



**EFFECTS OF COMMITTEE COMPETENCY ON PERFORMANCE OF BOREHOLE DRILLING PROJECTS IN MACHAKOS COUNTY**

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**Makau, E. K.**

MBA Candidate, Department of Management Science, School of Business, Kenyatta University [KU], Kenya

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**ABSTRACT**

*This study focused on the effects of committee competency on borehole drilling projects in Kenya with specific reference to Machakos County. The specific objectives of the study were to establish the effects of communication, training and development on performance of borehole drilling projects in Kenya. The study would be of importance to the management of Machakos County Government, other counties and researchers. The study used descriptive research design because it dealt with the aggregate of all responses using descriptive statistics such as mode, percentages, mean and frequency distribution through self administered questionnaires and stratified random sampling procedure to select the sample that represented the entire population. The stratified random sampling was used because the population was heterogeneous. The researcher targeted 198 respondents from the three levels of management of the Machakos County and a sample size of 99 respondents. Questionnaire administration was the main method of data collection. The results were analyzed by use of both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Results were analyzed qualitatively by data being corrected, coded and narrative explanations given. Quantitative data was analyzed quantitatively by use of tables and charts for easy interpretation. The study concluded that communication, training and development affected committee competency in performance of borehole drilling projects. It was concluded that effective communication is vital to improve the performance of drilling and involving all stake holders. Training and developing employees had significance in increasing knowledge and skills of the employees in drilling projects. The study recommended that a committee for competency should ensure that there is an extensive research on how to ensure effective communication was achieved in all levels of project work. Project committees should have employees trained during the drilling operations to equip them with new and better skill and knowledge to improve projects efficiency.*

**Key Words:** Communication, Training and Development, Project Performance

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## INTRODUCTION

A competency is fundamental knowledge, ability or expertise in a specific subject area or skill set, which allow a business to reach a wide range of markets, and cannot be easily replicated by competitors. Its company's unique characteristic or capability that provides a competitive advantage in the marketplace, delivers value to customers, and contributes to continued organizational growth.

Flammbot (2004) established that, for effectiveness in a committee competency it must develop a strategy for maximizing their potential. Doing so will allow a company to deliver value to its customers based on a sustainable competitive advantage. These enhanced proficiencies should represent an organization's collective learning and the ways in which it aligns diverse talent sets and technologies in order to establish competitive differentiation in borehole drilling. A committee can develop core a working environment by coordinating various stakeholders groups in order to deliver an end product or service to the marketplace (County). In doing so, county government should isolate key abilities and organizational strengths; ensure they're developing unique capabilities that customers value; invest in line with those priorities; create a road map that establishes goals for building additional competences; and consider outsourcing or other vendor-managed arrangements to access core competencies that might not be available within the organization.

The performance of any committee depends on its competency to deliver what a certain project is aimed at. There can be extremely effective ways to organize projects which allow institutions to tap into the many diverse skills and talents of employees, producing results superior to what any one individual would be capable. Committees are needed especially when a complex drilling projects problem needs to be solved and innovation and creativity are required. Using a group process also creates an investment in the outcome and a sense of ownership of the project by committee

members. People are committed to what they have created as indicated by Greenberger, (2005).

According to Richard, (2005) Change management is one aspect the committee observes for better performance. The implementation of proven methodology by the committee, which will be designed to maximize success and minimize failure as an organization consciously changes one or many aspects of their drilling projects. The adoption of committee project change management methodology helps them be aware of and control many variables - ensuring change process will be planned and implemented in an orderly, controlled and systematic manner to fully customize the flow of activities as managed, coordinate and audit simple and complex change projects. If it applies the right time and resources, the solution will be right. Employee participation will be a huge benefit to the project Change Management methodology to help improvise new ways of handling project. Involving employees gives them the chance to provide input into the solution. This enhanced collaboration leads to a better end performance, increased employee satisfaction, loyalty and reduced stress for the project team.

Committee competency is used to suggest opportunities for training and development, either by a committee or the full board. Periodic committee self-assessment can identify areas of knowledge, skills and emerging trends to address. Currently, committee competency as a relevant topic for committee include organizational transformation and culture change to maintain their skills, and thus enable the board to fully tap the talents of all their members as outlined by Wallace, (2002).

Machakos County was the first capital city of Kenya and now, it is an administrative county in Kenya. Machakos County has eight constituencies including Machakos Town, Mavoko, Masinga, Yatta, Kangundo, Kathiani, Matungulu, and Mwala. Machakos Town is the administrative capital of the county.

Machakos County borders Nairobi and Kiambu counties to the West, Embu to the North, Kitui to the East, and Makueni to the South, Kajiado to the South West, and Murang'a and Kirinyaga to the North West. Machakos County stretches from latitudes 0° 45' south to 1° 31' South and longitudes 36° 45' east to 37° 45' east. The County has an altitude of 1000 - 1600 meters above sea level.

Subsistence agriculture is practiced with Maize and drought-resistant crops such as sorghum and millet being grown. However, the County also plays host to the open air market concept with major market days where large amounts of produce are traded. Fruits, vegetables and other food stuffs like maize and beans are sold in these markets. The county has been selected as the home to the upcoming Konza Technology City due to its proximity to Nairobi, good infrastructure and availability of massive chunks of land. Machakos County, Nairobi's Eastern neighbour, is home to important industrial and residential centres like Athi River and Mlolongo. Sadly, the developments do not extend to most parts of the huge county, although that is part of change expected when the planned technology city development is finalized.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The effect of committee competency on projects is of great importance on performance of projects. Competent committee skills on borehole drilling projects implementation has helped improve the success of service delivery to citizens. Most projects have had a long history of failure due to the impact of expertise of the project committee. For over a long period, there have been major challenges to the project committees in ensuring full implementation of all drilling processes. This has been as a result of ineffective communication to all project management team and hence, leading to poor project performance (Business journal, 2008).

In recent years of the devolved governance, there have been several committees formed in Machakos County to oversee the implementation of several projects. The competency of the committee has

paused a great challenge as most of the members are accused of unethical practices through unclear procedures of implementing projects and procurement problems resulting to lack of trust by the public due to lack of transparency. This has created a major problem which needs to be addressed to ensure committee members are competent enough and effective to carry out their designated mandate of delivering to the public interest.

Drilling specialists have not been trained by the concerned committee resulting to failures in the operational work because of lack of capacity and knowledge by the drilling employees. This results to decreasing projects performance and viability.

There had been several studies conducted on factors determining performance of borehole drilling. However, there was no known extensive study that had been done on effects of committee competency on performance of borehole drilling hence a knowledge gap. This study sought to bridge this gap by determining effects of committee competency on performance of borehole drilling projects in Kenya by doing a case study of Machakos County.

### **Objectives of the study**

The general objective of this study was to examine the effects of committee competency on performance of borehole drilling in Machakos County. The specific objectives were:-

- To determine the effect of communication on performance of borehole drilling projects in Machakos County.
- To find out the effects of training and development programs on performance of borehole drilling projects in Machakos County.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Review of Theoretical Literature**

#### **Competency Framework Theory**

The theory was developed by Bolden R in June, 2003 at centre for leadership. Bolden explained that, a key element in the corporate governance

process of any organization is its project implementation committee. The battle for integrity and reliability depends on balancing the pressure of multiple stakeholders, including management, regulators, investors and the public interest.

The competency of any committee toolkit is designed to make the committee best practices actionable for committees of public companies, private companies, not-for-profit organizations, and government entities. It is important that committee members not only possess formal independence according to prescribed criteria, but also have independence of thought, judgment and action, so that independence is not only perceived or seen, but is real and applied. Committee members should voice their own opinions and not allow their trust in, or relationships with management to compromise their continual display of impartiality and objectivity.

The role of the any committee is to review, report and recommend and in certain instances approve. There should exist a shared commitment displayed among the board, committee and management for an effective system of risk management, which means that it is enterprise-wide, robust, integrated into operations, real-time, continual and culturally embedded and which responds to, identifies, evaluates, monitors, controls and mitigates material business risks to the company. This risk management system should enhance the review process that the committee undertakes. A comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness and contribution of the committee should be conducted, considering the committee charter and the responsibilities the committee is expected to fulfil, and, in terms of best practice, in a manner which the committee and its members are comfortable, providing feedback and reporting, taking timely, corrective action if or when required like, developmental suggestions, peer remediation, addressing information quality and reporting relationships, and with leadership provided by the audit chair and reporting to shareholders, through the board, on the nature of this review process in

sufficient detail in all appropriate public documents so as to demonstrate the effectiveness of the committee review process.

### **Committee Leadership Theory**

Sox, (2001) established a theory on the committee effectiveness on their role in the oversight of projects. Sox states, that good corporate governance in committee is the ability to improve boards and their committees to manage effectively and in the best interest of shareholders, whose trust and confidence is gained. Evidence from studies suggests that, a committee which is sizable in number meet more frequently is effective in their monitoring role. In the same way, committee's competency with more members is obligated to have a higher oversight function. The issues of both committee corporate governance and competency have been receiving a tremendous concern from government and private entities. The integrity of committee should be questioned in case of failure to oversee its mandate. DeFond and Francis (2005) claim that, in most cases shareholders depend on the ability of committee to monitor the independence of the management. Therefore, the responsibility lays on the effectiveness and competency of board and its committee.

### **Empirical Review**

#### **Effective Communication**

Communication is the activity of conveying information from one person to another. It is derived from the Latin word "communis" meaning to share. It requires a sender; a message and an intended recipient, although the receiver needs not to be present or aware of the sender's intent to communicate at the time of communication. Communication may take different forms in an organization which can either be verbal or non-verbal between all levels of management. Oral referring to spoken verbal communication can employ visual aids elements to support the conveyance of the meaning. It includes speech, presentation, discussion and aspects of interpersonal communication. Non-verbal conveys the information in a non-word message. Research



shows that majority of our communication is non-verbal. It includes body language, posture, facial expression and eye contact. All this kind of communication is necessary in a drilling project performance according to Mackenzie, (2005).

A competent committee on a Project is able to exchange project-specific information with the emphasis on creating understanding between the sender and the receiver. Effective communication is one of the most important factors that contribute to the success of a borehole drilling project. The project team must provide timely and accurate information to all stakeholders and prepare information in a variety of ways to meet the needs of project stakeholders. Team members also receive feedback from other stakeholders to the project according to Denison, (2007).

Mackn (2009) outlined that, when a committee has different changes in the way of drilling boreholes it is important to involve everyone impacted by the proposed drilling changes so that all are on board and actively involved throughout the drilling project. Anyone feeling left out or disconnected may become disenfranchised or even revolt. In fact, a disgruntled employee whose job faces dramatic change or elimination could sabotage the project, causing unexpected and costly delays or disruptions. Clear, concise effective communication that reinforces the benefits of a projects plan as well as the costs of not aiding in the change is critical to the success of the overall project. This is aimed to increasing employee satisfaction in an organization.

### **Training and Development**

Tripont (2004) defined training and development as the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competencies as a result of teaching of vocational or practical skills and knowledge that relate to specific useful competencies. It forms the core of apprenticeships and provides the backbone of content at institute of learning. In addition to basic training required for a trade, occupation or professional, observers of labour market recognize the need for continuous training beyond initial

qualification to maintain upgrade skills throughout working life. Scholars refer to it as professional development.

Research done by Michael (2009) established that, the most effective way to develop people and employees in performing is quite different from conventional skills training. Training is the most important way to enrich the employees with skills and enough knowledge to work efficiently and effectively and ensure project performance is achieved. The importance of development is for the organizational performance, quality, customer satisfaction, effective management and control. When the employees are well trained, the organization does not need to lay off employees and get new personnel.

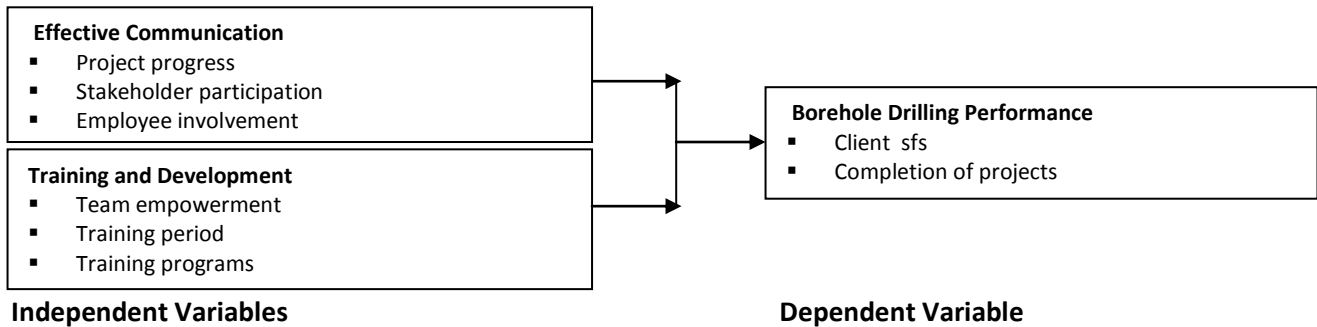
According to Freixsas (2004), in improving performance of drilling projects the project committee should take charge of new employee training programs which give employees the skills needed to protect themselves and others at work and to efficiently work well. Drillers must receive formal training to comply with Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations. Training is also required to attain most third-party certifications. The training program must document and verify that the employee understands the material and is competent in the subject matter. In addition being a required by government agencies, training programs are a good business practices.

In getting the work force for drilling boreholes perform, the committee in developing a training program should identify all the topics required by the stakeholders and specifically by the drilling team. According to Rothwell and Klingebiel, (2000) training can be done on topics generally falling into the following broad categories: Employee handbook position requirements, safety training, quality assurance, regulatory compliance, employee development and certifications, preventive maintenance and standard operation procedures. Project Committee need to create new employee checklist that summarizes all the training topics. In

some cases, employees will require only an introduction to a topic, whereas other employees

will need to receive in-depth safety training as part of their job assignment.

**Conceptual Framework**



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

Source: Author (2015)

**METHODOLOGY**

The descriptive research design was used to collect data from the respondents. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), descriptive research is the process of collecting information with the objective of describing a phenomenon. The target population of this study was the management and operations staff of Machakos County, which consisted of 198 members. Sample size is a representative of the target population which was 99 respondents. A sample of 50% respondents was considered to provide a general view on the effects of committee competency on performance of borehole drilling projects. The sample units were the management and operations staff of Machakos county

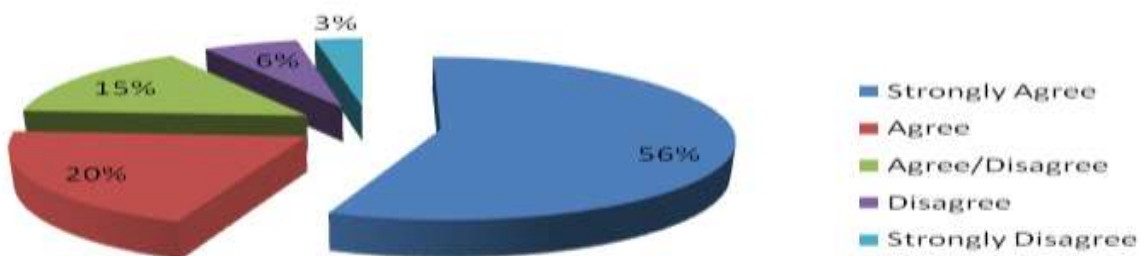
government. Data was collected through use of structured questionnaires technique. The data collected was analyzed mainly by use of descriptive statistics which included: Mean, frequency distributions and chi square test. The results were then presented in form of a well interpreted and easy to understand tables, graphs, charts and percentages.

**FINDINGS**

**Communication**

**Extent of Committee communication on project progress**

Communication by the committee has an effect on project progress of bore hole drilling projects as depicted in figure 2 below.



**Figure 2: Extent of committee communication on project progress**

Sources: Author (2015)

The data analysis in figure 2 above showed that out of the total respondents, 56% strongly agreed that committee members communicates to the all level of the county on the project progress , 20% agreed,

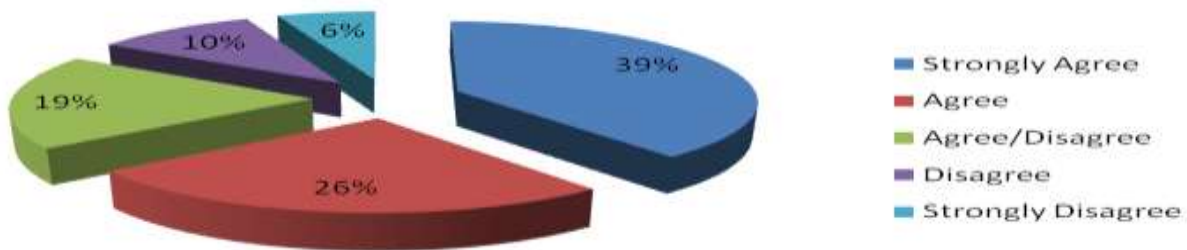
15% did not agree or disagree , 6% disagreed that committee didn't communicate and 3% strongly disagreed. This showed that competent committee should communicate the project progress to all its

stakeholders. This implied that, there was sufficient communication to all levels in the county on progress of borehole drilling projects. Denison, (2007) outlined that, competent committee on a Project is able to exchange project-specific information with the emphasis to creating understanding between the sender and the receiver. Effective communication is one of the

most important factors that contribute to the success of a borehole drilling project.

**Committee communication is effective for performance**

Effective communication has an effect on performance of bore hole drilling as per below figure.



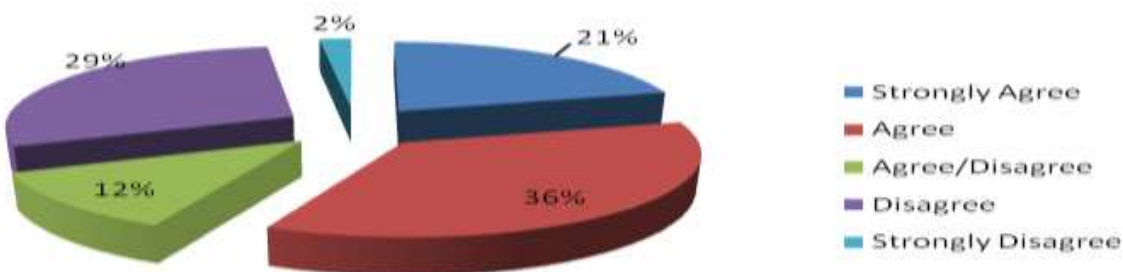
**Figure 3: Committee communication is effective for performance**  
**Source: Author(2015)**

The data analysis in figure 3 above showed that, 39% strongly agreed that communication was effective and competent, 26% agreed, 19% could not agree or disagree, 10% disagreed that no better communication for project performance while 6% strongly disagreed that. This implied that, the team considered communication a very crucial in performance of bore hole projects. According to Kennedy, (2009), all projects vary in nature and are ever changing, hence the project chairing

committee has to consider the changes and challenges all the way to the end of the project and ensure that the team and stakeholders are fully up to date with issues and progress so that there is no unexpected surprises..

**Committee communicates project progress to subordinates**

Figure 4 illustrated response on committee communication on project to subordinates.



**Figure 4: Committee communicates project progress to subordinates**  
**Source: Author(2015)**

The data analysis in figure 4 above showed that, committee communicated the project progress with the subordinate staff. Twenty one percent of employees strongly agreed, 36% agreed, 12%

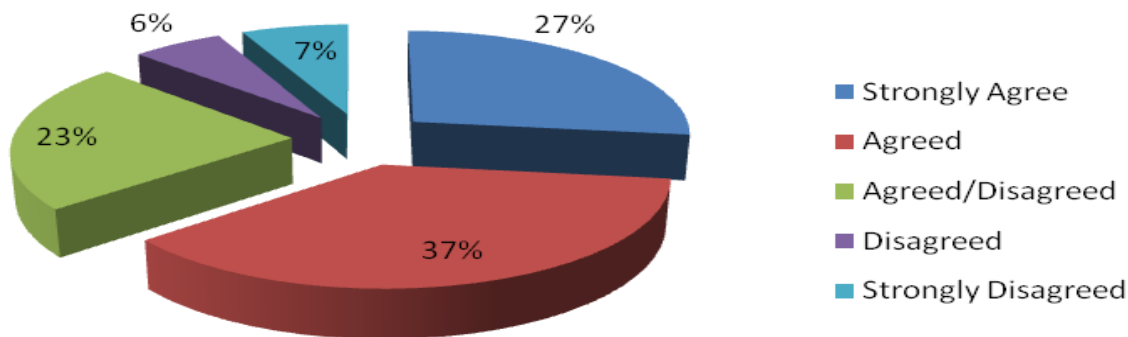
neither agreed nor disagreed, 29% disagreed on that fact while 2% strongly disagreed. This implied that, competent committee leadership informed all employees on the drilling progress for better



performance. The committee or appointed managers by the committee must communicate well with their subordinate in order to give them the best direction for achieving the planned drilling change strategies as indicated by Faraday and Kerry, (2009).

**Committee meet with all employees on project progress**

The study further rated whether committee met with all the employees. The findings were as indicated on figure 5.



**Figure 5: Committee meet with all employees on project progress**  
**Source: Author(2015)**

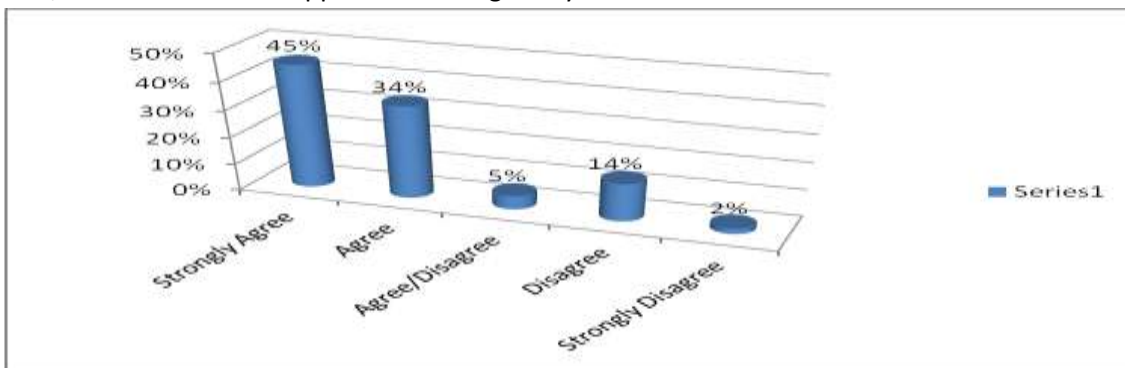
The data in the figure 5 showed whether the committee meets all employees to update them on how the drilling project is progressing, 27% strongly agreed that leaders meet employees, 37% agreed, 23% did not agree or disagree, 6% disagreed while 7% strongly disagreed .this implied that, project committee should meet employees frequently to update them on the progress for improvement. Controlling a drilling project change is impossible without written and oral communication in an organization. Faraday and Kerry, (2009) indicated that, the committee or appointed managers by the

committee must meet and communicate well with their subordinate in order to give them the best direction for achieving the planned drilling change strategies.

**Training and Development**

**Committee ensures training and development of drilling employees to improve performance.**

The study further reviewed whether committee ensured training and development of drilling employees. The findings were indicated in figure 6.



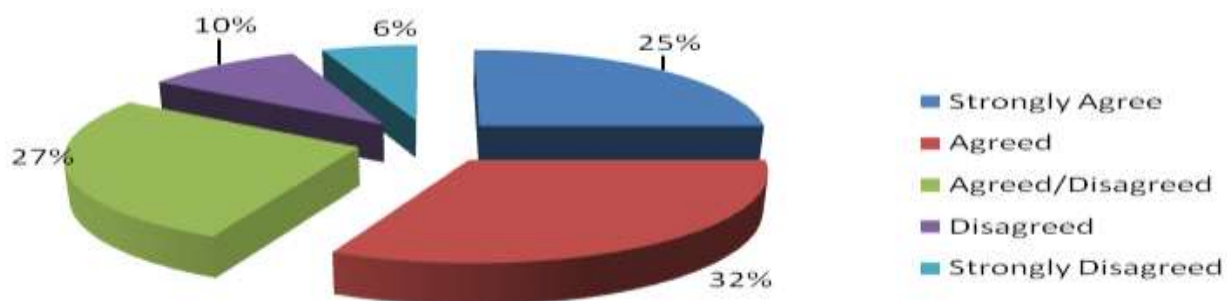
**Figure 6: Committee ensures training and development of drilling employees to improve performance**  
**Sourec:Author(2015)**

The data analysis in figure 6 above showed that, the county committee ensured that training and developing employees is done to improve performance and that, 45% strongly agreed, 34% agreed, 5% neither agreed or disagreed ,34% disagreed that training and developing employees was done while 2% strongly disagreed. This then meant that, for a committee to improve drilling performance they must ensure training and development of employees on drilling operations. According to Freixas (2004), in improving

performance of drilling projects, the project committee should take charge of new employee training programs which give employees the skills needed to protect themselves and others at work and to efficiently work well.

**Employee are offered orientation programs on drilling**

The data analysis in figure 7 below showed that, the employees were offered orientation programs to help in drilling borehole projects.



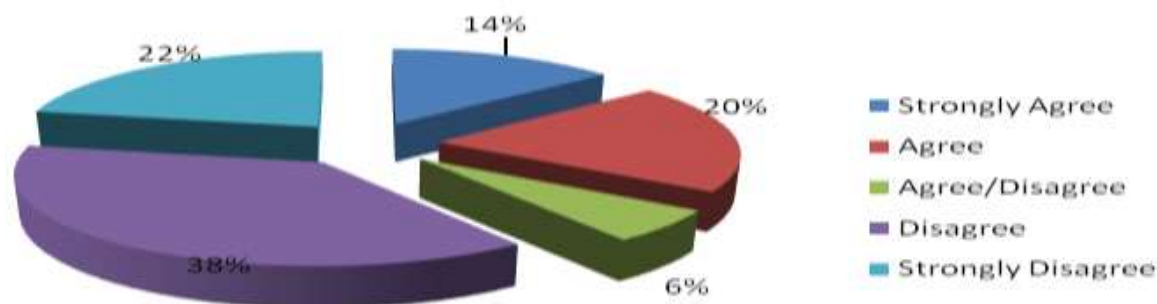
**Figure 7: Employee are offered orientation programs on drilling**  
Source: Author (2015)

The study findings indicated in figure 7 showed that, 25% strongly agreed to this fact, 32% agreed, 27% neither agreed nor disagreed, 10% disagreed that the committee doesn't ensure that orientation is done for the employees when drilling is done. While 6% strongly disagreed. This implied that, orienting employees on different drilling operations is important for their work performance. Robbins, (2008) outlined that, a well-designed training

program signals the project committee commitment to safety and employee development which is necessary for project performance. The employee's first day on the job is the best time to establish safety expectations.

**Training programs are conducted after four months**

Figure 8 below showed whether training programs were done after every four months.



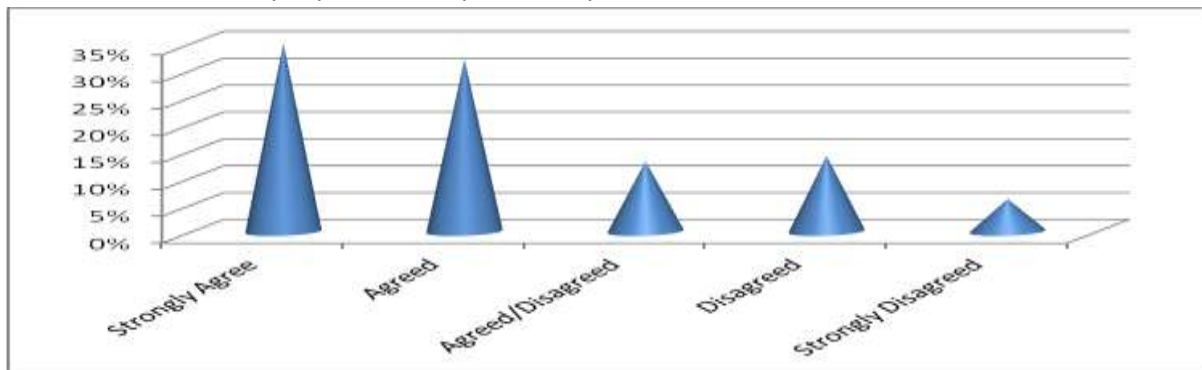
**Figure 8: Training programs are conducted after four months**  
Source: Author (2015)

From figure 8 above showed whether training programs were done after every four months, the study findings were as follows; 14% strongly agreed, 20% agreed, 6% neither agreed nor disagreed, 36% disagreed that the committee did not offer training programs after four months period while 22% strongly disagreed. This showed that there a big need for the drilling employees to be equipped with knowledge periodically to improve performance. According to Carow (2007), an effective committee needs to assess its people's skills periodically for

better borehole drilling performance. Managers and supervisors play a key role in training and developing project team and hence improve the project performance.

### **Training programs are offered to improve employee drilling performance**

The study further sought to determine whether training programs were offered to improve employee drilling erformance as indicated in figure 9.



**Figure 9: Training programs are offered to improve employee drilling performance**

**Source: Author(2015)**

The data in the figure 9 showed extent of how training programs are offered to support staff to improve drilling performance 35% strongly agreed that support staff is given training , 32% agreed, 13% did not agree or disagree, 14% disagreed while 6% strongly disagreed. This implied that, most of the support staff were given training programs and hence, the need for leadership to equip support staff with new skills. Rajang (2001) stated that, training and development helps in optimizing the utilization of human resource talent that further helps the employee to achieve the project goals and performance as well as their individual goal.

### **SUMMARY**

The study found that many of the respondents said that the communication between committee and stakeholders is a barrier when performing some

drilling projects. Competent committee on any drilling project is able to exchange project-specific information to understanding between all the stake holders. All project changes should be communicated appropriately so that effective communication contributes to the success of a borehole drilling project. Better and timely communication encourages employees to keep on working for better performance.

According to majority of the respondents, training programs by committee should be implemented to all employees to ensure performance is achieved. Trained employees find it easy to work with minimal supervision. It is the field which is concerned with an activity aimed at improving the performance of individuals and groups during any particular time to improve performance. In improving performance of drilling projects the project committee should take

charge of new employee training programs which give employees the skills needed to protect themselves and others at work and to efficiently work well. For better performance drillers should receive formal training to ensure safety of workers. Committee should focus towards employee talent management by training most of its workers.

## CONCLUSIONS

The study made conclusion that, borehole drilling projects performance was achieved through better passing of information by committee to all team players. This ensures that activities are well controlled and coordinated for the success and achievement of drilling objective. All changes and policies made by the committee should be well informed to employees and stake holders to ensure understanding is enhance which improves performance.

The study made conclusion that having training programs periodically during project undertaking is very crucial step in ensuring performance is achieved while lack of training may drag the project and fail to meet the expected duration. It is upon the committee to train new skills to employees. Training motivates employees to perform better in any project.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommended that any committee for competency should ensure that there is extensive research on how to ensure effective communication is achieved in all levels of project work. This ensures that all those concerned remain participative to any changes or policies and change of work plan for better performance.

The study recommended that project committees should have employees trained during the drilling activities to equip them with new and better skill and knowledge to improve projects efficiency. Training and developing, Morales most of the employees. Employees feel good when acquainted with the systems after training which boosts performance. Training should be done periodically.

## Suggestions for Further Studies

The research study was not able to cover all aspects of effects of committee competency on performance of borehole drilling projects. Therefore more study should be done on the same. Further research should be done on how to ensure that drilling of borehole projects is done perfectly and efficiently to improve performance and living standards of citizens.

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