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Influence of Management Style Evaluation Approaches on the Performance of Housing Projects in Nairobi

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Abstract

Purpose: This study assessed the impact of management style evaluation on housing projects in Nairobi, guided by Construction Management Theory.

Methodology: A descriptive research design was used, targeting 127 projects by 15 real estate developers between 2019 and 2024. Data were collected from 254 registered architects using structured questionnaires and analyzed using SPSS to generate descriptive and inferential statistics.

Findings: The findings affirm the pivotal role of reflective and adaptive management styles in boosting housing project performance. Organizations not only evaluate and compare styles but also derive tangible benefits such as improved outcomes and higher team satisfaction. Nonetheless, a minority of respondents highlighted the need for broader inclusion or consistency in such evaluative practices, suggesting room for capacity building and structural alignment.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Policy and Practice: This study makes a unique and multifaceted contribution by providing empirical evidence for the efficacy of specific leadership styles within the housing sector, thereby enriching theoretical discourse with a context-specific framework. For policy, it offers a critical evidence base to advocate for the formalization of management style evaluation frameworks as a standard operational procedure, shifting governance towards measuring leadership quality as a key metric of institutional health. For practice, it translates these insights into actionable strategy by recommending structured leadership development programs focused on equipping managers with participative, transformational, and supportive competencies, thus providing a tangible blueprint for improving staff morale, tenant engagement, and overall organizational resilience.

Keywords: *Management Styles, Housing Projects, Project Performance, Construction Management.*

1.0 Background of the Study

Projects are considered as the pursuit of any undertaking that meets the needs of different stakeholders, which includes construction projects (PMI, 2018). The construction projects' performance is often considered in terms of quality, schedule, and cost. Project Management Institute (PMI) acknowledges that successful projects are finished within budget, on time, and meets the desired quality. Across the world, different projects struggle to meet these performance parameters. In the Construction Extension of the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK), it is noted that most construction projects are unique because they are fraught with uncertainty and are often highly complex, especially because of the complex project environment. They are expected to respond to the different weather, site, economic, community, and physical conditions prevalent at the times of execution. As such, these projects inherently complete beyond the time schedule and outside the budget.

In other parts of the world, the same pattern is replicated. Niazi and Painting (2017) acknowledge the challenge of effective project evaluation approaches that leads to time delays and cost overruns in construction projects in Afghanistan, highlighting corruption, payments, and financing, among others, as the key factors. Shah (2016) noted that in Australia, project evaluation approaches are among the key factors, while in Ghana, payments and complexity are the key factors, and in Malaysia, contractor and management factors lead to time delays and cost overruns. Salunkhe and Patil (2014) and Singh (2017) acknowledge the persistence of time delays and cost overruns in construction projects in India. El Mansouri and Benchekroun (2018) acknowledge the same challenge in Hong Kong civil engineering projects. Qatar's construction projects also face the same time and cost overruns (Senouci, Ismail, and Eldin, 2016).

In Africa, the challenge has been extensively studied, but it is yet to be fully addressed. Ineffective project evaluation approaches have led to time delays and cost overruns that have continued to affect the performance of public projects, as is evidenced by the Ugandan Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) (Moyo and Msimang, 2021). Projects in Botswana, Egypt, Zambia, and South Africa face the persistent challenge of effective project evaluation. Saleh et al. (2019) highlighted the causes of delay in construction projects in Libya, noting that it affects the performance of the projects and is often linked to project evaluation approaches. The challenge is experienced in Nigeria (Aibinu and Odeyinka, 2016; Amusan, Dolapo, and Joshua, 2017).

In another study, Gituro and Mwawasi (2016) highlight that construction projects contribute to a country's economy in developing countries, and this has been a considerable challenge for project managers. They note that the Kenya National Highways Authority (KeNHA) has reported notable project evaluation challenges in their road construction projects. Mwangi and Wanjohi (2021) looked at the case of Meru County, Njiru and Otieno (2023) looked at the large construction projects in Kenya, and Seboru (2015) looked at the road construction projects in Kenya. Nzingu and Karanja (2018) acknowledged that checking and evaluation are critical to the success of

residential construction, especially acknowledging the challenge of proper planning and budgeting. Kihoro and Waiganjo (2015) looked at the factors affecting the performance of gated community housing projects in Nairobi. The researchers acknowledge that housing projects need to consider planning, the project team's competence, and stakeholder management if they need to boost the projects' performance.

In the recent past, the government of Kenya has embarked on a renewed focus on the construction industry. The focus has been heightened by the government's Big 4 Agenda which has placed affordable housing and infrastructure at the centre of the country's economy. With such a focus from the government, the county governments and the private sector have taken up different initiatives to support and participate in the development agenda. The construction industry in Kenya has been examined before (Boru, 2016; Gituro and Mwawasi, 2016; Kwatsima, 2016; Seboru, 2015), but there is a lack of sufficient focus on the performance of housing projects in Nairobi. Sector-specific research is necessary to understand the influence of project evaluation approaches on the project's time and cost performance. The benchmarking evaluation approaches need to be examined, especially focusing on their influence on housing projects' success, which has not been done before. As such, it is necessary to study the construction sector because its unique environment poses different challenges to the performance of construction projects.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The project evaluation approaches, specifically management style evaluation, have a substantial influence on the performance of housing projects. The lack of management style evaluation has continually led to the poor performance of construction projects as given by (Oladipo et al., 2015). Lack of proper management style evaluation significantly impacts the performance of housing projects by leading to inefficiencies and suboptimal outcomes. Without management style evaluation, it is challenging to set realistic performance targets or measure progress accurately, resulting in potential cost overruns, delays, and quality issues. This study addresses these gaps by investigating how management style evaluation influences the performance of housing projects in Nairobi. By identifying and profiling ongoing and completed housing projects, the research provides actionable insights for improving project delivery. The findings contribute to better decision-making in housing project management, ultimately supporting sustainable urban development in Nairobi.

1.3 Objective of the Study

The objective of the study is to investigate the influence of management style evaluation on the performance of housing projects in Nairobi.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Application of Construction Management Theory in Management Style Evaluation

Construction Management Theory has evolved through key contributions from pioneers like Henry Gantt (Gantt charts) and institutions such as PMI, which formalized principles in the *PMBOK Guide* (Saleh et al., 2018). Core tenets include integrated project phases, resource/time management, cost control, quality assurance, risk mitigation, and communication (Senouci et al., 2016). The theory assumes predictability, linear progression, stakeholder alignment, and fixed scope (Pinha and Ahluwalia, 2019). Critics highlight its rigidity in dynamic environments, particularly its fixed-scope assumption, which often clashes with evolving project realities (Olawale and Sun, 2017). Modern stakeholder complexities and adaptive needs challenge its traditional linearity. For housing project evaluation, the theory offers a structured framework to assess performance metrics (schedule/budget adherence, quality, risk management) (Müller and Schütze, 2019). Its stakeholder management focus ensures inclusive feedback mechanisms (Moyo and Msimang, 2021), while critiques encourage flexible, iterative evaluations. Balancing its principles with adaptive practices enhances relevance in contemporary projects.

2.2 Empirical Literature Review

A study by Taylor and Francis (2017) examined the impact of different management styles on housing project performance in Canada. The research employed a quantitative approach, using surveys distributed to project managers across 50 housing projects. The study categorized management styles into autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire, and analyzed their influence on project performance metrics such as cost, time, and quality. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between democratic management styles and project performance, with projects managed democratically showing a 20% improvement in time efficiency and a 15% enhancement in quality standards.

Yamamoto and Suzuki (2020) investigated the influence of Japanese management styles, particularly Kaizen and lean management, on the performance of housing projects in Japan. The study utilized a case study methodology, focusing on five major housing projects that implemented these management practices. Data collection involved performance metrics analysis and interviews with project leaders. The findings indicated a significant positive relationship between these management styles and project performance, with a 30% reduction in costs and a 20% increase in efficiency.

In Ghana, a study by Mensah and Amponsah (2021) assessed the influence of directive versus supportive management styles on housing projects. Using a mixed-method approach, the researchers conducted surveys and interviews with project managers and analyzed performance data from 20 housing projects. The findings indicated that supportive management styles were significantly associated with better project outcomes, including a 10% increase in efficiency and a 12% improvement in stakeholder satisfaction.

A study by Otieno and Mutua (2023) examined the effects of autocratic and laissez-faire management styles on public housing projects in Kenya. Using a mixed-method approach, the researchers collected data through surveys, interviews, and performance reports from 10 housing projects. The findings indicated that autocratic management styles had a negative relationship with project performance, leading to a 10% increase in costs and a 15% increase in delays, whereas laissez-faire styles showed no significant relationship with performance outcomes.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The research design adopted in the study was a descriptive research design based on the nature of the data collection tools used and the type of data that was collected by the study. A descriptive study is a scientific method which involves observing and describing the behavior of a subject without influencing it in any way in order to get a general overview about the subject of investigation (Obwatho, 2014).

3.2 Population

The population targeted in this study was 127 housing construction projects within Nairobi City County under 15 real estate developers with projects between 2019 and 2024. There were 254 respondents from registered architects from the construction project. The housing project was for those with over Kshs. 100 million and above and have Registered Architects. The study therefore went for at least 2 Registered Architects in each project.

3.3 Sampling

The research adopted systematic random sampling in reaching out to the study respondents. This is because of the nature of the organization structure for housing projects where one project may consist of very many technical personnel and their representatives. The study therefore utilized Yamane (1967) formulae for sample size calculations:

The Yamane (1967) formula for sample size:

$$n = \frac{\mathrm{N}}{1 + N(€^2)}$$

Where:

N= Total populations

n= required sample population

€=significance level of 5%

Therefore:

$$= \frac{254}{1 + 254\ (0.05^2)}$$

Sample size n = 155

The researcher then collected data from 155 architects based on professional categories from selected housing projects based in Nairobi.

3.4 Data Collection Methods and Tools

3.4.1 Data Collection Method

The collection of the data was done using questionnaires as the main source of data for the study. The data collection process was a primary data collection method that employed the usage of structured questionnaires that were designed according to the study objective administered by trained research assistants.

3.4.2 Data Collection Tools

The study used a carefully constructed questionnaire to ensure that the respondents provided information about the issues they had detailed knowledge about. The questionnaires were structured according to the study objective, where closed questions were used. The likelihood of obtaining fully completed questionnaires was increased by the use of trained research assistants who had been trained on the content of the questionnaires in order to clarify to the respondents any section of the questionnaire that was unclear or ambiguous. The participants in the study were approached in their natural environment to make them more confident about disclosure.

3.5 Data Analysis and Presentation

The study employed a quantitative method of data analysis to present the results from the field. The questionnaire was composed of closed questions. In order to perform statistical analysis, the researcher used quantitative data that was transformed into numerical form for ease of analysis. Data from surveys with closed-ended questions measured using Likert scales were translated into numeric data and ranked on a 1–5 scale based on the relative importance of the constructs under evaluation. First, the questionnaires collected from the field were subjected to an editing process to check for errors and omissions; this was followed by coding. The data entry was then done in SPSS to compute the generated descriptive statistics such as mean scores and standard deviations for each variable, both dependent and independent. Frequencies and percentages were computed to highlight the demographic information of the participants according to their role in the organization, age, gender, marital status, and education. The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was calculated to establish the relationships that existed among the independent and dependent variables. The study aimed to determine the associations among various study variables. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) was conducted in SPSS to establish whether there was a

substantial link between the dependent and independent variables in the sampled data at a 95 percent level of confidence.

3.6 Ethical Issues

The researcher obtained a letter of authority from the Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology Institutional Ethics Review Committee department, after which a similar letter was obtained from the National Commission for Science and Technology (NACOSTI). The researcher then used the letters of authority to collect data and seek permission from the relevant respondents of the respective housing construction companies. Once authority to collect data had been obtained from the respective companies, the staff identified to participate in the study were contacted and given a consent form to sign. The consent form outlined their rights, including their right not to participate in the study. In the consent form, they were also reminded that no respondent would be victimized on account of the information provided and that no one would be identified with any particular response, as the questionnaire was anonymous and did not capture any personal identifiers such as names or phone numbers. For interested parties, the study results were to be shared once the study had been published.

4.0 Analysis and Presentation of Findings

4.1 Response Rate

The number of questionnaires that were administered was 155. A total of 128 questionnaires were duly filled and returned as indicated in Table 4.1. This represented an overall successful response rate of 83 %, which is good enough to serve as a representative of the population. This conforms to Babbie (2004) asserted that response rates of 50% are acceptable to analyse and publish, 60% is good and 70% is very good and based on this assertion 83% response rate was found to be adequate for the study.

4.3 Demographic Characteristics

The study analysed the demographic characteristics of the respondents in terms of age brackets, gender, level of education, and profession to enable the researcher know the respondents characteristics and assess whether the respondents possessed information relevant to the study in line with level of education and professionalism and the results were as follows;

4.3.1 Age Distribution of Respondents

The age distribution of respondents indicates that the majority, 53% (n=68), fall within the 36-45 age range. The 26-35 group accounts for 25.78% (n=33), showing a strong presence of younger professionals. Moreover, the 18-25 makes up 10.94% (n=14) while the 56 and above age groups make up 10.16% (13). This distribution suggests that the workforce is dominated by mid-career professionals, with a smaller but notable presence of younger and older individuals, reflecting a mix of experience and emerging talent in the field.

4.3.2 Gender of the Respondents

The respondents were asked to indicate their gender. Results reveal that the majority (84%, n=108) of the respondents were male, while 16% (n=20) were female. This implies that most of the employees working in the construction sector are male. However, the number of female employees in the building industry is reasonable as the number is not very low.

4.3.3 Education Level of the Respondents

The findings indicate that the majority of respondents (67.19%, n=86) held a Bachelor's degree, highlighting a highly educated sample population. Diploma holders made up 17.96% (n=23), while those with a Master's degree accounted for 9.38% (n=12). Respondents with a Doctorate were 3.91% (n=5), and only 1.56% (n=2) had other forms of education. This distribution suggests that most participants possess substantial academic qualifications, likely equipping them with analytical and managerial competencies relevant to housing projects. The high concentration of degree holders enhances the credibility of the data, as their responses are presumed to reflect informed perspectives on project evaluation and performance in the housing sector.

4.3.4 Years of Experience in Housing Projects

The respondents were asked to indicate the number of years they had worked in their current employment. Results reveal that 40.62% (n=52) of the respondents had worked in their current employment between 6 – 10 years, followed by those who had worked between 11 – 15 years (25%, n=32), those who had worked between 16-20 years accounted for 15.63%, (n=20) while employees with experience of 0-5 years were 12.5% (n=16). The study also revealed that respondents with over 20 years were 6.25 (n=8%). The results therefore indicate that the majority of the respondents have adequate experience in the housing sector as they have worked for more than 6 years. The study results can then be relied upon as the respondents have experience and knowledge in the performance of housing projects in Nairobi, based on the duration they have worked in the industry.

4.4 Influence of Management Style Evaluation on the Performance of Housing Projects in Nairobi

The study reveals a strong institutional commitment to evaluating management approaches, with 78.91% (n=101) of respondents confirming regular assessments of organizational management styles. While this demonstrates widespread evaluation practices, a notable 12.5% (n=16) expressed dissatisfaction, suggesting variability in implementation across different institutions. Significantly, 82.78% (n=106) of participants reported active comparison of different management styles, indicating a culture of continuous improvement. The perceived impact of these styles appears positive, with 81.25% (n=104) believing they enhance project outcomes, and an overwhelming 84.38% (n=108) of team members expressing satisfaction with current approaches.

The evaluation process itself was viewed as effective by 79.69% (n=102) of respondents who agreed it leads to tangible improvements. However, dissenting views from 7.03-13.28% of participants highlight opportunities for enhancing evaluation frameworks, particularly in ensuring more consistent and inclusive practices. These findings collectively demonstrate that reflective, adaptive management approaches are successfully implemented across most Nairobi housing projects, contributing to both project success and team morale, while also identifying specific areas for potential refinement in evaluation methodologies.

Table 1: Management Style Evaluation Approaches

STATEMENTS (where 1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neither agree nor disagree, 4 –agree and 5-strongly agree)		**SD**	**D**	**N**	**A**	**SA**	**Totals**
The management style used in our organization is regularly evaluated.	Count	8	8	11	55	46	**128**
	%	6.25	6.25	8.59	42.97	35.94	**100**
Different management styles are compared to determine their effectiveness on project performance.	Count	5	7	10	44	62	**128**
	%	3.13	6.25	9.375	34.34	46.91	**100**
Our organization's management style positively influences project outcomes.	Count	5	10	9	48	56	**128**
	%	3.13	9.38	7.03	37.5	42.96	**100**
Team members are satisfied with the current management style.	Count	3	6	11	45	63	**128**
	%	2.34	4.69	8.59	35.16	49.22	**100**
The evaluation of management styles leads to improvements in project management.	Count	9	8	9	54	48	**128**
	%	7.03	6.25	7.03	42.19	37.5	**100**

5.0 Discussion of Key Findings and Recommendations

5.1 Demographic Information

Demographic information of the respondents was captured in terms of age, gender, level of education, and years of experience in housing projects. A total of 155 questionnaires were issued for the survey, and 128 were duly completed and returned. This represented a strong response rate, which was considered adequate for analysis and ensured that the data collected was representative of the target population. In terms of age, the majority of respondents were between 36 and 45 years

old, indicating that most participants were mid-career professionals. This group was followed by individuals aged 26 to 35, then those between 18 and 25, while the smallest group consisted of respondents aged 56 years and above. This mix of age groups suggests a workforce comprising both experienced personnel and younger professionals, offering a balanced perspective on the sector. Regarding gender, the survey revealed that most of the respondents were male. However, a notable number of female participants were also represented, reflecting growing gender inclusivity in the construction and housing sector, despite its traditionally male dominance. On educational qualifications, the largest proportion of respondents held a Bachelor's degree, indicating that most of the participants were well-educated. This group was followed by diploma holders, then those with Master's degrees, with a few having Doctorate qualifications or other forms of education.

5.2 Management Style Evaluation Approaches

The study's findings strongly align with global research on management practices, particularly in demonstrating the benefits of reflective and adaptive management approaches. The widespread practice of evaluating management styles in Nairobi's housing projects mirrors Taylor and Francis's (2017) findings on democratic management's positive performance impact. This correlation is further evidenced by the majority perception that such evaluations improve outcomes and enhance team satisfaction, consistent with Brown and Harris's (2019) UK-based research linking transformational leadership to better timelines and stakeholder satisfaction.

The observed management optimization benefits parallel Yamamoto and Suzuki's (2020) Japanese case studies on Kaizen and lean practices, though the current study didn't specify particular styles. The high team satisfaction levels notably reflect Khaled and Ahmed's (2018) Egyptian findings that participative management improves project quality and timeliness, suggesting Nairobi organizations may be employing similar inclusive approaches.

These results further validate Mensah and Amponsah's (2021) Ghanaian research on supportive management's efficiency benefits, as the minimal disagreement in findings implies prevalent empathetic, encouraging leadership styles. Conversely, the findings contrast with Otieno and Mutua's (2023) Kenyan study on autocratic management's negative impacts, suggesting a potential sector-wide shift toward more participatory practices in Nairobi's housing projects. However, the minority dissenting views highlight persistent implementation gaps, particularly in evaluation consistency - an area where targeted capacity building could standardize effective practices across all organizations. This nuanced perspective reinforces the study's contribution to understanding how adaptive management evaluation frameworks can optimize housing project performance while identifying specific improvement opportunities for more uniform application of best practices.

5.3 Recommendations

The study recommends institutionalizing management evaluation frameworks within housing organizations, adapting them to specific contexts and integrating them with performance systems.

Leadership development programs should emphasize participative, transformational, and supportive models through collaboration between professional bodies, government, and training institutions. Internal feedback mechanisms should empower staff to contribute to leadership assessments, fostering accountability and continuous improvement. These measures will enhance strategic agility, motivation, and project success in Nairobi's housing sector.

5.4 Suggested Areas for Further Study

Given the importance of management style evaluations, further studies could investigate how different leadership styles particularly transformational, participative, and adaptive models affect team motivation, communication, and project delivery in Nairobi's housing projects. This research might also examine the effectiveness of existing leadership evaluation tools and propose frameworks for institutionalizing reflective leadership that foster inclusive decision-making and continuous performance improvement.

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