

EFFECT OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT SKILLS TRAINING ON PERFORMANCE OF NG-CDF PROJECTS IN MALINDI CONSTITUENCY, KENYA

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Abstract: The constituency development fund is a national government fund introduced in Kenya in 2003 by an Act of Parliament, to eradicate poverty at the grassroots level, bring about an equitable share of resources and create employment opportunities at the constituencies. This fund was renamed in 2015 as the NG-CDF (National Government Constituency Development Fund) to bring about the separation of powers and functions between county and national governments. NG-CDF Act Section 4 sub-section (2a) of 2015 requires that at least two (2.5%) per cent of the yearly ordinary state revenue be directed and shared equally among all constituencies to drive the development agenda. The study's main objective was to determine the factors influencing project management practices on the performance of NG-CDF funded projects. The study utilised the Descriptive Survey Research Design. The population included 120 NG-CDF construction projects implemented between 2015/2016 and 2019/2020 financial years. The study sample comprised of 92 respondents. The study found out that NG-CDF projects are successful if they are managed by qualified project managers with a mean score of 4.01 and $sd=1.131$. Leadership skills was the second important factor for project managers with mean score of 4.08 and $sd=0.938$. Thirdly, the study established that the experience and knowledge of project managers influenced success of project with mean score of 3.99 and $sd=0.934$. The study also found that project management is influenced by level of training with mean score of 3.90 and $sd=1.098$

Keywords: Project Management Skills, Project Management Practices, Monitoring & Evaluation

Introduction

A project is referred to as a temporary and a distinctive set of undertakings which are well-coordinated with specific initial and finishing points which is undertaken by either individuals or an organisations to achieve clear-cut objectives within distinct time frame (timeline), budget and performance constraints (Filicetti, 2009). Temporary implies that each project has a starting and a finishing point even though it might be very hard to define them; a start might have crystallised over time while the end could be a slow phase (Burke, 2008). Unique, on the other hand, implies that a product or service has some distinctive features diverse from similar products or services (Burke, 2008). For a successful project, project management skills training, M&E and public participation on projects are paramount.

The unprecedented drive by governments to devolve many services, such as, social, political and financial resources has led to successful projects in different parts of the globe. Globally, countries such as Pakistan, India, Jamaica and Papua New Guinea have adopted devolution of resources as a critical component of development growth agenda and have made remarkable progress compared with African countries (World Bank, 2015). Regional devolution of resources initiatives to grassroots similar to Kenya's NG-CDF (Baskin, 2010) has been adopted by countries like Rwanda, Ghana and Uganda. Those in favour of resource devolution claim that it is a strong tool for guiding the development agenda because it addresses the ever-growing needs of rural communities that are constantly ignored in the national development programmes (World Bank, 2015).

The fund was introduced in Kenya in 2003 by Parliament Statute; according to the NG-CDF board (2015). This fund was renamed in 2015 as the National Government Constituency Development Fund (NG-CDF). On 19 February, 2016, however, it took effect to bring about the separation of powers and functions between county and national governments. NG-CDF Act Section 4 sub-section (2a) of 2015 requires that at least two (2.5%) per cent of the yearly ordinary state revenue be directed and shared equally among all constituencies to drive the development agenda. The constituency development fund board (CDFB) is mandated to manage and control the NG-CDF fund, which must make sure funds are disbursed to all constituencies and accountability, and openness observed in its utilisation. The Kenyan Government established this fund on the basis of the belief that the local governance system has a better understanding of the needs of the community (NG-CDF, 2015).

Training is an organised activity provides information to an institution so as to enhance the receiver's performance or to assist the receiver in achieving the needed level of knowledge (Armstrong, 2009). Lytras, De Pablos, & Avison, (2010) stresses that in project management, a training session may perhaps target improving or developing one of the project manager competencies. According to Muchiri (2014), the aspect of training ensures effective implementation of the planned projects; consequently, leading to the success of the projects. According to Dinsmore and Cabanis-Brewin (2014), mostly project management training abilities exists in consultancy, corporate, and professional organisations, totally not within higher education.

According to Wamuhu (2010), in his study pointed out that training ought to be focussed on effective management of projects. The research advocated for governments to ensure that project management curriculum is integrated at all the levels of the education hierarchy to ensure that school leavers are well equipped with requisite project management skills and knowledge.

Katamei, Omwono & Wanza (2015) in their study established that implementation of CDF funded projects was affected by cultural receptivity comprising of low levels of understanding of implementation procedure, project managers poor leadership approach, poorly executed values, in addition to belief systems, project leaders' conscious and unconscious symbolic actions hampered the Performance of CDF development projects. This study established that cultural receptivity, structural factors, leadership and communication were acknowledged to be hindrances to the successful CDF projects. From the study findings, various measures could be established to help cope with these challenges not limited to training of various committees, among others will sole aim of enhancing performance CDF funded projects.

According to Chesiyna & Wanyoike (2016) project management practice positively aid to the execution of health care projects in government owned hospitals. In addition, it was concluded that human resources does not influence the management health care projects. The study further suggested that healthcare management teams ought to be given independence for planning and execution of projects without control of the state and legislators.

Gathoni & Ngugi (2016) established that managerial skills affected the success of NG-CDF projects. This study stated that staff had insufficient managerial abilities to guarantee effectiveness and efficiency in NG-CDF development projects success. The study in addition found out that, personnel is not satisfactorily trained to meritoriously take part in inventing enterprises that will aid enhanced performance of NG-CDF projects. The study suggested a necessity for skilled project managers to guarantee efficiency in the NG-CDF development projects performance. The study further suggested that management training ought to be regular to allow project managers to attain additional knowledge on project management skills.

Consequently, it follows that for the effective performance of any project, training of project managers, as well as other stakeholders, is a crucial factor. Additionally, since the management of such development projects funded by the government comprises of all categories of stakeholders, it is vital for thorough training meant to address particular project areas so as to heighten overall performance of projects.

Statement of the Problem

Despite government's endeavour to make funds available for development purposes, NG-CDF continues to experience operational and policy challenges which are not limited to low utilisation of completed projects, weak capacity in the identification of viable projects, low technical capacity in the implementation of development projects, poor transition after general elections, numerous projects with small impact to the society and low level involvement of community in the development projects identification (CDF Review Task Force, 2010).

According to the government of Kenya, there has been a project failure up to the tune of 51% (GOK, 2013). The National Taxpayers Association (NTA) reported that for the years 2013/2014 approximately 40 per cent of CDF development projects were unaccounted for, 20 per cent of development projects had not been satisfactorily done, and just 5 per cent had been done satisfactorily. On the other hand, The Economic Survey (2016), showed that the performance of NG-CDF projects in Kenya averages 42 per cent nationally.

Wanyonyi and James (2019) research on factors affecting "Project Management Practice and success of Communal Development Projects in Bungoma County", established how planning, M&E, communication and stakeholders participation affects community development projects performance. This study, however, looked into community projects generally while the current study will dwell on NG-CDF projects. Muchiri (2014) established that project manager educational level and communication skills, project team training and stakeholder involvement is instrumental in guaranteeing proper as well as an effective project management. A study done by Mutwiri, Were and Odhiambo (2018) on Project Implementation Practices and performance of CDF Construction Projects in Kenya, established that the variables were significantly related; commissioning, procurement, communication and resource allocation and CDF construction projects success. Nevertheless, there is insufficient information on the three specific objectives in Malindi Constituency. In light of this, the current study aims to fill the gaps identified above by doing a study to establish the factors effecting project management practices and performance of NG-CDF construction projects in Kenya: a case of Malindi Constituency.

Objectives of the study

The study's general objective is to determine how Project Management Practices affect performance of NG-CDF projects in Kenya and a specific objective to find out the effect of project management skills training on performance of NG-CDF Projects in Malindi Constituency.

Study Hypotheses

H01: Project management skills’ training has no significant influence on performance of NG-CDF projects

Scope of the study

The study was executed across all wards of Malindi constituency. The study only looked at the effects of project management skills, community participation, and M&E on NG-CDF projects the performance. The study was narrowed to NG-CDF project managers, NG-CDF staff, project beneficiaries and teams in the constituency. The study strictly focused on NG-CDF construction projects completed in 2015/2016, 2016/2017, 2017/2018, 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 financial years.

Research Methodology

The descriptive survey design was used as it was deemed appropriate as it involves an in-depth analysis of the relationships. The research design as well-defined by Orodho (2003) is a means of data collection through interviews or administration of questionnaires to sampled individuals or respondents. The study utilised Semi-structured questionnaires with the Likert rating scale as well as open-ended kind of questions.

Data Analysis

The researcher desired to find out the level of agreement of projects’ performance. The outcomes of the analysis are as indicated in table 1.

Table 1: Project Performance

n=80	Mean	Std. Deviation
Time Performance: Projects implementation is done within the timeframes specified, resources delivery done on time without delays in obtaining funding.	2.24	1.214
Cost Performance: Projects implementation is in accordance with the budget/cost constraints.	2.45	1.311
Quality Performance: Projects implementation is in accordance with the planned quality standards, which include the use of appropriate materials for construction and the adherence to sound quality management standards (QMS).	2.45	1.292
Project implemented to users’ satisfaction	2.47	1.350
Environmental Impact: Projects use environmentally friendly technology that does not pollute the air or generate solid waste.	2.19	1.080

Source: Researcher (2021).

Based on the findings contained in Table 1 above, the analysis indicates that the mean scores on project performance were high on Project implemented to users’ satisfaction (2.47) while scores were low on Environmental Impact: Projects use environmentally friendly technology that does not pollute the air or generate solid waste. (2.19). The overall score suggests that Project Performance was not doing well in general.

Project Management Skill

The researcher inquired to know the degree of agreement on project management skills of the officers running NG-CDF projects. The outcomes are displayed in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Project Management Skill

n=80	Mean	Std. Deviation
NG-CDF Projects managed by qualified project managers are the most successful	4.01	1.131
Project management is influenced by level of training	3.90	1.098
The experience and knowledge of project managers have an impact on project success.	3.99	.934
Project managers' leadership abilities have an impact on project performance.	4.08	.938

Source: Researcher (2021).

Table 2 shows that NG-CDF Projects managers’ leadership abilities have an impact on performance of project with a mean score of 4.08 and sd=.938, NG-CDF Projects managed by qualified project managers are the most successful with a mean score of 4.01 and sd=1.131, The experience and knowledge of project managers have an impact on project success with a mean score of 3.99 and sd=0.934 and finally project management is influenced by training level with a mean score of 3.90 and sd=1.098. This seems to suggest that project management skills are key in performance of NG-CDF projects.

Testing for Normality

The Shapiro Wilk test was employed test the null hypothesis that the residual distribution is normal. The table 3 below displays the findings.

Table 3: Testing for Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Performance	.092	80	.209	.968	80	.740
Management Skill	.140	80	.201	.947	80	.362

Source: Researcher (2021).

Table 3 shows that the values of the Shapiro-Wilk Test for Performance of Project=.740, Project Management Skills=.362. The p-values for the variables were established to be higher than 0.05 (p>0.05), the study will fail to reject the null <at 95%> and then established that the distribution of residuals is normal

Testing for Linearity

The researcher conducted Pearson’s correlation coefficient in checking the linearity of the correlation amongst variables. The outcomes were as displayed in table 4 next page.

Table 4: Testing for Linearity

		Project Performance	Project Management Skill	Community Participation	Monitoring & Evaluation
Project Performance	Pearson Correlation	1	.934	.565	.777
	Sig. <2-tailed>		.009	.018	.032
	N	80	80	80	80
Project Management Skill	Pearson Correlation	.934	1	.037	.032
	Sig. <2-tailed>	.009		.746	.781
	N	80	80	80	80

Source: Researcher (2021).

Table 4 points out presence of a statistically significant linear association amongst performance of project and Project management skill ($r=.934, p(0.009)<.05$). These findings suggest linear relationship between the independent variables (Project Management Skills, and the outcome variable (Project Performance). The direction of the association is positive (i.e. positively correlated), which means these variables happen to rise together (i.e., good performance is linked with good project management skills, good community participation as well.

Testing for Multi-Collinearity

The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) method was applied to test for multi-collinearity. The outcomes are exhibited in table 5.

Table 5: Testing for Multi-Collinearity

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients'		Standardised Coefficients'	Collinearity Statistic	
	B	Std. Error	Beta	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	1.047	1.146			
Project Management Skills	-.004	.210	-.002	.997	1.003

Source: Researcher (2021).

The obtained VIF values are 1.003, based on the coefficients output of collinearity statistics. The VIF values obtained are between 1 to 10. This strongly implies that there is no evidence of multicollinearity.

Multiple Regression Model

Table 6: Multiple Regression Model

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.047	1.146		2.914	.043
Project Management Skills	.004	.210	.002	3.020	.034

Source: Researcher (2021).

The table above shows that all variables have $p < .05$. Hence, the variables Project Management Skills, Community Participation and Monitoring & Evaluation are statistically significance in predicting Project

performance. The general form of the linear regression equation to predict $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{1,1}$ is predicted as $Y = 1.047 + 0.004 X_{1,1}$

The regression equation indicated above has proven that taking (Project Management Skill) at constant, performance management of NG-CDF projects will be 1.047. The findings presented as well indicate that one unit improvement in the Project Management Skills leads to 0.004 rise in the score of performance of NG-CDF projects.

Summary of the Findings

The study found out that NG-CDF projects are successful if they are managed by qualified project managers with a mean score of 4.01 and $sd=1.131$. Leadership skills was the second important factor for project managers with mean score of 4.08 and $sd=0.938$. Thirdly, the study established that the experience and knowledge of project managers influenced success of project with mean score of 3.99 and $sd=0.934$. The study also found that project management is influenced by level of training with mean score of 3.90 and $sd=1.098$.

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