

Relationship between risk prevention and performance of the projects in ngos in South Sudan. A cross-sectional case study of safe network project in Action Africa Help International.

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Abstract

Background

The implementation stage of the project is the benchmark for measuring the performance of a project, because it provides a guideline for how the project will run. The aim of the study is to assess the relationship between risk prevention and performance of the projects in NGOS in South Sudan.

Methodology

The study applied a cross-sectional survey design, which applied both stratified and simple random sampling procedures. Questionnaire and interview methods were used for collecting primary Data, where closed-ended questions were used. SPSS Statistical package analysis was used, and data were summarized in tables with the aid of frequencies and percentages.

Results

1.67% of the respondents among the projects in Nairobi City County were secondary school graduates, 10% had college diplomas, and 67.5% were university undergraduates, while 20.83% had post-graduate qualifications. 54% indicated that risk prevention to a very great extent affects project performance, 33% indicated that it was to a great extent, 9% indicated that it was to a moderate extent, 3% indicated that it was to a little extent, and 1% indicated that risk prevention didn't have any effect on project performance. The organizations encourage the use of a detailed work plan to ensure no event leads to delays in projects, and the organizations train project teams to ensure that projects run within the allocated schedule, as indicated by a mean of 3.71, 3.66, and 3.91, respectively.

Conclusion

Risk prevention significantly affected project performance at 0.719; risk prevention is embraced among organizations executing projects in AAH-I.

Recommendations

There is a need to have a risk management plan in place and stick to organizations that are found to be skeptical of planning for risks and taking risk prevention steps.

Keywords: Risk prevention, Performance of the projects, NGOS, South Sudan.

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Background

The implementation stage of the project is the benchmark for measuring the performance of a project. This is because it provides a guideline to how the project will run in terms of its activities and ensures all the project participants focus on the end goal of the project (Nyoni, 2018). This means that differences in opinions, along with the project objectives, among project participants would lead to the failure of the project. Kerzner (2017) Project initiation takes an overall of 80% of all project activities and utilization of resources, thus it's a benchmark of whether the project will be successful or not. There are four dimensions of project performance. These four dimensions consist of factors such as quality, cost, time

efficiency, and production efficiency (Kerzner, 2017). However, different projects have different performance measurements; thus, organizations should avoid limiting the measurement of performance by using efficiency measures as the only indicators of project performance because it does not always signify the overall performance of a project. The organization should therefore look at measures such as the effect of the project on clients and how the end-product of the project impacts the future state of the organization. The theoretical review provides the researcher with an opportunity to have a philosophical stand (Kothari, 2003). The theoretical framework affects the decisions made in the process of research. The study was guided by three theories, namely, Network Theory, Expectancy Theory, and, lastly, the Enterprise Risk Management Theory. If

you are a business leader, then you already know the importance of risk control (Bennett, J. M., Chekaluk, E., & Batchelor, J., 2016). It is imperative that your business has a formal policy to limit the loss of assets and income. Here are the techniques associated with risk management. In Nairobi, Kenya, the organization adopted changing work plans to avoid risks, contingency, regular inspections, operational reviews, training, and skill enhancements to prevent risks (Wabomba, 2015). The supply chain firms adopted risk prevention strategies such as detailed planning, alternative approaches, and contingency as a way of risk prevention. Risk prevention practice positively influences the performance of supply chain firms (Weingarten, Humphreys, Gimenez, and McIvor, 2016). In Rwanda, a detailed work plan, safety inspection, and having a safety system influenced the performance of the construction projects (Aimable, Shukla, and Oduor, 2015). (Singh, Deep, and Banerjee (2017) In India, construction firms used risk prevention strategies such as safety inspections, safety systems, contingency, and detailed work plans to influence the construction project's performance (Singh, Deep, and Banerjee (2017). The study aims to assess the relationship

between risk prevention and performance of the projects in NGOS in South Sudan

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study applied a cross-sectional survey design, which was chosen because it is not too expensive, as no participant follow-ups are required and data is collected at a single point in time. The study selected various participants in a short period of time and never intended to carry out follow-ups with the participants. The study adopted quantitative procedures of data collection and analysis. Quantitative methods provided data for statistical purposes.

Study Population

A population is a set of members who belong to a group within which research is carried out that possess homogeneous observable characteristics (Barasa, Ikamari, Kiplang'at& Oladipo, 2015). The target population for this study consisted of a total of 220 respondents, who included 20 general managers, 45 project supervisors, 40 M&E officers, 70 project officers, and 45 finance officers.

Table 1, Target Population .

Department	Respondents
General Managers	20
Project Supervisors	45
Monitoring & Evaluation officers	40
Project Officers	70
Finance Officers	45
Total	220

Sampling procedure and size Sample size

A sample is defined as a collection of some (a subset) of a population according to T (Amin: 2005). The study focused on a sample size of 136 respondents as determined by the Krejcie and Morgan table of 1970 on sample size determination. The sample had project managers, project officers, human resource personnel, project assistants, and beneficiaries. The researcher used a simple random sampling method because it gave an equal opportunity to all members of the finite population to participate. This sample size was effective with a good representative of the population, convenient to the researcher in terms of funds, time, and others.

Therefore, the sample is represented by:

n = required sample size.

X^2 = the table value of chi-square for 1 degree of freedom at the desired confidence level (3.841).

N = the population size.

P = the population proportion (assumed to be .136 since this would provide the maximum Sample size).

d = the degree of accuracy (the margin of error) expressed as a proportion (.05).

The target population may have potential participants; therefore, by use of Krejcie and Morgan's method of determination of a sample size, a sample of up to 220 respondents can be obtained. According to the Central Limit Theorem, if the sample size is large enough ($N > 30$), then the data follows a normal distribution curve, and 500 is sufficient to give credible results of a field investigation. Purposive sampling and simple random sampling shall be used for the selection of respondents in each department.

Sampling Procedure

The study applied both stratified and simple random sampling procedures.

Sampling techniques

Table 2: Sample Size and sampling technique

Department	Respondents/Population	Sample size (using <i>Pd of 0.61</i>)	Sample method
General Managers	20	12	Purposive
Project Supervisors	45	28	Simple random
Monitoring & Evaluation officers	40	25	Simple random
Project Officers	70	43	Simple random
Finance Officers	45	28	Simple random
Total	220	136	

Data Collection Sources

Primary data

Questionnaire and interview methods were used for collecting primary Data, where closed-ended questions were provided to exhaust respondents' information about the topic under study.

Secondary data

Available secondary data was used, especially from personnel and record departments of the institutions,

textbooks, journals, newspapers, library, internet, councilors, among other sources, to ensure critical evidence and areas of reference.

Data collection techniques and pretesting

The researcher was guided by the questionnaire, observations, and interviews in collecting data during the study. The selection of these methods was based on the type of data collected, the time available, and the objective of the study.

Simple random sampling technique was applied for randomly distribution of the research questionnaire to various categories of people in various departments of AAH-I South Sudan mission.

A stratified sampling technique was used to organize the various selected key respondents. This was to enable the researcher to get a cross-section of the targeted population, hence giving equal chances to all selected people to participate equally and get the right and accurate response on risk management, more on the tools applied for risk identification, mitigation, and risk monitoring.

The researcher used public means like taxi, "Bodaboda" to get to the area of study, and the researcher used notebooks to keep track of information.

Questionnaire Guide

Questionnaires were used as a key instrumental tool during the study. The questionnaires consisted of both open and closed-ended questions that were issued to the different respondents among project assistants, managers, officers, and human resources, enabling them to give accurate information about the impact of risk management on projects. These questionnaires were collected and returned to the researcher for data processing and analysis. They were administered to all categories of participants apart from General managers.

removed from the final questionnaires after the review process.

Interview guide

Key questions were designed for key informants like head NGOs, project managers, human resource personnel, and project officers. The researcher had a list of questions to be asked of the respondents personally, which was to ensure qualitative data were collected during research.

Pretesting (Validity and reliability)

Validity of the Instruments

Validity refers to the extent to which an item measures what it's established to measure. Hair and Lukas (2014) define the validity of a data collection instrument questionnaire as the extent to which it measures what it claims to measure. To eliminate bias and unclear phrases, the piloted questionnaire was tested. Testing of the piloted questionnaire ensured that the final questionnaire has the capability of eliciting information that answers the research question. To confirm the validity of the structured questionnaires, questionnaires were administered to managers and supervisors. Invalid questions were then

Reliability of the Instruments

Reliability refers to the consistency of the outcome when a test is carried out over and over.

Cronbach's alpha (α) will be employed in the analysis of the pilot test data to determine the internal consistency or average correlation of items in a survey instrument to gauge its reliability. According to Yin (2017), Cronbach's alpha (α) indicates the extent to which the set of research instruments is reliable, making it appropriate for the study. A coefficient value of above 0.7 implies that the research instruments (questionnaire) are reliable, thus appropriate for use in the study.

Reliability Test

The study conducted a pilot study, which was used to test the reliability of the study instruments by assessing the consistency of data arising from the use of the study research method. A Cronbach's Alpha was used to measure the reliability of the research questionnaires. The Cronbach findings are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Reliability Test

Variable	Number of Coefficient	Cronbach Alpha
Risk prevention	5	0.794
Risk control	5	0.809
Risk assessment	5	0.862
Average		0.823

Source: Field data, 2024

The study indicated that risk transfer as a risk management practice had a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.827, risk prevention had a coefficient of 0.794, and risk control had a coefficient of 0.809. Since the Cronbach alpha coefficients were all more than 0.7, the data collection instruments were deemed statistically reliable to collect data for the study.

Measurement of variables

The Likert scale

A Likert scale is a psychometric scale commonly used on survey questionnaires. A Likert scale is one of the fundamental and frequently used psychometric tools in research. Some questions require respondents to indicate according to a predefined list or scale, usually ranking from positive to very negative. The researcher used a Likert scale from which respondents chose from strongly agree, strongly disagree, strongly agree, agree and neutral. The options are shown below:

Table 4 Likert Scale

Attitude	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Points	5	4	3	2	1

Source: Creswell, (2012)

Data Processing and Analysis

Data analysis

After collecting the primary data, the researcher edited the information in the questionnaires. Using the SPSS Statistical package, the analysis was done and summarized in tables with the aid of frequencies and percentages in response to questionnaires. Additions and deductions were also made from the necessary materials in the form of secondary data that were used in the analysis in a manner that yielded answers to the research questions. Qualitative data were analyzed using content analysis.

Data processing

Collected data was edited to ensure that the information from respondents was accurate and consistent, and this was conducted after every interview with respondents. Coding involved assigning numerical figures to each question according to the different codes of response. And data Tabulation was done basically with illustrative writing interpretation and analysis. That involved the use of frequency distribution tables that made it easy to understand and compare.

Limitations of the study

The researcher probably experienced some challenges during the study, but later clarification was made to enable the study to proceed. The time allocated for the research may not be enough since it involves the collection of data, editing, coding, analyzing, and final presentation of the report, among others. The researcher, however, overcame this by sticking to the set work plan.

The researcher found it hard to deal with some respondents who did not want to disclose information voluntarily.

They suspected the researcher of being a spy of their confidential organizational information, hence creating a worry among them. This was overcome by showing the respondents the researcher's student identity card and a letter of introduction from the Team University.

The researcher is faced with a financial constraint. This is because of the many trips made, tools and equipment purchased, and other expenses. This was overcome by sticking to the set budget.

Ethical Consideration

The study was conducted ethically. According to Kothari (2004), a norm that governs human conduct and has a significant effect on the welfare of humans is referred to as ethics (Kothari, 2004). The researcher ensured that the study was undertaken ethically by seeking permission before conducting the research in the form of a formal letter of request elaborating reasons for undertaking the study and the study's purpose. The researcher also assured the respondents that any information submitted was treated with utmost confidentiality. The researcher also professionally conducted the research.

Results

Response Rate

Table 5: Out of the 136 respondents sampled for the study, 120 of them completed the questionnaires and presented them for analysis. This represents a response rate of 88.89%. This rate is statistically significant and representative according to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), who indicated that a response rate of half is sufficient for investigations and revealing, a 60% rate is by and large great, while a 70% rate of response is magnificent.

Table 5: Response Rate

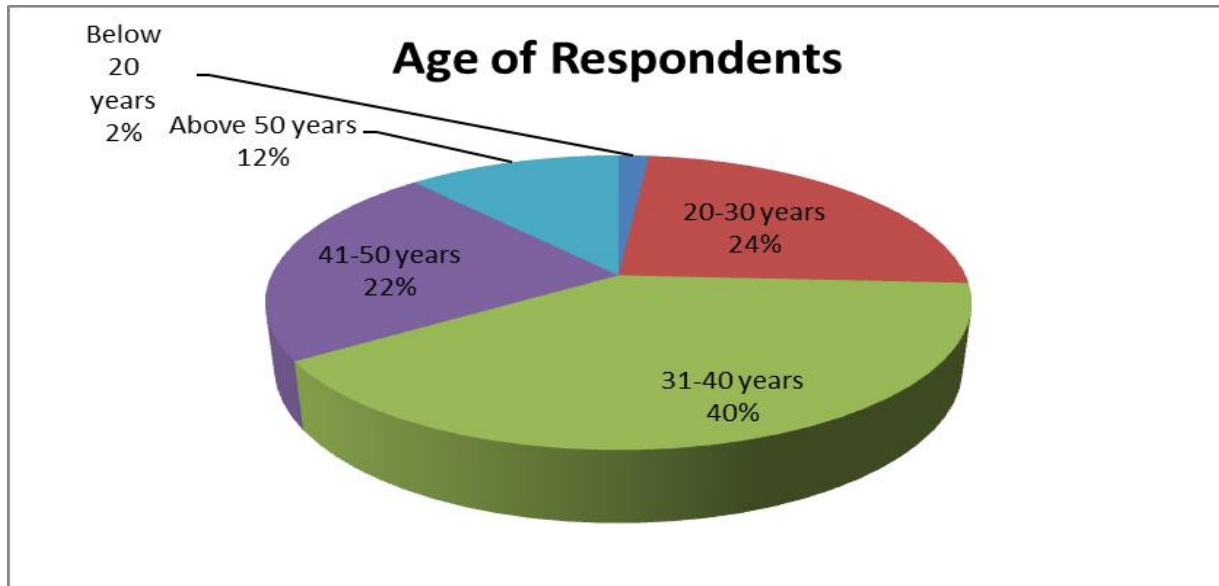
Response rate	Frequency	Percentage
Response	120	88.89
Non-Response	15	11.11
Total	135	100

Source: Field data, 2024

Demographic Data

Age of Respondents

Figure 1: Respondents' Age



Source: Field data, 2024

Figure 1 , 40% of the respondents were aged between 31 and 40 years, while 22% were between 41 and 50 years. This indicates that the majority of the respondents were aged above 30 years. This shows that they were grown-ups in the active labor force and above to deliver on their mandate.

Academic Level of participants

Table 6: Highest Academic Qualification

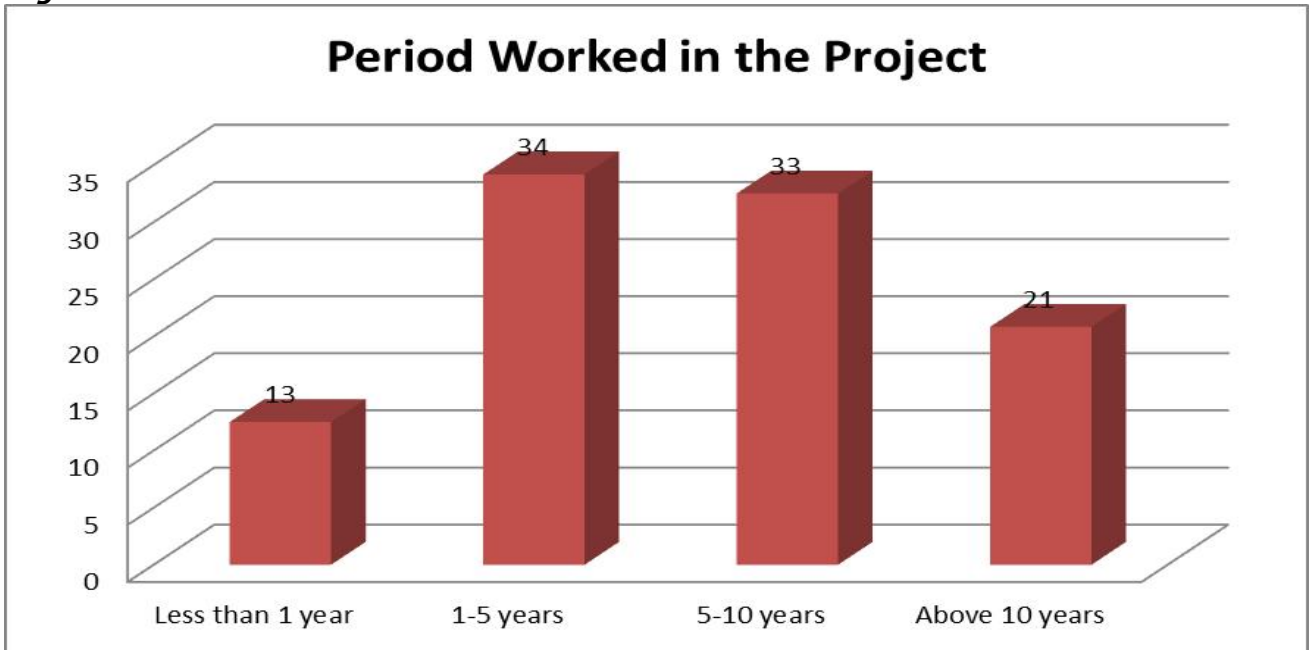
Academic Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Primary certificate	0	0
Secondary certificate	2	1.67
College diploma	12	10.00
University graduate	81	67.50
Post-graduate	25	20.83
Total	120	100

Source: Field data, 2024

Period worked in the current organization

The study sought to find out the number of years the respondents had worked in their respective projects.

Figure 2



Source: Field data, 2024

Figure 2 shows that 13% of the respondents had worked on the AAH-1 projects for less than 1 year, while 21% had worked for more than 10 years. This indicates that most of the project staff had worked for more than 1 year in their

project, hence understood the operations, risks encountered, possible mitigation strategies, and project performance. This makes them better at making the study valid.

Job designation

Figure 3: Respondents' job designation



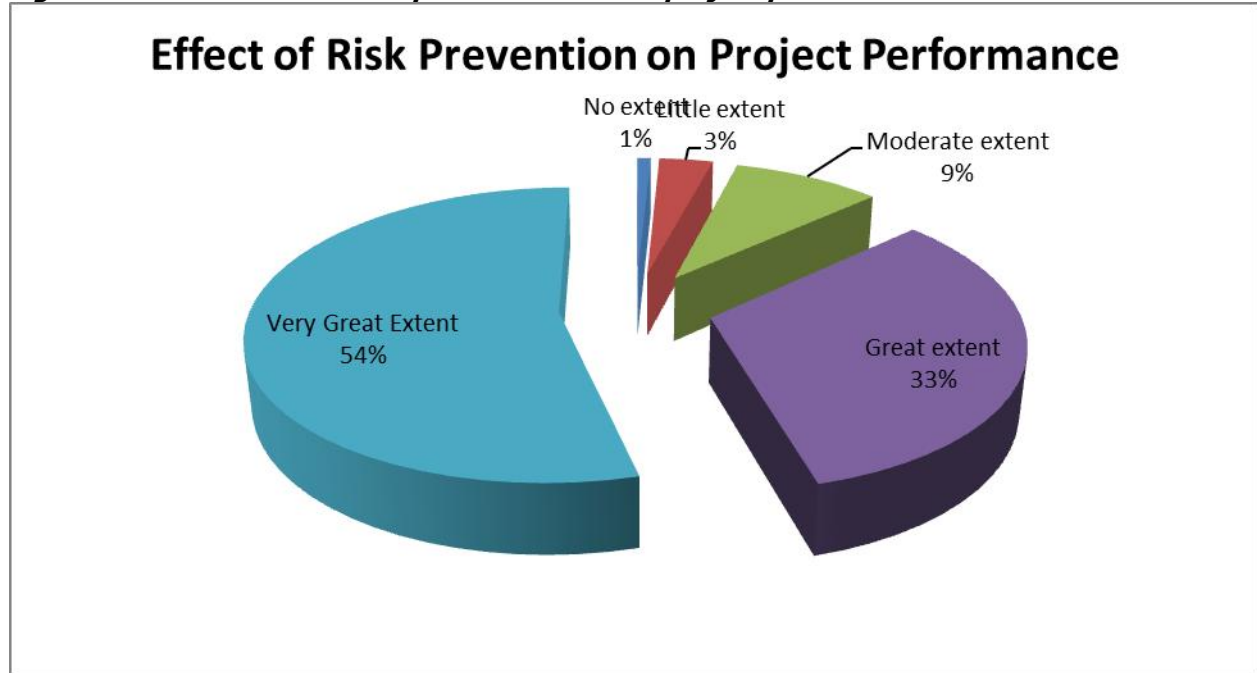
Source: Field data, 2024

Figure 3, 5% of the respondents were risk managers in the respective organizations, 8% were project managers, 6% were general managers, 48% were project officers, 15% were project supervisors, while 18% were finance officers.

This indicates that the majority of the respondents were project officers. All cadres of management in the organizations or projects were fairly and significantly represented.

Risk Prevention and Performance of projects in AAH-1, South Sudan.

Figure 4: Extent to which risk prevention affects project performance



Source: Field data, 2024

Figure 4, 54% of the respondents indicated that risk prevention to a very great extent affects project performance, 33% indicated that it was to a great extent, 9% indicated that it was to a moderate extent, 3% indicated that it was to a little extent, and 1% indicated that risk prevention didn't have any effect on project performance. This generally indicates that, to a significant extent, risk prevention as a risk management practice influenced

project performance. Wabomba (2015) in his study on the influence of risk management strategies on project performance in international development organizations in South Sudan indicated similarly that changing work plans to avoid risks, contingency, regular inspections, operational reviews, training, and skill enhancements in order to prevent risks contribute significantly to project performance.

The respondents were requested to further indicated the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statements using a scale of 1-5 where 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3- undecided, 4= agree and 5= strongly agree. The study had the following findings.

Table 7: Risk Prevention and Project Performance

Risk Prevention and Project Performance	Mean	Std. Dev
Our organization ensures installation of safety systems against any event that may lead to project delay	2.88	0.798
Our organization advocates for the use of alternative plan in case of occurrence of any event that may cause project delay	3.14	0.911
Our organization through project officials inspects ongoing projects to ensure projects are not delayed	3.71	0.801
Our organization encourages use of a detailed work plan to ensure no event leads to delays in projects	3.66	1.466
Our organization trains project team to ensure that projects run within the allocated time schedule	3.91	0.769

Source: Field data, 2024

Table 7, The respondents agreed that their organizations, through project officials inspect ongoing projects to ensure the projects are not delayed; the organizations encourage use of a detailed work plan to ensure no event leads to delays in projects and the organizations train project teams to ensure that projects run within the allocated schedule as indicated by a mean of 3.71, 3.66 and 3.91 respectively. The study respondents agreed to a moderate extent that their organizations ensure the installation of safety systems

against any event that may lead to project delay and advocate for the use of an alternative plan in case of the occurrence of any event that may cause project delay, as indicated by a mean of 2.88 and 3.14, respectively. This indicates that the organizations significantly embraced risk prevention mechanisms, which involved the installation of safety systems, having alternative plans, inspection and feedback, use of a detailed work plan, and capacity building among project team members.

The findings of coefficient of correlation and coefficient of determination are as shown in Table 8

Table 8: Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted r square	Std. Error of the estimate
1	.719 ^a	.516	.849	1.61972

a. Predictors: (constant), risk prevention,

Source: Field data, 2024

Discussion

Risk Prevention and Project Performance

The study found that risk prevention had a significant influence on the performance of projects in AAH-1, South Sudan. The study established that to a significant extent, risk prevention as a risk management practice influenced project performance. The respondents agreed that their organizations, through project officials, inspect ongoing projects to ensure the projects are not delayed; the organizations encourage the use of a detailed work plan to ensure no event leads to delays in projects, and the organizations train project teams to ensure that projects run within the allocated schedule. The study respondents agreed to a moderate extent that their organizations ensure the installation of safety systems against any event that may lead to project delay and advocate for the use of an alternative plan in case of the occurrence of any event that may cause project delay. This indicates that the organizations significantly embraced risk prevention mechanisms, which involved the installation of safety systems, having alternative plans, inspection and feedback, use of a detailed work plan, and capacity building among project team members.

According to respondents, prevention is better than cure; therefore, taking into practice proactive, preventive risk management into practice is far better than reactive firefighting risk management, and it's always key to understand and control the variability of preference without focusing on single error scenarios. This statement is backed up by David Tattam (Jul 21, 2017), as he said, if we can understand risk BEFORE we suffer an incident and we manage the risk early on to prevent it from happening in the first place, this must be better than waiting for an incident before we act and learn.

Conclusion

Risk prevention significantly affected project performance at 0.719; risk prevention is embraced among organizations executing projects in AAH-I.

Recommendations

There is a need to have a risk management plan in place and stick to organizations that are found to be skeptical of planning for risks and taking risk prevention steps.

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I would like to thank my family for their support and wonderful ideas throughout this process. I further wish to thank my older siblings for their invaluable advice and companionship on how to tackle life challenges.

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The study was not funded

Conflict of interest

The author did not declare any conflict of interest

Author contributions

Gloria Meliku drafted the research proposal, conducted data collection and analysis and drafted the manuscript of the study

Dr. Nelson Wani supervised all the processes of the study project to drafting of the manuscript of the study

Ethical approval

The study was undertaken ethically by seeking permission before conducting the research in the form of a formal letter of request elaborating reasons for undertaking the study and the study's purpose. The researcher also assured the respondents that any information submitted was treated with utmost confidentiality.

Informed consent

The purpose of the study was well explained to the respondents and consent obtained from the respondents before data collection.

Author biography

Gloria Meliku is a student of a masters in project planning and management at Team University.

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