

## **INFLUENCE OF PROJECT STAKEHOLDERS' PRACTICE ON PERFORMANCE OF CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS IN KAKAMEGA COUNTY, KENYA**

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**Abstract:** *The purpose of the study was to establish the influence of project management practices on performance of construction projects in Kakamega County, Kenya. The specific objective was to assess the influence of project stakeholders' practice on performance of construction projects in Kakamega County, Kenya; The study adopted a mixed research design which included descriptive survey, and correlation. The target population was 1761 respondents comprised of 925 Early Childhood Development Education managers, 62 County polytechnics managers, 765 modern stall managers and 9 managers of County modern markets. A sample size of 326 respondents comprised of 171 managers of Early Childhood Development Education, 11 managers of County polytechnics, 142 stall managers and 2 managers of county modern markets. The sampling technique that was used was stratified random sampling and purposive sampling. For primary data questionnaires was used as the main data collection instruments and was in form of a five likert scale with both closed and open ended. Multiple sources were used to collect secondary data; the respondents filled in the answers in the spaces provided to collect information required. Pilot study was done using 32 respondents. Reliability was measured using Cronbach's Alpha. Validity of the instruments was measured using a team of experts in the field of project management who are in charge of the area of study. Data was analyzed using qualitative and quantitative methods. The study found out that project stakeholders' practice had a strong positive significant influence on performance of construction projects in Kakamega County, Kenya. The study recommended that Stakeholders 'in the construction sector should formulate clear strategies in decision.*

**Keywords:** *construction projects, project stakeholders' practice, project management practices*

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Stakeholders' are people who are affected by the organization outcome. They can have a negative or positive influence on construction projects. (Project Management Institute, 2013). Dawkins (2015) argues that there should be consultation of involvement of stakeholder in the project and the project team should be the only one allowed to make decisions. The successful delivery of any project deliverables highly depends on stakeholder strategy (Chang et al., 2013) and the effective engagement and management of stakeholder relies on project manager's ability to identify stakeholders' expectation from the beginning to the end. The public participation aims at sharing information with and gets input from the members of the public that have an interest in an organization. The law of Kenya gives the right to citizens to participate in the things that have direct bearing on their lives (Mba'abu, 2012).

## **Empirical Review**

Stakeholders' are people who are affected by the organization outcome. They can have a negative or positive influence on construction projects. (Project Management Institute, 2013). Although minor decisions and emergency situations are not supposed to be for the stakeholders' participation, a difficult situation with far reaching impact warrant stakeholders involvement and when done proactively rather than response to a problem, assist to stop the problems that may occur later (Maina, 2013). The public participation aims at sharing information with and gets input from the members of the public that have an interest in an organization. The law of Kenya gives the right to citizens to participate in the things that have direct bearing on their lives (Mba'abu, 2012).

Project stakeholders can be defined as individuals and organizations that are involved actively in the construction by completion of the project (Aaltonen & Kijala, 2016).

People with particular interest are affected during the project cycle. The challenge is to recognize the stakeholder in the project and evaluate what is needed and expected with the objective of the construction project and ensure they satisfy the needs and expectation and also to determine the stakeholder's that affect the decisions on the project (Olander, 2007). Aaltonen (2011) argue that stakeholders' consultation in many organizations has to be looping from pre planning up to inception in order that their suggestions and ideals help the construction projects implementation and the rewards that come from the project.

Sallinen, Ruuska and Alola (2013) asserts that Stakeholder can affect negatively or positively the functioning of the project. They can assist the project to attain its goals or oppose the project objectives. Therefore, stakeholders in a project that is single, the managers of such project must have a method or a way to assist in managing them in order to get the results that are positive from the project. Maina (2013) asserts that stakeholders' participation in implementation of economic stimulus programmes influences the success of education projects. Stakeholder's participation is seen as a result in improved effectiveness since there is a high ownership and agreement of the process to achieve an objective, improve efficiency in which project inputs and activities are likely to result in output on time improved sustainability, transparency and accountability. If stakeholders are given information and decision making power when stakeholder needs, interests and liabilities are taken into consideration then improved results.

Herari, et al., (2015) identified the building construction project stakeholders and named them as team in project management design and consultant suppliers funding team contractor and sub contractors, workers, customers, client community and the government. They were categorized into four major groups of stakeholders namely project management or construction designer and contractor and developer. A mode of classification using external stakeholder can affect the outcome of the project and are local and international government social and political organizations, the environment, trade and industry, the media and the general public while internal stakeholders are project owners' clients, project leaders, designers, suppliers and contractors.

Kerzner (2011) describes stakeholders' strategy through six processes namely; identifying the stakeholder, analyzing, engaging identifying information flow, enforcing stakeholder agreement. Project strategies and plans should be shared by project team members and not the top management guarding and keeping them to themselves (Namusonge et al., 2017).

### **Scope of the study**

The study focused on the influence of project management, and practices on performance of construction projects in Kakamega County, Kenya. The study looked at construction projects which are located in Kakamega County.

According to Kakamega County project implementation report (2013) the County comprised of 12 sub counties and 60 wards. The managers were targeted because they are the ones involved in the County construction projects.

### **Statement of the problem**

In Kakamega County, some projects are still under construction. For example, the construction of Bukura market, Kipkaren and Mumias and Early Childhood Development Education Centres in Bahari Primary and Furale Primary school are not yet completed and the period stipulated was five years. According to Ahmed, Archers, Castillo and Kappagantula (2012) urban construction project is bound to fail due to slow rate of completion, lack of proper planning, poor leadership skills, lack of stakeholder involvement and contract management. Despite training of contractors in the construction projects they do not meet the specified criteria. This construction projects can collapse due to poor design, use of low quality materials and lack of qualified and incompetent contractors as noted by previous researchers, Githenya and Ngugi (2014), Gacheru (2015) and Nyagah 2010. Namusonge and Kanyari (2013) argue that training leads to high performance in the organisations.

Bwisa & Oyalo, 2015 notes that contractors reap heavily from the shoddy work they perform and most people are not pleased with the quality of projects done yet projects undertaken are substandard.

### **Study objectives**

The general objective of the study was to establish the influence of project management practices on performance of construction projects in Kakamega County, Kenya and the specific objective was to assess the influence of project stakeholders' practice on performance of construction projects in Kakamega County, Kenya.

## **II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted a mixed research design. The research design was both qualitative and quantitative. The research was descriptive. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) descriptive research design allowed description that was detailed of the status of the variables plus an explanation between the variables under the study. The descriptive survey was appropriate for this study because it assisted the respondents in describing the situation as it was.

The target population comprised of the construction projects in Kakamega County. According to Kakamega County project implementation report (2013) the projects comprised of 925 Early Childhood Development Education managers, 62 managers of County polytechnic, 765 managers of modern stalls and 9 managers of modern markets which formed a target population of 1761 respondents from where the sample size was drawn. The respondents consisted of managers in Early Childhood Development Education, managers of County polytechnic, modern stalls managers and modern market managers. Yamane (1967) formula was used to determine the sample size. The sample size used was 326. This consisted of 171 Early Childhood Development Education managers, 11 managers of County polytechnic, 142 managers of modern stalls and 2 managers of modern markets. The sampling technique that was adopted was purposive and stratified random sampling.

Questionnaires that were both open and close ended in a form of a likert scale were administered to the respondents as the main data collection instrument. Pilot study was carried out in Mumias East Sub county using 32 respondents. Cronbach's Alpha was used to measure reliability. Validity of instruments in the study was assessed by a team of experts in charge of project management at JKUAT University. Quantitative and qualitative were employed in the data analysis. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used in analyzing data.

### III. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### Descriptive Results

The respondent responses were rated on a five-point Likert scale indicating to what extent the respondents agree or disagree with the study statements, where: 1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Moderately Agreed, 4-Agree and 5-Strongly Agree. The study used mean to interpret data as suggested by Bryman and Bell (2011), where mean  $<1.5$ =Strongly Disagree,  $>1.5-2.5$ =Disagree,  $2.5-3.5$ =Moderately Agree,  $3.5-4.5$ =Agree and  $>4.5$ =Strongly Agree.

Before conducting descriptive analysis, the researcher tested for normality among the study variable responses using skewness and kurtosis. According to, George and Mallery (2010), a variable is reasonable close to normal if its kurtosis and skewness values lies between  $-3.0$  and  $+3.0$ . Test of normality was also used as a diagnostic test for regression analysis.

The study sought to assess the influence of project stakeholders' practice on performance of construction projects in Kakamega County, Kenya. The results of the study shown in Table 1 below depicts that project stakeholders' practice constructs had skewness coefficient values ranging from  $-0.829$  to  $0.347$  and kurtosis coefficient values ranging from  $-0.458$  to  $0.208$ . Based on the findings, it was concluded that project stakeholders' practice constructs are normally distributed since skewness and kurtosis coefficient values lies within the  $\pm 3$  range recommended by George and Mallery (2010) hence suitable to be subjected to descriptive and inferential analyses. The study also revealed that stakeholders are rarely involved in construction projects in Kakamega County (Mean= $3.3639$ ). The variation from the mean responses was also small ranging from standard deviation of  $0.71720$  to  $0.9239$ . The respondents were asked whether stakeholders adequately participate in decision making. The distribution of findings showed that  $13(4.3\%)$  of the respondents strongly agreed to the statement,  $79(26.3\%)$  of them agreed,  $110(36.7\%)$  of the respondents moderately agreed,  $98(32.7\%)$  disagreed while none of them strongly disagreed. In general, the respondents moderately agreed that project stakeholders adequately participate in decision making (Mean= $3.0233$ ). These findings implied that stakeholders' sometimes participate in decision making. Findings dovetail with Gitua and Wanyoike (2015) who established that stakeholders' participation had a significant and positive effect on the performance of community water projects in Njoro Sub County.

The respondents were also asked whether the level of stakeholders' participation in the project was satisfactory. The distribution of findings opined that  $18(6\%)$  of the respondents strongly agreed to the statement,  $95(31.17\%)$  of them agreed,  $134(44.7\%)$  of the respondents moderately agreed,  $53(17.7\%)$  disagreed while none of them strongly disagreed. In general, the respondents moderately agreed that level of stakeholders' participation in the project was satisfactory (Mean= $3.2600$ ). The study findings agreed with Ongwen, Kyalo, Mulwa and Mutula (2014) who found that involvement of Key stakeholders with skills and Knowledge in water projects, promoted sustainability of the projects.

The respondents were also asked whether stakeholders ensure there was a qualified management team in the project. The distribution of findings indicated that 20(6.7%) of the respondents strongly agreed to the statement, 162(54%) of them agreed, 97(32.3%) of the respondents moderately agreed, 21(7%) disagreed while none of them strongly disagreed. In general, the respondents agreed that stakeholders ensure there was a qualified management team in the project (Mean=3.6033). These findings implied that stakeholders ensure there is qualified management team in the project. The findings of the study are corroborated by Macharia and Ngugi (2014) who examined that projects managers should have skills and knowledge to analyse the different demands from the stakeholders because they have a great influence on completion of power projects in Kenya.

The respondents were further asked whether there exists a clear formulated stakeholder strategy. The distribution of findings shown that 29(9.7%) of the respondents strongly agreed to the statement, 89(29.7%) of them agreed, 112(37.3%) of the respondents moderately agreed, 70(23.3%) disagreed while none of them strongly disagreed. In general, the respondents moderately agreed that there exists a clear formulated stakeholder strategy (Mean=3.2567). These findings implied that there exists a clear formulated stakeholder strategy. Findings are congruent by Njiru (2014) who established that all the projects which use stakeholder strategy had clear objectives and strategy to achieve the success of the projects goals.

Further, the respondents were asked whether stakeholders’ strategy affects the performance of construction projects. The distribution of findings shows that 48(16%) of the respondents strongly agreed to the statement, 148(49.3%) of them agreed, 64(21.3%) of the respondents moderately agreed, 40(13.3%) disagreed while none of them strongly disagreed. In general, the respondents agreed that stakeholders’ strategy affects the performance of construction projects (Mean=3.6800). These findings implied that stakeholders’ strategy affects the performance of construction projects. The study findings were consistent with Namusonge, Sakwa and Omboto (2017) who suggested that strategies and plan should be shared by members of the project team and not the top management that keeps the records.

Finally, the respondents were asked whether objectives are achieved using the stakeholders’ strategies. The distribution of findings opined that 21(7%) of the respondents strongly agreed to the statement, 119(39.7%) of them agreed, 117(39%) of the respondents moderately agreed, 33(11%) disagreed while 10(3.3%) of them strongly disagreed. In general, the respondents moderately agreed that objectives are achieved using the stakeholders’ strategies. (Mean=3.3600). These findings implied that objectives are achieved using the stakeholders’ strategies. Findings are in tandem with Pella, Sumarwan, Doryanto and Kirbrandokko (2013) who asserted that organizations that formulate and implement their strategies successfully achieve high performance outcome.

*Table 1: Influence of project stakeholders’ practice on performance of construction projects in Kakamega County, Kenya*

Statement	SD-1	D-2	MA-3	A-4	SA-5	Mean	Std. Dev	Skewness	Kurtosis
1. Stakeholders adequately participate in decision making	0 (0)	98 (32.7)	110 (36.7)	79 (26.3)	13 (4.3)	3.0233	.87484	.347	-.829
2. The level of stakeholders’ participation in the project is satisfactory	0 (0)	53 (17.7)	134 (44.7)	95 (31.2)	18 (6)	3.2600	.81729	.154	-.524
3. Stakeholders ensures there is qualified	0 (0)	21 (7)	97 (32.3)	162 (54)	20 (6.7)	3.6033	.71720	-.395	-.042

	management team in the project									
4.	There exists a clear formulated stakeholder strategy	0 (0)	70 (23.3)	112 (37.3)	89 (29.7)	29 (9.7)	3.2567	.92392	.211	-.829
5.	Stakeholders strategy affects the performance of construction projects	0 (0)	40 (13.3)	64 (21.3)	148 (49.3)	48 (16)	3.6800	.89831	-.439	-.517
6.	Objectives are achieved using the stakeholders' strategies	10 (3.3)	33 (11)	117 (39)	119 (39.7)	21 (7)	3.3600	.89053	-.458	.208
<b>Mean Average</b>							<b>3.3639</b>			

### Inferential Results

Inferential involved the testing of correlation and regression among the variables. To check whether the variables were related, the study used Pearson’s correlation coefficient. According to Crawford (2006), two variables ranging from -1 will show a perfect negative association, 0 which shows no relationship and + 1 indicated a perfect positive association. Pearson correlation coefficient was used in this study to test the collinearity. The researcher carried out regression analysis in order to test research hypotheses. Regression analysis had a model summary, ANOVA and beta coefficient for the purpose of either accepting or rejecting the study hypothesis. In this study, the t-statistics significance value was used to test the hypothesis. The test criteria was set such that the study rejects the null hypothesis if t-statistical significance value is less than 0.05 (<0.05), otherwise the study failed to reject the null hypothesis. The F-statistic significant value was used to test the goodness of fit (Hoe, 2008; Blackwell, 2005).

### Pearson Correlation

The study sought to establish the strength of the relationship between independent and dependent variables of the study. Pearson correlation coefficient was computed at 95 percent confidence interval (error margin of 0.05). Study results show that each project management practice is positively and significantly related to performance of construction projects at 95% confidence level. Project stakeholder practice (r=0.168, p=0.003 and p<0.05). The study results in Table 2 supports the study findings that found out that project management practice is positively and significantly related to performance of construction projects (Adeleke, Bahandian & Kamarudden, 2018; Adenuga, 2013).

*Table 2: Relationship between project management practice and performance of construction projects*

		Performance of construction projects
	Pearson Correlation	<b>.253**</b>
Project planning practice	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	300
	Pearson Correlation	<b>.168**</b>
Project shareholder practice	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003
	N	300
	Pearson Correlation	<b>.122**</b>
Project risk practice	Sig. (2-tailed)	.035
	N	300

Project monitoring and evaluation practice	Pearson Correlation	<b>.147**</b>
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.011
	N	300
Project Leadership practice	Pearson Correlation	<b>.273**</b>
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	300

### Regression Analysis

The results in Table 3 below show the test of hypothesis on the effects of project management practice and performance of construction projects as per each research hypothesis. The tables have a model summary, ANOVA and coefficient of determination for the purpose of either accepting or rejecting the study hypothesis. The study used the correlation  $r$  (Beta,  $\beta$ ) to test the hypothesis. The test criteria are set such that the study rejects the null hypothesis if  $\beta$  is significant, otherwise the study will have failed to reject the null hypothesis if  $\beta$  is significant from the  $t$ -statistics (Elam, 1979).

### Regression Analysis on Project Stakeholders' Practice and Performance of Construction Projects

The computed Durbin-Watson was 1.882 which is between a threshold of 1-3 suggested by Hoe (2008) and Blackwell (2005). This shows that the values of the residuals are independent and can be subjected to regression analysis hence absence of autocorrelation.

Table 3 results on model summary indicate R-Square is 0.028 showing that project stakeholder practice accounts for 2.8% of the variability in performance of construction projects. The results also show that there is a positive influence of project stakeholder practice on performance of construction projects ( $r=0.168$ ).

Study results on ANOVA had a  $F=8.678$ ,  $\alpha=.003$  which is less than  $p$ -value of 0.05. The results reveal that there is a satisfactory goodness of fit between project stakeholders' practice and performance of construction projects. The use of regression model to either accept or reject the research hypothesis was thus justified.

Based on the study beta coefficients results, the equation for linear regression model can be written as;  $Y=2.340+0.197X_2+e$ . Where  $Y$  represents performance of construction projects,  $X_2$  represents project stakeholder practice and  $e$  represents error term. A beta value of 0.197 imply that use of 0.197 units of project stakeholder practice contributes to a corresponding 1 unit in performance of construction projects. The results also show that project stakeholder practice is statistically significant ( $p=0.003$  and  $p<0.05$ ) in explaining performance of construction projects in Kakamega County, Kenya.

The results of the regression below used  $t$ -statistic significant value to test the second research hypothesis,

### Hypothesis testing

**“H02:** Project stakeholder practice does not have a significant influence on performance of construction projects in Kakamega County, Kenya”. The null hypothesis of the study was therefore rejected at 95 confidence level since the beta value  $t$ -statistics was significant ( $p=0.003$ ) hence the study concluded that there is a positive and significant influence of project stakeholders' practice on performance of construction projects in Kakamega County, Kenya. The findings of the study are in agreement with those of Muronge and Owour (2017) which revealed that all the independent variables namely project funding and communication had positive statistic significance with the completion of water supply and sanitation projects. Wamugu and Ogolla (2017) study concluded that participation in control were positively significant effect on performance of CDF

projects. The findings are in line with Masau (2020) who established that stakeholders’ involvement had a strong positive influence on the success of water project implementation. These findings contradict Kisavi and Ngugi (2019) whose study had a negative significant influence between stakeholders’ involvement and performance of road construction projects. Further Osedo (2017) found that stakeholder had a negative weak insignificant effect on implementation of construction projects.

*Table 3: Project stakeholders’ practice and performance of construction projects regression results*

<b>Model Summary<sup>b</sup></b>						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate	of the Durbin-Watson	
1	<b>.168<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>.028</b>	.025	.56352	<b>1.882</b>	

a. Predictors: (Constant), Project stakeholders’ practice  
 b. Dependent Variable: Performance of construction projects

<b>ANOVA<sup>a</sup></b>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2.756	1	2.756	<b>8.678</b>	<b>.003<sup>b</sup></b>
	Residual	94.633	298	.318		
	Total	97.389	299			

a. Dependent Variable: Performance of construction projects  
 b. Predictors: (Constant), Project shareholders’ practice

<b>Coefficients<sup>a</sup></b>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	<b>2.340</b>	.227		10.315	.000
	Project stakeholder practices	<b>.197</b>	.067	.168	<b>2.946</b>	<b>.003</b>

a. Dependent Variable: Performance of construction projects

#### IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Stakeholder is a person who is affected by the outcome of an organization. They can have a positive or negative impact. In this study project stakeholders’ practice were measured by stakeholders participation in decision making, level of stakeholders satisfactory, qualified management team, existence of clear stakeholders strategy, stakeholders’ strategy affected the performance, objectives achieved by stakeholders’ strategies.

The study sought to assess the influence of project stakeholders’ practice on performance of construction projects in Kakamega County, Kenya. In regard to stakeholders’ adequately participating in decision making, the study established that it influenced project stakeholders’ practice on performance of construction projects. The study determined that the level of stakeholders’ participation in the project was satisfactory had an influence on performance of construction projects. While qualified stakeholders’ management team in the project influenced the performance of construction projects. Likewise, existence of a clear formulated stakeholder strategy and stakeholder’s strategy affects the performance of construction projects and objectives being achieved using stakeholders’ strategy influenced the performance on construction projects.

In addition, the correlation results revealed that there was a positive and significant relationship between project stakeholders’ practice and performance of construction projects at 95% confidence level thus construction projects in Kakamega County that embrace project stakeholders’ practice reports improvements



in project performance. ANOVA results reveal that the overall regression model was accepted to measure project stakeholders' practice and performance of construction projects. Regression analysis results on regression coefficient also revealed that project stakeholders' practice predicts performance of construction projects thus the study rejected the second null hypothesis and concluded that there is a significant and positive influence of project stakeholders' practice on performance of construction projects at 95% confidence level.

The study revealed that there was a positive and significant relationship between project stakeholders' practice and performance of construction projects at 95% confidence level. It was found out that project stakeholders' practice predicts performance of construction projects thus the study rejected the second null hypothesis and concluded that there is a significant and positive influence of project stakeholders' practice on performance of construction projects at 95% confidence level.

The study recommends that management should embrace stakeholder's practice in order to formulate strategies and stakeholders' participation that are in line with the stakeholder theory.

The study recommends that policy makers in Kenya should embrace stakeholders' practice such as stakeholder participation and stakeholder strategy which promote performance of construction projects in Kakamega County, Kenya.

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