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COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF COUNTY FUNDED CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS: A CASE OF MACHAKOS COUNTY HEALTHCARE FACILITIES

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ABSTRACT

Worldwide, the construction industry especially in the public sector is always characterized by delays. Poor site management, shortage of skilled labors, unrealistic project scheduling, labor absenteeism, and design changes due to the construction errors and accidents due to poor site safety are some of the major causes of delays. The objectives that guided this study were: Community engagement on the implementation of government funded health facilities construction projects in Machakos County. The study was grounded on stakeholder's theory. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The researcher-selected members with relevant information on health facilities construction projects in Machakos County who includes; construction engineers, construction project managers, village administrators, public works of Machakos county procurement officer, inspection and acceptance committee members and county contractors on site. The target population in this study included all the 39 health facilities construction projects in the 6 sub-counties in Machakos County. The total target population comprised 80 respondents. Since the study's target population was small the research adopted census sampling. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The study concluded that community engagement was positive and significant and therefore the management should involve most of the stakeholders before making decision on project implementation.

Key Words: *Project Implementation, Community Engagement and Health Facilities.*

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INTRODUCTION

Worldwide the construction industry especially in the public sector is always characterized by delays. An analysis by (Nihan, 2012) revealed that; poor site management shortage of skilled labors, unrealistic project scheduling, labor absenteeism, design changes revolve due to the construction errors and accidents due to poor site safety are some of the major causes of delaying.

Construction process are considered as 'successful' when they are completed in time budgeted cost and specified quality (Ritz 1994). Enshassi (2009) posit that delays are one of the most important factors affecting project performance. Shared problems of construction domain, time explanation have been observed in both developed and developing countries to date (Sullivan, Harms 1986; Kaming et al. 1997; Ling et al. 2004; Sambasivan, 2007).

A study conducted by Kaming et al. (1997) on causes of delays in 31 high rise buildings in Indonesia revealed that major factors causing delays are poor labor productivity, design changes, resource shortages and inadequate planning. A study by (Sweis, 2008) on causes of delay in construction of residential projects in Jordan indicated that financial problems by the contractors and the large amount of change order by the client are the leading causes of construction delays. Sambsivan and Soon (2007), asserts that project delays lead to time overrun, cost overrun, dispute litigations and even abandonment of projects. Faridi & El-Sayegh (2006) contends that shortage of skills, poor supervision, poor site management, unsuitable leadership, shortage and breakdown of equipment among others contribute to construction delays in United Arab Emirates.

Kenya Vision 2030 main aim for the construction sector is to increase its contribution to the gross domestic product by 10% per year and drive Kenya on the path of becoming Africa's economic industrial hub (ICPAK, 2018). Construction industry makes an immense contribution towards the GDP of the Kenyan economy and hence it plays a significant role in determining economic growth. Presently, Kenya is going through a construction boom which can be pegged on the fact that, there has been poor infrastructure development in the past coupled with population growth (ICPACK, 2013).The need for better roads, railways ports and ICT development have presented a wide range of opportunities for sustained development in the building and construction sector.

However, World Bank (2013) reveals that only 21% of the planned projects have been efficiently and effectively implemented, 45% are struggling still whilst the remaining have failed or abandoned. Some of the factors limiting the implemented projects are factors such as tribalism and nepotism in board's employment, lack of water supply, lack of railway linkage, poor planning, and cultural beliefs, low level of technology, corruption and lack of power stakeholder participation. This has continuously hindered effective implementation of development projects in the country.

Machakos County has been ranked third in 'ease of doing business by the World Bank group in 2016 and banks on major transformative development projects such as the Konza Technology City and the New Machakos City for the growth and development of the county. Other sited projects consist of construction of educational institutions, Machakos Youth Polytechnic, tourism projects like Machakos Convention Centre and Machakos Peoples Park. Road projects include Junction Machakos Road, building of Hospitals, solid waste management water reservoir among others (GOK, 2013).

Study Objective

The study determined the influence of community engagement of implementation of government funded construction projects in Machakos County, Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Implementation of government funded construction projects

Successful project implementation is about transition from a strategic blueprint into reality and doing what is necessary so as to attain strategic objectives and goals. Brown and Thyer (2010) posit that successful project implementation can be measured on the basis of quality time and cost which is commonly referred to as the triple constraint. These factors aptly represent the key performing indicators (KPLS). In order to establish whether a project has been implemented effectively or the project is successful, one has to get back to the initial goals of the project of quality (performance), time and cost and become able gauge the extent of their individual attainment.

Project implementation is a process that usually consists of many variables which influence implementation including operational system, resource management, governance of the organization and organizational culture. Projects are often designed, planned then implemented in tandem with the order displayed in the project cycle. A log frame is a planning tool used in designing, appraising, managing, monitoring and evaluating the progress of the project through the life cycle from the policy framework to the final evaluation (Chianti, 2009).

Globally, implementation of projects by county government in states like Texas in the US for instance include: modern hospital, residential buildings, feeder roads, interconnecting railway lines, modern hospital units, tourism project construction, housing units agricultural projects and water projects. However, (Fernando, 2009) posits in his comparative study on the development manufacturing factors in Austria, India, Malaysia and USA, found out that there exists an imbalanced development across countries, states and local municipalities in all these countries. The main reason that has been cited for the different development in counties/states even though they operate from the same countries consist of; financial resource availability, availability of natural resource, county/state by laws, rates of imposed infrastructure, politics, security, cultural factors, climate conditions, corruption and educational factors, determinants like level of technology, human resource development, availability of minerals, financial resource allocation from budgets, political oppositions and many more. VOA (2010) has grossly influenced projects implementation on light railway line construction project in Texas up to a tune of 55%. The global economy exerts pressure on countries to implement and also upgrade infrastructure project in order to gain competitive advantage or keep from lagging behind (Cohen, 1980).

In Kenya, infrastructure projects are technically owned and managed by the government or governments undertaking. Due to the big investments needed in infrastructural development which plays an important role in economic growth and development, there is now consensus that county governments input in this activity is crucial. In many projects such as rural roads irrigation, electricity, water systems, the active participation of local beneficiary organizations in infrastructure identification planning, construction and maintenance decision has been established to be critical to project completion and sustainability. In theory, projects implemented by the county government's agencies have got reasonable prospects for financial sustainability since such agencies can cover recurrent project cost from their county budgets.

Community Engagement and implementation of government funded construction projects

Several resources have been put forward to cement the low levels of community engagement in decision making during initiation of development process like political, economic, professionalism and most importantly the concentration of power in most governments in Africa. When the state of affairs is as such, getting any significant community engagement within developing initiatives is hard to

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come by (Akinbile, Oladoya, Awoyi and Adisa, 2006 & Ofuoku, 2011).

Havugimana (2013) study focused on community involvement in project planning in project planning and project implementation, with specific focus on water supply sanitation and hygiene project (WASH) Karongi District. The study sought to investigate the extent to which participation from the members of the community in planning of the project and its implementation of WASH. The study adopted purposive and simple sampling where the information received was considered representative, the sample size was 95 household members which was derived using Bouchard's formula from a target population of 7309 households. The study findings revealed that community participation in project planning stage of WASH project was very low, however, the number of households that were involved in implementation stage was much better. This was so due to efforts by implementing agencies of mobilizing the community members mainly at the stage of implementation. The findings further revealed that community did not participate in decision making process during project selection.

Nyaguthii and Oyugi (2013) carried out a study that examined influence of community participation on successful implementation of constituency development funds (CDF) projects in Kenya, a case study of Mwea Constituency. The study sought to determine the extent to which community involvement on identification, implementation monitoring and evaluation of the community based projects are affecting the successful implementation of CDF Projects. The study used descriptive resource design that guided it. The findings of the study revealed that most residents in Mwea do not participate in managing CDF projects this therefore leads to failure in implementation. It further concluded that community members whether influential or not ought to be involved in identifying, implementing, monitoring and evaluating CDF projects so as to boost success.

Theoretical Framework

Stakeholder theory

The theory asserts that companies have connections with many participant groups and they can offer and at the same time the support of these groups by carefully balancing their suitable welfare. It further states four principles of stakeholder theory as follow; companies have relationships with several stakeholders that may be affected by its decisions. The theory also relates with the types of connections with the organization and its consistent groups, that all genuine stakeholder groups interests are of high value and not the interests of ministry which carry the day. Lastly the theory gives prominence on management decision making (Kirsi, 2010).

This theory links well with my study in that government sponsored construction process have both internal and external stakeholders. Internal stakeholders are the direct beneficiaries of the project being undertaken and to whom the need identified by the government is being met through successful implementation. If the project is not implemented successfully, the community loses the benefits of the project. The external stakeholders are the contractors and consultants whom if the project is successfully implemented, they can use it to solicit for more business of the same magnitude because they can prove their competence, but if the project fails to be implemented fully, they suffer dearly both financially and their reputation is jeopardized.

METHODOLOGY

Research design is the conceptual structure within which the research is conducted; it constitutes the blue print for the collection of data, measurement and analysis of data (Kothari, 2004). The researcher adopted the descriptive research design since it answers the question of who, what, where and of how (Pervez & Kjell, 2005). The target population for this study was 39 government funded health care facilities construction projects in Machakos

County. The researcher selected members with relevant information in each project who included; construction engineers, construction project managers, village administrator, inspection and acceptance committee members, procurement officer and county contractors on site. The target population comprised of 80 respondents. They included: 39 village administrators, 10 construction engineers, 10 project engineers, 10 county contractors, 1 procurement officer and 10 inspection and acceptance committee members. Since the study's target population was small the research adopted census sampling, here, all the elements were used as sample size. The chosen technique enhances statistical accuracy and provides sufficient data for analyzing the various variables (Kombo and Trump, 2006).

The data collected was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The collected data was crosschecked and rigorously verified for consistency, completeness and errors. Analysis of data was in terms of frequencies and percentages using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SSPS 20). The analyzed data was thereafter presented in pie charts and tables. Also, descriptive statistics was adopted to give a synopsis and the state of affairs of all the variables (community engagement and procurement procedures) that was used in this study. The descriptive analysis consisted of mean, frequencies and standard deviation. On the other hand, the data from interviews was carefully read. The responses was edited for grammatical correctness, chronology, precision and presented as quotations in order to triangulate the data that has been obtained through administration of close ended instruments which are often quantitative in nature.

The SSPS program was used to refine the collected data using a multiple regression analysis which showed the link between dependent and independent variables. Regression analysis was used when the researcher's aim is to determine whether an independent variable predicts a dependent variable (Saunders, 2009). The multivariate regression model took the format below:

$Y = \beta 0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \dot{\varepsilon}$

Y = implémentation

$\beta 0$ = Constant

β_1 = Regression co-efficient

X1 = Community engagement

β = Parameters to be estimated

$\grave{\varepsilon}$ = Error Term

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Response rate was 121 which was 91.7% of the sample of 132 hand distributed questionnaires to the target respondents in Machakos County. The response was as per Mugenda and Mugenda (2010), recommendations of 70 percent minimum is sufficient for drawing conclusions.

Community Engagement

The qualitative including as well quantitative data on community engagement impact in Machakos County government funded health facilities constructions was gathered and displayed for interpretation.

Community Engagement Qualitative Analysis

Ways that engagement of the community impact execution of health facilities construction projects in Machakos County were suggested as follows. It influences the quality of the projects due to delayed procedures that lead to overlapping of activities and also failure to conduct other stages necessary. There is delayed payment of workers, delayed actual implementation due to lack of the required resources and also delayed of arrival of the material for constructions. Also, some indicated poor allocation of resources, inadequate human resources due to late disbursement of funds. Poor performance hence quality of project.

Community Engagement Descriptive Analysis

The respondent's agreement to the community engagements statements were executed through descriptive analysis hereunder.

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Table 1: Community Engagement Descriptive Analysis

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.
Local communities are actively informed on allocated sub-county projects	2.58	1.28
Local community take part in project progress briefs	3.02	1.18
Monitoring of health facilities constructions is actively done by community	3.09	1.31
In public forums ,there is high community engagement	3.08	1.34
Community approves the undertaken health facilities constructions	3.01	1.44
Aggregate Score	**2.96**	**1.31**

Data Source: Field (2021)

Table 1 shows values of maximum and minimum of 1 and 5. The aggregate score was 2.96 and 1.31. The greatest mean was 3.09 and least mean was 2.58. Standard deviation highest was 1.44 and lowest was 1.18. This indicated levels of community engagement measures for this study were some of the variables that impact the execution of health facilities construction projects in Machakos County. Monitoring of health facilities constructions is actively done by community was highly disputed with 3.09 mean and 1.31 standard deviation, second to the rank of being disputed was that community engagement in public forums is high with 3.08 mean and 1.34 standard deviation. Local communities are actively informed on allocated sub-county projects was agreed moderately with 2.58 mean and 1.28 standard deviation.

Akinbileet al., 2006 & Ofuoku 2011 put forth many reasons that affirm non engagement of communities to contribute ideas at the start of development projects are politics, absence of competence and above all the power owned by African governments. The scenario hinders any engagement by the society to offer any views on any

Implementation of Health Projects

The study focused on getting data by application of questionnaires to know the amount of projects that are finished involving the percentages of completion of stalled projects and the time of completion.

Implementation of Health Projects Qualitative Analysis

Targeted people gave the project numbers that were concluded in the sub-counties they were conversant with of the 39 seeded Machakos county projects. Close to four people said about 30 percent were completed projects, Close to six said completed projected summed to 60 percent while 20 percent were not sure of approximation.

The factors that played a role to successful project, were ranked in order of the most agreed as follows: clearly defined goals, competent project team members, sufficient resource allocation, top management support and lastly adequate communication channels

Implementation of Health Projects Descriptive Analysis

On determinate factors that affect for execution of funded healthcare construction projects in Machakos County, Kenya data was picked and descriptive outputs were interpreted.

Table 2: Implementation of Health Projects Descriptive Analysis

Statement	Mean	Std Dev
Proper procurement and tendering process	2.90	1.31
Accountability of project resources	3.15	1.22
Monitoring & evaluation of Projects	3.17	1.31
Proper communication	3.12	1.22
Proper leadership and stakeholder inclusivity	3.27	1.34
Aggregate Score	**3.12**	**1.28**

Source: Field Data (2021)

Table 2 indicated 3.12 average mean was while 1.28 average standard deviation. Strong argument against proper leadership and stakeholder inclusivity was backed by 3.27 most mean and 1.34 standard deviation. Monitoring & evaluation of projects follows closely by 3.17 mean as well as 1.22 standard deviation where there were a lot of disagreements showing that indeed there were no evaluation of the projects. 2.90 was the least mean and 1.31 standard deviation as a prove of moderate response of proper procurement and tendering process.

Close variation between the mean and standard deviation is a pointer that opinions aired about execution of funded healthcare constructions in Machakos County, Kenya are closely to similar. Results here support Pinto and Slevin (1989) inventions that show complexity of fruitfully implementing a project

Inferential Statistics

Linear regression analysis was utilized to verify the hypothesis determinants for execution of funded healthcare construction projects in this case, project funding, procurement procedures and community engagement were regressed on implementation of health projects. Table 3 showcase results of direct relationship analysis.

Regression Model Summary

Table 3: Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.837[a]	.700	.692	.4573

A. Predictors: (Constant), Community Engagement, Project Funding, Procurement Procedures

Source: Field Data (2021)

Table 3 results showed the multiple determinations coefficient as 0.692 indicating that all the three variables that is community engagement, project funding and procurement procedures explained 69.2 percent of execution of healthcare projects in Machakos County, Kenya.

Analysis of Variance Results ANOVA

Table 4: ANOVA Results

model		Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	sig.
1	Regression	56.170	3	18.723	89.527	.000[b]
	Residual	24.051	115	.209		
	Total	80.221	118			

a. Dependent Variable: Implementation of Projects

b. Predictors: (Constant), Community Engagement, Project Funding, Procurement Procedures

Source: Field Data (2021)

The model tailored the witnessed data and statistically ascertained significant at F (3,115) =89.527. The probability value was 0.000 being lower than the adopted limit of 0.05.

Coefficients

Table 5 indicated that determinants such as project funding, procurement procedures and community engagement have relationship with implementation of projects of funded healthcare construction projects in Machakos County, Kenya

Table 5: Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
	(Constant)	1.482	.164		2.945	.004
	Community engagement	.655	.053	.590	2.309	.000

A. Dependent Variable: Implementation of Projects

Source: Field Data (2021)

Implementation of projects = 1.482 + 0.655 **Community Engagement**

This study aimed to evaluate the role of community engagement in the construction of government funded health facilities in Machakos County, Kenya.

Table 5 established that community engagement was significant at β= .590; t= 2.309; p=0.000. The results proved that construction of government funded health facilities increases by 0.655 when a single unit of community engagement is raised. Therefore, at P<0.05 level of significance. Significant effect of community engagement is evidenced in the construction of government funded health facilities in Machakos County, Kenya

Hence, in summation there is support to study by Havugimana (2013) proves on communal partaking's in projects processes from organizing which majored on Water Supply Sanitation and Hygiene. Community involvement findings were minimal.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study objective was community engagement to the construction of government funded health facilities in Machakos County, Kenya. There was extent of disagreement on the local communal engagement in health facilities constructions. Their responses indicated that others were neutral while others were content with the monitoring aspect on projects.

Community participation or engagement has proven to spearhead success of projects through regular assessments and accountability by contractors. Many projects in local areas that tend to fail are majorly led by segregating the community role. Therefore, the community is a key stakeholder towards success and implementation of government and county government projects.

Proper evaluation to be done across all phases of project implementation for the Machakos County funded projects. This would limit stagnation and deviations of projects and as well curb waste of resources. All the stakeholder parties should play their roles in the procurement for the project management. Decisions should be made based on merits rather individual vested interests on projects. Health funded projects in the Machakos County should be decentralized to all regions rather being centralized to county management to involve various stakeholders. This will aid resource mismanagement and proper service delivery through timely execution of health projects.

Recommendations for Further Study

Exploring determinants of project implementations is essential to all counties, other organizations and also to individual capacities. This study focused on projects implemented in Machakos County, Kenya hence comparable studies in other counties could be carried. The study also majored in government funded projects in Kenya. Researchers can carry research in other organizations globally

The study only considered the three determinants which were project funding, procurement procedures and community engagement. Other researchers focus to discover other determinants that affect implementation of projects.

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