

Decision-making Criteria for Investing in Commercial Real Estate in Kenya

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Abstract

Commercial real estate investments in the Kenya's capital city-Nairobi reveal the following: A shrinking occupation demand; Disparities between expected and actual incomes; Difficulties in meeting debt servicing obligations and difficulties in completing construction projects within the specified cost and time frames. In spite of these problems, new, large and very expensive buildings continue to mushroom in the city. Therefore, there appears to be unexplained reasons that compel investors to continue investing in commercial real estate. It is against this background that research was undertaken to establish the basis of decision-making while investing in these properties. The research was based on two main objectives, namely; to identify and rank the factors that influence the decision to invest in commercial real estate and propose steps to be followed by investors in the decision to invest in these properties in order to, amongst other goals, minimise disparities between the expected and actual returns. A random sample of commercial buildings in the city was studied and it was established that, expected income was the most important factor influencing the decision to invest in commercial real estate followed by expected returns from the investment. While it was observed that the commercial real estate investor in Kenya is fairly rational and economically led, a lack of systematic and formal decision making rules and procedures was noted. The study's main proposal is that the decision to invest in commercial real estate ought to be undertaken in a systematic manner. Effective decision making rarely occurs by chance but involves a logical, sequential and ordered approach. The researcher is also of the opinion that a standard school of appraisal should be developed and introduced in Kenya. Continuous professional development programmes should also be instituted.

Key words: investment, decision-making, commercial real estate

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Drivers for Change in the Built Environment and Their Implications in Construction Management Curricula at African Universities

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Abstract

The paper explains the context of built environment in relation to construction management and identifies the drivers of change as globalization, technology and competition. Specific drivers for change in the built environment and their impacts in the training of professionals within the built environment are described. Implications for construction management curricula in universities are explored including an examination of the construction management curricula in universities in African countries and in some overseas commonwealth countries. A review of the various construction management programmes offered in selected African Universities is carried out in order to understand their implications in the construction management curricula. There is a description of a modern trends in construction project procurement models and their incorporation in construction management training programmes. The paper highlights and compares how construction management curricula responds to current change drivers in the built environment. The paper concludes by recommending the adoption of new trends in construction management training programmes. It concludes by suggesting that there should be an improved exchange of knowledge between researchers and practitioners and how these research processes need to be modified to serve the needs of practitioners and society through relevant training and curriculum development in the construction industry.

Key words: built environment, change drivers, construction process, curricula, project delivery, management

Rural-Urban Dualism and Ineffective Land use Control Instruments at the Rural- Urban Interface

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Abstract

Hitherto, land use planning in Kenya was practiced in the colonial urban areas and the scheduled highlands but not in the African markets and rural reserves. This then created favorable land use patterns in the European settlements and unfavorable land use patterns in the African settlements. In the recent times, efforts have been made to introduce land use planning in the former African settlements in order to harmonize land use patterns in the country. However, effective land use planning within the former African settlements especially at the rural-urban interface has proved futile. Hence, the favorable spatial patterns in the former colonial settlements and the unfavorable spatial patterns in the former African settlements can still be observed during the era of post-colonial Kenya. This paper seeks answers to the following question: why would land use control instruments which are fairly effective in the former European settlements become ineffective in the former African settlements especially at the rural-urban interface? Arising from the review of literature, it is concluded that overtime, the colonial settlements and the African settlements land use economies evolved to what can be considered as two composite land use systems. The two land use systems have variations in land use objectives, legal provisions, institutional frameworks and land delivery models. The variations in components between the former African rural land use systems and those of the colonial urban and scheduled areas system were not harmonized. Therefore, the European settlement area-specific land use control instruments could not be effective in the former African land use system where the rural-urban interface is located.

Key words: rural-urban dualism, ineffective control instruments, rural-urban interface

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The Impacts of Organisational Culture in the Performance of Land Administration Institutions

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Abstract

Land as a resource and factor of production plays a major role in the development of a country. The management and administration of land is done through structures and processes that are governed by the existing institutional and regulatory frameworks. In most of the countries, these processes are undertaken by public service institutions (central and local government), which are not only the custodians of public land but of records and information pertaining to land rights. With the world becoming a global village, it has become apparent that the performance of public institutions should be benchmarked against other best practices. Land administration is no different, and where in the past, stakeholders have been dogged by inefficiency, corruption and poor record keeping, now the stakeholders demand accountability, probity and good governance of land administration systems with clear time frames and measurable outputs of the processes. This paper is a result of a study that aimed at examining the management systems of land administration in Kenya. It attempts to show that the performance of any institution is highly dependent on the organizational culture and work attitudes of the employees of the organization. The study found that most of the consumers rated the land administration institutions in Kenya as poor with most linking this, to poor work attitudes and culture. The paper recommends the need for land administration institutions to embrace attitudinal change and respond positively to the changing management trends for better performance.

Key words: land administration, organisational culture, change management

Reality Effects on The Human Development Paradigm in Sub-saharan Africa

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Abstract

The Paper argues that humanity should be at the centre of development. People should be involved in the design, implementation of local development projects. The paper also advocates for the decentralisation of authority since in a centralised authority the citizens are normally made subjects of their own development. There is need for local resource mobilisation as a way of enabling people to enhance their capabilities. There is need for a new development paradigm that will empower the population, a paradigm that will enable the people to participate in their own development. That's when the population will own their development. Without true ownership, national programs will not be appropriate to local conditions and therefore they will fail. The dictates of donors and the philosophy of the neo-liberal paradigm that countries in Sub-Saharan Africa are following will not develop Sub-Saharan Africa. This paper identifies the policy of decentralisation as an appropriate policy that would enhance the development of Sub-Saharan Africa, since it empowers the people. But the policy in most cases has been hijacked by the political leaders for their own benefit. The policy can only succeed if it is appropriately designed and implemented, with strong leadership support and bureaucratic commitment.

Key words: human development, paradigm, reality effects, decentralisation, sub-saharan africa.

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Theoretical Underpinnings of Urban Sprawl; *in Search of a Universal Theory of the 21st Century Urban Management Challenge*

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Abstract

Urban sprawl is a phenomenon which characterizes all urban spaces both in MDCs and LDCs. Managing the problems associated with urban sprawl, especially in LDCs, is, however, mind boggling, hence, the very reason why the theme of the world urban forum held in 2008 in Beijing city, China, read: cities without sprawl. In order to manage urban sprawl in a sustainable way, there is need to understand the factors which bring it about. In an effort to contribute to that understanding, this paper seeks answers to the questions: Do patterns of urban sprawl occur the same way in every city both in MDCs and LDCs? In other words, can urban sprawl be explained by use of a single and universal theory? The review of literature has established that patterns of peri-urban formation vary depending on the city-rural relationship at the rural-urban interface. In countries where the urban land use system is integrated with that of the rural, peri-urban formation takes the form of invasion and succession along the city-rural continuum. In countries where the rural and urban land use systems are dichotomized, peri-urban formation jumps the threshold constituting the duality and takes the form of an appended urban sprawl within the rural land use system. In this paper, theories are analyzed to establish the extent to which they can explain peri-urban formation, either in the context of rural-urban continuum or the rural-urban dichotomy. It is concluded, however, that there is no single theory to explain all forms of urban sprawl. The general consensus; however, is that urban sprawl is undesirable. A framework to predetermining desirable/optimum patterns of peri-urban formation is conceptualized in this paper. What constitutes a universal theory that informs a desirable/optimum model is also conceptualized in this paper and termed herein as the integrated politico-social-economic optimizing model.

Key words: theoretical underpinnings, urban sprawl, universal theory, management challenge, urban fringe.

Performance Enhancement of the Catering Information Systems in e-hotels, through ICT Interventions

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Abstract

Prevailing trends of globalising world markets, along with their Information and Communication Technology (ICT) anchor, pose a critical challenge to the local hotel industry. In order to maintain competitiveness in the world scene, this industry urgently needs to adopt e-commerce, in its basic unit of function, the hotel into e-hotels. Good business sense though demands controlled change whose elements are clearly understood, in order to optimise resources, and maximise the desired positive results. It is crucial therefore to fully understand the relationship of hotel activities and the related use of ICT. For this reason, attention is spotlighted upon the Catering Information System (CIS) for food, beverages, conferencing, banqueting, and rooming, products and services. A descriptive field-setting inquiry that relies on the sample cross-sectional survey research design is used in this study. Cluster, stratified, and simple random sampling procedures are assembled into a complex random sampling design, through the use of the proportional allocation method. The broad spectrum of hotel strata by star rating and therefore scale and quality of operation is probed to attain a full understanding of the industry. Credible generalisable scientific theory regarding the use of ICT in e-hotels, results. The CIS, though seemingly heavily loaded on localised physical operations, is found to be quite dependent on information flows. It is seen to be distinctly responsive to the use of ICT, which impulse compels variable improvement of performance along the elements of this CIS. Recipe costing systems, and stock control systems are the recommended most responsive points of intervention. They are followed by rooming, and then sequentially: conferencing and banqueting, followed by electric points of sale, with automated mini-bars coming in last.

Key words: efficiency, e-hotels, information and communication technology, catering information systems

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A Designer and Principles of Cloth Design

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Abstract

There are many practices of design for example fashion, graphics, industrial and environmental among others. These all use the same principles, elements and theories. This paper endeavours to define the role of a designer and isolates principles of cloth design. It presents a few examples of problems – solving techniques for design of cloth with an aim of enhancing the appreciation of the profession. The paper also shows that cloth design is influenced by culture and individual anthropometrics. The study finally tries to prove that good design is a choice of individual and society at large. The paper concludes by showing how design is related to human existence, people's perceptions and its fundamental social need.

Key words: problem solving, appreciation, environment, human existence.

The Design and Production Process of Jua Kali Furniture in Kenya “Art or Chaos”

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Abstract

The Jua Kali industry covers the informal manufacturer who operates informally under makeshifts on the outskirts of our major urban areas such Gikomba and Shauri Moyo in Nairobi. This paper looks into the design and production processes of Jua Kali furniture. Jua Kali designers' approaches to the trade and tools used are also addressed. The issue of equipment and workshop, sketches and photographs showing faults in their products have been included for scrutiny and evidence of the chaotic situation. Interviews were conducted among 300 artisans and 100 consumers. The workshops observed were for wood and metal production. The interviewed artisans in 188 wood production workshops and 112 metal production workshops.

Key words: jua kali, sheds, marketing, originality, pattern, informal employment.

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Risk Response in Handling Building Materials on Construction Sites in Kenya

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Abstract

Handling of building materials on construction sites is part of the production process, which commences with delivery of building materials to the construction site up to the point of fixing them. Material handling represents a major portion of total costs and may account for 10-80% of total cost. Construction sites are exposed to various risks such as workmanship, storage, transit, theft, damage. Such risks affect material handling hence increasing the cost of production. Data was collected using questionnaires administered to site managers at on-going construction sites in Nairobi. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as proportions, charts and spearman's correlation. It was established that both workmanship and theft (88%) posed the biggest risk and that risk retention was found to be the most preferred response method. A recommendation was made that sub-contracting; transfer of theft risk through insurance and employment of professional security firms could address the issue of risk response. The hypothesis of the study was: "the proportion of building material losses increases as risk response measures in the handling of building materials decreases tested positive. Risk response methods should be used intensively in the handling of materials on construction site in order to minimize losses.

Key words: client, risk management, risks response, handling building materials, contractor.