projects handlers and ensure that there is consistency in reducing costs. In the same regard, they should outsource project consultants to enable them to come up with appraisals that articulate with their organization objectives.

Areas for Further Research

Existing literature indicates that as a future avenue of research, there is need to undertake similar research in other institutions and private organizations in Kenya and other countries in order to establish whether the explored practice herein can be generalized to affect project performance in non-governmental organizations institutions.

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