
ABSTRACT

This research investigates the performance of contractors in timeously delivering road construction projects in Gabon. Road infrastructure is the backbone of economic development of any country. A good road network facilitates trade and cooperation. It also provides access to markets in addressing socio-economic challenges by providing access to employment opportunities (World Bank 2014).

The study was motivated by the fact that despite the government of Gabon's efforts to improve the delivery of road projects by initiating a National Infrastructure Master Plan (NIMP) and creating a National Agency of Public Works (ANGT) to supervise the construction of national roads, the performance of contractors involved on these projects remains unsatisfactory in delivering road projects within the time frame proposed.

The objective of the study was to establish the effect of finances on the performance of contractors in the road construction sector, to assess the effect of skilled manpower on the performance of contractors in the road construction sector, to examine how organization structure affect the performance of contractors in the road construction sector, and to establish the effect of client support on performance of contractors in the road construction sector.

The study uses a cross sectional descriptive survey design since it is an investigation of an individual group of respondents. The purposive sampling technique was used in coming up with a sample size. The study relied mostly on primary data source and 65 questionnaires were used as source of data collection. From the questionnaires sent 54 respondents returned their questionnaires cutting across professionals from the contractors and the ANGT directly involved in road construction projects these included Project Managers, Planners, Engineers, Site Managers, and Site Supervisors.

The data collected were both qualitative and quantitative. Collected data were coded and entered into Statistical Package for Social Scientists SPSS Version (20.0). The data were analysed to test the hypotheses using the Chi-Square statistical method. The calculated Chi-Square values in all four cases were found to be less than the critical value consequently the null hypotheses were accepted in all four cases as per the study objectives.

The findings were presented descriptively in forms of tables while explanation was presented in prose. The main findings were that all the 4 factors as per the study objectives had influenced the performance of contractors delivering road project on time. It was noted that finance and organization structure have the highest influence followed by skilled manpower and client support according to the number of respondents.

The recommendations for improvement in finances included that contractors should form public private partnerships with financiers and government who may be willing to finance major road construction projects, legislation be put in place to ensure clear

timelines for payments and spell out penalties for default and the establishment of a bank to serve the construction industry. The recommendations included training and skill upgrading within construction firms and establishment of more middle level technical colleges in order to improve availability of skilled manpower. Also recommended was that construction firms also need to have a flexible dynamic organizational structure as the existence of such was found to be the core from which the successful implementation of road construction projects was founded. In addition, client support in form of prompt payments and approvals, involvement of stakeholders, early land acquisition and project coordination are necessary to ensure enhanced performance of contractors in the road sector. This would ensure timely, cost effective and quality completion of road projects.

Keywords: Client Support, Organization Structure, Performance Measurement, Project Finances, Skilled Manpower.