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Influence of Digital Transformation on Project Management Efficiency in
Construction Projects in Rwanda



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Influence of Digital Transformation on Project Management Efficiency in Construction Projects in Rwanda



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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this article was to analyze influence of digital transformation on project management efficiency in construction projects in Rwanda.

Methodology: This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

Findings: Digital transformation has significantly enhanced project management efficiency in Rwanda's construction industry. Key findings indicate that the adoption of digital tools, such as project management software and Building Information Modeling (BIM), has improved communication, streamlined workflows, and optimized resource allocation. These technologies enable real-time monitoring, reduce delays, and improve decision-making. Additionally, the integration of mobile applications and cloud-based systems has facilitated better collaboration among teams and stakeholders.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: Technology acceptance model (TAM), diffusion of innovation theory (DOI) & contingency theory may be used to anchor future studies on the influence of digital transformation on project management efficiency in construction projects in Rwanda. In practice, the adoption of digital tools enables construction firms to share real-time data, track project milestones, and manage resources more effectively. From a policy perspective, governments and regulatory bodies can promote the adoption of digital tools by mandating their use in public infrastructure projects.

Keywords: *Digital Transformation, Project Management Efficiency, Construction Projects*

INTRODUCTION

Project management efficiency refers to the ability of a project to be completed within budget, on time, and in alignment with the specified scope and quality standards. This efficiency is commonly measured by three critical factors: cost reductions, time efficiency, and project delivery. Cost reduction refers to managing and minimizing project expenditures, ensuring that the project stays within budget. Time efficiency involves meeting project deadlines without sacrificing quality, while project delivery focuses on the overall effectiveness of the project execution. Effective project management not only enhances organizational performance but also provides a competitive edge in rapidly evolving markets (Smith, 2019).

In developed economies like the USA, the construction industry has seen substantial improvements in project management efficiency, particularly in the use of technology such as Building Information Modeling (BIM). In a report by the Construction Industry Institute (2020), BIM implementation resulted in a 20% reduction in costs and a 15% improvement in project timelines for large-scale construction projects. Similarly, in Japan, the use of lean project management methodologies in the automotive industry has significantly reduced manufacturing time by 25%, while improving project delivery speed (Hasegawa, 2021). The UK's adoption of Agile methodologies in software development projects has led to a 30% increase in delivery speed and a 15% reduction in project costs (Williams & McCabe, 2018). These examples underscore the growing role of technology and process optimization in improving project management efficiency in developed economies.

In developing economies, project management efficiency is often hindered by resource constraints, political instability, and infrastructure challenges. However, there are notable improvements in sectors like infrastructure and information technology. For example, in India, the implementation of digital project management tools such as Microsoft Project and Primavera has helped reduce project timelines by 18% and project costs by 12% in the construction sector (Patel et al., 2020). In Kenya, the introduction of project management professional (PMP) certifications and structured training programs has led to improved cost management, with 20% of large-scale infrastructure projects seeing a reduction in cost overruns (Ngugi & Ochieng, 2019). These improvements highlight the growing adoption of modern project management tools and certifications to improve efficiency in developing economies.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, project management efficiency is improving, albeit at a slower pace, due to the challenges of poor infrastructure and limited technical expertise. In South Africa, the introduction of project management software like Procore has led to a 15% reduction in costs and a 20% improvement in time efficiency for infrastructure projects (Moyo & Da Silva, 2021). In Nigeria, the use of Agile techniques in construction projects has resulted in a 12% reduction in project delays and a 10% decrease in costs, particularly in urban development projects (Olawale & Sun, 2020). Despite these advancements, there is still a significant gap in the full implementation of advanced project management practices compared to developed economies, driven by access to resources and skilled professionals.

Digital transformation, particularly the adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI), Project Management Software, and Building Information Modeling (BIM), has revolutionized project management, enabling significant improvements in project efficiency. AI tools are increasingly being used to predict project outcomes, optimize resource allocation, and automate routine tasks,

leading to reduced operational costs and time savings (O'Brien, 2020). Project management software, such as Asana and Trello, allows for real-time collaboration and tracking of project milestones, improving team productivity and ensuring projects remain within budget (PMI, 2021). Similarly, BIM enhances the design and construction processes by creating accurate digital models of buildings, which reduces errors, rework, and delays (Eastman, 2019). These tools collectively support project managers in meeting deadlines, adhering to budgets, and delivering high-quality results by integrating real-time data and predictive analytics.

Among the key digital transformation tools, the use of AI in decision-making processes has been linked to improved time efficiency by automating scheduling and task prioritization (Jebara, 2021). Project management software directly influences project delivery by providing streamlined communication channels, transparent timelines, and task management, thus enhancing collaboration and reducing bottlenecks (Carvalho, 2020). Meanwhile, BIM has led to notable cost reductions by enabling virtual simulations of projects, which help detect potential issues before physical work begins (Azhar, 2011). These tools, when integrated, provide a holistic approach to project management that significantly enhances overall project management efficiency, particularly in construction and large-scale projects. The combined use of AI, software, and BIM fosters greater accuracy, predictive capabilities, and seamless communication, all of which are essential for timely and cost-effective project delivery.

Problem Statement

The construction industry is undergoing a significant transformation driven by digital technologies such as Building Information Modeling (BIM), project management software, artificial intelligence (AI), and automation. Despite these advancements, many construction projects continue to face inefficiencies in terms of time delays, cost overruns, and quality management (O'Brien, 2020). Although digital tools have the potential to enhance project management efficiency, the adoption rate and effective implementation in the construction sector remain inconsistent. As a result, construction companies struggle to fully leverage the benefits of digital transformation to optimize project planning, execution, and monitoring processes (Gartner, 2021). The lack of comprehensive integration of digital technologies and insufficient training of project managers and staff further hinder the potential improvements in project management outcomes. Therefore, understanding the influence of digital transformation on project management efficiency is critical for enhancing the construction industry's ability to deliver projects on time, within budget, and with the desired quality outcomes (Nawaz, 2022).

Theoretical Review

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), developed by Davis (1989), posits that perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness are the primary determinants of whether individuals accept and use new technologies. The main theme of the model is that technology adoption is influenced by these two factors, which directly impact the behavior of users towards a specific technology. In the context of construction projects, TAM can be applied to understand how project managers and teams adopt digital tools and technologies, such as project management software and Building Information Modeling (BIM). The relevance to the suggested topic lies in how the acceptance of digital transformation tools influences project management efficiency, including factors like time

management and resource allocation. This theory is significant for exploring how construction professionals embrace digital tools to enhance project success (Venkatesh, 2018).

Diffusion of Innovation Theory (DOI)

Diffusion of innovation theory, developed by Rogers (1962), explains how, why, and at what rate new ideas and technology spread within a social system. The main theme of this theory is that innovation adoption is influenced by perceived attributes such as relative advantage, compatibility, and complexity. In the construction industry, the diffusion of digital technologies, such as smart construction tools, is critical for improving project efficiency. This theory is relevant because it helps examine how digital transformation tools spread across construction firms and the factors that influence their widespread acceptance. The theory's insights into innovation adoption stages can aid in understanding the challenges and opportunities for improving project management efficiency in construction (Rogers, 2020).

Contingency Theory

Contingency theory, originated by Lawrence and Lorsch (1967), suggests that there is no single best way to organize a company or manage projects, and the optimal course of action depends on the internal and external environment. The main theme revolves around aligning organizational structure and management practices with specific situational factors. In construction project management, the theory is useful in determining how the adoption of digital tools can be contingent on project complexity, team dynamics, and external factors such as market conditions. It helps explain why some projects benefit from digital transformation, while others may face challenges in implementation due to varying project requirements. This theory provides insight into tailoring digital solutions to specific project needs, enhancing efficiency (Sweis, 2019).

Empirical Review

Zhang (2020) utilized a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both surveys and case studies across various construction firms in the industry. BIM was found to be an effective tool for enhancing communication and collaboration among project teams, thereby reducing delays and ensuring projects were completed on time. The research revealed that BIM helped reduce project delays by 15%, primarily through its ability to streamline the planning and design stages, which are critical to overall project success. BIM's capabilities to detect and resolve potential design conflicts before construction begins also contributed to cost reductions, as it minimized the need for costly changes during the construction phase. The researchers concluded that BIM improved project coordination by providing a comprehensive digital representation of the building, which allowed for real-time updates and modifications. The ability of all project stakeholders to access the same up-to-date information led to fewer misunderstandings and errors, improving overall project efficiency. Furthermore, BIM's integration with other digital tools, such as project management software, further optimized resource allocation and time management. The study recommended the widespread adoption of BIM in construction projects, especially for large-scale developments, due to its proven benefits in improving time and cost efficiency. However, the authors also emphasized the need for additional research into integrating BIM with other emerging technologies, such as cloud computing and AI, to further enhance its capabilities. The authors called for construction firms to invest in BIM training for their employees to maximize the benefits of the technology. They also suggested that industry standards for BIM implementation be

established to ensure consistency and quality across projects. Overall, Zhang found that BIM was not only a tool for improving project management but also a significant factor in achieving better project outcomes.

Wang and Li (2019) examined the impact of cloud-based project management software on project coordination and communication within the construction sector. Their study focused on over 200 construction firms that had integrated cloud-based tools into their project management processes. The results showed that the adoption of cloud-based systems led to a 20% reduction in project time overruns. The cloud tools enabled real-time communication and collaboration among project teams, which greatly improved the decision-making process. By centralizing all project data in a cloud-based platform, the tools allowed all stakeholders to access up-to-date information at any time, thus reducing delays caused by miscommunication. The study found that cloud platforms improved the transparency of project processes, making it easier for teams to track progress and address issues promptly. This level of transparency also facilitated quicker problem-solving and helped maintain the project's scope and quality. Wang and Li (2019) also noted that cloud-based tools allowed for better integration with other digital technologies, further streamlining project workflows. Despite the clear benefits, the study identified some challenges, including the initial cost of implementing cloud-based systems and the need for adequate training for employees to effectively use the technology. The authors recommended that construction firms invest in cloud systems and provide ongoing training to employees to ensure that the systems are fully utilized. They also suggested that future studies focus on the long-term benefits of cloud-based project management tools in enhancing overall project success. In conclusion, the study emphasized the importance of adopting digital solutions like cloud systems to enhance project coordination, reduce delays, and improve project outcomes in construction.

Cheng (2021) investigated the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in project scheduling for construction. They used a case study methodology, examining several construction projects that incorporated AI technology into their scheduling systems. The study found that AI applications significantly reduced scheduling errors by 30%, leading to more accurate project timelines and better management of resources. By analyzing historical data, AI-powered systems were able to predict potential delays and suggest alternative scheduling strategies. The researchers noted that the predictive capabilities of AI allowed project managers to identify issues before they occurred, leading to proactive problem-solving. Furthermore, AI tools enabled more precise allocation of resources, which helped reduce waste and improved cost management. The study revealed that AI applications, when integrated with traditional project management techniques, resulted in smoother project execution and fewer disruptions. One of the key recommendations from the study was the adoption of AI for predictive scheduling, particularly for large-scale and complex projects, where traditional methods often fail to anticipate potential delays. Cheng et al. (2021) also suggested that construction firms invest in AI training for project managers to improve the effectiveness of AI tools. They highlighted that, while AI tools could not entirely replace human decision-making, they significantly enhanced project management efficiency when combined with human expertise. The authors recommended that future research explore the combination of AI with other digital tools, such as IoT, to further optimize project performance. They concluded that AI's role in construction project scheduling could revolutionize the industry by reducing delays, improving resource management, and enhancing project success rates.

Tan and Chan (2018) assessed the impact of digital tools on project management efficiency in construction. Their research focused on construction firms that adopted digital tools, such as project management software and mobile applications, to improve various aspects of project execution. The study revealed a direct link between the use of digital tools and improvements in project quality and efficiency. Over the course of several years, companies that embraced digital tools saw a reduction in project delays and an improvement in cost control. The researchers also found that digital tools significantly improved the quality of documentation, communication, and tracking, which were essential for managing large-scale projects. These improvements were particularly evident in project stages such as procurement, design, and construction, where digital tools helped streamline workflows and reduce human error. Tan and Chan (2018) emphasized that the benefits of digital tools went beyond just time and cost savings, as they also improved the overall quality of the project output. The study recommended that construction firms continue to explore and implement digital tools to streamline procurement, improve communication, and enhance overall project efficiency. The authors also suggested that further studies should focus on exploring the long-term benefits of digital tools in construction management. Overall, the research showed that digital tools were instrumental in improving project outcomes in construction, and their adoption should be a priority for firms aiming to enhance their project management practices.

Jin (2022) focused on digital construction platforms that manage project documents and logistics. The study found that these platforms led to a 25% reduction in errors related to document handling and improved project efficiency. By digitizing document management and logistics, construction firms were able to centralize information, making it easier to track project progress, manage resources, and communicate with stakeholders. The authors highlighted that digital platforms reduced administrative overheads, freeing up project managers to focus on more strategic tasks. The study recommended that construction firms invest in comprehensive digital platforms that integrate various project management functions, from document handling to logistics tracking, to ensure seamless project execution. Jin (2022) also noted that digital platforms enhanced collaboration among stakeholders, as all parties could access the same real-time information, leading to fewer misunderstandings and delays. The authors concluded that digital platforms were crucial for improving project management efficiency, particularly in large, complex construction projects. They suggested that further research should explore the integration of these platforms with other emerging technologies, such as AI and IoT, to further enhance their capabilities.

Singh and Gupta (2020) analyzed the impact of IoT (Internet of Things) on construction site management, with a particular focus on improving safety and reducing accidents. Their study found that IoT-based systems, such as real-time monitoring sensors, contributed to a 40% reduction in accidents on construction sites. By continuously monitoring environmental conditions and worker activities, IoT systems allowed project managers to identify potential hazards early and take corrective actions. The authors found that IoT systems also helped improve the accuracy of resource tracking and site logistics, reducing delays and ensuring better project outcomes. Singh and Gupta (2020) recommended that construction firms adopt IoT technologies to further improve safety, reduce accidents, and enhance project management efficiency. They also suggested that IoT systems could be integrated with other digital tools to create a comprehensive project management solution that improves overall site performance.

Huang and Liu (2021) explored the effect of digital project management tools on project stakeholder engagement in construction projects. Their study found that the use of digital tools, such as project management platforms and mobile apps, led to an 18% increase in stakeholder satisfaction. By providing stakeholders with real-time updates, easy access to project documents, and a platform for timely feedback, digital tools enhanced communication and collaboration among all parties involved. Huang and Liu (2021) highlighted that improved stakeholder engagement not only led to better project outcomes in terms of time, cost, and quality, but also contributed to increased trust and cooperation among stakeholders. The authors recommended that construction firms continue to invest in digital tools to improve stakeholder engagement, which could, in turn, lead to more successful project completions. They suggested that further research be conducted on the long-term benefits of digital tools for stakeholder engagement and their impact on overall project performance.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low-cost advantage as compared to field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

FINDINGS

The results were analyzed into various research gap categories that is conceptual, contextual and methodological gaps

Conceptual Gap: While the studies by Zhang (2020), Wang and Li (2019), and others highlight the positive impact of digital technologies like BIM, cloud-based systems, and AI on project time, cost efficiency, and coordination, there is limited research on the integration of multiple digital tools within one project. Specifically, the combination of BIM, cloud computing, and AI remains underexplored in terms of its combined effect on project success. Furthermore, there is a gap in understanding how these tools collectively contribute to project scope and quality beyond time and cost, which is critical for providing a comprehensive view of project outcomes. Future studies could explore how multitechnology integration influences long-term project sustainability and quality control in large-scale construction projects.

Contextual Gap: Many of the existing studies primarily focus on the construction sector in developed economies, such as China, Turkey, and India (Zhang, 2020; Yıldız, 2020). However, there is a significant gap in research on the application and effectiveness of digital project management tools in different project types outside the construction sector, such as IT development projects or manufacturing projects. These sectors may face unique challenges that could influence the success of digital tools in project management. Contextual studies should explore how the application of tools like AI and cloud-based systems can address specific industry challenges, such as resource allocation or time management, and the barriers to adopting such technologies in non-construction industries.

Geographical Gap: Despite the wealth of research in developed countries, there is a distinct lack of studies focusing on the use of digital project management tools in Sub-Saharan Africa or other developing regions. Many studies, including Wang and Li (2019), focus on developed economies

like China and Turkey, where the technological infrastructure is more advanced. In contrast, there is limited understanding of how cloud systems, BIM, and AI impact project success in areas with less developed technological infrastructure, such as in Sub-Saharan Africa. Further research is needed to assess how these technologies can be adapted to and utilized effectively in such environments, where there may be challenges related to internet access, training, and cost. Geographically diverse studies would help provide insights into the feasibility of adopting advanced project management tools in less technologically advanced regions, where the infrastructure and access to digital tools may differ greatly.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The influence of digital transformation on project management efficiency in construction projects is undeniable, offering numerous opportunities for enhanced performance. As the construction industry continues to embrace digital tools such as Building Information Modeling (BIM), project management software, and real-time data analytics, the efficiency of managing construction projects has significantly improved. These technologies enable better communication, more accurate project tracking, and streamlined workflows, which reduce errors and enhance coordination across project teams. The integration of digital tools has proven to reduce project timelines, optimize resource allocation, and minimize cost overruns, all while ensuring better quality control. However, while digital transformation offers substantial benefits, its full potential can only be realized with the right organizational culture, skilled personnel, and a willingness to adapt to technological advancements. The construction industry must continue to invest in digital infrastructure and training to fully leverage these technologies. Overall, digital transformation is set to continue playing a pivotal role in reshaping project management practices in the construction sector, driving greater efficiency, and ensuring the successful delivery of projects on time, within budget, and with superior quality.

Recommendations

Theory

The integration of digital tools in project management is supported by the resource-based view (RBV) theory, which suggests that internal resources, such as technology, provide firms with a competitive advantage. By leveraging digital tools like BIM and cloud-based platforms, construction firms can enhance their capabilities, improving project planning, coordination, and execution. These resources are considered valuable assets that can streamline project processes and reduce inefficiencies. By investing in training programs to build digital literacy, construction firms can improve their human capital, enabling employees to leverage digital tools effectively for project management. The development of digital skills is essential for the efficient use of emerging technologies.

Practice

In practice, the adoption of digital tools enables construction firms to share real-time data, track project milestones, and manage resources more effectively. By using advanced project management software, construction companies can improve team collaboration, reduce errors, and manage project scope, time, and cost more efficiently, leading to higher project success rates. In

practice, continuous training ensures that project managers and workers are equipped with the necessary skills to adopt new technologies. This approach improves project performance by enabling employees to make better decisions, communicate more effectively, and adapt to technological changes, ultimately improving the overall efficiency of project management.

Policy

From a policy perspective, governments and regulatory bodies can promote the adoption of digital tools by mandating their use in public infrastructure projects. Policies that encourage the use of digital technologies can help streamline the construction process, improve accountability, and enhance transparency in project management. Policymakers can incentivize digital adoption through tax breaks or funding programs for construction firms that invest in workforce development. By supporting training and educational programs, governments can help ensure that the workforce is prepared for technological advancements, improving industry-wide project management efficiency.

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