

## PROCESS CONTROL AND PROJECT PERFORMANCE OF REAL ESTATE FIRMS IN PORT HARCOURT, RIVERS STATE

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### ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between process control and project performance of real estate firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The study was guided by the Resource-Based View Theory and Reliability Theory. The study adopted a correlational research design. The population of the study consisted of 34 registered and functional real estate firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, while the researcher studied twenty (20) real estate firms in Port Harcourt as sample. Data for the study was generated through primary source. The main data collection instrument for this study was a structured questionnaire. The reliability for the study was determined using the Cronbach alpha coefficient. The bivariate analysis was carried out using Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient. The findings revealed amongst others that there is a positive and significant relationship between process control and measures of project performance (timeliness, stakeholders' satisfaction, quality) of real estate firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. It was concluded that if an organizations institute process control measure in its operations, injury resulting from plant or operational tools, will also be minimized and by extension loss of human life at the work place prevented. Based on the findings and conclusion, it was recommended that management of real estate firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State should develop and maintain a clear, standardized process for monitoring and controlling key processes, and ensure that all employees are trained on how to use these processes effectively. This will help ensure that deviations from established processes are identified and addressed in a timely manner thereby improving project performance of the organization.

**Keywords:** Process control, project performance, timeliness, stakeholders satisfaction, quality

### INTRODUCTION

Project performance has become a critical concern to managers especially when it involves real estate firms in Nigeria. Managers tend to monitor their plans, goals and objectives to ensure project success (Idoro, 2012). Project performance within an organization is a measure of how well the project has achieved its objective. A real estate project is considered successful when it is completed on time, within budget, following specifications and to stakeholders' satisfaction. However, levels of project performance and successes are low in the real estate industry especially in developing countries such as Nigeria where owners are generally dissatisfied (Odediran, Babalola & Adebisi, 2013; Isa, Jimoh & Achuen, 2013). One of the significant reasons for owners' dissatisfaction with building projects is their poor process control (Abdulrahman, Wang & Wen, 2010; Achi, Onukwube & Ajayi, 2007).

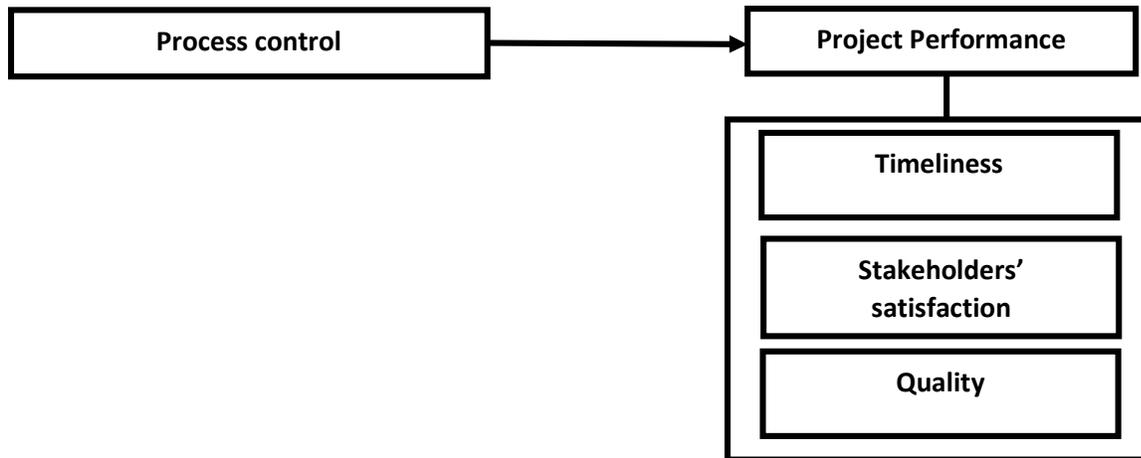
Process control is a way to monitor and manage the conditions in which businesses make and transport products to ensure conformity and quality, limit waste and increase efficiency. Process control refers to "the systematic use of information, procedures, and technology to regulate the quality of a process to achieve desired outcomes (Ledford & Hill, 2007). The term process control has been defined in various ways by different authors and organizations. In service industries, process control may involve monitoring customer satisfaction and feedback, as well as using quality management frameworks such as Six Sigma to identify and address process issues (Pande *et al.*, 2019). It is a critical component of quality management, as it helps organizations to monitor and maintain consistent quality levels in their products or services. Process control is a systematic approach to managing and regulating processes to ensure they produce desired outcomes. It involves monitoring and measuring a process to ensure it is operating within certain parameters, identifying and addressing any deviations, and continuously improving the process to increase efficiency and effectiveness.

The relationship between process control and project performance has been studied in many research works using different performance measures such as quality performance, employees' satisfaction and operational performance which gave varied and inconsistent findings (Jimoh, Oyewobi, Isa & Waziri, 2018). In some studies, there was positive relationship between PC practices and project performance (Mwaniki & Bichanga, 2014; Masindet & Bichanga, 2014). Other studies reported negative or non-significant relationship between PC practices and some organizational performance indicators particularly customer focus and financial performance (Mwaniki & Bichanga, 2014). The reasons of the mixed results could be due to: the utilization of different methods, considering varied PC elements and diverse performance standards in their research models; they were performed in variegated backgrounds such as different countries and different industries and some did not address the effect of process control on project performance. This study therefore sought to mitigate this and add to the body of knowledge by investigating the relationship between process control and project performance of real estate firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

The specific objectives of the study were:

- i. Examine the relationship between process control and timeliness of real estate firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.
- ii. Determine the relationship between process control and stakeholders' satisfaction of real estate firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.
- iii. Ascertain the relationship between process control and quality of real estate firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

### Conceptual Framework



**Figure 1:** Conceptual framework showing the relationship between process control and project performance

**Source:** Desk Research (2025) with measures of Project Performance were adapted from the work of Ozigi and Onuoha (2023).

### Research Questions

The following research questions guided the researcher in order to achieve the research objectives.

- i. What is the relationship between process control and timeliness of real estate firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?
- ii. What is the relationship between process control and stakeholders' satisfaction of real estate firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?
- iii. What is the relationship between process control and quality of real estate firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?

### Statement of Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were given in null form so as to arrive at a logical conclusion and to achieve its stated objectives.

- Ho:1** There is no significant relationship between process control and timeliness of real estate firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.
- Ho:2** There is no significant relationship between process control and stakeholders' satisfaction of real estate firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.
- Ho:3** There is no significant relationship between process control and quality of real estate firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Theoretical Foundation

This study was anchored on Resource-Based View Theory and Reliability Theory.

### **Resource-Based View Theory**

This theory was propounded by Wernerfelt, (1984). The theory argues that a firm has the ability to achieve and sustain competitive advantage if it possesses resources that are valuable, rare, imperfectly imitable and non-substitutable. Not all resources are strategically relevant within an organization. The goal of an organization is to ensure it has access to and control of valuable resources by developing and securing all the relevant resources either internally or externally. If a firm possesses critical resources that have strategic value, it is better to retain the activity in-house. Internal knowledge is recognized as one of the organization's core resources, according to the company's resource-based approach. is an essential basis for competitive advantage (Barney, 1991; Barney & Arikan, 2001). Wernerfelt (1984) considers a firm's resources at a given time as those tangible and intangible assets which are anchored semi-permanently to the firm and include brand names, in-house knowledge of technology, employment of skilled personnel, trade contacts, machinery, efficient procedures, capital etc. For competencies, capabilities and skills to be an essential determinant of worthwhile competitive advantage and promote organizational performance they must be of value, rare, difficult to copy and irreplaceable. This theory is particularly relevant to this study because it provides an understanding of quality control practices which is a rare and valuable aspects of an organization's operations leads to improved project performance.

### **Reliability Theory**

The reliability theory was put forward by Rausat and Hoyland (2014). According to Strandberg (1992), reliability can be defined as the capability of a product to execute a desired function, under preset operational and environmental conditions and for a defined period of time. Reliability theory involves meeting the identified likelihood of success, at a preset statistical confidence level. Reliability is based on the intended purpose and is assumed to imply flawless operation. According to this theory, the quality of an item is defined not only by its adherence to specifications at the point of purchase by the user, but also by its capability to conform to these specifications over its total lifespan. Quality implies the adherence of the item to its specifications as manufactured while reliability refers to its ability to continue complying with this specification over its entire lifespan. Reliability is therefore an extension of quality into the time domain (Smith, 1997).

This theory is applicable in this study because quality control is progressively focused, inspired by the almost obligatory execution of the ISO 9000 series of standards. Reliability may in certain circumstances be deemed to be a characteristic of quality; maybe even the most important characteristic. According to the theory, all technical components items, systems and sub-systems are designed to achieve one or more desired tasks. For a product to be reliable, it must achieve more than just attaining an initial quality specification or factory performance - it must function satisfactorily for a defined duration in the exact application for which it was intended.

### **Conceptual Review**

#### **Concept of Process Control**

Process control is a combination of engineering and statistics that involves monitoring and adjusting a process to maintain a desired output. Process control is a way to monitor and manage the conditions in which businesses make and transport products to ensure conformity and quality, limit waste and increase efficiency. Process control refers to "the systematic use of information, procedures, and technology to regulate the quality of a process to achieve desired outcomes

(Ledford & Hill, 2007). The term process control has been defined in various ways by different authors and organizations. For example, Ledford and Hill (2007) define process control as "a systematic use of information, procedures, and technology to regulate the quality of a process to achieve desired outcomes.

The concept of process control has evolved over time, with early pioneers such as Shewhart (1931) and Deming (1950) laying the foundation for modern process control methods. Shewhart's development of the Shewhart cycle, also known as the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle, provided a framework for continuous improvement in quality management, which is still widely used today (Shewhart, 1931). Process control is a critical component of quality management that aims to regulate and monitor processes to ensure they produce high-quality products or services. The concept of process control has its roots in the early 20th century, with the work of pioneers such as Shewhart and Deming laying the foundation for modern process control methods. Since then, process control has evolved to encompass a wide range of techniques and methodologies, including Six Sigma, Lean Six Sigma, TPM, and other quality management approaches, which have helped organizations to drive continuous improvement in their processes and operations.

Today, process control is increasingly being supported by technology, with the advent of advanced tools and systems such as computerized maintenance management systems (CMMS), enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems, and the Internet of Things (IoT) providing new ways for organizations to monitor and regulate their processes in real-time (Li et al., 2019). However, despite these technological advancements, the human element remains crucial in process control, with skilled operators and quality managers playing a key role in identifying and addressing process issues and driving continuous improvement.

### **Project Performance**

A project is considered as a temporary effort in organizations that is structured to perform a set of activities for creating a unique result with a predetermined beginning and end defined by time boundedness and limited resources. According to PMI (2017), "a project is a temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product or service". Project performance denotes the extent to which project outputs and outcomes satisfy budget goals, schedule goals, operational and technical specifications, and ultimately, the business needs of the client (Ali et al., 2018). Project performance denotes the extent to which project outputs and outcomes satisfy budget goals, schedule goals, operational and technical specifications, and ultimately, the business needs of the client (Ali et al., 2018). Project management practitioners emphasized that project performance is all about the success of projects which must be in line with the organizational long-term goals.

Indeed, the overall conceptualization of project performance includes schedule performance, quality performance and innovation (Chen & Lin, 2018). Indeed, the overall conceptualization of project performance includes schedule performance, quality performance, innovation performance, and benefit performance (Chen & Lin, 2018). On the other hand, project management practitioners emphasized that project performance is all about the success of projects which must be in line with the organizational long-term goals. In other words, project management literature often defined project performance with the fundamental triple constraints of time, cost, and quality (Barbosa et al., 2021; Younus & Younis, 2021). Nonetheless, different stakeholders have different stakes in the project, therefore various

components and dimensions are also used to measure the project performance success, such as client satisfaction in addition to time, cost, and scope parameters (Zhu et al., 2021).

### **Measures of Project Performance**

#### **Timeliness**

Timeliness reflects the ability of the organization to produce a response within an allotted time determined by the task requirements. Timeliness is a measure of employee productivity. Delays in completing a task are due both to the time required for processing information and making decisions and to the time required to effect communications among decision makers. Timeliness measures whether a unit of work was done correctly and on time, given that time is the most crucial resource to be considered in the performance of any activity. Time determines the imperativeness of any other resources in accomplishing organizational set out objectives and goals (Ugwulashi, 2011).

In addition to the potential loss of money, poor timing for transportation projects might influence other projects that are already in the works, necessitating changes to the entire region's transportation planning programme. Today's urbanized areas frequently have construction projects going on while a lot of traffic is moving through, which disrupts travel both physically and chronologically. Most crucially, inaccurate timeline estimates may also cause planners to underestimate the amount of time necessary to accomplish a project or to prioritise tasks less wisely. As a result, a transportation program's overall performance depends on a precise project timetable.

#### **Stakeholders Satisfaction**

Stakeholders' satisfaction refers to the degree to which an organization meets or exceeds the expectations, needs, and interests of its various stakeholders, including but not limited to customers, employees, investors, government agencies, suppliers, and the wider community (Freeman, 2024). Unlike customer satisfaction, which focuses solely on consumers, stakeholders' satisfaction is a multi-dimensional concept that acknowledges the diverse and sometimes conflicting objectives of different groups connected to an organization (Mitchell, Agle & Wood, 2017). The term is deeply rooted in stakeholder theory, which posits that an organization should not solely serve the interests of its shareholders, but also those of all parties affected by its actions (Donaldson & Preston, 2015). As such, achieving stakeholders' satisfaction is essential not only for ethical governance but also for ensuring long-term sustainability, trust, and organizational legitimacy (Clarkson, 2015). Ultimately, stakeholders' satisfaction acts as a barometer of organizational health, reflecting not just how well an organization performs, but also how responsibly and inclusively it operates. It demands continuous listening, evaluation, and adaptation qualities that are indispensable for organizations aiming for long-term impact and societal value

#### **Quality**

Output refers to the total production of goods and services of a whole country over a given period – its gross domestic product. The term may refer to all the work, energy, goods, or services produced by an individual, company, factory or machine. In contracting, the term means the desired result from a contractor or project. For a business producing one good, output could simply be the number of units of that good produced in each time period, such as a month

or a year. The business's output could also be approximated by the revenues from sales of the product, adjusted for price changes (inflation)

The extent to which a project satisfies requirements determines its quality. In order to make sure that a project satisfies the identified needs it was designed to address, it entails developing and adhering to policies and procedures. Project quality management includes methods, procedures, and strategies to guarantee and enhance quality (McNamara, 2003). However, project quality management techniques have not gotten as much attention, and when they do, statistical process control is the main focus.

### **Empirical Review**

Jawad and Mark (2017) carried out a research on process control and construction project performance in Saudi Arabia. Survey research (quantitative approach) was used. The population of the study consists of construction projects in Saudi Arabia (public and private sectors). The sample size consists of 120 construction projects. The stratified random sampling techniques was used. Data collected was through questionnaires and interviews with project managers, quality inspectors, and contractors. SPSS software (descriptive statistics, correlation, regression) was used to analyse the data. The study found out that process control measures significantly correlate with project performance ( $r = 0.83$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The study concluded that process control measures significantly improve construction project performance in Saudi Arabia by reducing defects and enhancing overall quality.

Liu et al. (2018) carried out a study on process control and project performance: A systematic review. Systematic review and meta-analysis. The population of the study consists of Construction projects worldwide. 150 was the sample size while the sampling techniques used was convenience sampling. The study found out that Process control measures significantly impact project performance ( $r = 0.83$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The result of the study showed that quality control, schedule control, and cost control predict project success. The study concluded that Process control measures enhance project performance.

Zhang et al. (2019) carried out a study process control and project success in Chinese Manufacturing Industry. The research design used was survey research. The population of the study consists of Chinese manufacturing projects. The sample size consists of 200 projects. Stratified random sampling techniques was used. The findings revealed that process control practices predict project success ( $R^2 = 0.65$ ,  $F(1, 198) = 151.21$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The result of the study revealed that Quality control and schedule control significantly correlate with project success. The study concludes that process control practices improve project success in Chinese manufacturing industry.

### **METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted the correlational research design. The target population of this study consisted of 34 registered and functional real estate firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, while the researcher studied twenty (20) real estate firms in Port Harcourt as sample. The research data for this study was collected mainly from the primary source. The questionnaire was adopted as the primary data collection instrument for this research. The study adopted both content and face-validity. The reliability for the study was determine using the Cronbach alpha coefficient. Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient ( $R^o$ ) was used to test the stated hypotheses formulated for the study.

### DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION FINDINGS

#### Relationship between Process control and Timeliness of real estate firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State

**Table 1: Test for Correlation between process control and timeliness**

			Process control	Timeliness
Spearman's rho	Process control	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.806**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	90	90
	Timeliness	Correlation Coefficient	.806**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	90	90

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Output, 2025

**Research Question 1:** What is the relationship between process control and timeliness of real estate firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?

The result as depicted in table 1 revealed that there is a very strong and positive relationship between process control and timeliness of real estate firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The data indicates that process control is significantly associated with timeliness of real estate firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State (where  $\rho = .806$  and  $P < 0.05$ ). The finding suggests that process control enhances project performance which is measured in terms of timeliness. Hence on the basis of the result, the null hypothesis ( $H_{04}$ ) is rejected and alternate accepted. It is therefore concluded that there is a significant relationship between process control and timeliness of real estate firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

#### Relationship between Process control and Stakeholders satisfaction of real estate firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State

**Table 2: Test for Correlation between process control and stakeholders satisfaction**

			Process control	Stakeholders satisfaction
Spearman's rho	Process control	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.754**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	90	90
	Stakeholders satisfaction	Correlation Coefficient	.754**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	90	90

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Output, 2025

**Research Question 2:** What is the relationship between process control and stakeholders satisfaction of real estate firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?

The result as depicted in table 2 revealed that there is a strong and positive relationship between process control and stakeholders satisfaction of real estate firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The data indicates that process control is significantly associated with stakeholders satisfaction (where  $\rho = .754$  and  $P < 0.05$ ). The finding suggests that process control enhances project performance which is measured in terms of stakeholders satisfaction. Hence on the basis of the result, the null hypothesis ( $H_{05}$ ) is rejected and the alternate accepted. It is therefore concluded that there is a significant relationship between process control and stakeholders satisfaction of real estate firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State

**Relationship between Process control and Quality of real estate firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State**

**Table 3: Test for Correlation between process control and quality**

		Process control	Quality
Spearman's rho	Process control	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.854**
		N	90
	Quality	Correlation Coefficient	.854**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	1.000
		N	90

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Output, 2025

**Research Question 3:** What is the relationship between process control and quality of real estate firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?

The result as depicted in table 3 revealed that there is a very strong and positive relationship between process control and quality of real estate firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The data indicates that process control is significantly associated with quality of real estate firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State (where  $\rho = .854$  and  $P < 0.05$ ). The finding suggests that process control enhances project performance which is measured in terms of project quality. Hence on the basis of the result, the null hypothesis ( $H_{06}$ ) is rejected and alternate accepted. It is therefore concluded that there is a significant relationship between process control and quality of real estate firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

**Discussion of Findings**

The result for hypotheses 1, 2 and 3 showed that there is very strong positive relationship between process control and timeliness of real estate firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State; and there is a strong positive relationship between process control and stakeholders' satisfaction of real estate firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The result further revealed that there is a very strong and positive relationship between process control and quality of real estate firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The finding is in line with the studies of Jawad and Mark (2017) who carried out a research on process control and construction project performance in Saudi Arabia.

Survey research (quantitative approach) was used. The study found out that process control measures significantly correlate with project performance. The study concluded that process control measures significantly improve construction project performance in Saudi Arabia by reducing defects and enhancing overall quality.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of this study, it was concluded that if an organizations institute process control measure in its operations, injury resulting from plant or operational tools, will also be minimized and by extension loss of human life at the work place prevented. Furthermore, process control tends to ensure compliance with basic organizational rules and policies.

It is therefore recommended that management of real estate firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State should develop and maintain a clear, standardized process for monitoring and controlling key processes, and ensure that all employees are trained on how to use these processes effectively. This will help ensure that deviations from established processes are identified and addressed in a timely manner thereby improving project performance of the organization.

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