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**Influence of Stakeholders' Management on Public Project Success: Evidence from
Kenya**

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of stakeholders' management on public projects success in Kenya:

Methodology: This study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional survey design. The target population was 500 staff working for the Kenya government. The study population included public work engineers, works clerks, public project managers, contractors, supervisors and community elder respondents. The research study embraced stratified random sampling method and a sample size of 150 respondents was obtained using the Yamane (1967) formula. The study further used structured questionnaires which consisted of both open-ended and closed-ended questions to collect data from the sampled population. The collected data was cleaned for clarity clearness. Coding was done on the basis of the place of the participants. The data was analyzed using excel. Data was presented using frequency tables

Finding: The findings revealed that stakeholders' analysis has a positive influence on public project success. Majority of the respondents agreed that stakeholders and their roles have been successfully identified. The study concludes that stakeholders' participation had a positive impact on project success. In addition, the study suggests that proper stakeholder expectation management enhances project success.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy:

The study affirmed applications of stakeholder's theory since internal and external stakeholders power determines the success of public projects. For Practice, Public Project implementors should enhance stakeholder involvement in project decision-making. There is need for improvement in participatory planning and budgeting to enhance decision-making processes. In addition, the government should refine stakeholder management process by designing policy for stakeholder engagement. The policy, should emphasize the need to address concerns related to service timeliness, quality, and budget adherence, as well as enhancing feedback mechanisms and communication channels. Proper timeliness and quality of service delivery need to be enhanced. The government should establish mechanisms for participatory planning and budgeting, providing stakeholders with resources for active participation, addressing service timeliness and quality concerns.

Keywords: Stakeholders Management, Project Success, Stakeholders, Analysis, Involvement and Expectation Management

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INTRODUCTION

Stakeholder management is the systematic process of identifying, analysis and communicating with influence individuals (Nyandika & Ngugi, 2014). Stakeholders' contribution in form of ideas and perception are important since they can influence projects negatively or positively (Umugwaneza & Kule 2016). To ensure a successful project, the public must identify and engage all stakeholders, determine their requirements and expectations and manage their influence in relation to their requirements, (Oleanders & landin, 2015). Project stakeholders are individuals who are actively involved in the project and whose interest may be affected as a result of the project execution or completion (Oleanders & Landin, 2015). According to Shokri-Ghasabeh and Kavousi-Chabok, (2009) common challenges of public project in Africa include dissatisfaction, disunity, lack of a proper system for consulting stakeholders and failure to complete activities within the stipulated time and budget, poor recruitment and training of project team, lack of proper monitoring and evaluation structures, inability to respond to unexpected crisis effectively, incompetent and insufficiently trained managers and leaders who are politically driven, unchecked power and politics within the public service and a general lack of a sense of project implementation techniques

In South Africa, it was established that most of the development projects had not been completed on schedule and within budget and this was attributed to poor stakeholder analysis and identification. Stakeholders' interests which affected the implementation designs, financial resources, adequate expertise can affect the state's capacity to deliver services in time (Oke & Aigbavboa, 2016). In addition, Peng et al. (2017) asserts that stakeholder management teams in South Africa do have the expertise to run project effectively..

In Kenya, (Ndiangu et al., 2014) asserts that project implementation in the public service needs competent stakeholders who are involved in the fund sourcing and management skills. Further, according to Muhiai et al (2018) Kenya's case has been attributed to a lack of attention to stakeholders. Stakeholders' negative attitudes towards the public service can cause cost overruns and schedule delays due to conflicts over project design and implementation. It is argued that by establishing a process of genuine stakeholder management, the development will occur as a direct result. Stakeholder management is critical in the management of projects as effective stakeholder management can improve the performance of the public service and also reduce some of the challenges such as delay in completion, cost overruns and poor quality (Githinji et al., 2020) Unlike the private sector, the public service is established to have a more responsive approach that addresses the local needs and empowers the community in the decision-making process in their local area (Alwanga & Samuel, 2020). The public service is ranked as the most effective strategy towards the attainment of effective solutions to the different challenges facing citizens. The government devices service delivery by bringing together different stakeholders to device different mechanisms and strategies through which the public can be assisted to realize the most effective solutions. The public service is geared towards ensuring service delivery to the public that would otherwise be challenging to obtain from the private sector (Ikua, 2016).

Statement of the Problem

Public organization's goal is to optimize its service delivery to citizens of a country through provision of successful project (Muhiai et al., 2018). On the contrary most public entities services have been found lacking in their ability to fully achieve their meant objectives and public satisfaction (Njoroge, 2017). According to Kasomo (2016), majority of the public

service initiatives failed to achieve the optimal stakeholder engagement. Studies in Kenya Ngwai et al.,(2019) analyzed role of management practices on construction cost of projects in Mombasa county. In addition Githinji et al.(2020) and Mageto et al (2021) did not consider stakeholder analysis and stakeholder expectation management. Thus, this study intends to determine the influence of stakeholders' management on public service delivery in Kenya.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to investigate the influence of stakeholders' management on public projects. The study specifically analyzed the influence of stakeholder's analysis, stakeholders' involvement and stakeholder Expectation management on public projects success in Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

Stakeholder Theory

This study was informed by stakeholder's theory developed by Freeman (1984). The theory asserts that an organization has internal and external stakeholders and the level of influence to unilaterally determine the strategy of an organization depends on the level of power and interest that the stakeholder holds or possibility of cooperation or threat from such stakeholders. The theory affirms that an organization can increase its value by involving interested parties. Johnson and Scholes (2002) define stakeholders as those individuals who depend on the organization to fulfill their own goals and on whom, in turn, the organization depends on. The stakeholder management suggests that managers must formulate and implement process which will satisfy all and only those groups who have a stake in the business Freeman and Mcvea (2001). It is built on partnering mentality that involves communicating, contracting, managing partnership and motivating as postulated by (Freeman & McVea, 2005).The theory is relevant to the study as it explained the influence the stakeholders have on the performance of an organization.

Empirical Review

According to Ngilambi and McCubbin, (2017) analyzing the effective implementation of community-based water safety plans in Afghanistan asserts that good communication between the stakeholders and the municipal officials is needed to provide services effectively. The study affirms that for effective project implementation the municipal must not exclude any stakeholder. The study concluded that managers and municipal officials must provide stakeholders the opportunity to contribute with inputs during service provision, especially in new projects and when there are changes needed.

According to Aapaaja and Haapasalo, (2014) initiation phase of a project is critical for the project's success. The study also affirms that many public projects face challenges in identifying and managing stakeholders' expectations. The framework advocates that stakeholders need to be integrated to participate in the development of the project concept. In addition, project's initiation phase has a number of features, including a high level of uncertainty, a low level of information, recognition of stakeholders, and knowledge of their interests and preferences

Mok and Shen (2016) asserts that project environment is also very complex, requiring a set of systematic methods and procedures for managing stakeholder relations and issues. Stakeholder

analysis is essential in the stakeholder management process because it enables project teams to understand the stakeholder environment and develop appropriate engagement strategies. In addition (Shokri-Ghasabeh & Kavousi-Chabok, 2009) argues that one way to engage stakeholders in the decision-making process is to create formal advisory bodies-the so-called stakeholder committees .The study indicated that the success factors for the actual stakeholder participation in the decision-making process are: close cooperation with the management board, focusing on the operational level of the activity as being more practical and closer to patients than the strategic level, transferring greater autonomy to the stakeholder committee activity, also by enabling the choice of the topics taken-as well as and enabling stakeholders to prepare for decision-making.

Furthermore, a study by Schalk (2015), concludes that the adverse impact of shareholders' engagement in the decision-making processes with high-risk management standards may remain a result of extending the time needed, decision considered too broad or irrelevant information and critical situation, in which risk management processes are employed, require prompt answers. It might also be caused by the lack of appropriate conditions for stakeholders to actively participate in the process (Reed et al. 2018), or the lack of understanding of the problem by stakeholders and their irrelevant or even harmful pressures on inappropriate solutions Petkovic et al. (2020).

Research Gap

Studies including Ngilambi and McCubbin, (2017), Aapaoja and Haapasalo, (2014) and Mok and Shen (2016) focus on non-participation of stakeholders, involvement of stakeholders at the initiation phase and engagement on project environment respectively. Taking cognizance that project planning and implementation are critical in the success of projects, it is necessary that participation of all stakeholders for these two phases be taken into account, hence the need for a study of this nature.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional research design. The design was appropriate because data was collected from many different individuals at single point in time. The study involved both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods.

Population

The population for a survey entire set of units for which the survey data are to be used to make inferences Mugenda & Mugenda (2015). The target population comprises of 500 senior officers working for the Kenya government. This target population includes public works engineers, works clerks, public project supervisors, project contractors, supervisors and community elders

Sample Design

Purposive sampling was used to identify key stakeholders involved in public projects Kenya Government. Purposive sampling was used to identify the key stakeholders involved in public projects. The sample size was determined using the Yamane (1967) formula.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data was collected using a semi-structured questionnaire. In additions, interview guide included open-ended questions to explore the research questions. The research questions were

framed to assess the influence of management on public project success. Primary data was collected through semi-structured questionnaires with the sampled stakeholders, including government officials, community leaders and members of the public. The interview was conducted using interview guides or questionnaires developed by the researcher. The selection of participants was purposive and representative of the broader population of stakeholders involved in public project management

This study employed both the qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods. Quantitative analysis used for structured questions which was aimed at graphical presentation of the outcome of the study. This kind of analysis was undertaken where the data was having characteristics that could be measured through some statistical units. Data was analyzed using excel. The results were presented in form of frequency tables

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Data Analysis

This study analyzed both qualitative and quantitative. Data was analyzed using SPSS statistical software. The results were presented below.

Stakeholders' Gender Distribution

The participants who responded to the questionnaires were majorly female giving a 55.6 % compared to 44.4 % male. The female stakeholders' respondents agreed on how they are involved in Planning, budgeting and execution of the sector activities.

Stakeholders' Age Distribution

The stakeholders who were active in the interview were aged between 41-50years, followed by 31-40 years. The majority age group of 41-50 years tends to be more active, willing and committed to share information and provision of relevant decisions. This age exhibited a high degree of knowledge about stakeholder involvement in the health and service delivery, which could be attributed to the long working experience.

Study Findings

The following analysis focuses on responses to four sets of objectives. For each objective had five questions, four questions where one question was an open question, with responses recorded on a five-point scale 1=Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3=Neither Disagree or Agree, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree. The results for this study were based on the interview questions.

Stakeholders Analysis on Public Project Success

The study first specific objective of the study was to analyze the influence of Stakeholders Analysis on the public project success. The results are indicated in Table 1. The results summary of the stakeholders' analysis on Public Project success is presented in in Table 1.

Table 1: Stakeholders Analysis on Public Project Success

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Std.Dev
Public organization identify key stakeholders	6	78	6	17	1	3.9	1.20
The stakeholders identified within the organization have been clearly classified according to roles played	33	42	3	22	0.0	3.5	1.10
Analysis all the stakeholders involved in public project is critical	0	69	22	9	0	3.7	.94
Stakeholders' analysis enhances public project success	0	100	0	0	0	4.0	0

Source: Researcher (2023)

The results in Table 1 respondent strongly agreed that public organization identify key stakeholders to a greater extent (Mean=3.9; Std Dev=1.2). In addition, the respondent agreed that the stakeholders identified within the organization are classified according to roles they play to an extent. These results agree with Mok and Shen (2016) who argue that project environment is complex and requires management of stakeholders' expectations. Furthermore, the respondents strongly agree that analysis of stakeholders involved in public projects is critical for project success (Mean=3.7; Std Dev=.94). The results also indicate that stakeholders' analysis enhances success of public projects (Mean=4.0; Std Deve=0.0). These results agree with Schalk (2015) who affirms that high impact stakeholders' analysis is critical in decision making since they outline key and relevant information.

Stakeholders Involvement and Public Project Success

The study's second specific objective was to analyze the influence of Stakeholders involvement on public project success. The results are indicated in Table 2.

Table 2: Stakeholders' involvement Public Project Success

Questions	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Std.Dev
Stakeholders were involved in the development of the Project Plan.	28	42	28	3	1	3.80	1.03
Stakeholders involved in public planning projects assist in fulfilling project goals	24	69	5	1	1	3.50	1.25
Stakeholders' involvement assists in communicating project success.	70	27	1	1	1	4.10	1.05
Ineffective stakeholders' communication affects project implementation	68	30	1	1	1	4.20	0.90
Stakeholders were properly communicated to in the development of the project plans	20	30	50	0	0	2.67	1.10
The communication strategy used to involve stakeholders are effective in delivering public project	40	20	10	0	0	2.90	1.12

Source: Researcher (2023)

The results in Table 2 ascertain stakeholders are involved to a great extent in the development of projects plans (mean=3.80; std deviation=1.03). In addition, the respondents agreed that

stakeholders involved in public projects planning assist in fulfilling projects' goals to a greater extent (mean=4.10; std dev=1.25). This result confirms the stakeholder's theory by Freeman which asserts that success of an organization depends on cooperation with the key stakeholders. Moreover, the respondents strongly agreed that ineffective communication to stakeholders affects project implementation to a greater extent (Mean=4.2; std dev=0.90). Furthermore, the respondent agreed that key stakeholders were properly communicated to a moderate extent (Mean=2.67; Std Dev=1.10). The results also suggest that the communication strategy applied to communicate to the stakeholders is effective to a moderate extent (Mean=2.90; Std Dev=1.12). These results agree with Ngilambi and McCubbin (2017) who asserts that good communication between stakeholders is critical for project success.

Stakeholders Expectation Management and Public Project Success

The third specific objective of the study was to analyze the influence of stakeholder's expectation management on public project success. The results are indicated in Table 3.

Table 3: Stakeholders Expectation and Public Project Success

Questions	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Std.Dev
Project Decision making is participatory	37	33	30	0	0	3.8	1.20
Conducive environment is provided for decision making in project initiations	75	2	8	15	0	4.1	.89
Key stakeholders' decision is considered in project implementation	19	55	1	25	0	3.7	1.12
Majority of the stakeholders' expectation are managed effectively for project success	0	48	50	2	0	3.0	1.02
Stakeholders' decision is considered for project success	25	25	25	25	0	3.0	1.24
Stakeholders' expectation management ensures timely delivery of public projects	2	44	8	44	2	3.5	1.30

Source: Researcher (2023)

The results in Table 3 indicate that project decision making is participatory to a moderate level (Mean=3.8; Std. Dev=1.20). This result is in agreement with Shokri-Ghasabeh and Kavousi-Chabok, (2009) who find out that project stakeholders need close cooperation. In addition, the results show that key stakeholders' decisions were considered in project implementation moderately (Mean=3.7; Std Deve=1.12). The respondents also affirmed that a conducive environment was provided for project decision making to a great extent (Mean=4.1; Std Dev=.89). This result affirms the works of Reed et al. (2018) who asserts that lack of understanding of stakeholders' conditions could negatively affect project success. This result also confirms the stakeholder's theory by Freeman which asserts that success of an organization depends on cooperation with the key stakeholders. Moreover, the respondents agreed that stakeholder management ensures project success (Mean=3.0; Std Deve=1.24). Furthermore, the respondents agreed that key stakeholders' expectations management ensures timely delivery of public projects to a moderate extent (Mean=3.5; Std Dev=1.30. This result confirms Petkovic et al 2020) who argued that lack of understanding of stakeholders' problems is harmful and could provide harmful solutions.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Summary of Findings

The study established stakeholders' analysis a positive influence on public project success. The results indicate that stakeholder identification and role classification directly influence project success. In addition, stakeholders' analysis played a critical role in project identification and decision making. The study results also suggest that stakeholders' participation enhances project success. In particular respondents agreed that the public was involved in project identification. While identifying project, implementors communicated effectively. The communication channel was effective to a moderate extent. The study also establishes that stakeholder expectation management has a positive influence on the success of public projects. Project decision making was implemented in a participatory way. Stakeholders were provided with a conducive environment for participation and the stakeholders' expectations were managed to a moderate extent.

Conclusion

The study concludes that stakeholder analysis significantly influences public projects success. Most of the stakeholder analysis component including identification, classification and communication were critical in the project success. The respondents suggested that although most of these factors influence project success they were not fully adhered to. In addition, the study concluded that stakeholders' involvement positively influences project success. Although most of the component of stakeholder's involvement in planning, goal setting and communication were poorly managed. Lastly, the study concludes that proper stakeholders' expectation management moderately impacts on public project success

Recommendations

From the study finding and conclusion, the researcher recommends: Public organizations and government official should ensure proper stakeholder analysis by identifying, classifying and communicating to key stakeholders involved in project. Public officers should properly map out key stakeholders and communicate effectively to reach majority of the stakeholders. Public project implementors should establish mechanisms for participatory planning and budgeting to ensure stakeholders' needs and priorities are considered. Furthermore, the study recommends that proper stakeholder expectation management success of the project. A conducive stakeholder management environment should be created. Moreover, provide stakeholders with tools, strategies, and resources to promote their active participation. The public entities should continuously assess and adapt stakeholder expectation management strategies through regular evaluations and integrating stakeholder feedback into decision-making processes.

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