

INFLUENCE OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT PRACTISES ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GOVERNMENT PROJECTS IN KENYA: CASE OF GARISSA COUNTY GOVERNMENT

¹MAGAN A. KHALIF, ²Dr. ANAYA W. SENELWA

Abstract: Government undertakes a variety of projects which are aimed at development of infrastructure, social welfare, health services, urban and rural development, preserving culture and heritage which directly or indirectly affects the lives of citizens and also reflects on the effectiveness and efficiency of Government. Nonetheless in Garissa County Government, major management gaps exist as regards the effective implementation of government projects. The government are continuously faced with the huge challenge in their institutions of supervising the implementation of numerous planned projects in an effective manner through application of abiding methodologies. The projects are to a great extent required to create a strong foundation base for a future successful nation. National duties of public institutions in the direction of sustainable development are hugely expected with infrastructure assuming a significant position in the economic sector growth. This study therefore sought to investigate the extent to which project management practices impact the implementation of government projects in Garissa County Government. The specific objectives included; evaluating the influence of project planning on management practices and implementation of government projects; determining the effects of stakeholders' participation on management practices and implementation of government projects; and finding out the effects of monitoring and evaluation on management practices and implementation of government projects. The study employed descriptive survey research design and had a population of 400 of employees that are directly involved in completion of government projects. The respondents were purposively selected; top level management, middle level management and lower level management. To get the sample size 30% of the target population which is termed as a good demonstration was used for analysis. The researcher used questionnaires to collect primary data from the sample population and secondary data was collected from the Government reports and other related studies. There was a pilot test for questionnaire before carrying out the data collection to determine instrument reliability. In addition, both closed and open ended questions will be used in the self-administered questionnaire. After collection, the data was edited, coded and classified and analysed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics using SPSS software. Conclusions and recommendations was drawn from the study findings. Regarding project planning, the study concluded that project planning significantly and positively influenced implementation of government projects in Garissa County Government. The study also concluded that stakeholder's participation has a significant and a positive effect on implementation of government projects in Garissa County Government. The study further concluded that monitoring and evaluation had significant and a positive effect on implementation of government projects in Garissa County Government. Finally, the study concluded that project technology had a significant and positive effect implementation of government projects in Garissa County Government

Keywords: Evaluation, Implementation, Management practice and Project planning.

1. INTRODUCTION

The practice of project management details the use of skills, knowledge, tools along with techniques to project activities to finally get to the project needs. Additionally, project management is attained by the use of the procedures that include; initiating, planning, executing, monitoring plus controlling in addition to closing. A project is termed as a temporary

undertaking carried out to formulate a unique product or service where the temporary character of projects means that it possesses the trait of having a certain beginning and an end which is sharply differentiated by operations that are monotonous, permanent or even semi-permanent functional tasks to create products or services. According to Lewis (2006), the key challenge of project management is to attain all of the project objectives as well as goals while at the same time adhering to the needs of project constraints. Notably, Lewis (2006) outlined scope, time, cost and quality as being the major project constraints. Another challenge is the optimization of the allocation along with integration of inputs to be up to par with pre-defined objectives. The challenges are over and over again evident in project management practices in numerous industries and turn to be a limitation to attainment of set objectives and result needed from the execution of projects

Statement of the problem:

The government of Kenya funds a myriad of projects in different sectors in the country including road construction, water dams, education and IT based projects. The main stakeholders of these projects are the people of Kenya, the business community, and investors. The decentralization policy of Kenya is aimed at promoting the participation of citizens as well as the ownership of machinery of government by shifting the process of governance from command to consultations processes, and by transferring power, authority and functions, competence and resources to the county level (Wanjiru, 2008; Kamau, 2007). Counties have already implemented a number of projects. Despite this progress, a few challenges in the projects are emerging and slowing the transition process. The County Government has been facing serious challenges in managing the projects and outing in the conditions required for the success of these projects. Some of the challenges facing the County Government include inadequate personnel with the required project management skills, inadequate financial resources, inefficient project planning, and the un-involvement of the various project stakeholders among others.

The projects are meant to improve the life of the citizens in different sectors, increase transparency and accountability. In their studies Marangu (2012); and Naidoo (2011) noted that the success rate of government projects in the globe has been much lower than in the private sector. The success rate reduces even further when the project is in a developing nation such as Kenya. A major challenge that is faced in Kenya government projects is that they do not stay within the budget, nor meet the timelines set or even produce a product that conforms to the quality standards established. Furthermore, projects have failed to be completed within a given duration hence they at times fail to meet the intended purpose.

The consequences of gaps in implementation are obvious and unlimited ranging from wastage of the limited public resources, inadequate service delivery to the public to impeding economic development of the country with the ultimate result of perpetual high poverty levels among the world's majority populace (Chandra, 2008). Previous studies in Kenya have provided evidence of the existence of a serious problem of ineffective project implementation. For instance many Counties organizations have failed to realize one of their key strategic objectives within a certain timeline due to delayed payments, procurement process (Kagendo, 2010)

A number of studies have been done in the area of projects implementation. Wambui et al 2015 conducted a study on factors affecting roads Construction Projects delivery in Nairobi City County. Musa (2012) did a study on effects of total quality management on performance of Companies in Kenya a case study of Inter build Company Limited. He found that human resource management and resource management affects performance of the building company to a great extent. Bundi (2011) did a survey on challenges in the management of procurement services within Kenya Urban Roads Authority. She found that political interferences and inadequate allocations of funds hinder completion of KURA activities even though the authority fully implements procurement policies. Nyamwaro (2011) did a study on analysis of challenges facing project implementation a case study of Ministry of Roads Projects.

From above studies they have not been significant research on the influence of project management on the implementation of government projects in Kenya. Furthermore, these scholars have focused on other variables. This study therefore sought to bridge the gap by assessing the influence of project management on the implementation of government projects in Kenya

Objectives:

- i. To evaluate the influence of project planning on the implementation of government projects in Garissa County Government.
- ii. To determine the effects of stakeholders participation on the implementation of government projects in Garissa County Government.

- iii. To find out the effects of monitoring and evaluation on the implementation of government projects in Garissa County Government.
- iv. To find out the effects of technology on the implementation of government projects in Garissa County Government.

2. THEORETICAL REVIEW

Institutional Theory:

According to Scott (2004), institutions are composed of cultural-cognitive and regulative elements that, together with associated activities and resources give meaning to life. He further explains the three pillars of institutions as regulatory, normative and cultural cognitive. The regulatory pillar emphasizes the use of rules, laws and sanctions as enforcement mechanism, with expedience as basis for compliance. This theory is very important when it comes to the implementation of sustainable projects in organizations that serve the public. From this theory, one can understand the laws and regulations governing project management practices in effective project implementation for instance from the Evaluation period, Award, Substantial Completion and End of Defects Liability period of project justifying its implementation.

Stakeholders Theory:

This theory was proposed by Freeman in 1984. The general idea of the stakeholder concept is a redefinition of the organization. In general the concept is about what the organization would be and how it should be conceptualized. Friedman (2006), states that the organization itself should be thought of as a grouping of stakeholders and the purpose of the organization should be to manage their interests, needs and viewpoints. This stakeholder management is thought to be fulfilled by the managers of a firm. In the application of stakeholder theory within the project management process, various stakeholders have or perceive that they have various stakes in the government project. Based on their perceived stakes in the government project, stakeholders behave in ways in which they feel will help them accomplish their project objectives, which may be congruent or incongruent with the project manager's project mission, vision, and/or objectives

Resource Based Theory:

This theory was proposed by Wernerfelt in 1984. Resources are inputs into a firm's production process, such as capital, equipment, skills of individual employees, patents, finance, and talented managers. Resources are either tangible or intangible in nature. With increasing effectiveness, the set of resources available to the firm tends to become larger. Individual resources may not yield to a competitive advantage. It is through the synergistic combination and integration of sets of resources that competitive advantages are formed. The Resource-based Theory (RBT) is a strategic management theory that is widely used in project management. It examines how resources can drive competitive advantage (Killen et al., 2012). According to the resource-based theory, managing strategically involves developing and exploiting a firm's unique resources and capabilities and continually maintaining and strengthening those resources.

Conceptual framework:

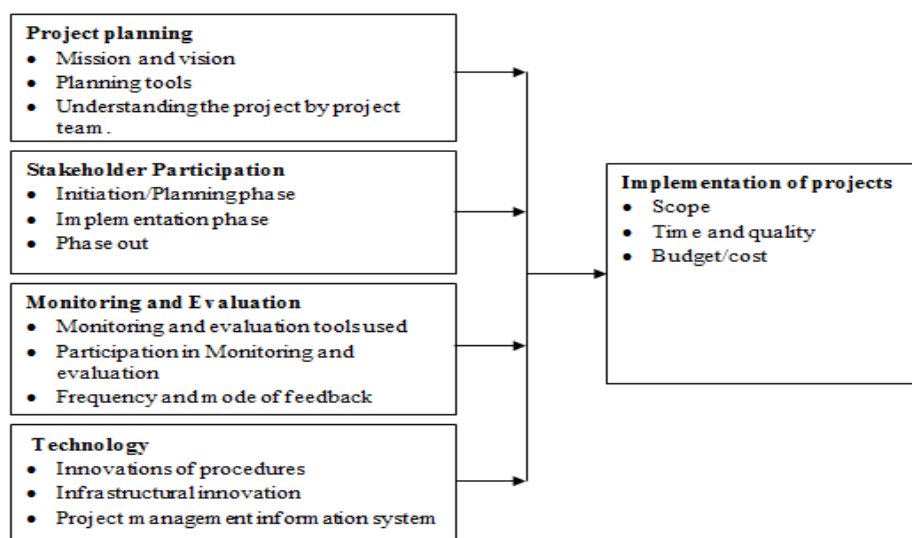


Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework

Research gaps:

There are apparently significant gaps in the academic area of public projects management and implementation prompting to unwarranted loss and wastage of the scarce public resource. No conclusive project has been done to evaluate the extent project management practice and implementation of power projects. Moraa (2011) in her project focus on roads projects at the Ministry of Roads, yet the problem may be more widespread across the board within the entire public sector. In addition, not a lot has been researched in this area of management and implementation, yet implementation has over one decade progressively picked up prominence within the public sector being at core of the projects implementation process in Kenya. What has been missing is giving the linkage between project management practices and implementation objectives. Despite the fact that a few analysts including Kirungu (2011), Malala (2011), Mutunga (2010) and Rutere (2010) have endeavoured to convey to the fore the importance of management practices in public projects implementation, their effort has generally been rather too general and as such wanting in detail thereby failing to address the specific aspects of management that affect project implementation. The researcher intends to bridge these glaring research gaps. This study is an effort to plug this gap and to provoke more critical thinking and research in the area of public projects implementation.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design used in this study was descriptive research design. The target population comprised all employees at Garissa County Government engaged in implementation of public projects. The study used a sample of 150 respondents was drawn from employees in various departments including finance and economic, energy, health services, education & information communication technology, agriculture & technology & fisheries and finally transport & infrastructure. The researcher used questionnaires as research instruments to collect data to study. The statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for data analysis purpose.

Model:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \varepsilon$$

Where; Y = effective project implementation

X1 = Project Planning

X2 = Stakeholder participation

X3= Monitoring and evaluation of projects

β_0 = Constant Term;

$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$, = Beta coefficients; ε = Error Term

β_0 = Constant

ε = the error term

$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$ = Independent variables' regression coefficients

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**Regression Results:****Table 1: Significance of Independent Variables**

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.850	.165		4.785	.000
Project planning	.750	.212	.680	4.800	.000
stakeholders participation	.475	.150	.385	3.708	.000
monitoring and evaluation	.575	.195	.580	4.771	.000
Project technology	.520	.170	.415	4.086	.000

The results in Table 1 indicate that project planning significantly and positively influenced implementation of government projects in Garissa County Government. ($\beta = 0.680$; $t = 4.800$; $p < 0.05$). This indicates that project planning has the objective of achieving a number of common factors including the production of realistic schedules and costs, the completion of a project to defined standards of quality, design criteria, project resources, health and safety, and meeting project stakeholders' expectations. The strategic project planning process gives all levels an opportunity to participate, thus reducing the fear of the unknown and possibly eliminating resistance.

Further, stakeholder's participation has a significant and a positive effect on implementation of government projects in Garissa County Government ($\beta = 0.385$; $t = 3.708$; $p < 0.05$). This result indicates that the level of stakeholder support determines whether a project becomes established, how quickly and successfully it consolidates, and how it responds and adapts to meet changing needs. Thus, stakeholder participation is an important component of community development and reflects a grassroots or bottom-up approach to problem solving.

Monitoring and evaluation had significant and a positive effect on implementation of government projects in Garissa County Government ($\beta = 0.580$; $t = 4.771$; $p < 0.05$). These results indicate that allowing for sufficient monitoring and feedback mechanisms gives the project manager the capacity to predict challenges, oversee counteractive actions and to ensure that no weaknesses are overlooked. This means that the monitoring team needs to be enhanced and strengthened in order for it to have more power which will increase its effectiveness.

Project technology had a significant and positive effect implementation of government projects in Garissa County Government ($\beta = 0.415$; $t = 4.086$; $p < 0.05$). This indicates that innovative project management practice enabled by emerging technology and innovations could more explicitly recognize, represent, and manage the interdependencies that are pervasive throughout projects thereby fully exploiting the potential of the technology to improve overall project implementation. Additionally, technology can also help streamline and standardize project management processes.

5. CONCLUSION

Regarding project planning, the study concluded that project planning significantly and positively influenced implementation of government projects in Garissa County Government. The study further concluded that that stakeholder's participation has a significant and a positive effect on implementation of government projects in Garissa County Government. The study also established that that monitoring and evaluation had significant and a positive effect on implementation of government projects in Garissa County Government. Finally, the study established that project technology had a significant and positive effect implementation of government projects in Garissa County Government

6. RECOMMENDATION

The study recommends that County Government officials engaged in implementation of public projects should be trained on importance of project planning. This can be done through collaborations with well established pan in the County. The study also recommends that the project leaders should creatively devise ways of involving stakeholders in the implementation of the project according to their evolving capacities. The study further recommends that County Government officials engaged in implementation of public projects should ensure that they employ and deploy qualified and competent individuals for M&E process. Finally, the study recommends that County Government officials engaged in implementation of public projects should seek support for information technology facilities such as computers, printers and modems which are beyond their reach from well established organizations, corporate and well wishers.

Suggestions for Further Research:

This study was conducted at a single County Government in the context of Garissa County Government It is recommended that further studies be conducted in other County government across the country and consider other factors that might influence project implementation. The study recommends research studies on monitoring and evaluation practices on organizations implementing HIV/Aids projects. The study further recommend studies on the influence of project stakeholder participation in implementation of urban based projects since this study was conducted in a rural set up.

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