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ABSTRACT

The role of the client is critical in successful infrastructure project delivery. This requires the appointment of an experienced and capable client team to lead and oversee infrastructure programmes or projects. A number of professionals often work in a client's project management team and play various roles. While textbooks may identify some of the professionals and their roles, little empirical research has been conducted on the structure of such client teams and the critical role of the client's team leader in leading the infrastructure delivery process and managing the whole professional team to perform their roles successfully and deliver the project to achieve the intended objectives and value for money.

Therefore, the aim of this study was to examine the nature of the team structure in each case and how the client's project team leader performed his role to ensure successful delivery of the infrastructure programmes.

Data collection was undertaken through semi-structured interviews with eight (8) members of the team, documentary analyses and listening to one detailed presentation by three key members of the client's team including the client team leader and the client himself.

Based on the results of the work, successful delivery of infrastructure project requires a client team that is structured in a hierarchical manner in terms of reporting lines, but has flexible interaction between members of the team. Although there was a clear hierarchy, various team members referred to structure of the team as ''Flat structure'' this implies that although there was a hierarchy in terms of leadership and membership of the team, they operated much as equals within the team.

In relation to the role of the client's team leader, it was found that project decisions and actions are driven by the values and interests of the client. The client's team leader viewed his primary role to be 'unblocking obstacles to progress' and 'demand management' of inputs from everyone in the supply chain.

The qualitative data showed one possible relationship between the team structure, role of the client tem leader, and project outcomes – the role and performance of the leader is a critical determinant of successful project outcomes.

In conclusion, the main contribution of this study lies in the use of a comprehensive methodology to develop a systematic understanding of the contemporary structure of a client's infrastructure project delivery team; and the critical elements of the role of the delivery manager entrusted with the responsibility to lead the client's team and deliver the intended objectives of the infrastructure programme or project.