# Project Quality Planning and Performance of Floricultural Projects in Kenya

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**Abstract:** Project quality planning is an important component of project success. Its contribution is particularly significant in the floricultural projects where it enables the floricultural farmers to minimize the losses arising from the natural, economic and socio-political environments. In Kenya, there have been concerted efforts to embrace project quality planning in floricultural projects in order to make the sector more profitable. Therefore, this paper examined the influence of project quality planning on the performance of the floricultural projects in Nakuru County with the senior level managers constituting the sample of the study. Data was collected using questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive results showed that project quality planning influenced the performance of floricultural projects in Kenya. A significant 9% of the variance in the performance of floricultural projects was explained by project quality planning. However, the influence of project quality insignificant.

Keywords: Floriculture, Project Planning, Project performance, Project quality planning, Floricultural projects

# 1. Introduction

Planning consists of defining and refining the objectives of a project and developing the course of action required in accomplishing the stated project objectives. Cleland (2015) concurs that project planning enables the planners to make a detailed plan early in the project to facilitate effective project implementation. However, Vater (2019) observes that over planning can limit creativity. This is because inadequate planning is likely to lead to incorrect assumptions and poor execution of the intended project activities (Askov, 2018). Effective planning ought to incorporate project financial planning.Project quality planning is essential because it increases the chances of success of a project by quantifying the financial resources required to accomplish the proposed project (Deborah, 2018).

Meanwhile performance is considered as an issue of concern in any project endeavors. Its indictors include time, budget, quality and overall client satisfaction. Long (2018) concurs that the major indicators of project performance are time, budget, quality and stakeholder satisfaction. Ling (2015) believes that the most important aspect of project performance relate to quality control, cost, time, client satisfaction and effective communication. In floricultural projects, decision making, proper coordination, social condition, economical condition and climatic condition are determinants of project performance.

Although the growth in the floricultural sector has been on the rise in, the sector has encountered challenges among them low exportability due to post-harvest problems and price destabilization. The slow development of the sector has been associated with improper planning, limited investment and emphasis on other sectors of the economy. In Kenya, floricultural sector faces challenges such as high cost of inputs, weak farmers' institutions, limited extension services and inadequate credit facilities.

In Nakuru County the floriculture is an important foreign exchange earner making the sector a key driver of economic development. However, farmers needto plan well in order to adapt to increasing requirements of quality and compliance with the emerging standards. Instead, the sector is grappling with a myriad of challenges including fertilizer importation crisis, increase in input taxes, stringent phytosanitary requirements and new demands on fumigation by key markets. Proper quality planning is required in developing the floricultural projects for the sector to realize improved performance (Muchira, 2019).

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

The floricultural sector continues to face a myriad of challenges that hinder its performance. The major challenges confronting the sector including limited access to credit, poor infrastructure and multiple taxes. These challenges have continued to reduce the revenues for the floricultural projects. This has raised concerns about the role of project quality planning (Karanja, 2019; Mishra & Sandretto, 2015). Although studies have been conducted globally on project planning, research attention focusing on the influence of project quality planning on the performance of floricultural projects are still inadequate (Wallace, 2020; Buang, 2018; Kimutai, 2015; Kamau, 2019). The studies addressed some of the determinants of project performance but did not

examine the role of project quality planning in the context floricultural projects. This paper examined the influence of project quality planning on the performance of floricultural projects in Kenya.

### 2. Theoretical Review

The study was guided by the control theory. The control theory focuses on taking timely corrective actions to control the dynamic and fast-paced environments surrounding project activities. The theory examines the process by which one party attempts to influence the behavior of another within a given system. Organizational control is an inherently communicative activity that consists of verbal and physical actions designed to overcome resistance and exercise authority over others. The motivation behind the control theory is the fact that managers and workers often have competing interests. Managers typically want to maximize the productivity of their subordinates in exchange for the lowest organizational cost. In contrast, workers may seek out ways to maximize their individual compensation while exerting the least amount of personal effort. Control theory helps in sustaining the performance management system by defining forms of control between the organization and the systems within.

According to control theory, actions of all systems should be in sync with the overall goals and objectives of an organization (Barrows & Neely, 2012). Control theory focuses on control mechanism which should be imposed at all levels of an organization. There are different forms of control which an organization can use in order to get the desired results such as organizational structure, behavioral activity sequencing like norms and regulations of an organization or performance measurement mechanisms. Simple control provides members with a clear source of authority to respond to and react against. Structural control complicates member resistance efforts because there is no clear source of authority for workers to communicate with or to challenge. Normative control processes motivate and influence member behavior by encouraging the development of strong personal relationships within the work environment. Technical control relies on the intervention of some physical to substitute for the presence of a supervisor. Cultural control strategies influence member behavior by drawing upon the communal and social aspects of organizational life. The results of activity sequencing have to be congruent with the objectives and goals of the organization (Barrows & Neely, 2012).

Control theory helps in the performance management by evaluating the output of the system for its consistency with pre-defined sets of parameters. In case of any kind of deviation, it will be adjusted by the controller in the system (Barrows & Neely, 2012). This model helps the managers to control the performance of the employees. There are multiple applications of the control theory in project management. In order to increase the performance of employees, managers must assign specific and challenging goals to employees that will upgrade their performance. However, organizations should avoid ambiguous goals that do not have specific standards and direct feedback. Therefore, organizations can apply the control theory in the areas where there is the activity duration estimating of performances, team meetings and check-ins. In the context of the proposed study, the control theory is based on the idea that every effort ought to be made to ensure that project implementers are carrying out their duties in conformity with the project can be overcome by adopting appropriate modes of control to ensure the quality of the project implementation. However, the control mechanisms should be aligned with the overall project goals. It is on this basis that this paperwas guided by the control theory to explain how project quality planning influenced project performance.

### 2.1 Project Quality Planning

The term quality is about achieving customer expectations at a price that signifies a value to them. Generally, quality project planning focuses on enabling the project to be completed successfully using the established set of directions (Meredith & Mantel, 2016). In this regard, the most essential component of project planning in floricultural projects is project quality planning. The concept of project quality planning is to guarantee efforts directed towards accomplishing the necessary level of quality for the outcome which are well planned and organized. It is vitally required for any project to have an effective project quality planning system.

According to Tan and Abdul-Rahman (2020) project quality planning is about obtaining customers' satisfaction by maintaining the quality of activities at a mandatory standard. In order to produce availability of financial plans, proper planning techniques are required in the estimation of the necessary resources, the description of work duties, durations for individual tasks, the selection of technology and the identification of any connections among the different work tasks. Using the right techniques in planning helps in the analysis of the plan, organizes the information and gives a crucial effect on the way in which the plan is communicated. Without project quality planning, a lot of projects may not achieve their targets, and time, money and resources are likely to be wasted or lost.

### 2.2 Performance of Floricultural Projects

Traditionally projects are perceived to be successful when they meet time, budget, performance goals, customer expectations and quality standards (Shenhar, 2019). Kloppenborg and Opfer (2019) observed that project performance is measured in terms of time, quality and customer satisfaction. In other words, a project is often considered successful if it is completed within its budget estimate and scheduled time frame to the satisfaction of the owners (Walsham, 1993). Shenhar (2023) evaluated project performance by assessing the long-term success that propels the project into the future. Lim and Mohamed (2018) measured project performance using the multidimensional set of time, cost, quality, safety and operational benefit. Shenhar (2023) uses project efficiency and potential benefit to assess project performance. Yuk (2019) developed a value-centered model based on project quality planning and operation value to evaluate performance of floricultural projects and considered profitability as the criterion for measuring project performance.

According to Burke (2022) the key components of performance that may be applicable in the flower sector include actors' satisfaction and commercial value. This concurs with Pinto and Slevin (2016) who observed that performance of floricultural projects means achieving deadlines, delivering within budget and making the customer happy. Generally, the floricultural projects are complex undertakings involving different activities and participants from initial planning stage through to execution. This paper sought to establish how project quality planning enhanced performance of floricultural projects in Kenya.

#### **2.3 Empirical Review**

Project quality planning are used to design and control project, deliverables, resources, financial planning, assignments, roles and responsibilities, communications and quality management. Scholars have examined the commonly adopted project quality planning techniques that lead to performance of floricultural projects. Müller and Turner (2001) reported a correlation between pre-contract planning and project schedule variance and noted that project quality was required to meet schedule goals. This implied that certain practices such as project planning were consistently associated with success while Raz and Matrem (2019) found a positive relationship between project quality planning and project performance. Fortune and White (2018) concur that the correct choice of project quality planning is a critical success factor for projects. Kresson (2019) studied the influence of project quality planning on project performance through a survey design of selected constructions firms in London. The study targeted construction projects not completed in time. The study found that the project management primary objective was to meet otherwise surpass the project quality planning usage sponsors anticipation of the project. However, the study did not consider many forces intervening and attempting to push projects off target such as Floricultural regulations. Zwikael and Globerson (2019) examined the extent of project planning in Israel and observed that project managers enjoyed higher intensity of performance of projects if they emphasized project quality planning. Wysocki (2018) argues that project quality planning plays a critical role in the success of a project. This is particularly so since it ensures that the resources and the expenditure required for each deliverable are matched. However, internal quality management programs have been found to be ineffective in delivering the desired performance outcomes unless the programs are integrated with external market-orientation, based on customer needs identification. Willar (2019) conducted a study on improving quality management system implementation in Indonesian construction companies. The results showed that the companies developed project quality planning mechanisms to successfully operate projects without substantive time-delays and cost overruns. Plenert and Best (2019) studied the influence of project quality planning on project performance. The study was based on a survey of construction companies utilizing the descriptive analysis. The study did not find a strong association between project quality planning and performance but recommended that firms must be capable of focusing on planning of project quality planning. The study failed to indicate clearly the relationship between project quality planning usage and project performance.

In Kenya, Gacharia (2019) examined the relationship between project quality planning and performance of the Coca-Cola bottling plants. The study established that internal project quality planning on various scope areas of the quality management system positively impacted various performance areas to a great extent. Although previous studies have emphasized the importance of project quality planning, it is not clear how much their use can contribute to performance of floricultural projects in Kenya the floricultural sector in Kenya. Therefore, the main goal of this paperwas to assess empirically the extent to which project quality planning contributed to the performance of floricultural projects in Kenya.

#### 3. Methodology

The study adopted the correlation research design. A correlation study reflects the strength and the direction of the relationship between two (or more) variables. A correlational research design was adopted to examine the relationship between project quality planning and performance of floricultural projects in Kenya.

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This design was adopted because it allowed the researcher to generate both numerical and descriptive data that enabled the researcher to examine the relationship between project quality planning and the performance of floricultural projects. The design was chosen owing to the complexity that exists in the planning phase of floricultural projects. The study targeted 110 registered flower farms in Kenya. The target population comprised of 75 registered flower projects in Nakuru County. A census sampling was chosen to select 288 study participants from whom data was collected using closed ended items in the questionnaires. The descriptive statistics which included mean and standard deviation were adopted to analyze the quantitative data while the inferential statistics were adopted to make inferences. Pearson's product moment correlation analysis was used to show the direction of the relationship between the study variables. Standard multiple regression analysis was used to provide the estimates of net effects owing to its explanatory power. F-tests were computed for the individual variable coefficients to determine their significance in the derived models.

# 4. Results, Analysis and Discussion

The paper examined the influence of project quality planning on the performance of floricultural projects in Kenya. The constructs that were used to measure this objective were quality work, control plans, quality management, quality standards and quality reporting. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Project Quality Planning					
Statements	Ν	Mean	Std. Deviation		
Quality work contributes to success of the project	286	3.895	.94934		
Effective coordination of activities contributes to performance of	286	2.811	.71526		
floricultural projects					
Meeting the laid down quality specifications ensures that the project is	286	2.748	.65393		
completed on time					
Breaking down the project activities into discrete states minimizes the	286	2.744	.64988		
cost of the project					
The output met the planning specifications	286	2.818	.70722		
Specifying work estimates contributes to cost effectiveness	286	2.748	.64855		
Project quality planning provides a basis for meeting the needs of the	286	3.832	.90601		
project beneficiaries					
Using the industry best practices ensures that project activities meet	286	3.440	.94124		
the quality standard set					
Quality project activity sequencing ensures project is successful	286	3.993	.79026		
The use of management project quality planning leads to quality	286	4.073	.73379		
project deliverables					
Valid N (listwise)	286				

There were ten parameters assessing project quality planning. From these statements, it was evident that majority of the respondents agreed that quality work performed on the project activities contributed to the success of the projects (M=3.8951; SD=0.94934) while effective coordination of the project activities did not contributed to the performance of floricultural projects (M=2.8112; SD=0.71526). Moreover, while meeting the laid down quality specifications did not ensure that the projects were completed on time (M=2.7483; SD=0.65393). The findings were inconsistent with Fortune and White (2018) who agreed that the correct choice of project quality planning was a critical success factor for projects.

It also seemed that breaking down the project activities into discrete states did not minimize the cost of the project as shown by a mean response of 2.7448 with a standard deviation of 0.64988. Similarly, majority of the respondents were concomitant that the project output met the specifications in the planning stage (M=2.8182; SD=0.70722) and were also noncommittal that specifying work estimates for every task contributed to cost effectiveness (M=2.7483; SD=0.64855). This disagrees with Wysocki (2018) who argued that project quality planning ensured that the resources and the expenditure required for each deliverable were matched. However, majority of the respondents agreed that project quality planning provided a basis for meeting the needs of the project beneficiaries (M=3.8322; SD=0.90601). This concurs with Willar (2019) who established that organizations that developed quality planning mechanisms successfully operated their projects without substantive time-delays and cost overruns.

Furthermore, majority of the respondents slightly agreed that using the industry best practices ensured that project activities met the quality standard set (M=3.4406; SD=0.94124) while the majority of the respondents agreed that adoption of internal and external quality project activity sequencing ensured that the projects were successful (M=3.9930; SD=0.79026). The findings are consistent with Müller and Turner (2001)

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who reported a correlation between pre-contract internal planning and project schedule variance and noted that project quality was required to meet schedule goals. Moreover, majority of the respondents agreed that project quality planning led to quality project deliverables (M=4.0734; SD=0.73379). This is also consistent with Raz and Matrem (2019) who averred that a positive relationship existed between project quality planning and project performance. A focus on quality project deliverables featured in the works of Gacharia (2019) who concurred that internal project guality planning positively impacted various performance areas of a project.

# 4.1 Descriptive Statistics of Performance of Floricultural Projects

The performance of floricultural projects was the dependent variable and was measured by examining projects completed, time adherence, cost/budget compliance and customer satisfaction. The results are presented in table 2.

Table 2: Performance of Floricultural Projects						
Statements	Ν	Mean	Std. Deviation			
All project activities are completed as scheduled	286	2.7483	.65393			
At the end of the project the interest of the customers and clients are	286	4.0979	.90855			
satisfactorily served						
Quality deliverables are achieved at the end of project cycle	286	2.6517	.76326			
The cost of productivity is lower for the floricultural projects	286	4.1783	.63772			
The employees are satisfied with implementation	286	4.2378	.68526			
Project procures adheres to the stipulated quality standards	286	4.1923	.86739			
The production costs are recovered upon project completion	286	4.3042	.76442			
The project activities are aligned to strategic business goals	286	4.1329	.74681			
The project activities are aligned with the goals of the floricultural projects	286	2.7483	.65393			
The project activities are completed on time	286	2.8252	.74282			
Valid N (listwise)	286					

From the results presented in table 2, project performance was measured using ten statements. The results showed that majority of the respondents were noncommittal that all the project activities were completed as scheduled (M=2.7483; SD=0.65393); however, majority believed that at the end of the project the interests of the customers and clients were generally satisfactorily served (M=4.0979; SD=0.90855). This has been supported by Kumaraswamy (2017) who conceptualized project performance in terms of timely completion and meeting clients' satisfaction. Moreover, majority of the respondents disagreed that quality deliverables were achieved at the end of the project cycle (M=2.6517; SD=0.76326) with a significant number of the respondents concurring that the cost of productivity was lower than the cost of input for the floricultural projects (M=4.1783; SD=0.63772). This is in harmony with Thomas (2019) who conceptualized project completion in terms of cost considerations. Also majority of the respondents agreed that the employees were satisfied with their role of project implementation (M=4.2378; SD=0.68526).

Similarly, majority of the respondents agreed that the execution of the project procures adhered to the stipulated quality standards (M=4.1923; SD=0.86739). This concurs with Pheng and Chuan (2020) who averred that quality considerations as playing an important role in determining the performance of a project. Similar sentiments were observed by Ling (2019) who believed that the most important aspect of planning relates to quality control. With regard to recovering production costs upon project completion, majority of the respondents agreed (M=4.3042; SD=0.76442). Also majority of the respondents agreed that the project activities were aligned with the strategic business goals (M=4.1329; SD=0.74681). This concurs with Pheng and Chuan (2020) who averred that human factors play an important role in determining the performance of a project. Moreover, majority of the respondents were neutral that the project activities were aligned with the goals of the floricultural projects (M=2.7483; SD=0.65393) which failed to ensure that the project activities were completed on time (M=2.8252; SD=0.74282).

# 4.2 Correlational Analysis of Variables

Having explored the descriptive analysis of the results, the paper embarked on exploring the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable.Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient (r) was used and the results are presented in table 3.

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Table 3: Correlation Coefficients Matrix				
		Performance	Quality Planning	
Performance	Correlation	1	.186**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002	
	N	286	286	
Quality Planning	Correlation	.186**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002		
	N	286	286	

The correlation analysis results revealed that there was alow positive and significant relationship between project quality planning (PQP) and performance of floricultural projects (r=0.186, p=0.000). It is important to note that the correlation coefficient between the predictor variable and the criterion variable was positive and statistically significant thus making it suitable for further analysis using regression.

### 4.3 Regression Analysis for Project Quality Planning and Performance of Floricultural Projects

The results presented in table 5 show the R-square of 0.035 which implied that when considered in isolation project quality planning explained 3.5% of the performance of floricultural projects.

	Т	Table 5: Model Summ	nary for Project Quality Planning		
				Std. Error of the	
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Estimate	
1	.186 <sup>a</sup>	.035	.031	.23202	
a. Predictors: (Constant), Project Quality Planning					

The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for the influence of project quality planning on the performance of the floricultural projects is present in table 6.

Table 6.Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)					
Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	.547	1	.547	10.161	.002 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	15.288	284	.054		
Total	15.835	285			
a. Dependent V	/ariable: Performance				
b. Predictors: (	Constant), PQP				

It is evident that the F statistic of 10.161 (p=0.02) was greater than the f-critical which implied that the model was statistically significant and displayed goodness of fit. The results on the beta coefficients of project quality planning and performance of floricultural projects are presented in table 5.

Table 5: Beta Coefficients					
Model					
	Unstandar	dized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	В	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	3.239	.144		22.455	.000
PQP	.138	.043	.186	3.188	.778
a. Dependent	Variable: Perforr	nance			

The findings indicated that without project quality planning, the performance of floricultural projects was fixed at 3.239 units. The results further show that that a unit increase in project quality planning led to an increase of 0.138 units (13.8%) in the performance of floricultural projects. It was hypothesized that project quality planning significantly and statistically influenced the performance of floricultural projects in Kenya. However, the results obtained facilitated the rejection of the research hypothesis as the *p*-value was 0.788.

#### 5.1 Conclusion

# 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The paper examined the influence of project quality planning on the performance of floricultural projects in Kenya. The constructs that were used to measure this objective were control plans, quality management, quality standards and quality reporting. It was evident that project quality planning (control plans, quality management, quality standards and quality reporting) contributed positively and significantly to the performance of floricultural projects in Kenya. The results showed that quality work, considering the project scopes, effective coordination of the project activities, meeting the laid down quality specifications, breaking down the project activities into discrete states, specifying work estimates, project quality planning, using the industry best practices, internal and external quality project activity sequencing led to improved performance of floricultural projects.From the results, the study concluded that there was positive relationship between project quality planning and the performance of floricultural projects in Kenya. The outcome of the study indicated that 9% of the variance observed in the performance of floricultural projects was explained by project quality planning. However, the influence was statistically insignificant.

#### **5.2 Recommendations**

Given that project quality planning is an antecedent of the performance of floricultural projects, the study recommends that the quality aspects of the floricultural projects should be reviewed at every step of the project cycle. The paper also recommends an elaborate policyintervention to allow for enhanced quality considerations during the planning phase. Quality plays a critical role in the overall performance of floricultural projects; hence, it should be factored in at the planning stage of the floricultural projects.

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