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RISK MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE OF PROJECTS: A CASE OF EDMUND RICE CATHOLIC EDUCATION CENTRE, KAJIADO COUNTY, KENYA.

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ABSTRACT
Despite the importance of projects, performance issues still plague them due to inadequate risk management. This results in unsustainable results, resource waste, and, in extreme situations, project failure.The aim of this study was to assess the influence of risk management on the performance of projects, a case of Edmund Rice Catholic Education Centre in Kajiado County, Kenya. A convergent parallel research design was utilized, targeting 95 respondents at ERCEC through questionnaires and interviews. Because of the small target population, a census method was employed to include all individuals. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis, while qualitative data was thematically analyzed.To maintain the study's integrity, ethical principles including informed consent and confidentiality were adhered to. The results showed that Risk Management, ($r = 0.514$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$), had a significantly positive association with Performance of Projects. The study concluded that effective risk management enhances project performance. This study recommends that organizations strengthen risk management through capacity building, consistent monitoring, and expert involvement in high-risk projects to sustain performance and ensure long-term success.

Keywords: Risk Management, Project Performance, Risk Identification, Risk Mitigation, Risk Assessment, Project Management

INTRODUCTION

Performance is the successful completion of a task as determined by several factors, such as completeness, cost, and speed(Barmasai and Mbugua, 2020). In the context of projects, performance is the ability of a project to accomplish its objectives within a certain scope, time, and budget while guaranteeing that the required quality standards are met(Karigirwa and Rusibana, 2024; Kerzner, 2022).Studies have indicated that a large number of projects fail to meet performance standards because they frequently encounter delays, go over budget, and produce poor quality outcomes(Ajam, 2020; Marrewijk *et al.,* 2024; Ndunda and Thomas, 2024). For instance, delays, cost overruns, and other problems plagued the Big Dig highway project in the United States, contributing to its subpar performance (Ika *et al.,* 2023; Park, 2021). Similarly, the National Health Service IT Project in the United Kingdom was hindered by problems such scope changes, financial mismanagement, uncertainty, budget overruns, and time delays (Nazaruddin *et al.,* 2023).

These performance challenges are not unique to developed economies, they are equally prevalent in Africa, delaying the achievement of intended objectives and, in severe cases, resulting in project termination (Mwandawiro *et al.,* 2019; Ndirangu, 2021). For instance, poor performance resulted from financial mismanagement, operational inefficiencies, insufficient stakeholder involvement, and disinformation in South Africa's Eskom projects (Chauke, 2024).Similarly, inadequate infrastructure, erratic electricity supplies, restricted internet access, and a lack of teacher readiness all contributed to Rwanda's One Laptop per Child project's failure to yield the desired results, making it challenging to incorporate laptops into the curriculum (Faustino *et al.,* 2024; Ghafoori, 2024).

Poor performance is also a characteristic of several projects in Kenya. A National Assembly report shows

thousands of initiatives run by the Kenyan government collapsed as of 2020 as a result of poor performance(National Assembly, 2021).Furthermore, Wanyama and Aila, (2022) noted that in the broader public sector, Kenyan parastatal projects experienced high rates of failure due to poor performance which resulted from unclear project goals and mismanagement of resources. The Edmund Rice Catholic Education Centre (ERCEC) as an educational project is facing challenges due to inadequate risk management. Risks such as an over-reliance on external funding, inadequate infrastructure, competition from other schools, curriculum changes, and fluctuating resource availability have left the project vulnerable to disruptions that undermine its overall performance (ERCEC, 2025).These challenges point to the importance of risk management in enhancing project performance. Therefore, the objective of this study was to assess the influence of risk management on the performance of projects, a case of Edmund Rice Catholic Education Centre in Kajiado County, Kenya.

Veiga and Maria da Silva (2020) define risk management as the process of identifying, evaluating, and handling potential threats that could negatively affect a project's outcomes. All projects are bound to come across these dangers at one point in their lifecycle and thus, it is crucial that risk management remains a priority so that they have a chance of succeeding. Projects undergo different types of risks including, deviating from their objectives, loss of existing resources, ever-complaining stakeholders, inadequate technology, late deliveries, and regulatory shifts among many more. If left unchecked, these risks could lead projects directly to poor performance and failure (Barghi and Sikari, 2020). When risk management is carried out effectively, it ensures that projects are able to navigate and adapt to unforeseen changes faster which further contributes to their performance (George, 2020; Isa *et al.,* 2020). First, possible threats that could influence the smooth running of a project are identified which means that everything that could go wrong is noted down by the project managers. At this stage, research is done to make sure that every possible risk is identified. This could range from asking stakeholders, to hiring experts in the field to make sure every area is covered (George, 2020). Then assessment of the identified threats is carried out, that is, detecting the specific type of risk, predicting the chance that the risk will occur, and how it might affect an initiative's outcomes (Veiga and Maria da Silva, 2020). This further allows project managers to plan and come up with measures to respond to every threat in what is termed as mitigation (Ngare and Wairimu, 2024; Shafqat *et al.,* 2022).These measures could range from avoidance to developing contingency plans or reaction plans that will ensure a project does not have to encounter any challenges that might have an impact on their performance (Madushanka and Tilakasiri, 2020; Shafqat *et al.,* 2022). If projects skip this step, it could be difficult for them to remain on track, not exceed their budgets and timelines, which eventually affects their overall outcomes (Pegulescu, 2023).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Projects should ideally accomplish their goals within the allocated scope, time, and budget while providing stakeholders with the desired level of quality and value(Eteki, 2024).However, in reality, many projects around the world fall short of these standards because risks are not adequately managed. The Sponge City project in China and the Big Dig highway project in the US are two notable examples. Due to poor risk management, they both encountered delays, overspending, and poor results(Ajam, 2020; Ika *et al.,* 2023; Nazaruddin *et al.,* 2023; Ndunda and Thomas, 2024; Park, 2021). Similarly, across Africa, project underperformance is widespread, with risks such as limited resources, financial mismanagement, poor stakeholder engagement, and infrastructural challenges frequently undermining their outcomes (Mwandawiro *et al.,* 2019; Ndirangu, 2021). Poor performance is also a problem in Kenya, where the government has reported that more than a thousand public projects have failed due to mismanagement of risks(National Assembly, 2021). The Edmund Rice Catholic Education Centre (ERCEC) similarly faces significant risks, including over-reliance on external funding, inadequate infrastructure, insufficient staffing, and fluctuating resource availability (ERCEC, 2025).These challenges have significant consequences, including resource wastage, stalled project progress, compromised quality of outputs, and in severe cases,

project failure.Although previous studies have examined the relationship between risk management and project performance, notable gaps remain.For instance, in Libya, more than three hundred building projects in Tripoli and Bengazi area took part in a study by Algremazy *et al.,* (2023) on the implementation of managing risks. However, their research did not explore the specific dimensions of risk management such as risk identification and risk assessment that directly contribute to improved outcomes. Similarly, Kenyan road infrastructure initiatives were studied by Patu *et al.,* (2024)to understand how their performance was impacted by project risk management. However, the study only focused on road infrastructure projects. Because previous studies lack specificity, there is limited knowledge on how risk management, particularly risk identification, risk assessment, and risk mitigation affect project performance. Existing research has also not adequately examined these practices in donor-funded educational projects, such as Edmund Rice Catholic Education Centre, leaving a sector-specific gap. In order to fill that void in knowledge, this study examined how risk management affects project outcomes, specifically focusing on risk identification, risk assessment, and risk mitigation.

EMPIRICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

An investigation into the risk management procedures and evaluation of projects in construction was carried out by Appiah (2020). Surveys were given out to project managers to fill. To improve the outcomes of a project, the study found that management of project threats involved, recognizing, evaluating, and handling them as soon as they occurred. The findings also noted that the use of risk-impact probability matrices was frequently done in order to evaluate the threats qualitatively.

Madushanka and Tilakasiri, (2020) did their research in Sri Lanka. Identification and management of big threats to the building sector was the main purpose. Using both numerical and descriptive data, the investigation sought to recognize the major dangers and strategies to minimize them. The study's results indicated that the two main dangers that projects faced were financial risks and time risks. And that the main strategies used to manage these dangers were idea generation and lowering the impact of the risks.

In Libya, more than three hundred building projects in Tripoli and Bengazi area took part in a study by Algremazy *et al.,* (2023) on the implementation of managing risks. The outcomes of the inquiry indicated that management of threats significantly impacted project success. In that when these threats were managed and their impact lessened, it led to improvement in project outcomes.

Kenyan road infrastructure initiatives were studied by Patu *et al.,* (2024) in a cross sectional study to understand how their performance was impacted by project risk management. By using six hundred and ninety-five individuals, the investigation found that the outcomes of road infrastructure initiatives had a positively noticeable effect as a result of project risk management.

Researchers Ngare and Wairimu, (2024) in Kenya's Nairobi County looked into the performance of commercial banks and how risk minimization measures contributed to this. Specific measures such as prevention and transfer of the threats were the aim of the study and how they impacted the outcomes of commercial banks. The investigation was focused on 13 banks. Investigation findings showed that prevention and transfer of the threats significantly affected how well commercial bank projects performed.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A convergent parallel research design was employed to guide the mixed methods approach in this investigation.In a convergent parallel research design, the qualitative and quantitative data are gathered simultaneously, and analyzed and presented separately(Dawadi *et al.,* 2021).A mixed-methods approach enables a researcher to gather both narrative and numerical information in one study. This approach was used because gathering both data provides a depth in knowledge and an understanding of the study inquiry. This further makes the research more comprehensive as it allows the collection of in-depth and detailed information (Dawadi *et al.,* 2021). The target population for this study included 95 individuals directly involved in or influencing the operations and performance of projects at Edmund Rice Catholic

Education Centre in Kajiado County. A census approach was used to include all 95 individuals since the target population was small. Information was gathered using two tools, an interview guide to gather descriptive data, and a questionnaire to collect statistical data. Questionnaires targeted all respondents at ERCEC as they directly engage with the projects and provided firsthand insights into their performance. Interviews targeted the management staff. These are key decision-makers and individuals with specialized knowledge who provided in-depth insights into risk management and project performance. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, linear regression analysis, and analysis of variance (ANOVA), while qualitative data was analyzed using a thematic approach, which involved transcribing responses, coding them into categories, and identifying emerging patterns to provide deeper explanations. To ensure ethical standards were adhered to, the study ensured that everyone was aware and consented to the investigation being carried out within their borders. The identities of the individuals participating remained discrete. They were also informed that the information they filled in the surveys and interview guides would only be used for scholarly reasons.

FINDINGS

Descriptive statistics for Risk management and performance of projects

The investigation employed a Likert scale with five levels of agreement, asking participants to rate their agreement or disagreement with each statement. Table 1 displays their generated responses.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Risk Management

	1	2	3	4	5	M	SD
Management of risks is important in improving the performance of projects	4(5.6%)	0(0.0%)	15(20.8%)	31(43.1%)	22(30.6%)	3.93	1.01
There is a process in place to identify project risks	1(1.4%)	3(4.2%)	24(33.3%)	23(31.9%)	21(29.2%)	3.83	0.95
Risks are regularly assessed during the project lifecycle	1(1.4%)	9(12.5%)	13(18.1%)	20(27.8%)	29(40.3%)1	3.93	1.11
Mitigation strategies are in place for high-impact risks	1(1.4%)	5(6.9%)	14(19.4%)	31(43.1%)	21(29.2%)	3.92	0.95
Risks are prioritized based on their potential impact	1(1.4%)	6(8.3%)	22(30.6%)	24(33.3%)	19(26.4%)	3.75	0.99
It is not advisable to mitigate risks	12(16.7%)	25(34.7%)	12(16.7%)	13(18.1%)	10(13.9%)	2.78	1.31
Project risks do not affect the performance of projects	26(36.1%)	20(27.8%)	10(13.9%)	9(12.5%)	7(9.7%)	2.32	1.34
There is no process in place for assessing potential risks	15(20.8%)	24(33.3%)	13(18.1%)	10(13.9%)	10(13.9%)	2.67	1.33
Risk mitigation strategies are inconsistently applied	22(30.6%)	21(29.2%)	9(12.5%)	11(15.3%)	9(12.5%)	2.50	1.39
Risk identification is often delayed	22(30.6%)	9(12.5%)	26(36.1%)	9(12.5%)	6(8.3%)	2.56	1.28
Composite Mean and Standard Deviation						**3.22**	**1.17**

A composite mean of 3.22, depicts that participants appeared to agree moderately that risk management affects project performance. The standard deviation of 1.17, however, suggests a broad spectrum of opinions,

with some respondents expressing less certainty and others viewing it as quite impactful.

A total of 72 respondents completed the questionnaires, as shown in Table 1. On the statement, management of risks is important in improving the performance of projects; 22 (30.6%) strongly agreed, 31 (43.1%) agreed, 15 (20.8%) were neutral, none disagreed, and four (5.6%) strongly disagreed that management of risks is important in improving the performance of projects. Responses indicated an average of 3.93 (better than the combined 3.22 mean), 1.01 standard deviation (lower than the combined standard deviation). This demonstrates the assertion positively influences project performance.

For the statement, there is a process in place to identify project risks, majority (33.3%) of the respondents recorded neutral, only one disagreed strongly, 21 respondents (29.2%) strongly agreed, twenty-three (31.9%) respondents agreed, and three disagreed. Consequently, the average was 3.83 with a standard deviation of 0.95. The mean was significantly better than the aggregated mean, and lower than the pooled standard deviation. This suggests the statement positively affects project performance.

29 respondents (40.3%) strongly agreed, thirteen (18.1%) were indifferent, 20 (27.8%) agreed, nine (12.5%) disagreed, with one respondent (1.4%) strongly disagreeing that risks are regularly assessed during the project lifecycle. As compared to the cumulative mean of 3.22, this statement scored 3.93. 1.11 emerged as the standard deviation, slightly lower than the combined value (1.17). This statement implies that it affects project performance in a positive manner.

A total of 72 respondents completed the questionnaires. Of these, 21 (29.2%) strongly agreed, 31 (43.1%) agreed, five (6.9%) disagreed, one (1.4%) disagreed strongly, and 14 (19.4%) remained impartial that mitigation strategies are in place for high-impact risks. Compared to the composite average of 3.22, an average of 3.92 was recorded, surpassing the composite figure; the standard deviation was 0.95,which was lower than the composite figure (1.17). This demonstrates that assertion positively influences project performance.

Six respondents (8.3%) disagreed, nineteen respondents (26.4%) strongly agreed, 24 (33.3%) agreed, 22 (30.6%) remained impartial and the rest disagreed severely that risks are prioritized based on their potential impact. The responses indicated an average of 3.75 (better than the combined average of 3.22), and a 0.99 extent of deviation from the mean (lower than the combined figure of 1.17). This demonstrates that assertion positively influences project performance.

Ten respondents (13.9%) strongly agreed, 13 (18.1%) agreed, twelve (16.7%) were neutral, 25 (34.7%) were in disagreement, and twelve participants (16.7%) agreed strongly that it is not advisable to mitigate risks. One point three one was found to be the standard deviation, while 2.78 was found to be the average. While the average score was low that the cumulative average score, the standard deviation was high than the composite value. According to the statement, risk minimization is crucial and has a favorable impact on project performance.

On the statement, project risks do not affect performance, nine respondents (12.5%) agreed, seven respondents (9.7%) strongly agreed, 10 (13.9%) remained indifferent, 26 (36.1%) disagreed strongly, and 20 respondents (27.8%) disagreed that project risks do not affect performance. 1.34 was found to be the standard deviation, while 2.32 was found to be the average. While the average was lower than the cumulative average, the standard deviation was high than the combined value. According to the statement, project risks are generally thought to negatively affect outcomes of a project.

Of the 72 respondents, 10 (13.9%) strongly agreed, 13 (18.1%) were indifferent, 24 (33.3%) disagreed, and 15 (20.8%) disagreed strongly that there is no process in place for assessing potential risks. 1.33 was found to be the standard deviation, while 2.67 was found to be the average. They were both above the composite standard deviation and below the overall average, respectively. The assertion implies that the lack of a risk assessment procedure is not generally viewed as an issue, suggesting that risk assessment enhances project performance.

There were twenty-one respondents (20.2%) who disagreed, nine respondents (12.5%) who strongly agreed, eleven (15.3%) who agreed, nine (12.5%) who were indifferent, and twenty-two (30.6%) who disagreed strongly that risk mitigation strategies are

inconsistently applied. 1.39 was the resulting standard deviation, while 2.50 was found to be the average. They were both above the overall standard deviation (1.17) and above the overall average (3.22), respectively. The phrase implies that the inconsistent implementation of risk mitigation techniques is not generally regarded as a problem, suggesting that consistent mitigation is thought to enhance project performance.

Twenty-two respondents (30.6%) strongly disagreed, six (8.3%) strongly agreed, nine (12.5%) agreed, twenty-six (36.1%) were neutral, and nine (12.5%) disagreed that risk identification is often delayed. The statement's average score was 2.56, lower that the aggregate mean (3.29). The standard deviation was 1.28; it was above the combined standard deviation. The statement implies that identification of risks on time positively affects project outcomes and that delayed risk identification is not often viewed as a challenge.

In summary, the findings indicate a strong agreement by the participants that identification of risks and mitigation are necessary for project success and that risk management is essential. There are still issues, like inconsistent strategy implementation and delayed risk identification. Although risk management is typically regarded as a strength, there are certain significant areas that require development in order to improve project outcomes.

In the interviews, the management staff discussed the various strategies, to assess and manage risks that are in place to prevent project failures at the Centre. This is what one of them had to say when asked to elaborate further:

> *"We are very robust in risk and risk management. This means that we are able to identify, analyze, and manage threats to projects. For example, we have taken insurance covers. The facilities here are insured against things like fires. We have also tried to collaborate with other key stakeholders for example the community so they feel a sense of belonging. If the community embraces the projects, the risk of rejection is minimal" (Personal Communication No. 1, 2025).*

Another respondent mentioned that:

> *"For high-risk projects, we often partner with external consultants or experts to supplement internal capacity in risk management. Another thing we do is we have a contingency planning in place as a way to anticipate potential risks and it also helps map out and brainstorm potential mitigation strategies" (Personal Communication No. 2, 2025).*

Another respondent also highlighted:

> *"We use benchmarking with other similar projects to inform decision making. This prevents "reinventing the wheel" and helps the Centre implement best practices and avoid common pitfalls experienced by others. We also ensure that there is regulatory compliance as a crucial strategy for risk prevention." (Personal Communication No. 3, 2025).*

When asked to provide an example of a past project that faced significant risks, and how the institution managed the situation, one interviewee said,

> *"The modern dairy project faced several risks. A significant early risk was inadequate feed supply that the quality was not as good. When we realized this, we had to come up with a way to fix this threat. So, we had to come up with contacts that are long term especially with the local farmers so that we could stabilize the feed prices and also mitigate these risks. Another thing we did was to invest in drought-resistant forage crops to buffer against supply shocks" (Personal Communication No. 4, 2025).*

Another one stated that,

> *"When we started the modern dairy project, we did not have a ready market. What we did, was seek out local dairy processors and retailers to leverage on their existing markets. We did this by securing offtake agreements with them. We added products like yogurt, cheese, and flavored milk to satisfy different market demands. Another risk was the reliance on sophisticated equipment, which introduced risks of system breakdowns and high maintenance costs. The local technical capacity to maintain the equipment was very limited, which could have disrupted operations and affected productivity. When we realized this, we negotiated service-level agreements with equipment suppliers to guarantee prompt maintenance and repair support. We also trained local staff on basic maintenance to reduce*

dependency on external technicians." (Personal Communication No. 5, 2025).

Another respondent noted that,

"Despite initial investments, the modern dairy project risked failing to achieve its aim of financial sustainability due to high operational costs, that is, energy, labor, feed, and unpredictable market conditions. To address this, we conducted regular cost-benefit analyses and performance monitoring. In addition, we developed a phased business plan that included break-even analysis and conservative revenue forecasts to manage investor expectations and ensure realistic growth targets. Another measure was the integration of renewable energy solutions such as biogas from manure to lower operational costs and enhance environmental sustainability." (Personal Communication No. 6, 2025).

Another respondent explained that,

"Operating in an urban area required adherence to multiple regulations. We engaged early with municipal authorities and regulatory bodies like the county environmental health departments and Kenya Dairy Board, to ensure the project met all relevant standards for land use, waste management, animal welfare, and food safety. We also conducted regular internal audits and employed a compliance officer to track changes in local and national regulations, ensuring that all permits and licenses remained valid and up-to-date. We also maintained open communication with the community and regulatory agencies to build trust and support for the project's ongoing operations." (Personal Communication No. 7, 2025).

Correlation Analysis between Performance of Projects and Risk Management

To ascertain how performance of projects was associated with risk management, this investigation conducted correlation analysis. Table 2 conveys the results.

Table 2

Correlation Analysis between Performance of Projects and Risk Management

Correlations			
		Performance of Projects	**Risk Management**
Performance of Projects	Pearson Correlation	1	.514**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	72	72
Risk Management	Pearson Correlation	.514**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	72	72
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

The results presented, found that performance of projects and risk management had a positive statistically significant association ($r = 0.514$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$). This implies a correlation between enhanced project performance and greater risk management.

Regression Analysis between Performance of Projects and Risk Management

Regression analysis was administered in order to ascertain whether there was a causal relationship between Performance of Projects and Risk Management as displayed below.

Table 3

Model Summary Table of Performance of Projects and Risk Management

Model Summary				
Model	**R**	**R Square**	**Adjusted R Square**	**Std. Error of the Estimate**
1	.514[a]	.264	.253	.43193

a. Predictors: (Constant), Risk Management

.264 was the R Square value, demonstrating that Risk Management could explain 26.4% of the total variance in performance of projects, which is the dependent variable. This indicates that additional factors not covered by risk management account for 73.6% of the variance in the dependent variable.

An ANOVA table evaluating project performance against risk management was generated and presented the results in Table 4.

Table 4

ANOVA Table of Performance of Projects and Risk Management

ANOVA[a]						
Model		**Sum of Squares**	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
1	Regression	4.679	1	4.679	25.080	.000[b]
	Residual	13.060	70	.187		
	Total	17.739	71			
a. Dependent Variable: Performance of Projects						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Risk Management						

Table 4 above shows that F-static was 25.080 and p-value was .000, which was below the threshold of 0.05. Therefore, this result supported the alternative hypothesis and the hypothesis that, there is no meaningful correlation between risk management and project success at Edmund Rice Catholic Education Centre in Kajiado County, Kenya, was rejected.

The study further generated a coefficients table for risk management and performance of projects and presented the findings in Table 5

Table 5

Coefficients Table of Performance of Projects and Risk Management

Coefficients[a]						
		Unstandardized Coefficients		**Standardized Coefficients**		
Model		**B**	**Std. Error**	**Beta**	**t**	**Sig.**
1	(Constant)	2.246	.240		9.352	.000
	Risk Management	.365	.073	.514	5.008	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Performance of Projects						

The table shows that management had a beta coefficients value of .365 (p = 0.000). Thus, risk management improves project performance in a way that is statistically significant. Therefore, risk management contributes 0.365 to a single unit increment in performance of projects. Additionally, the optimal model for the relationship becomes:

$Y = 2.246 + 0.365X$

Where:

Y = Project Performance,

X = Risk Management

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

A composite mean of 3.22 indicates that participants agreed that risk management had an impact on project performance. With an average score of 3.93, the majority of respondents concurred that management of risks is important in the success of project outcomes. Qualitative insights echoed this as respondents noted the presence of strong risk management at ERCEC to prevent project failures. The findings were in agreement with those of George, (2020) and Isa *et al.,* (2020) who observed that when risk management is carried out effectively, it ensures that projects are able to navigate and adapt to unforeseen changes faster, which further contributes to their performance. Majority of the respondents disagreed that risk mitigation strategies are inconsistently applied, with a mean of 2.50, implying that, at ERCEC, risk responses are consistent. In a similar study, Pegulescu, (2023) averred that if projects skip risk mitigation step, it could be difficult for them to remain on track, not

exceed their budgets and timelines, which eventually affects their overall outcomes. The null hypothesis, that risk management and project performance have no meaningful relationship, according to the simple linear regression, was rejected. Project performance was found to be favorably and significantly correlated with risk management at a Pearson's correlation coefficient of .514 ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$). This implies that management of risks can actually improve project success. This finding agrees with a study by Patu *et al.,* (2024) on how performance of Kenyan road infrastructure initiatives was impacted by project risk management. The study discovered a favorable correlation between road infrastructure initiatives' performance and project risk management. Another study by Ngare and Wairimu, (2024) in Kenya's Nairobi County that looked into the performance of commercial banks and how risk minimization measures contributed to their performance, found that prevention and transfer of the threats had a significant impact on the performance of commercial bank projects. These studies, which range from infrastructure to finance to education, converge to show that risk management improves performance across sectors.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The study sought to determine how project performance was impacted by risk management at Edmund Rice Catholic Education Centre in Kajiado County, Kenya. Through the descriptive statistics, the results revealed a 3.22 cumulative mean, which suggests that performance of projects had a positive impact on risk management. Thus, the results showed, project performance and risk management are significantly correlated. Since the p-value was .000, which was below the 0.05 threshold, the simple linear regression's null hypothesis, according to which there is no meaningful correlation between project performance and risk management, was rejected. A correlation analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between risk management and project performance. There was a substantial positive association ($r = 0.514$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$) between risk management and the dependent variable, project performance. The interviews highlighted presence of strong risk management techniques, such as a solid Risk Management Framework, backup plans, regulatory compliance, and stakeholder involvement that have been put in place by ERCEC to stop project failures. For high-risk projects, the Center also collaborates with other specialists and sets benchmarks against related efforts. An important example is the modern dairy project, which had to deal with risks like high operating expenses, market difficulties, and feed shortages. Supply agreements, product diversification, cost containment, and the utilization of renewable energy sources were used to address these.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY FINDINGS TO THE PROGRAM PURSUED BY THE RESEARCHER

The results of the study have significant ramifications for project management and planning program. They emphasize how important risk management is to project performance, thus, it serves as the cornerstone for the principles and practices that the Project Planning and Management curriculum emphasizes. Therefore, this shows how crucial it is to incorporate risk management into all stages of project management, from start to finish. Project managers and planners must make sure that possible risks are proactively addressed. Overall, the results enhance our comprehension of how risk management can be applied in project settings, which makes them extremely pertinent to the development of project planning and management theory and practice.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that risk management significantly improves project performance. Proper risk management lowers the chance of failure, promotes informed decision-making, and increases project resilience. Nonetheless, when project environment change, flexible, forward-thinking approaches that can address new risks and complexity are still required. Therefore, maintaining project performance over time requires the development of a dynamic risk management strategy.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

Given that risk management has been shown to have a major impact on project performance, the following measures are recommended;

- Institutionalize risk management practices by integrating risk identification, assessment, and mitigation into all phases of project planning and implementation to enhance outcomes.
- Provide regular risk management training for project staff to raise awareness, build capacity, and promote a proactive approach in handling emerging threats.
- Engage external specialists early in high-risk projects to strengthen risk anticipation, improve control measures, and ensure that projects are better prepared to respond to uncertainties.

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