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**INFLUENCE OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT FACTORS ON PROJECT SUCCESS, A CASE OF A CHILD CARE PROJECT
IN VIHIGA COUNTY**

Agoi, E.

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Agoi, E.

Candidate, Master of Science in Project Management, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and
Technology [JKUAT], Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Project success forms a critical foundation for project management and any manager wants to deliver to their stakeholders the intended goals of the project. A project is said to be a success if it achieves all of the agreed project objectives. The purpose of this study was to establish the influence of project factors on the success of projects in county Governments in Kenya. The study used project planning, project execution, monitoring and control as the main independent variables on which it pegged its objectives. The study adopted four main theories namely; organization theory, classical communication theory, thermostat model and the transformation flow value theory. It adopted a descriptive survey design and targeted project managers and supervisors of the selected project. The study used a sample of 52 respondents selected through a census. Questionnaires were the main data collection instruments. These instruments were pre-tested to ascertain whether they were valid and reliable. A coefficient of above 0.7 was achieved for all the study variables thereby making it reliable. The data was analyzed quantitatively and was presented in the form of descriptive and inferential statistics. The results showed that all the variables including project planning, project execution, project monitoring and project control positively influenced project success. The study recommended that management should incorporate stakeholders that will undertake the project to avoid rolling down already planned projects that may not do well in some regions. The management should also include expected risks in their project and give possible mitigation methods so that the contingency funds set aside for risks were estimated and allocated. Managers of different organizations which sponsor project should continually modify management aspects to improve performance of county government projects. Certain aspects of management should be addressed as a matter of policy, such as supervision of team members by the project managers to improve service delivery. Finally, national and county government has therefore, a duty to closely monitor all the projects from start to end.

Key Words: Project factors, Monitoring, Planning, Project Evaluation, Execution

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INTRODUCTION

Performance of projects is considered as a source of concern to both public and private sector clients. A project as defined by Wysocki, Beck and Crane (2000), is a sequence of unique, complex and connected activities having one goal or purpose that must be completed by a specific time, within the budget and according to the specification. A project will be considered totally successful, if it gets completed on time, within the budget and performs exactly to the designer's specifications. However, this is difficult to fulfill and many projects would not meet these requirements (Kikwasi, 2012). Project implementation varies among various options; various factors will play out to determine if the project will be implemented successfully. It is however established that, investors have an interest in projects being completed in a timely way and according to the budget and that it will meet quality expectations.

Project success requires creating a well-planned project schedule as well as understanding of the key success factors. It helps the project manager and the stakeholders to take the right decisions and act towards the project success. To ensure project success, the project manager must have requisite knowledge of project management practices which are, planning, monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of a project and the motivation of all involved to achieve project objectives within the defined time, cost and performance to meet the project's requirements. Most popular determinants of project success, accepted by the research community are project mission, top management support, project schedule/ plan, client consultation, personnel, technology to support project, client acceptance, monitoring and feedback, channels of communication, troubleshooting expertise (Serrador & Turner, 2014). Quality can be assured by identifying and eliminating factors that cause poor project performance.

Different studies have identified determinants and a lack of consensus of opinion among researchers on the criteria for judging project success and the factors that influence that success (Gopal & Gosain 2010). In addition, several studies addressing critical success factors (CSFs) have observed the impact of context on which factors are considered most critical as well as whether certain CSFs are indeed related to success. In most construction companies, management activities in construction project can be a better understanding by exploring the CSFs for improving the performance of their building projects. The CSFs approach has been established and popularized over the last 20 years (Chan, et al. 2014). Nevertheless, the majority of the studies focus on the traditional 'iron triangle' which are cost, quality and schedule (criteria for measuring project success) of conventional construction process rather than sustainable buildings (Walker & Shen, 2012).

Application of the best Project Management (PM) practices is of critical importance for organizational projects. The question arises what a best practice is: The author defines best practice as a more effective and resourceful method for achieving a goal that is better than other methods, processes and techniques being previously observed (Zenalzadeh, 2011). He also emphasized that the adoption of the best practices by organizations is an evolutionary process which takes time and adaptability to execute and implement. It is a procedure whereby standard method for carrying out various tasks are developed and followed. Project management best practices can be effectively adapted from International Standards and Guideline like International Standards Organization (ISO), American National Standardization Institute (ANSI), the International Project Management Association (IPMA) and the Project Management Institute (PMI) (Lilies et al., 2011).

Projects are an essential product of engineering organizations that operate in Make-to-Order environments of compatible manufacturing systems and must have an efficient project management

system, in order to meet their customer's tighter demands and standards for cost, time and quality (Irian *et al.*, 2009). All organizations, whether public sector or private sector, working in project environment need to adopt the PM practices, in one way or the other for sustainability. They may differ in terms of rules and regulations being applied to them but at the core, integration of manufacturing and project management is mandate by the specificity of this environment (Forced, 2009). However, in maintenance project, Gwayo *et al.* (2014) noted, there's a growing concern regarding the reasons why the requisite objectives are not achieved as per the project's client's expectations.

Project success is often commented on at the end of the project management phase. Muchung'u (2012) lamented that, some projects take as many as 3 years before they are completed; a scenario that is usually accompanied by huge cost overruns. Projects' implementation is open to all sorts of external influence, unexpected events, ever growing requirements, changing constraints and fluctuating resource flows. This clearly shows that if projects are applied and steps are not taken in order to manage them effectively and efficiently, the chance of failure is high. The foregoing has resulted to inevitable cost overruns, time overrun, idling resources and inconveniences to the targeted beneficiaries of such projects (Kikwasi, 2012). This is so due to the fact that, incompetent and/ or unsuccessfully completed construction projects affect service delivery. Projects which have stalled or are unsuccessfully completed will negatively affect beneficiaries.

According to the Project Management Institute (PMI), project management is the application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to project activities to meet the project requirements (PMI, 2008). As a result, project management practices can be construed to be vital for the planning, organizing, managing and controlling activities, which lead to better performance and increased productivity for projects. Similarly, Kupakuwana and Van der berg (2005) opined that the user of project

management techniques and principles may lead to more effective service delivery and project success. Cleland and Gareis (2006) revealed that the emergence of technological advancements and accelerated national and industrial developments have transformed project management practices into a highly sophisticated process over the years. These Collyer and Warren (2009) proposed that the use of early warning signals aimed at managing risks in these developments should be adopted.

In most developing countries, owing social, political and economic problems, as well as the low level of infrastructural development, Diallo and Thuillier (2004) identified that the construction of roads, houses, water and facilities as well as other government core prerogatives, were among the key projects frequently executed. The majority of these projects may be funded independently by the home government or through direct or indirect support from external agencies. Several studies have examined project management practices in developing countries. For instance, Nguyen (2007) acknowledged the rising significance of project management practices in Vietnam but still highlighted the limited use of risk management techniques during project management practice because of its relatively unknown relevance. This disclosure may indicate the tendencies of heightened risks during the life cycles of most projects in Vietnam. Furthermore, Nguyen (2007) added that ideally, project quality management an integral component of project management practice, which should be closely associated with just achieving project technical expectations in Vietnam.

For Nigeria, another leading developing nation, Dousman, Yabba and Omirin (2003) claimed that project management is still at its infancy stage. Their claims were established based on the absence of formalized project management frameworks or professionally recognized project management regulatory bodies in the country. This disclosure indicated that project management practice in Nigeria may be constantly enmeshed with similar

challenges faced in other developing countries. Therefore, project management practice in Nigeria may, to a large extent, be characterized by a lack of top management awareness of project management practices, highly bureaucratized projects because of an over dependence on government for project funding and control as well as corrupt practices that may occur at various project phases. Similarly, evidence from Okereke (2012) indicated that failures in several projects in Nigeria may be attributable to the absence of structured project management practice. Furthermore, Lawal (2000) submitted that many projects embarked on by the Nigerian government have remained incomplete or abandoned due to poor project management.

Murithi and Crawford (2003) listed the paucity of information in project management and insufficient literature describing the experiences of project managers as limiting factors for project management practice in most developing countries in Africa. Thus, it can be characterized by the limited use of lessons learnt from the past projects. Being fully aware of the importance of project management information experienced will never augur well for future projects and the effectiveness of project management practice in the concerned countries.

Over the years a number of companies and governments all over the world have witnessed project failure (e.g. McManus and Wood Harper, 2008, Ruuska and Teigland, 2009; Liu et al., 2011; Avilla et al., 2013). This has cost companies and governments huge sums of money. Health and information systems in South Africa IS projects in China and almost all World Bank funded projects in Africa are either a total failure or partial failure (Heeks, 2002, 2005, 2006) an example is the World Bank's Chad-Cameroon pipeline project. The project which cost \$4.2 billion was abandoned in 2008 (Fabian & Amir 2011). Deviations in projects and project management which brings about project failure have become normal in organizations (Pinto, 2014). Project failure in developing countries is very

high (Heeks, 2006; Kumar & Best, 2006; Swisset al., 2008; Aziz, 2013; Marzouk et al Rasas, 2013) in their quest for development, developing countries engage in projects such as building roads, dams, plants, pipes, industries, theatres, e-government services, telecommunication, ICT among others. These projects which are normally financed by IMF, World Bank.

Statement of the problem

County government performance is deemed as the vehicle for the execution of countries economic growth. In order to achieve set objectives, there need to be involvement of both external and external stakeholders (Mensah, 2013). The impact stakeholders can have on organizational policy, strategy and project is dependent on their relationship to either the organization itself or the issues of concern or both. The management of county government and the corresponding community, supplier's involvement signified link between PPM and stakeholder's involvement (Shah & Naqvi, 2014).

Despite the progress made by several counties in Kenya regarding development and execution of projects, a few challenges in the projects are emerging and slowing the transition process. The counties have been facing serious challenges in implementing their strategies and outing in the conditions required for the success of these strategies due to resistance from the community and other stakeholders. Some of the challenges facing the county include inadequate personnel with the required project management skills, inadequate monitoring, inefficient project planning and the un-involvement of the various stakeholders' inefficient control of projects among others. However, in maintenance project, Gwayo et al (2014) noted there's a growing concern regarding the reason why the requisite objectives are not achieved as per the projects' client's expectations. Muchung'u (2012) lamented that some projects take as many as 3 years before they are completed; a scenario that is usually accompanied by huge cost overruns, time overrun, idling resources and

inconveniences to the targeted beneficiaries of such projects (Kikwasi, 2012). This is due to the fact that and/or successfully completed construction projects affect service delivery. Projects which have stalled or are unsuccessfully completed will negatively affect beneficiaries.

Study Objectives

The study was guided by the following specific objectives:

- To examine the influence of project planning on project success in Counties in Kenya.
- To determine the influence of project execution process on project success in Counties in Kenya
- To evaluate effect of project monitoring on project success in Counties in Kenya.
- To investigate the influence of control of projects on project success in Counties in Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Organizational Theory

The Organizational Theory refers to the set of interrelated concepts, definitions that explain the behavior of individuals or groups or subgroups, who interacts with each other to perform the activities intended towards the accomplishment of a common goal. In other words, the organizational theory studies the effect of social relationships between the individuals within the organization along with their actions on the organization as a whole. Also, it studies the effects of internal and external business environment such as political, legal, cultural, etc. on the organization (Johnston & Brennan, 1996).

The term organization refers to the group of individuals who come together to perform a set of tasks with the intent to accomplish the common objectives. The organization is based on the concept of synergy, which means, a group can do more work than an individual working alone. Thus, in order to study the relationships between the individuals working together and their overall effect

on the performance of the organization is well explained through the organizational theories.

It is assumed that the organization consists of a management part and an effort part. Management at the operation level is seen to consist of centralized creation, revision and implementation of plans. This approach to management views a strong casual connection between the actions of management and outcomes of the organization. By assuming that translating a plan into action is the simple process of issuing 'orders', it takes plan production to be essentially synonymous with action.

Thermostat Model

Thermostat model conceptualized that in the production process, there is a process to control, a unit for performance measurement, a standard of performance, and a controlling unit. Koskela and Howell (2002) focuses on finding causes of deviations and acting on those causes, instead of only changing the performance level for achieving predetermined goals in the case of deviation. Project control therefore involves gauging performance, identifying deviations and learning the causes of deviations, their effects and the best means of countering them. The learning process is an avenue that can be used by project managers to improve their project performance. This theory turns out to be similar to the concept of job dispatching in manufacturing where it provides the interface between planning and work. This concept can be traced back to Emerson (1917).

A positive feedback is achieved when intended outcome is attained or may be negative when a situation where there's immediate response can be delayed. Feedback can also be used to determine the efficacy of a certain communication send or in a circumstance that has already happened. Its main theme concerns how elements like digital, mechanical or biological manages its behavior, relays, responds to and changes information or can be altered to achieve primary tasks effectively.

This theory was relevant to this study because, it showed that there was a need for project managers to individually tell staff of new regulations and improvements within the systems of the company to permit workers to be aware and take part successfully in issues that pertain to them. Hence they need to realize whilst to apply formal or casual mode of conversation, for the reason that their primary objective is to gain effects from the team of workers. Moreover in making use of the cybernetics theory, it becomes useful for any enterprise that intends to reap workers overall performance to make sure that feedback mechanism must be sufficient either inside the attitude to work, productiveness and better project implementation

Classical Communication Theory

According to (Koskela & Howell, 2002), the theory of execution asserts that managerially, execution is about dispatching tasks to work stations and this is also regarded as the classical communication theory. However, for execution to be effective, the classical communication theory must be complemented with the language/action perspective the vice used in communicating the tasks dispatched to work stations must be completely comprehensive to the operatives. There should be feedback mechanisms that will convey the operatives understanding of the instruction passed and such, enable tasks to be executed as it is envisaged in the plan.

Information flow originates in a source. A transmitter encodes the signal which then flows through a channel to a receiver, which decodes information for the destination. Shannon and Weaver (1959) point at three sets of problems with communication based on this model:

This theory turns out to be similar to the concept of job dispatching in manufacturing where it provides the interface between plan and work. This concept can be traced back to (Emerson, 1917). The basic issue in dispatching is allocating or assignment of tasks or jobs to machines or work crews, usually by a central authority. According to a modern definition job dispatching is a procedure that uses

logical decision rules to select a job for processing on a machine that has just become available (Bhaskaran & Pinedo, 1991).

Dispatching consists of two elements; decision (for selecting task for a work station from those predefined tasks that are ready for execution) and communicating the assignment to the work station. However in the case of project management, that decision is largely taken care in planning and thus dispatching is reduced to mere communication. The underlying theory classical theory of communication (Shannon & Weaver, 1949) where a set of symbols is transmitted from sender to receiver

Classical communication theory was relevant to this study since it focused on division of labor, where projects were broken down into smaller tasks that are easy to complete. Employee's responsibilities and expectations were clearly defined. This approach allows workers to narrow the field of expertise and to specialize in one area. The division of labor approach leads to increased productivity and higher efficiency, as workers are not expected to multi-task. Small businesses owner can benefit from taking this approach if they are looking to increase production with minimal expense.

Empirical Review

Project planning has been related to organizational changes in the environment (Pearce & Robinson, 2012). For any organization, strategy helps in integrating the long term plans and ensuring that there's harmony between the vision, mission, objectives, core values, activities and its implementation are core management functions. A strategic plan is a set of processes undertaken in order to develop a range of strategies that will contribute to achieving the organizational direction (Srivastava & Teo, 2012) this therefore calls for formulation of a coherent document which will guide the efforts of all the stakeholders, outline what the organization is trying to achieve and how it intends to achieve it. Strategies can be formulated in three levels.

A project will be considered totally successful if it gets completed on time, within budget and performs exactly to the designer's specification (Kikwasi, 2012) project implementation varies among various options. In all the implementation options, various factors will play out to determine if the project will be implemented successfully. It is however established that investors have an interest in project being completed in a timely may according to the budget and it will meet quality expectations.

The execution stage involves the implementation of project activities. Thus, it is the process of leading and performing work as described in the management plan and affecting the changes approved to realize the set objectives. This stage is characterized by continuous performance of project activities, change requests, monitoring and control, risk, quality, communication and stakeholder management (Desmond, 2004). The PMI (2013) outlines the key aspects in this phase. First, the inputs in this stage include the plan, the change requests, business environmental aspects and organizational policies and assets. Secondly, the available tools and techniques applied during execution influence the progress of the project. These include project management information systems, stakeholder and project team meetings, communication channels and monitoring and control activities. In the course of execution, deliverables are assessed and measured; change requests are affected and documented; project documents are updated to reflect progress and change requests.

However, the understanding of project success has been altered to include limitation to minimum changes in the scope of the activities, shift in the corporate culture and acceptance of project results by clients (Alexandrova, 2012). Shenhar, Levy, & Dvir (1997) postulated that project success is measured in four dimensions, one of which is project efficiency during execution and immediately after completion.

PMBOK (2000) defines project control as a process that ensures the project objectives are met by monitoring and measuring progress regularly to identify variances from plan, so that corrective action can be taken when necessary and further identifies controlling process to have links with planning and executing process. Also Kerzner (1995) mentions controlling as the three step process; measuring progress, evaluating what remains to be done, and corrective action to achieve or exceed the objectives.

Project control is project management function that comprises of monitoring, evaluating and comparing actual versus planned results (ILX Group, 2015). It tracks the projects progress towards achieving the stated objectives within project constraints; identifies deviations, evaluates alternative courses of action and takes remedial actions (Larson & Gray, 2011).

Project monitoring is the systematic and regular-collection of data over a period of time to identify and measure changes. Monitoring involves the collection and analysis of data over a period of time to identify and measure changes. Monitoring involves the collection of data prior to and during project implementation (United Nations Environment Programme, 2008). The primary purpose of monitoring is to document the implementation process, facilitate decision making, and provide feedback for plan review and lessons learnt.

Monitoring refers to the routine task of collecting and analyzing information in order to track progress of a project against a set plan checking compliance to set standards. Monitoring is the art of collecting the necessary information with minimum effort in order to make a steering decision at the right time (Gudda, 2011). It helps management to identify patterns and trends and helps the management to make informed decisions.

The information collected constitutes a database that is important for analysis, discussion, and evaluation and reporting. According to

Gebremedhin, Getachew, & Amha, (2010), the collected data helps to measure progress towards achieving project/organization objectives. Monitoring also involves feedback on the progress of the project to all the stakeholders of the project, which is used for decision making to improve project performance (Bartle, 2007). Monitoring helps to strengthen organizations and their human resource capacity.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed descriptive survey research. The descriptive survey research design was preferred because of its appropriateness to examine causal relationships between study variables (Saunders *et al.*, 2007)). The target population comprised of project managers and related staff at the chosen study site.. The study sample had 52 respondents picked through a census approach. Data collected mainly through questionnaires which were self-administered by the researcher. The questionnaires in usage for this

research were of close-ended questions. The questionnaire was structured with likert scale to quantify the responses. A pilot study was conducted before the main study. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) facilitated the data analysis.

RESULTS

The researcher administered 52 questionnaires to the sampled project managers, assistant project managers and planning officers in the selected study site. Out of fifty two (52) questionnaires that were administered forty five (45) responses were obtained, which gave a response rate of 86.5%. According to Kothari (2004) a response rate of 50% or more is adequate for analysis.

Correlation Results

Pearson correlation was performed to study the direction of relationship between the dependent and independent variables. Table 1 below showed the results of the analysis.

Table 1: Correlation Analysis Results

		Project Planning	Project Execution	Project Monitoring	Project Control	Project Success
Project Planning	Pearson Correlation	1		.		
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
	N	52				
Project Execution	Pearson Correlation	.709**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000				
	N	52	52			
Project Monitoring	Pearson Correlation	.727**	.878**			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000			
	N	52	52	52		
Project Control	Pearson Correlation	.593**	.777**	.809**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		
	N	52	52	52	52	
Project Success	Pearson Correlation	.691**	.734**	.723**	.728**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	52	52	52	52	52

The results in table 1 above indicated that all independent variables are positively related to the dependent variable. The independent variables showed significant positive relationship. Project planning is positively related to Project success at $R=.691$, $p=.000$. Project execution is positively related at $R=.734$, $p=.000$; Project monitoring is positively related at $R=.723$, $p=.000$ while project

control factors are related to project success at $R=.728$, $p=.000$.

This indicates that the variables have significant positive correlation with project success.

Multiple Regression Results

The regression analysis was also performed and results for model summary are as reported on table 2 below.

Table 2: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.867 ^a	.752	.738	.604

a. Predictors: (Constant) Project Planning, Project execution, Project monitoring, Project control

Table 3: ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	76.463	4	19.116	52.427	.000 ^b
	Residual	25.158	69	.365		
	Total	101.622	83			

a. Dependent Variable: Project Success

b. Predictors: (Constant), Project Planning, Project execution, Project monitoring, Project evaluation

Regression analysis between independent variables and the dependent variable had coefficient of relationship $R=.867$. This showed the existence of a high positive relationship. The coefficient of determinant, R^2 was .752, the proportion of variance in the dependent variable (Project Success) that was explained by the independent variables. This indicates that a total of 75.2% of variations in Project Success can be explained by project Planning, execution, monitoring and Project control while 24.8% can be explained by other factors which were not considered in this study.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study found that project planning, when jointly regressed had a positive influence on project success. Similarly, based on the second objective, the study revealed that project control had a positive influence on the success of the project. The study revealed that project execution had a positive impact on project success. However, as much as the joint regression showed that planning and execution influenced project success, the two

variables are interlinked since planning ushers in execution as shown in literature review.

The government and other management organs are advised to incorporate a few stakeholders that will undertake the project to avoid rolling down already planned projects that may not do well in some regions. The management should also include expected risks in their project and give possible mitigation methods so that the contingency funds set aside for risks are estimated and allocated. This will help to cup uncertainties that may reduce on deliverables or client satisfaction.

Certain aspects of management should be addressed as a matter of policy, such as supervision of team members by the project managers to improve service delivery. Both the national and county government has therefore, a duty to closely monitor all the projects from start to end. Also, the government is advised to employ highly qualified managers to help exercise their management skills while supervising and executing projects for better performance

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