PROJECT MANAGEMENT PROCESSES AND PROJECT PERFORMANCE IN REAL ESTATE FIRMS IN NAIROBI CITY COUNTY, KENYA

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Abstract

Research shows that the real estate sub-sector is facing issues that have hampered the performance of projects. This research examined how project management affect project performance of particular companies within the Nairobi City County Area, Kenya. It specifically concentrated on how project scheduling, risk management planning, project planning, and quality management techniques impact project performance. The research focused on three theories; theory of constraints, construction management theory and realistic evaluation theory. This study used the descriptive study design. Using a census sample technique, participants were chosen from among the 89 employees in the project management department. Data collection involved distributing questionnaires to projects of Willstone Homes, Mahiga Homes, and Cytonn Homes using a drop-and-pick-up technique within the Nairobi city county. Analysis and presentation of data was conducted by descriptive and inferential analysis methods. The findings show that project planning enhances feasibility but faces challenges in risk assessment and documentation. The findings indicate that structured scheduling improves project execution but is affected by market fluctuations and resource constraints. The study findings showed that project planning had the strongest effect on project performance, supported by a highly significant with p-value of .000. The study concluded that project planning has a key role in improving the performance of real estate firms in Nairobi City County. The study concluded that project scheduling has a moderate yet significant effect on improving project outcomes. The study concluded that risk management planning is critical for the success of real estate projects by mitigating possible risks. The study recommended that real estate companies intensify quality processes to improve project effectiveness and client satisfaction.

Keywords: Project Management, Project Performance, Real Estate Sector, Project Planning, Project Scheduling, Risk Management Planning, Quality Management, Theory of Constraints, Construction Management Theory, Realistic Evaluation Theory, Descriptive Study Design, Nairobi City County, Willstone Homes, Mahiga Homes, Cytonn Homes, Census Sampling, Questionnaire Survey, Descriptive Analysis, Inferential Analysis, Feasibility Assessment

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Introduction

Delays in construction works is a main challenge in the real estate sector, usually resulting to increased costs and disruptions in project schedules. Fashina et al. (2021) assesses the key factors contributing to construction delays in Hargeisa, stressing their effect on project performance. Understanding these factors is essential for real estate stakeholders as it improves efficiency and reduces risks that may be encountered. This paper sheds light to the complex relationship of variables affecting project success, offering essential data for project coordinators and developers to enhance planning and execution.

Jugdev, Muthur and Fung, (2019) founded their study on the mediated transfer of project management asset attributes to any organization's performance. Although the research did not look at real estate the findings are related to the real estate sub-sector. Efficient project management is key in real estate projects which is characterized by their complexity and scope. Acknowledging how specific project management attributes can affect general organization firm performance, stakeholders in real estate company have insights into promoting project performance and making sure real estate developments are carried out effectively and successfully.

Nsibande (2020) examined how decisions are made in sub-Saharan Africa's real estate market in spite of uncertainty utilizing a phenomenological approach. The purpose was to examine how uncertainty effects the way decisions are made in the real estate industry in this area. Using qualitative methods, the study uncovers that uncertainty significantly influences investors' decisions, with factors like, political instability, economic fluctuations, and market unpredictability playing pivotal roles. Findings indicate that investors adapt their decision-making criteria and strategies, possibly through risk hedging and adaptive planning approaches, to navigate uncertainties. However, potential knowledge gaps exist, including a potential lack of comprehensive coverage regarding the spectrum of uncertainties and limitations in exploring broader social, cultural, or psychological influences on decision-making within sub-Saharan Africa's real estate investments.

Macroeconomic factors shape the performance of property constructions. Kipkurui (2019) investigated impact of different macroeconomic indicators on effectiveness of the Stanlib Fahari real estate investment trust in Kenya. The study used a comprehensive methodology, examining how external economic conditions influence the success of real estate projects. The macroeconomic environment has an inherent tendency to affect the real estate subsector, affecting factors like demand, financing availability, and general market stability. As a result, acknowledging interdependence between these variables and project performance is key for real estate stakeholders. The results of this study offer intuitions into how economic changes can either boost or prevent the success of real estate projects and direct decision making in a volatile market.

Mutai (2021) looked at the relationship between the financial success of investments in the real estate subsector and Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) in Nairobi, Kenya. Due to their effect on project performance, REITs have emerged as an essential financial tool for real estate investing.

The study looks into the complex financial processes that support real estate projects and how REITs, as an investigative tool, might affect how these projects develop. Acknowledging the effects of financial instruments such as REITs on real estate project performance, stakeholders can make informed decisions concerning financial initiatives and funding, potentially promoting the outcome of projects.

Nyaguthii, (2021) examined how Nairobi County, Kenya's real estate organizations perform in relation to financial risk management. Within the real estate sub-sector, managing financial risks is essential since these projects mostly consist of important investments and are prone to market variations. The study investigated elements of financial risk management consisting of strategies to reduce financial risks, the effect of these initiatives on project performance and how real estate companies in Nairobi County navigate these challenges. This research offers valuable contribution to acknowledging how effective financial risk management can protect project performance and financial stability within the real estate industry. The current study was guided by the following specific objectives;

1. Establish how project planning affects project performance of real estate companies in Nairobi City County, Kenya.
2. Establish how risk management planning affects project performance of real estate companies in Nairobi City County, Kenya.
3. Examine how project scheduling affects project performance of real estate companies in Nairobi City County, Kenya.
4. Assess the effect of quality management on project performance of real estate companies in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

Results And Discussions

The distribution of real estate firms in Nairobi City County as reflected in Figure 1, shows that companies (39) have 6-10 years of experience, while 28 firms have operated for over 20 years. This suggests that established firms have refined project management processes, leading to better project performance (Holtom, et al. 2022). However, the presence of 24 firms with 1-5 years in business indicates that newer firms may still be developing efficient project execution strategies, effecting timelines and quality management

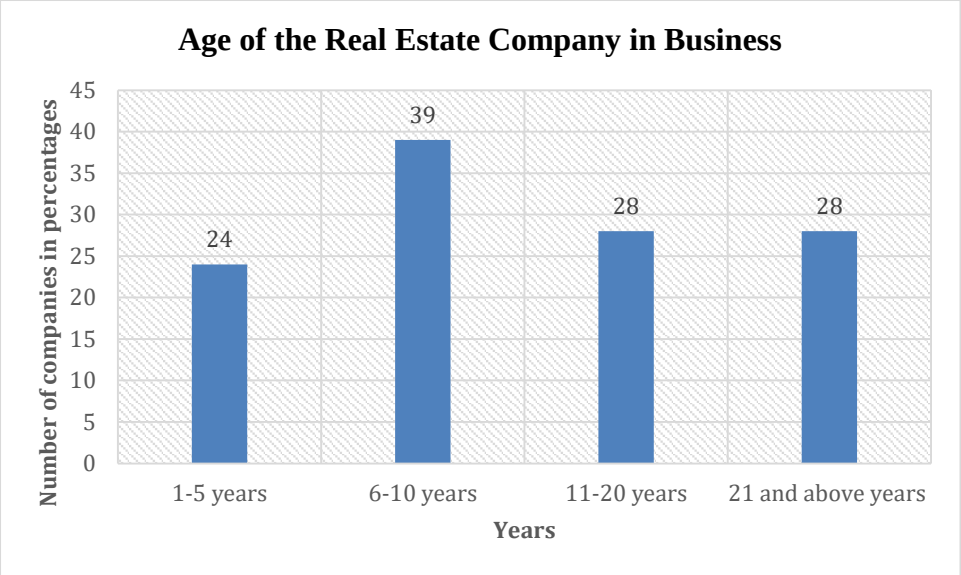

Figure 1: Age of the Real Estate Company in Business

Number of Projects Completed by the Company

The distribution of completed projects among real estate companies, highlights varying levels of project management experience and performance. A majority of firms (56) have completed 51-100 projects, indicating strong project execution capabilities and refined management processes. Firms that have completed over 100 projects (18) likely demonstrate advanced planning, scheduling, and quality control, contributing to higher project success rates. Meanwhile, companies with 1-10 projects (17) or 11-50 projects (28) remains to be developing efficient project management strategies, possibly encountering difficulties in resource allocation and risk management. This variety shows that improving project performance and efficiency in the real estate industry needs experience managing different projects performance (Holtom, et al. 2022).

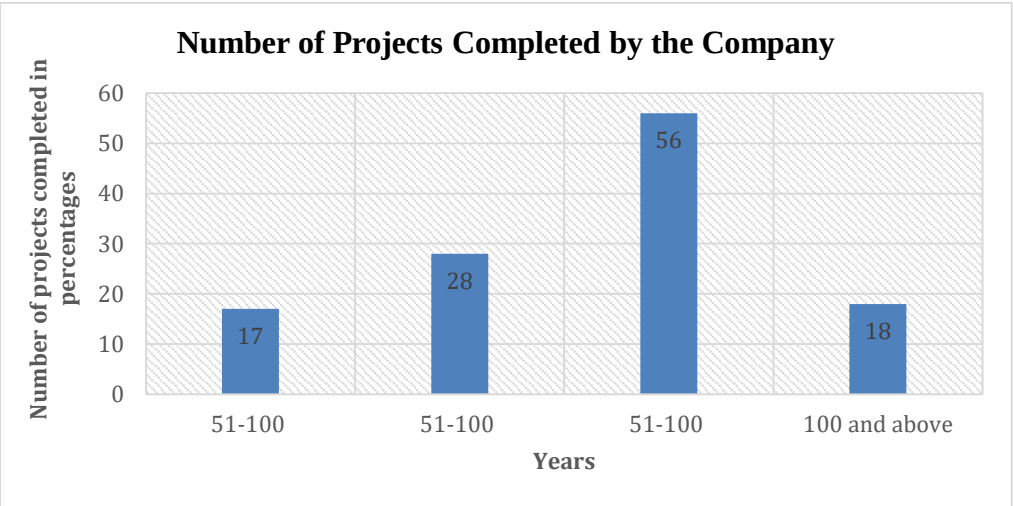

Figure 2: Number of Projects Completed by the Company

Position at the Firms

Project management experts make up the majority (62.2 percent) of the positions in construction companies, according to the distribution of positions. This shows how important organized project management procedures are to the success of projects. Strategic decision-making might be increasingly dependent on project managers, who have direct control over planning, scheduling, and execution, given that senior management only makes up 16.8 percent of the workforce. The 21.0 percent sales presence emphasizes how crucial consumer involvement and market demand are to project success. According to this distribution, successful real estate developments are largely driven by efficient project management, which guarantees productivity, quality assurance, and on-time project completion (Holtom, et al. 2022).

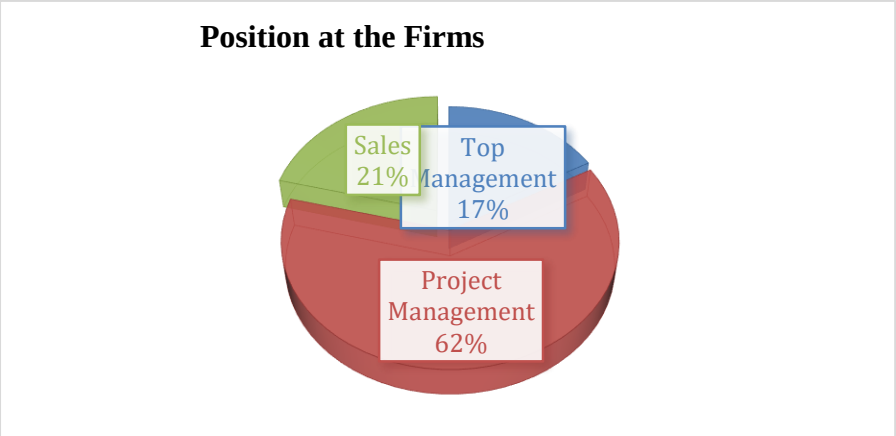

Figure 3: Position at the Firms

Project Planning and Project performance

This section examined project planning in addition to its effect on project performance in real estate companies. Respondents assessed a set of questionnaire statements on a five-level rating scale ranging from strong disagreement (SD) to strong agreement (SA). The following table presents overview of the research results, including mean as well as standard deviation.

Table 1: Project Planning and Project performance

Statements on Project Planning	SA	A	N	D	SD	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The project's deliverables are clearly defined and documented.	60	35	12	7	5	119	4.24	0.989
The project team has a shared understanding of what needs to be delivered.	55	40	13	7	4	119	4.18	0.802
Project constraints, such as time and budget, are well-documented and realistic.	65	38	10	4	2	119	4.37	0.623

We regularly monitor and address constraints so that there are no adverse effects to the project.	50	42	15	7	5	119	4.10	0.616
Assumptions about the project have been identified and documented.	63	36	10	6	4	119	4.34	1.181
We regularly review and update project assumptions to ensure they remain valid.	58	37	12	6	6	119	4.29	1.290
Average mean							**4.25**	

The high average mean of 4.25 indicated that successful real estate developments in are largely dependent on efficient project planning. The most highly regarded statement, "Project constraints, such as time and budget, are well-documented and realistic" (M = 4.37, SD = 0.623), suggests that real estate firms prioritize financial and time management, ensuring feasibility in project execution. Similarly, "Assumptions about the project have been identified and documented" (M = 4.34, SD = 1.181) highlights the importance of risk assessment in planning, although the high standard deviation implies inconsistencies in assumption documentation across firms. The statement "We regularly review and update project assumptions to ensure they remain valid" (M = 4.29, SD = 1.290) had the highest deviation, possibly due to varying market conditions and firm-specific policies that affect the frequency of reviews. "The project's deliverables are clearly defined and documented" (M = 4.24, SD = 0.989) and "The project team with mutual agreement on the deliverables" (M = 4.18, SD = 0.802) indicate strong alignment in project expectations, though minor deviations suggest differences in team communication and documentation practices. Lastly, "We regularly monitor and address constraints making sure there are no adverse effects on t the project" (M = 4.10, SD = 0.616) demonstrates proactive risk management, albeit with a lower mean, possibly reflecting challenges in maintaining strict oversight. The varying standard deviations indicate that while most firms adhere to structured project planning, differences in experience, regulatory compliance, and organizational priorities influence the extent to which planning elements are consistently applied.

This study was found to be in line with that of Zwikael and Gilchrist (2021); Kerzner (2019) argued that project outcomes, organizations must develop their project management practices, which are emphasized in this study as being crucial to project management. The actual usage and effectiveness of such strategic planning models in different project settings are the main areas of knowledge gap. On the other hand, Zwikael and Gilchrist (2021) noted that in highly uncertain contexts, excessive planning efforts could lead to delays and inefficiencies by utilizing an extensive technique that comprises the analysis of different project case studies. This study stressed the significance of a balanced approach to project planning, particularly when considering the degree of uncertainty existing in a project.

Risk Management Planning and Project performance

This section examined risk management as well as its effect on project performance in real estate companies within the Nairobi city county area, Kenya. Respondents assessed a set of questionnaire statements on a five-level rating scale ranging from strong disagreement (SD) to strong agreement

(SA). The table below provides a summarizedfindings, comprising of mean as well as standard deviation.

Table 2: Risk Management Planning and Project performance

Statements on Risk Management Planning	SA	A	N	D	SD	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Risks and triggers have been clearly identified for this project.	50	40	15	8	6	119	3.98	0.957
The project team is well-prepared to recognize triggers when they occur.	55	42	12	6	4	119	4.15	0.953
We have well-defined response strategies in place for identified risks.	60	38	10	6	5	119	4.24	0.989
The response strategies effectively mitigate the effect of identified risks.	65	35	8	6	5	119	4.28	1.402
We have a systematic process for monitoring risks throughout the project.	70	38	6	3	2	119	4.39	0.489
Our monitoring process allows for timely adjustments to risk response strategies.	60	40	10	5	4	119	4.19	0.509
Average mean							**4.21**	

Findings suggest that risk management planning greatly impacts project performance in real estate companies, with an overall average mean score of 4.21. The most highly rated aspect was having a systematic process for monitoring risks (Mean = 4.39, Std. Dev. = 0.489), suggesting that firms prioritize continuous risk assessment. The effectiveness of response strategies in mitigating risks was also rated highly (Mean = 4.28, Std. Dev. = 1.402), though the high deviation implies variability in how firms assess their strategies' success. Well-defined risk response strategies (Mean = 4.24, Std. Dev. = 0.989) and the ability to make timely adjustments (Mean = 4.19, Std. Dev. = 0.509) reflect structured risk management processes but indicate some inconsistencies in execution. The project team's preparedness to recognize risk triggers (Mean = 4.15, Std. Dev. = 0.953) and the identification of risks and triggers (Mean = 3.98, Std. Dev. = 0.957) had the lowest means, suggesting potential gaps in proactive risk identification and training. The observed deviations could be attributed to differences in risk management maturity across firms, resource constraints, and external market uncertainties that affect how risks are identified, monitored, and mitigated.

The study was found to be in line with Urbaski et al. (2019): Mutunga and Ondara (2021). Urbaski et al. (2019) stressed on the value of involving efficient risk management approaches into project planning. There is a study gap in relation to the precise processes and best practices for establishing this integration in different project contexts, though. While, Mutunga and Ondara (2021) findings of the study demonstrate that understanding the function of risk management in a particular organizational environment is key. The knowledge gap entails to the need for research that combines risk management approaches from different organizations and industries, showing the similarities and contrasts in how they affect project effectiveness.

Project Scheduling and Project performance

This section assessed project scheduling and its effect on project performance in real estate companies within the Nairobi city county area, Kenya. Respondents examined a set of questionnaire statements on a five-level rating scale ranging from strong disagreement (SD) to strong agreement (SA). The following table has summarized findings, comprising of mean as well as standard deviation

Table 3: Project Scheduling and Project performance

Statements on Project Scheduling	SA	A	N	D	SD	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The project's progress is regularly tracked and reported as per the schedule.	60	35	10	8	6	119	4.28	1.402
The project team consistently meets the indicators and progress goals set in the schedule.	58	38	12	6	5	119	4.33	1.283
Project deadlines are clearly defined and communicated to all team members.	65	40	8	4	2	119	4.31	0.465
Deadlines in the project schedule are realistic and achievable.	55	42	10	8	4	119	4.19	0.509
Project deliverables are well-defined and aligned with the project schedule.	50	40	15	8	6	119	4.13	0.663
The project team consistently delivers on time and meets the quality standards set for project deliverables.	58	38	12	6	5	119	4.33	1.283
Average mean							**4.26**	

Project scheduling is a vital factor in the project performance of real estate companies evidenced through an overall average mean score of 4.26. The highest-rated aspect was the project team's ability to consistently meet milestones and progress goals (Mean = 4.33, Std. Dev. = 1.283), along with timely delivery while maintaining quality standards (Mean = 4.33, Std. Dev. = 1.283), highlighting the importance of structured scheduling. Clearly defined deadlines (Mean = 4.31, Std. Dev. = 0.465) and regular progress tracking (Mean = 4.28, Std. Dev. = 1.402) further reinforce the role of scheduling in project success. However, the relatively lower mean scores for well-defined project deliverables aligned with schedules (Mean = 4.13, Std. Dev. = 0.663) and realistic deadlines (Mean = 4.19, Std. Dev. = 0.509) suggest that some firms may struggle with deadline feasibility and clarity in deliverables. The observed deviations, particularly in progress tracking and milestone adherence, could be due to external market fluctuations, resource allocation challenges, and variations in project complexity, affecting adherence to schedules and overall project execution efficiency.

The study was found to be in line with Xie, et al. (2021) : Assaad et al. (2020) Xie, et al.(2021) proposed the adaptation of computational techniques and algorithmic optimization. There findings indicate that genetic algorithms can be used to better plan prefabricated construction projects. In contrast, Assaad et al. (2020) studied the construction industry's project performance. They

utilized data analysis and quantitative methods to develop models that could forecast project performance basing on different project criteria. The conclusion of the study will assist with resource distribution and project planning by offering a means of predicting project outcomes.

Quality Management and Project performance

This section looked at quality management as well as its impact on project performance in real estate firms Respondents examined a set of questionnaire statements on a five-level rating scale ranging from strong disagreement (SD) to strong agreement (SA). The following table provides summarized findings, comprising of mean as well as standard deviation

Table 4: Quality Management and Project performance

Statements on Quality Management	SA	A	N	D	SD	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Quality progress is regularly tracked and reported to ensure adherence to quality standards.	60	45	10	3	1	119	4.29	0.727
The project team consistently maintains and improves the quality of work throughout the project.	70	35	8	4	2	119	4.40	0.629
Quality management deadlines are clearly defined and communicated to all team members.	58	40	12	6	3	119	4.24	0.989
Deadlines for quality assurance and control activities are realistic and achievable.	55	42	13	6	3	119	4.18	0.802
Quality standards for project deliverables are well-defined and aligned with project goals.	62	30	10	9	8	119	4.33	1.283
The project consistently meets quality standards for all deliverables, ensuring a high level of quality throughout the project.	65	32	11	6	5	119	4.38	1.089
Average mean							**4.30**	

Quality management is a key determinant of project performance in real estate firms which is reflected by an overall average mean score of 4.30. The highest-rated aspect is the project team's ability to maintain and improve quality throughout the project (Mean = 4.40, Std. Dev. = 0.629), demonstrating a strong commitment to high-quality standards. Similarly, projects consistently meeting quality standards for deliverables (Mean = 4.38, Std. Dev. = 1.089) and aligning quality standards with project goals (Mean = 4.33, Std. Dev. = 1.283) highlight effective quality assurance processes. Regular tracking and reporting of quality progress (Mean = 4.29, Std. Dev. = 0.727) and clearly defined quality management deadlines (Mean = 4.24, Std. Dev. = 0.989) suggest structured quality monitoring mechanisms. However, slightly lower ratings for realistic deadlines

in quality assurance activities (Mean = 4.18, Std. Dev. = 0.802) indicate challenges in meeting quality control timelines due to resource constraints, regulatory approvals, or project complexities. The observed deviations, particularly in deadline feasibility and alignment with project goals, may stem from unforeseen changes in market conditions, contractor inefficiencies, or client demands, which can affect the overall effectiveness of quality management in real estate projects.

The study was found to be as per Lu, et al. (2019): Pertusa-Ortega et al. (2021). Lu, et al. (2019) The findings indicate that governance systems modify the linkage of effective project management techniques as well as project performance. Utilizing these findings to different forms of inter-organizational strategies and the investigation of governance structures in different industries are the subject of the knowledge gap. On the other hand, Pertusa-Ortega et al. (2021) findings demonstrates that ambidexterity can be enhanced by quality management practices, which in turn enhances performance. Hence, understand how ambidexterity may be cultivated and how performance results can be affected by quality management practices.

Project Performance

This part assessed project performance in construction companies within the Nairobi city county area, Respondents examined questionnaires on a five-level rating scale ranging from strong disagreement (SD) to strong agreement (SA). The following table provides summarized findings, entailing of mean as well as standard deviation.

Table 5: Project Performance

Statements on Project Performance	SA	A	N	D	SD	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Resources are effectively and efficiently utilized to support project goals.	55	40	14	6	4	119	4.22	0.885
The project team optimizes resource allocation to meet project requirements.	60	42	10	5	2	119	4.35	0.480
The project consistently follows the defined scope without significant deviations.	58	38	12	6	5	119	4.24	0.736
Scope changes are managed effectively, and their effect on the project is minimized.	54	40	14	7	4	119	4.18	0.659
The project is finalized as per the scheduled timeframe.	58	38	12	6	5	119	4.33	1.283
Timely adjustments are made to ensure the project accomplishes all its deliverables within completion time.	55	42	10	8	4	119	4.19	0.509
Average Mean							**4.25**	

Project performance is a crucial determinant of success for real estate firms. this is indicated by an overall average mean score of 4.25. Effective as well as efficient utilization of resources to support project goals (Mean = 4.22, Std. Dev. = 0.885) indicates that most projects manage their resources well, though minor inefficiencies may exist. The project team's ability to optimize resource

allocation (Mean = 4.35, Std. Dev. = 0.480) suggests strong planning and coordination efforts. Adherence to the defined scope without significant deviations (Mean = 4.24, Std. Dev. = 0.736) shows that project goals are generally met, although scope changes (Mean = 4.18, Std. Dev. = 0.659) can introduce unforeseen challenges. Timely project completion (Mean = 4.33, Std. Dev. = 1.283) reflects strong scheduling practices, but the relatively high standard deviation suggests occasional project delays. Additionally, timely adjustments to keep projects on track (Mean = 4.19, Std. Dev. = 0.509) indicate proactive risk management. Project timeframes and overall performance may be effected by unforeseen regulatory changes, fluctuating material costs, or permission delays, which could be the cause of the observed deviations, especially in scope changes and scheduling (Pandey & Pandey, 2021).

Inferential Analysis

Table 6 shows a strong positive correlation (R = 0.948) between project management dynamics and project performance. The R Square (0.898) indicates that 89.8% of project performance variations are explained by project scheduling, risk management planning, project planning, and quality management.

Table 6: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.948[a]	.898	.894	.18243

The Adjusted R Square (0.894) confirms the model's reliability which implied that independent variables counted for 89.4 percent of the variation in the dependent variable whereas 10.6 percent of the variation in the dependent variable was attributed to the external variables that were not part of the study. These research findings indicated achievement of a high level of prediction accuracy.

Table 7: Coefficients of regression

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.515	.132		3.915	.000
	Project Planning	.509	.084	.641	6.080	.000
	Risk Management Planning	.334	.047	.343	7.167	.000
	Project Scheduling	.144	.056	.203	2.576	.011
	Quality Management	.182	.066	.214	2.739	.007

The regression coefficients indicated that project planning, risk management planning, project scheduling, and quality management significantly influenced project performance in real estate firms. Project planning contains the highest effect (B = 0.509, p = 0.000), followed by risk management planning (B = 0.334, p = 0.000), quality management (B = 0.182, p = 0.007), and project scheduling (B = 0.144, p = 0.011). The positive coefficients propose that improvements in

these project management processes results to better project performance. The low p-values that were below 5 percent significance level established the statistical significance of these relationships, stressing their significance in attaining successful real estate projects (Mbugua & Otuya 2020).

Conclusion

The study concluded that;

1. Project planning significantly enhances project performance in construction firms, showing the strongest effect (B = .509, Beta = .641, t = 6.080, p = .000).
2. Project scheduling has a moderate but statistically significant effect on project performance (B = .144, Beta = .203, p = .011).
3. Risk management planning strongly improves project performance, with the most robust statistical support (B = .334, Beta = .343, t = 7.167, p = .000).
4. Quality management positively contributes to project performance, though at a moderate level (B = .182, Beta = .214, t = 2.739, p = .007).

Recommendations

1. Construction firms should prioritize comprehensive planning at the early stages of projects, since project planning has the strongest effect on project performance. This should include clear scope definition, resource allocation, and stakeholder engagement to maximize efficiency and outcomes.
2. Firms should adopt advanced scheduling tools and techniques (e.g., Gantt charts, Critical Path Method, and project management software) to improve timelines, resource coordination, and task sequencing, since project scheduling has a moderate but significant impact.
3. Firms should institutionalize risk identification, assessment, and mitigation strategies, since management planning strongly improves performance. Regular risk reviews and contingency planning should be integrated into project cycles to reduce uncertainty and enhance resilience.
4. With quality management contributing moderately, firms should strengthen quality assurance systems, implement regular inspections, and ensure compliance with industry standards. Training project teams in quality control techniques will also enhance long-term project success.

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