

# Team Collaboration and Project Performance of Real Estate Developers in Rivers State, Nigeria

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**Abstract:** *This study examined the relationship between team collaboration and project performance of real estate developers in Rivers State, Nigeria. The cross-sectional survey was employed and a population of one hundred and fifty-nine (159) of 10 real estate developers were covered. The sample size was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table. Copies of questionnaire were administered to respondents. The simple random sampling technique was employed and data was analysed using Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient. The findings revealed a significant relationship between the dimensions of team collaboration (team cooperation, team coordination and team partnership) and project performance. It was concluded that organizations that inculcate team partnership, team cooperation and team coordination in its operations, will be able to take advantage of any opportunity and easily adapt to any imponderable and highly dynamic environment which thus help boost their project performance. The study recommended among others that management of real estate developers should inculcate team cooperation in their operations in order to enhance the project success of the organization.*

**Keywords:** *Project Performance, Project Team Collaboration, Team Cooperation, Team Coordination, Team Partnership.*

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## 1.0 Introduction

Project performance has become a critical concern to managers especially when it involves construction firms in Nigeria. Managers tend to monitor their plans, goals and objectives to ensure project success (Idoro, 2012). In addition, Barclay and Osei-Bryson (2010) noted that a dominant challenge for those who model project performance is recognizing the critical factors of project success even though studies in the project management field has investigated and identified a wide variety of measures that designate project outcomes, performance and project success. Omran, AbdulRahman and Pakir (2012) acquiesced that the success of a construction project is reliant on project performance and performance is evaluated based on well-timed completion, quality that meets expectation and standard, being within cost estimates and client gratification.

Furthermore, failing to accomplish the project objectives within specifications and on time is not new scenario holding that construction and other industries are faced with uncertainties (Fleming & Koppelman, 2002; Ford & Sterman, 2003; Jung & Kang, 2007). Thus, most project managers adapt two major methods of examining performance of construction projects to include “Critical Success Factors (Omran, et. al., 2012) and “Key Performance Indicators” (Mahmoud & Scott, 2002).

Project team collaboration becomes necessary to ensure that these group of interrelated persons work in one accord. Project team collaboration seems to be a concern for managers that wishes to attain high project performance holding that all the resources involved in a project must be harmonized to achieve set goals and objectives. Thus, the task handed over to the project manager, in form of project complexity and contract type, seems to be a major factor for regulating critical success criteria and related outcomes. Inadequate utilization of the project team capabilities, could lead to negative project performance. Thus, it becomes mandatory for the identification of the right project manager and team members that suit a given type of project (Turner & Muller, 2006).

Several scholarly works have been carried out in an attempt to examine how the project performance of organizations can be enhanced. Muller and Turner (2007) examined the influence of project managers on project success. The authors observed that project managers have an influence on project success. Also, Unegbu, Yawas, and Dan-asabe (2020) conducted a study on an investigation of the relationship between project performance measures and project management practices for the construction industry in Nigeria. The study discovered that the relationship between customer satisfaction and project success had most positive correlation with so much emphasis on communication management, procurement and stakeholder, leaving out project team collaboration and its indicators which serves as gap in the body of literature. Similarly, Kehinde, Afolabi, and Omogbolahan (2017) evaluated the effect of project management techniques on road construction project in Nigeria. The study revealed a significant relationship among the variables. From the foregoing, it is clear that there is a dearth of work on how team collaboration relates with project performance of real estate developers. Thus, the present study seeks to bridge this knowledge gaps.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The real estate developers all over the nations are faced with divergent problems leading to slow down in successful delivery of services and products. These problems are not particular to one country but several countries implying that meeting goals of successful construction services is a global challenge (Adrian, 2010). Evidently, Oyedele (2016) noted that amongst the key problems of firms in Nigeria include rivalry among real estate developers. Poor project performance indicates inability to reach project success or poor chances of becoming successful in terms of delivery services at the right form and right time. Project performance and success differs based on certain situations like type of customers, industry, goals and objectives of the organization in question. For instance, a project that is executed with the objective of completion in a year could be tag as failure when it does not get completed in a year and tag success if met the set objective. In order words, project success is based on target, goals and objectives set over a specific period of time. Similarly, Shenhar, Dvir, Levy, and Maltz (2001) noted that most projects are perceived with a business perspective which are tied to a goal which is focused on better results and organizational performances such as more prospects, additional growth, and improved market position. In order words, project success leads to increased satisfaction, profit or revenue increment, market share and market growth etc. whereas project failure implies dissatisfaction, bankruptcy, low sales, and delay in completion. Consequently, Kehinde, Afolabi, and Omogbolahan (2017) highlighted that project performance and success depends on the ability of project manager to harness potential employees, monitor performance, quality, manage time and ensure adequate collaboration. However, it becomes critical to find means of improving project performance. This study examined how team collaboration in terms of team partnership, team

cooperation and team coordination relates with project performance of real estate developers in Rivers State, Nigeria.

### **Aim and Objectives of the Study**

The specific objectives are to investigate the relationship between;

- I. Team partnership and project performance of real estate developers.
- II. Team cooperation and project performance of real estate developers.
- III. Team coordination and project performance of real estate developers.

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses served as tentative answers to the research questions;

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between team partnership and project performance of real estate developers in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between team cooperation and project performance of real estate developers in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Ho3: There is no significant relationship between team coordination and project performance of real estate developers in Rivers State, Nigeria.

## **2.0 Review of Literature**

This work is anchored on complexity theory. According to Curlee and Gordon (2011), complexity theory is built on the management concept that absolute order does not provide for sufficient flexibility to solve every potential circumstance. Complexity is inherent in projects. Complexity theory recognizes that projects are naturally composed of components that interact as a system. As a consequence, even if some individuals are upset with the modifications, they must result in several procedures. Certain obstructions must be eliminated, and ineffective methods must be replaced or amended. According to complexity theory, interdependent components self-organize to produce potentially developing structures that display a hierarchy of emergent system traits (Lucas, 2009). Throughout the project's lifecycle, several team members will be worried about the project's outcome. The project team is behind schedule, highlighting the difficulty of delays and how the project will almost certainly exceed budget. This explains why changes in projects are likely to occur, and is therefore important to the research since it tackles concerns of change, which correspond to the contract variation variable.

### **Concept of Project Team Collaboration**

Each project has a designated Project Manager, but there are also a variety of individuals with varying experiences, skills, and experience available to assist the Project Manager in moving the project ahead. These individuals create a team that the Project Manager organizes and utilizes to accomplish the project's anticipated goals and ensure project success. The team is one of the project

management tools available. A team's structure and organization may be structured and organized in a variety of ways, but the four most prevalent are functional teams, cross-functional teams, problem-solving teams, and self-managed teams (Hellriegel, 1998).

A project team is a group of individuals that operate in various organizational units on a daily basis but are assigned particular responsibilities and are accountable for accomplishing them for the period of the project. A team approach is a unique manner of working in which all team members contribute their total abilities, strengths, and energy. Project teams are defined by their ad hoc nature; they are formed for the length of the project and disband upon conclusion. They operate on a subject-specific basis, choosing participants based on their often specialized and unique skills. Additionally, it is critical to concentrate all team members' attention on the project's objective and to ensure that all participants have complementary expertise and capabilities. Project teams form distinct communities in which members engage and exhibit a range of behaviors (Pajestka, 2012). Collaboration is a cooperative effort directed toward a common objective. Collaboration may be visualized in a hierarchical fashion. When individuals cooperate, they may operate in one of at least three modes: collected, coordinated, or concerted (Nunamaker, Romano & Briggs, 2001).

### **Team Partnership**

Team partnership is a communication and project management style that places a premium on collaboration, creative thinking, and equitable involvement in order to accomplish goals. While the term "partnership" alludes to collaborating with another person to create something, team partnership in the workplace also encompasses corporate culture and technology. The goals of team partnership include completing work swiftly and effectively, developing ideas together, and providing a feeling of success to all team members (Lewis, 2019). While there are several strategies for building and developing team partnership, there are a few widely accepted best practices. Once a team has been formed, each member should get familiar with the others and have an understanding of their personal histories, expertise, capabilities, and weaknesses. Team building exercises may assist participants in forming relationships from the outset (Lewis, 2019). Additionally, a team leader should be appointed to set an example, promote open communication, and manage meetings and tasks.

Lewis (2019) asserts that team partnership can refer to a variety of business relationships, including those between supervisors and subordinates, representatives from multiple teams, employees of two partnering organizations, and company agents with service providers, contractors, volunteers, or vendors. Successful partnership strategies often result in advantages such as quicker project turnaround times, more fulfilled deadlines, and, as a consequence, less money spent. Additionally, strong team partnership enables workers to learn from one another, solve problems more effectively, overcome communication hurdles, and understand the big picture of the firm. In a truly collaborative partnership, duties are widely dispersed, collaboration opportunities are expanded, mutual understanding and solidarity increase, communication is regular and vigorous, and the interpersonal setting is rich (Kayser, 2014).

### **Team Cooperation**

According to Nolan and Doyle (2007), a fundamental part of team creativity is the team meeting. Numerous processes occur today, including information sharing, member conflict, shared pressure,

and negotiation, all of which are crucial for team creativity. Wang, MacCann, Zhuang, Liu, and Roberts (2009) concentrated on scientific teams and identified many significant factors of their success. He continued by stating that teams are successful when they effectively resolve conflicting outcomes, have some variety in their structure, and are engaged in efficient mutual reasoning. According to Lockhart-Wood (2000), the cooperative process can be divided into four stages. The first stage is the planning or design phase, during which the cooperation is established and the objectives and rationale for cooperation are defined and agreed upon; the second stage is the designing or forming stage, during which the cooperative effort is designed. The second stage is referred to as the information or data-gathering phase, which is a critical step in cooperation. It is also referred to as the storming phase, during which team members create relationships with one another, responsibilities are given, leadership is established, and commitments are negotiated. The third step is the analytical or processing stage, during which facts and information are examined and then processed in order to define the cooperation. This is referred to as the norming stage. The last step is referred to as the implementation and execution stage, during which the cooperation puts the results of all preceding phases into action. This is referred to as the performance stage.

### **Team Coordination**

Coordination is an objective-directed and articulated function of system artifacts (Woods & Hollnagel, 2006). Multiple agents coordinate to synchronize, integrate, and apply order to the working environment, hence reducing losses and increasing efficiency (Rousseau, Aubé, Savoi, 2006). Coordination needs not just a shared and predefined script for team members, but also some degree of adaptability. The pre-written script is one component of a common and shared perception of the working environment that team members use to anticipate and respond to one another's actions (Klein, 2001). Team coordination refers to the process through which team members coordinate their efforts in order to effectively perform a team assignment. Coordination is a critical component of a team's performance. As Brigitte Steinheider and Al-Hawamdeh (2004) argued, teams whose actual output falls short of their potential output may have sustained such process losses as a result of low motivation or ineffective coordination. Team coordination include determining who does what and when, where, and how they perform assigned duties. At least two variables of team coordination may vary: time and explicitness. Member efforts at coordination may occur prior to or during the course of team work. Coordination may be implicit, based on unspoken expectations and intentions, or explicit, based on verbal agreements or officially established plans that specify who is responsible for what and when.

### **Concept of Project Performance**

The final performance of a project is determined by its ability to stay within the given budget, timeframe, and scope, as well as by its ability to adhere to the requisite technical standards for quality, operation, functionality, safety, and environmental protection (Flanagan & Norman 2003). The performance of a project guarantees that organizations optimize revenue while mitigating the impact of risks and uncertainties on the project's goals (Kululanga & Kuotcha, 2010). Assessing project performance is challenging because views of project performance vary owing to the stakeholders' divergent interests. Members of software development teams, for example, often define project success in terms of completing the project's scope, but external stakeholders often



evaluate project performance using objective time and cost targets (Agarwal & Rathod, 2006). As a result, evaluations of project performance might vary significantly amongst team members, team leaders, and stakeholders, making it difficult to objectively quantify team performance. While the subjectivity of performance metrics continues to be a point of contention, the literature has a variety of performance metrics. Hoegl and Gemuenden (2001) underline the necessity of obtaining numerous appraisals of team performance from both internal and external sources in order to increase impartiality. It is critical to define project requirements (quality, time, and money) and evaluation criteria in advance to eliminate ambiguity and subjectivity about the definition of success. Additionally, it is critical that these objectives and evaluation criteria be effectively conveyed to the various stakeholders involved (Wateridge, 1995). As a result, project performance is determined by the various stakeholders' appraisal of the project's success.

## **Empirical Review**

Muhammad and Zaheer (2001) investigated the effect of shared leadership behavior on project success. Additionally, the article examines the moderating effects of information sharing, team cohesion, and trust in the team. After obtaining model fit, they gathered data from 236 team members in IT projects at two time periods and assessed the conditional process model using PROCESS. The findings indicate that shared leadership enhances project success both directly and indirectly via knowledge sharing and cohesion. Slope analysis demonstrated that confidence in the team has an impact on cohesion and information sharing, which has an influence on the success of the project. The research addressed the practical consequences of the findings and offered conclusions.

Zwikael (2008) emphasized the importance of top management support mechanisms in ensuring project success. 700 project managers and their supervisors were surveyed across seven sectors and three countries — Japan, Israel, and New Zealand. The findings reaffirm that top management support is positively associated with project success. Additionally, the findings indicate that distinct top management support methods should be created in every business and culture.

Ghafoor and Munir (2016) conducted an empirical study to determine the impact of the project manager's leadership and collaboration on the project's success. It reviews pertinent literature on project success, project leadership, and cooperation from a variety of procedural perspectives and synthesizes his findings about the expansion of creative structure. The data from the literature research demonstrate the tasks that remain true to originality, assessing and assessing the benefits of project success. He utilized a method called purposive sampling. Questionnaires were utilized to collect data from manufacturing company workers. Three hundred questionnaires were sent, and though two hundred and forty copies were acknowledged, two hundred and twenty-six copies were picked for final analysis after removing fourteen incomplete questions, resulting in a response rate of 94%. To examine the direct effect of independent factors on dependent variables, statistical procedures such as descriptive statistics, Pearson moment correlation, and regression analysis were used. As a consequence of the hypothesis testing, it was shown that the leadership of the project manager was favorably connected with project success, while collaboration also had a positive correlation with project success.

Khoshtale and Adeli (2016) examined the association between variables affecting team effectiveness and project performance. Data were gathered from fourteen project teams. A

questionnaire-based study is being performed among Iranian construction enterprises to ascertain their level of familiarity with building project teams. Numerous statistical tests, including Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and bivariate correlation, were used to examine the acquired data. It was shown that the most critical components in project management are team leadership, team roles and responsibilities, trust and values, and team relationships.

Iqbal, Nawaz, Bahoo, and Bukhari (2017) emphasize the critical role of project cooperation in project success and claim that a leader cannot effectively finish a project on his or her own. The research examined Higher Education Commission (HEC) projects in Pakistan and gathered data from project leaders evaluating project performance and teamwork's impact to project success. The research predicted a direct link between project cooperation and project success. To verify this association, project managers were asked to answer surveys by e-mail. Additionally, this association is experimentally and theoretically validated using Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). On the basis of the findings, it is determined that project team has a positive and direct correlation with project success.

Bond-Barnard, Fletcher, and Steyn (2018) emphasized the critical success of trust and collaboration in enhancing the chances of successful project management (PM). The relationship between these three structures, on the other hand, remains unclear. The authors highlight the critical importance of project team trust and collaboration for boosting the chance of PM success using structural equation modeling (SEM) and data from a worldwide survey of 151 project practitioners. The findings show that PM success becomes more probable when collaboration increases, which is driven by an increase in team member trust. PM success is determined by two factors: project performance and knowledge integration and innovation. Physical closeness, commitment, conflict, coordination, connections, and incentives were all examined as variables affecting the degree of collaboration. The three variables examined in terms of trust are expectations, information sharing, and imported trust.

Minjeong and Sungyong (2020) investigated the link between team members' emotional, managerial, and intellectual competence as measured by the LDQ (Leadership Development Questionnaire), as well as the influence on project success. (1) Context: Significant and complicated initiatives are being undertaken in a fast-paced corporate environment. Capabilities and management attributes of project participants are becoming more important for company performance. (2) Techniques: A questionnaire study of 164 project management experts from diverse sectors in Korea was undertaken. The structural equation modeling methodology was used to ascertain the influence of team member competency on the project's success factor. (3) Findings: The findings provided empirical support for the effect of team member competences on project success. Additionally, there is no difference in perceptions of the influence of team members' capabilities on the project success factor between project manager and team member positions. (4) Conclusions: The study discussed the significance of team member competency in the eyes of the project manager. The conclusions of this research indicate the members' strategic orientation at a time when business innovation is required.

### **3.0 Methodology**

This study used a cross-sectional survey and the target population was two hundred and sixty-nine (269) staff strength of ten (10) real estate developers in Rivers State, Nigeria. The sample size was determined in this study using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table. As a result, 159 questionnaires

were distributed to the ten (10) real estate developers. The simple random sampling technique was applied. Team collaboration (independent variable) was measured using team partnership, team cooperation and team coordination. 7 items were used in measuring team partnership (e.g. In my organization, my team members help and support each other), 5 items were used in measuring team cooperation (e.g. In my organization, all team members listen to and consider other members voice and opinion) and 5 items were used in measuring team coordination (e.g. In my organization, all of my team members meet and discuss on project plans on regular basis). Project Performance (dependent variable) was measured with 10 items (e.g. my organization is able to deliver project within the set deadlines). Items were rated on a 4-point Likert scale and the Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient was used in analyzing the data.

#### 4.0 Result

A total of 159 questionnaires were distributed to respondent, however, only 130 (82%) copies were returned and used for the study

#### Hypothesis One

**Table 1: Team Partnership and Project Performance**

Correlations				
			Team Partnership	Project Performance
Spearman's rho	Team Partnership	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	0.722**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	0.000
		N	130	130
	Project Performance	Correlation Coefficient	0.722**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	.
		N	130	130

The result of the analysis in Table 1 shows a significant level  $p < 0.05$  ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ),  $\rho = 0.722$  between Team Partnership and Project performance. The null hypothesis is rejected and alternate accepted.



## Hypothesis Two

**Table 2 Team Cooperation and Project Performance**

Correlations				
			Team Cooperation	Project Performance
Spearman's rho	Team Cooperation	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	0.675**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	0.000
		N	130	130
	Project performance	Correlation Coefficient	0.675**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	.
		N	130	130

The result of the analysis in Table 2 shows a significant level  $p < 0.05$  ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ),  $\rho = 0.675$  between Team Cooperation and Project performance. The null hypothesis is rejected and alternate hypothesis accepted.

## Hypothesis Three

**Table 4.3 Team Coordination and Project Performance**

Correlations				
			Team Coordination	Project Performance
Spearman's rho	Team Coordination	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	0.816**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	0.000
		N	130	130
	Project Performance	Correlation Coefficient	0.816**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	.
		N	130	130

The result of the analysis in Table 3 shows a significant link  $p < 0.05$  ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ),  $\rho = 0.816$  between Team Coordination and Project performance. The null hypothesis is rejected and alternate hypothesis accepted.

## 5.0 Discussion of Findings

### Team Partnership and Project Performance

The bivariate hypotheses between team partnership and project performance reveal a noteworthy relationship between the two variables. The Spearman correlation coefficient reveal that the p-

value of 0.000 was less than 0.05 ( $p=0.000<0.05$ ) which implies that team partnership has a significant relationship with Project performance. Thus the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted. The result of the correlation coefficient ( $\rho$ ) is 0.722. This thus reveal that there is a significant relationship between team partnership and project performance. This implies that 72.2% total variation in the project performance of an organization is accounted for by Team Partnership. Thus, enhancing team partnership will help enhance project performance. This findings agree with that of Assbeihat (2016) which observed that collaboration through partnership is valued in order to achieve outcomes efficiently and effectively.

### **Team Cooperation and Project Performance**

The result on the test of hypothesis two shows that there is a significant relationship between team cooperation and project performance. The P-value of 0.000 which is less than 0.05 level of significance ( $p=0.000<0.05$ ) implies that team cooperation relates significantly with project performance. This was affirmed by the spearman correlation coefficient ( $\rho$ ) which revealed a positive significance relation of 0.675. This suggest that 67.5% total variation in project performance is accounted for by a unit change in team cooperation. This study is in alignment with that of Ahola (2009) who pointed out that an optimum amount of cooperation between customer and supplier minimizes control costs, lessens the likelihood of failure, and fosters innovation and learning which thus improve performance.

### **Team Coordination and Project Performance**

Considering the result of the bivariate analysis relating to hypothesis three, it can be observed that the significance value of 0.000 was less than 0.05 significance level ( $p=0.000<0.05$ ). This implies that there is a significant relationship between team coordination and project performance. The result of the correlation from the spearman correlation ( $\rho$ ) show that team coordination has 0.816 correlation with project performance. 81.6% total variation of Project performance is accounted for by a unit change in team coordination. These findings concur with that of Buvik and Rolfsen (2015) who noted that a project coordination has a diversified and interlinked connection with project performance.

## **6.0 Conclusion and Recommendations**

Drawing from the result of the tested hypothesis, it is clear that project team collaboration influences the project performance of real estate developers. Team partnership significantly correlates with Project performance. This is to say that when team partnership increases in the workplace, project success also increase. As such, any decrease in team partnership will be detrimental to the project performance of the organization. Furthermore, team cooperation in the organization will further enhance the project performance. This suggests that any decrease or default in the team cooperation of the organization will be detrimental to the optimum project success. Team coordination in the organization is essential and it helps boost the performance of the organization in the long run. In conclusion, organizations that inculcate team partnership, team cooperation and team coordination in its operations, will be able to take advantage of any

opportunity and easily adapt to any imponderable and highly dynamic environment which thus help boost their project performance. It is recommended that;

- I. The management of real estate developers should ensure team partnership when executing any project as such will enable the firm to achieve optimal project success.
- II. The management of the firms should inculcate team cooperation in their operations in order to enhance their project performance.
- III. The management of real estate developers should ensure team coordination in the workplace in order to enhance effectiveness in operations and thus boost the total project performance.

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