



DETERMINANTS OF PROJECT PERFORMANCE, A CASE OF ONE ACRE FUND PROJECTS IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the determinants of project performance, A case of One Acre fund projects in Kenya. The study specific objectives were to examine the influence of Project leadership, project financing, monitoring and evaluation and beneficiary involvement on project performance of One Acre Fund in Kenya. The study used the following theories in supporting the research variables; stakeholder theory, resource dependency theory, system theory and complexity leadership theory. A descriptive research design was used in the study. The study targeted 397 respondents. Stratified random sampling was used to select 124 respondents. The study used primary data which was collected using structured questionnaires. Pilot test was conducted to test validity and reliability of data collection tools. Descriptive and inferential analyses were done by the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 23) and were presented through figures, tables and charts. The findings established that there is significant positive influence of project leadership, project financing, monitoring and evaluation and beneficiary involvement on project performance of One Acre Fund in Kenya. The resulted postulated that the four independent variables, significantly predicted variance in project performance of One Acre Fund, Kenya. The study concluded that improvement in project leadership, project financing, beneficiary involvement, monitoring and evaluation would results to improved project performance of One Acre Fund. The study recommended that management of One Acre Fund projects should place more resources in cultivating good and quality leadership for the benefit of the projects. Management of OAF should also carry out financial resource planning to ensure that financial resources are adequate for the operation of the One Acre Fund projects. Enough resources should be allocated so as to have the funds availed at the right time and be in the right hands in order to have the monitoring and evaluation processes a success.

Key Words: *Project leadership, project financing, monitoring and evaluation, beneficiary involvement*

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INTRODUCTION

Performance of a project is considered as a source of concern to both public and private sector clients. Project success requires creating a well-planned project schedule as well as understanding of the key success factors also. It helps the project manager and the stakeholders to take the right decisions and act towards the project success. Most popular determinants of project successes accepted by research community are-project mission, top management support, project schedule plan client consultation personnel technology to support the project client acceptance monitoring and feedback channels of communication troubleshooting expertise (Serrador & Turner, 2014).

Many developed and developing countries have invested in agro-based development projects. Mrema, Baker, and Kahan (2008) reveal that in some developed countries like U.S.A the government through the ministry of agriculture places a high emphasis on the performance of agricultural projects. Dwyer and Black (2007) revealed that in the United Kingdom, the government policy on agriculture reforms was aimed upon basic research which provides evidence-based recommendations drawn from holistic analysis of contemporary top project performance in different agricultural sectors.

The performance of agro-based projects varies from one country to another but in Kenya agro-based project performance has remained unstable with a major decline experienced after the post-election violence of 2008 (Ministry of Agriculture report, 2018). During the 2016/17 financial year, the country had a deficit of 10 million bags of maize, the main staple food for Kenyans. The government introduced Community based organizations which were used as the building block for promoting agricultural projects to remedy the declining agriculture performance. The community based projects were aimed at empowering the communities to take up agribusiness opportunities by promoting entrepreneurship, innovation, value addition, access to information, linking farmers to

markets, access to rural finance and establishing strategic partnership (MOA and MOLD report,2011). Most of the population in rural communities, however, is still suffering from persistent food insecurity and poverty despite all the efforts made by the government through NALEP service extension groups (Youn, 2013).

One Acre Fund is an Illinois a not-for-profit organization that was incorporated in December 2005 and is registered to operate in its program countries, including those where Once Acre Fund conducts trial activities. Currently, the primary countries of operations are Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi and Tanzania. The mission of OAF is to empower chronically-hungry farm families in Africa to uplift them out of hunger and poverty OAF achieves its mission by working with self-help groups in rural villages to deliberately reach the most severely hunger-affected (OAF, 2021)

In Kenya, OAF Headquartered in Kakamega, Kenya, the organization works with farmers in rural villages throughout Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania and recently Malawi. Using a market based approach, One Acre Fund facilitates activities and transactions at various levels of the farming value chain, including seed sourcing and market support. In 2013, farmers who worked with One Acre Fund realized a 180% return on their investment and significantly increased farm income on every planted acre (OAF, 2021)

One Acre Fund offers smallholder farmers an asset-based loan that includes: 1) distribution of seeds and fertilizer; 2) financing for farm inputs; 3) training on agriculture techniques; and 4) market facilitation to maximize profits. To receive the One Acre Fund loan and training, farmers must join a village group that is supported by a local One Acre Fund field officer. Field officers meet regularly with the farmer groups to coordinate delivery of farm inputs, administer trainings and to collect repayments. One Acre Fund offers a flexible repayment system: farmers may pay back their loans in any increment at any time during the growing season. Beyond their core program model,

One Acre Fund also offers smallholder farmers opportunities to purchase additional products and services on credit. These include solar lights and reusable sanitary pads. One Acre Fund states that it practices sustainable intensification and land management (OAF, 2021)

Some of the projects been implemented by One Acre Fund include Nutrition Intervention Project - Distribution of Food supplements and Eggs to Expectant Mothers and children under 5 years in Bungoma County; Tree Planting Project - Tree planting in Western province for economic empowerment of Farmers around One Acre Fund Shops in Bungoma, Vihiga and Kakamega County; Improving Access to Clean Water in Western Drilling of boreholes for farmers to Crop Commercialization Project - A project of linking Macadamia farmers to Macadamia processors in Central Kenya ; Soil Characterization Project - Soil testing for One Acre Fund Clients in Western and recommending the appropriate crops and measures to improve yield in Homa Bay County (OAF, 2021)

Statement of the Problem

Despite the importance and emphasis on projects, the end results for most projects have been discouraging with majority of projects across different countries, industries and sectors registering poor performance (Jugdev & Muller, 2005). Report from World Bank (WB) reveals that the Government of Kenya receives massive donor aid from various sources to fund a number of food security challenges and other sustainable development goals (WB, 2013). However, According to World Bank (2017), performance of said projects are inferior in Sub Saharan Africa and Asia due to low implementation success rate. The major causes of failures cited include insufficient implementing capacity, inadequate monitoring and evaluation, lack of standardized methodologies to guide project management, weak project design, insufficient stakeholder participation and political interference (Msafiri, 2015).

Kenya continues to grapple with challenging food insecurity, poverty and related sustainable

development goals despite efforts from state and non-state actors. The national and County Governments, local and international NGOs and other concerned organizations invest large sums every year for the implementation of various sustainable development goals (Okoth, 2016). However, these projects have failed to have substantial impacts on livelihoods. Report from World Bank (WB) reveals that most of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) projects in agriculture, health, water and sanitation have not achieved their objectives. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) shows that projects implemented in developing countries collapse one year after completion of the projects (OECD, 2018). Further statistics from Government of Kenya (GoK) reveal that 36% of the SDGs related projects fail after a short time after implementation (GoK, 2018).

According to a study done by Muyala (2017) indicated some Kenyan farmers are abandoning the One Acre Fund due to lack of provision of farm inputs and extension services that the NGO was previously providing to them. This has consequently affected the yield of farmers who solely depended on farm production to earn a decent living; problems of low output of agricultural produce are now a common phenomenon to farmers registered by the NGO. The study reported that the project has lost about 10% of its members due to low satisfaction. Further, According to Khalwale (2019), nearly a decade down the line, beneficiary farmers in Kakamega County are unable to practice farming independently. Instead, the initiative has caused what can be called a “dependency syndrome,” that the withdrawal of these agents of development would lead the beneficiaries into the worst destitute people of the county.

Previous on the determinants of project performance has yield mixed outcome therefore making it impossible to generalize the findings and recommendations. For instance, Inda and Moronge (2015) as well as Kirui (2016) found that fund management and stakeholder participation is

significant determinant. However, Osedo (2015) indicated that stakeholder participation has weak and not statistically significant influence of successful project implementation. Andhoga (2016) failed to isolate stakeholder participation as a significant determinant of effective project implementation. This leaves a significant knowledge gap which this study filled. This study hence aimed to fill the missing link by investigating the determinants of project performance, a case of One Acre fund projects in Kenya.

Research Objectives

The general objective of this study was to investigate the determinants of project performance, a case of One Acre fund projects in Kenya. The specific objectives were;

- To examine the influence of Project leadership on project performance of One Acre Fund in Kenya.
- To find out the influence of project financing on project performance of One Acre Fund in Kenya.
- To find out the influence of monitoring and evaluation on project performance of One Acre Fund in Kenya.
- To find out the influence of beneficiary involvement on project performance of One Acre Fund in Kenya.

The study was guided by the following research hypotheses

- H_{01} : There is no significant relationship between project leadership and project performance of One Acre Fund in Kenya.
- H_{02} : There is no significant relationship between fund availability and project performance of One Acre Fund in Kenya.
- H_{03} : There is no significant relationship between the monitoring and evaluation and project performance of One Acre Fund in Kenya.
- H_{04} : There is no significant relationship between beneficiary involvement and project performance of One Acre Fund in Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Stakeholders Theory

The stakeholder theory asserts that the importance of a firm focuses on various partner groups that were concerned with the daily operations of the organization. Hence, Stakeholder theory was propounded by Freeman (1984) and suggested that managers in an organization had an obligation of ensuring that there was cordial relationship between customers, business partners, suppliers and contractors. More so a stakeholder who controlled them, could come up with value chain for customers, vendors, communities and financiers. The illustration and representation of all the partner groups on projects was therefore paramount for effective and efficient performance of the organization (Gibson, 2000). The stakeholder's model was very critical since it defined duties, rights and responsibilities of various stakeholders (Freeman, 2002). Stakeholder had larger share in the corporation and expected maximum returns (Frey & Nickerman, 2009). Stakeholder theory was therefore relevant to this study because beneficiaries' involvement is vital for project performance through ensuring proper management of the potential project management risks. The theory aided in investigating the influence of beneficiary involvement on project performance of One Acre Fund in Kenya.

Resource Dependence Theory

This study was anchored on the resource dependency theory (RDT) as propounded by Pfeffer and Salancik (1978). Resource dependence theory is the study of how the external resources of organizations affect the behavior of the organization. RDT is based upon how the external resources of organizations affect the behavior of the organization. The theory is based upon the following tenets: organizations are dependent on resources, these resources ultimately originate from the environment of organizations, the environment to a considerable extent contains other organizations, the resources one organization needs are thus often in the hand of the

organizations, resources are a basis of power, legally independent organizations can therefore be dependent on each other (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978).

Complexity Leadership Theory

Given the centrality of complexity in determining organizational outcomes, researchers have developed new approaches to leadership grounded in complexity theory (Lord, 2008; Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey, 2007; Surie & Hazy, 2006). These approaches are motivated by the desire to develop leadership models that more accurately reflect the complex nature of leadership as it occurs in practice (Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2009). They represent a growing concern that traditional models of leadership are insufficient for understanding the dynamic, distributed, and contextual nature of leadership in organizations (McKelvey, 2008; Johannessen & Stacey, 2005).

Systems Theory

First proposed by Ludwig von Bertalanffy in 1945, systems theory has been used for decades as an analytical approach to understand the operation of complex systems. According to Mutong’Wa & Khaemba (2014), a system is a set of several independent and regularly interacting units or subsystems that work together to achieve a set of pre-determined objectives. Therefore, systems theory provides a framework for defining the subject entity, creating a formalized model of the entity, hence enabling the ability to understand the entity in terms of the elements and their properties, and thereby understanding results (Mutong’Wa & Khaemba, 2014). Systems theory states that real systems are open to, and interact with, their environments, and that they can acquire qualitatively new values through emergence, resulting in continual evolution.

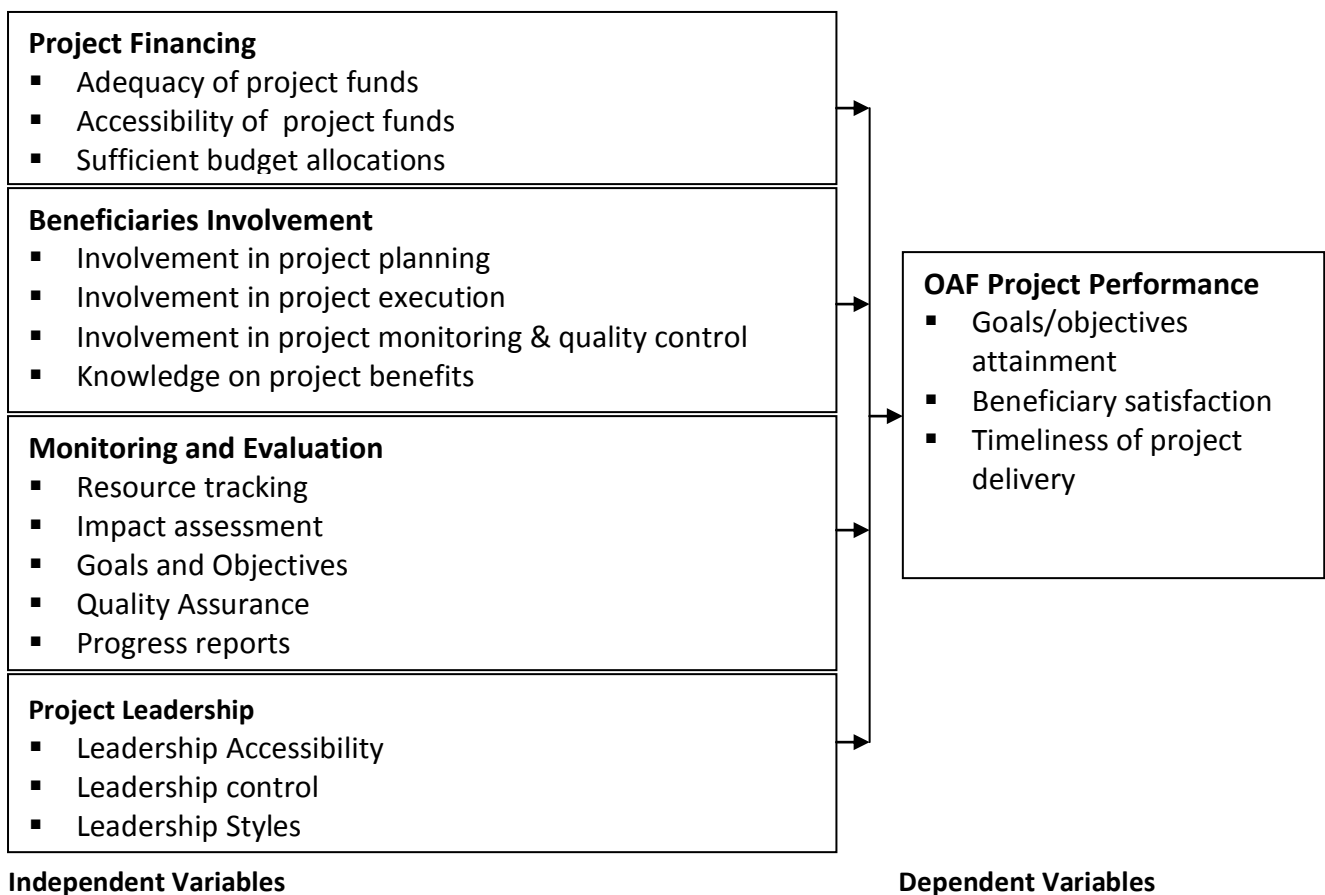


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Empirical Literature Review

Ismail and Fathi (2018) examined the relationship between leadership styles (transformational and transactional) and project performance. A set of questionnaires was administered to 52 project managers, executive directors and program officers in 18 organizations in Addis Ababa, of whom 44 were responded. Regression statistical analysis was done to explain the relationship between variables. The most salient finding was that transformational leadership styles were related to project performance.

Kiioh (2015) examined influence of project management leadership research on performance of Information Technology projects. The study employed a descriptive survey design and adopted a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods. The targeted population comprised 100 full time employees of Fintech Kenya that included senior managers, project managers, project team members and consultants. The sample size was 80 drawn from the targeted population and this was in accordance with the Krejcie and Morgan formula. The study concluded that there was a significant relationship between project management leadership aspects and performance of IT projects; project management leadership style had the greatest influence on performance of IT projects.

Adhoga, Mavole and Mose (2017) analysed influence of project financing on CDF project performance in Kasipul Constituency. Mixed research design involved both quantitative and qualitative research approaches. The target population was 254 projects from which samples of 77 projects were stratified randomly selected. Census sampling was used to sample CDFC members and national government officials. Project financing had significant effects on effective management of CDF funded projects. It was recommended that the government should strengthen existing policies that advocate for appropriate project financing and embrace stakeholder participation to enhance effective management of CDF projects.

Kuria and Wanyoike (2016) assessed factors influencing performance of donor funded projects in Nakuru County. A descriptive research design was adopted with a target population of 726; involving funding agency officials, project managers, beneficiaries and committee members. Stratified random sampling was used to select 88 respondents. A semi-structured questionnaire was used to collect. Project financing had strong positive relationships with sustainability.

Monitoring and evaluation of projects is of great importance to various players including project sponsors and it goes further to ensure similar projects are replicated elsewhere and not only revolving around a few areas. Monitoring and to some extent evaluation, fall under the control functions of project management. It provides regular feedback that helps the organization track costs, personnel, implementation time, and organization development, economic and financial results and compare what was planned to actual performance (Emmanuel, 2015). Monitoring and evaluation, although very essential in improving performance, is also very complex, multidisciplinary and involves skill intensive processes (Engela & Ajam, 2010).

Kiara and Luketero (2018) focused on the factors influencing performance of donor funded projects a case of Embu Water and Sanitation Company, Embu County, Kenya. The study used descriptive design; the target population was 49. The study concludes that regulatory of monitoring & evaluation influence performance of donor funded projects at very great extent. Monitoring is a very important step-in the project management life cycle.

Nyaguthii and Oyugi (2013) sought to determine the extent to which involvement of beneficiary on performance of community-based projects affects the successful implementation of Constituency Development Fund projects in Kirinyaga county, Mwea constituency. The study recommended that community members, whether influential or not, should be involved in identification,

implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the projects to boost success.

Ngondo (2014) investigated the influence of beneficiary participation in project performance as one of the contributors to timely completion of projects in Kanyekini ward-Kirinyaga central constituency. The study found out that project beneficiaries had not been approached directly to join any of the projects activity teams during the projects planning and implementation, however, where participation occurred, their participation was valued fairly well and that during implementation deadlines are met to help stay within schedule, budget and credibility. The study recommended that project managers and their team should introduce frequent meetings with project beneficiaries and allocate time for them in their schedules.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, the researcher used descriptive research survey design. The study targeted 397 respondents from One Acre Fund comprising of clients (group leaders), program managers, finance managers, field operations coordinators, customer engagement managers and M&E Managers. Stratified sampling technique was utilized while respondents were selected through simple random

sampling. The study's sample size was determined using Nassiuma (2000) formula. Primary data was collected through structured questionnaires. The data analysis in this study involved the use of descriptive and inferential statistics. SPSS version 23 is the computer analysis tool that was used in this study for data analysis. Analyzed data were organized into models and tables for easy reference. The study used multiple Régression model below ;

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + e$$

Y = Project performances

β_0 = Constant

X_1 = Project Leadership

X_2 = Project Financing

X_3 = Monitoring and Evaluation

X_4 = Beneficiary Involvement

{ β_0 - β_4 } = Beta coefficients

e = the error term

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Project performance in the One Acre Fund

To investigate the determinants of project performance, a case of One Acre fund projects in Kenya, the researcher sought to find information regarding the project performance which is the main response variable in this study. The findings were as displayed in below in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive Analysis for Project performance

1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Undecided, 4-Agree, 5-Strongly Agree.

Project performance	5	4	3	2	1	Mean	SDV
One Acre Fund projects are implemented within the budget	18 (18.9)	33 (34.7)	31 (32.6)	7 (7.4)	6 (6.3)	3.526	1.0802
One Acre Fund projects are implemented within expected timelines	7 (7.4)	45 (47.4)	21 (22.1)	15 (15.8)	7 (7.4)	3.316	1.0645
Implemented Once Acre Fund projects are sustainable	14 (14.7)	47 (49.5)	21 (22.1)	12 (12.6)	1 (1.1)	3.642	0.9216
Project beneficiaries are satisfied with performance of One Acre Fund Projects	17 (17.9)	37 (38.9)	23 (24.2)	17 (17.9)	1 (1.1)	3.547	1.0186
5 One Acre Fund projects are implemented and evaluated according to set objectives	5 (5.3)	32 (33.7)	37 (38.9)	18 (18.9)	3 (3.2)	3.189	0.9144
Beneficiaries of projects wants the project activities to continue	19 (20)	30 (31.6)	30 (31.6)	12 (12.6)	4 (4.2)	3.505	1.0805
Composite Mean						3.454	1.0133

From table 1, few of respondents agreed (34.7%) One Acre Fund projects are implemented within the budget while 32.6% were undecided with a mean of 3.526. The results also revealed that 47.4% of respondents agreed that One Acre Fund projects are implemented within expected timelines while 22.1% were undecided with a mean of 3.316.

More so, 49.5% of respondents agreed that implemented Once Acre Fund projects are sustainable although 22.1% of the respondents were undecided with a mean of 3.64. The study also established that 38.9% of the respondents agreed that project beneficiaries are satisfied with performance of one Acre Fund Projects although 24.2% were undecided with a mean of 3.645.

In regard to One Acre Fund projects are implemented and evaluated according to set objectives, 33.7% of the respondents agreed and 38.9% of the respondents were undecided with a

mean of 3.189. Lastly, 31.6% of the respondents agreed that beneficiaries of projects want the project activities to continue with 31.6% of them remaining undecided. The mean of 3.5 indicated that the beneficiaries of projects want the project activities to continue.

Averagely, the project performance at One Acre Fund was at 69.1% mean response (mean=3.454, std. dev. =1.0133) rated high as shown in Table 1.

Project leadership and Project performance

The first objective of this study was to examine the influence of Project leadership on project performance of One Acre Fund in Kenya. To achieve this, the researcher queried the respondents about the project leadership. The responses are as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis for Project leadership

1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Undecided, 4-Agree, 5-Strongly Agree

Project Leadership	5	4	3	2	1	Mean	SDV
1 Existing leadership style ensures there is accessibility of leaders for consultation on project issues	24 (25.3)	48 (50.5)	13 (13.7)	8 (8.4)	2 (2.1)	3.884	.9550
2 There is accountability of project implementation from the leadership	22 (23.2)	55 (57.9)	11 (11.6)	5 (5.3)	2 (2.1)	3.947	.8675
3 The leadership ensures there is adequate resources for project success	35 (36.8)	25 (26.3)	24 (25.3)	7 (7.4)	4 (4.2)	3.842	1.1328
4 Project leaders ensures there is effective communication during project implementation	15 (15.8)	32 (33.7)	41 (43.2)	5 (5.3)	2 (2.1)	3.558	0.8958
5. Project leadership clearly states the roles and duties of each member in achievement of goals	22 (23.2)	29 (30.5)	35 (36.8)	7 (7.4)	2 (2.1)	3.653	0.9868
Composite Mean						3.777	0.9676

From Table 2, 50.5% of the sampled respondents agreed that existing leadership style ensures there is accessibility of leaders for consultation on project issues while 25.3% strongly agreed on the same with a mean of 3.884. Similarly, majority of the respondents (57.9%) agreed that there is accountability of project implementation from the

leadership and additional 23.2% strongly agreed on the same with a mean of 3.94. In regards to the leadership ensuring there is adequate resources for project success, 26.3% of the respondents agreed while 36.8% strongly agreed although 25.3% were neutral with a mean of 3.895.

The results also revealed that 33.7% of the respondents agreed that project leaders ensure there is effective communication during project implementation and 15.8% strongly agreed with a mean of 3.9. However, 43.2% of the respondents were undecided. Lastly, 30.5% of the respondents agreed that project leadership clearly states the roles and duties of each member in achievement of goals and 23.2% of the respondents strongly agreed with a mean of 3.65.

Averagely, the level of project leadership was at 75.5% mean response (mean=3.777, std. dev. =0.9676) rated high, an implication that project leadership such as leadership Accessibility, Leadership control and Leadership Styles influences project performance. The results of this study concur with the findings of Elloy (2008) who indicated that the goal of a leader in a project environment is to improve performance of team members by developing the teams own capabilities

of displaying leadership and goal settings. Bussiswe, Maseko and Cecile (2013) emphasises that there are certain leadership styles and characteristics identified as being critical for successful project delivery. The results were consistent with finding by Waldman and Atwater (1994) who noted that that transformational leadership by top most managers of a project had positive impact on the outcomes of a project in terms of quality, time taken and the satisfaction of stakeholders.

Project financing and Project performance

The second objective of this study was to find out the influence of project financing on project performance of One Acre Fund in Kenya. To achieve this, the researcher sought from the respondents' information about the project financing. The responses are as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Descriptive Analysis for Project financing

1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Undecided, 4-Agree, 5-Strongly Agree

Project financing	5	4	3	2	1	Mean	SDV
There is adequate fund for each aspect of project implementation	24 (25.3)	33 (34.7)	14 (14.7)	20 (21.1)	4 (4.2)	3.558	1.2003
It is easy to access funds allocated for various projects	17 (17.9)	42 (44.2)	20 (21.1)	13 (13.7)	3 (3.2)	3.600	1.0355
Funds are allocated per the budgeted activities	16 (16.8)	19 (20)	21 (22.1)	34 (35.8)	5 (5.3)	3.074	1.2050
Funds are sustainable to run the project as per the stipulated time of the project implementation	17 (17.9)	47 (49.5)	16 (16.8)	12 (12.6)	3 (3.2)	3.663	1.0170
Projects funds are disbursed on time which ensure projects are implemented timely	12 (12.6)	46 (48.4)	23 (24.2)	8 (8.4)	6 (6.3)	3.526	1.0298
Composite Mean						3.484	1.0975

Results in Table 3, revealed that 34.7% of the sampled respondents agreed that there is adequate fund for each aspect of project implementation and 25.3% of the respondent strongly agreed with a mean of 3.658. The results also revealed that 44.2% of the respondents agreed that it is easy to access funds allocated for various projects although 21.1% were undecided with a mean of 3.60. In regards to funds are allocated per the budgeted activities,

20.0% agreed and 16.8% strongly agreed on the same. On the other hand, 22.1% of the respondents were undecided and 35.8% disagreed that funds are allocated per the budgeted activities with a mean of 3.1.

The results also revealed that majority of the respondents (49.5%) agreed that funds are sustainable to run the project as per the stipulated

time of the project implementation and further 17.9% agreed with a mean of 3.66. Lastly, majority of the respondents agreed (48.4%) that projects funds are disbursed on time which ensure projects are implemented timely and further 24.2% were undecided with a mean of 3.52. Averagely, the level of project financing at the One Acre Fund was at 69.7% mean response (mean=3.484, std. dev. =1.095) rated high. This is an indication that the way in which project financing is managed in terms of adequacy of project funds, accessibility of project funds and sufficient budget allocations is conducted influences project performance. The findings were similar to those of Brigham and Ehrhardt (2013) who reiterated that programme fund availability enhances continuous and sufficient cash flow for a project in order to meet the expenditures incurred at the course of a project and

thus project fund availability is a very critical element of accounting in that it provides direct link between the start of a project to the end. The findings are in agreement with study by Umulisa, Mbabazize, Shukla (2015) who assessed the effects of Project financial resources on project performance. Financial resource planning practices were found to influence project performance.

Monitoring and evaluation and Project performance

The third objective of this study was to find out the influence of monitoring and evaluation on project performance of One Acre Fund in Kenya. To achieve this, the researcher probed the respondents about the monitoring and evaluation. The responses are as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Descriptive Analysis for Monitoring and Evaluation

1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Undecided, 4-Agree, 5-Strongly Agree

Monitoring and evaluation	5	4	3	2	1	Mean	SDV
1 Project evaluation inform change which is essential for project performance	15 (15.8)	38 (40)	26 (27.4)	9 (9.5)	7 (7.4)	3.474	1.0997
2 Resources tracking affects project scope on implementation of One Acre Fund projects	36 (37.9)	20 (21.1)	31 (32.6)	7 (7.4)	1 (1.1)	3.874	1.0442
3 Monitoring of One Acre Fund projects identifies areas for improvement in the course of implementation	23 (24.2)	35 (36.8)	22 (23.2)	10 (10.5)	5 (5.3)	3.642	1.1196
4 There is periodic evaluation of One Acre Fund Projects and feedback provided to stakeholders	15 (15.8)	30 (31.6)	28 (29.5)	16 (16.8)	6 (6.3)	3.337	1.1262
5 The project monitoring always ensures that the all goals and objectives of all projects are achieved	12 (12.6)	38 (40)	29 (30.5)	15 (15.8)	1 (1.1)	3.474	0.9435
6 Project status is tracked consistently and circulated to relevant stakeholders	22 (23.2)	29 (30.5)	35 (36.8)	7 (7.4)	2 (2.1)	3.474	1.1135
Composite Mean						3.546	1.0745

From Table 4, slight majority of the respondents (40.0%) agreed that project evaluation inform change which is essential for project performance although 27.4% of the respondents were undecided on the same with a mean of 3.474. However, 21.1% of the respondents agreed that resources tracking affect project scope on implementation of One Acre

Fund projects and 37.9% strongly agree on the same with a mean of 3.87. Similarly, 24.2% of the respondents strongly agreed monitoring of One Acre Fund projects identifies areas for improvement in the course of implementation and further 36.8% agreed on the same with a mean of 3.64.

In regards to there is periodic evaluation of One Acre Fund Projects and feedback provided to stakeholders, 31.6% of the respondents agreed that there is periodic evaluation of One Acre Fund Projects and feedback provided to stakeholders although 29.5% were undecided with a mean of 3.33. The results also revealed that 40.0% of the respondents agreed that the project monitoring always ensures that the all goals and objectives of all projects are achieved while 30.5% were undecided with a mean 3.47. Lastly, 30.5% of the respondents agreed that project status is tracked consistently and circulated to relevant stakeholders while 36.8% were undecided with a mean of 3.47.

Averagely, the level of monitoring and evaluation was at 70.9% mean response (mean=3.546, std. dev. =1.046) rated high, a suggestion that monitoring and evaluation such as resource tracking, impact assessment, goals and Objectives and Quality Assurance influences project performance. According to Kusek and Rist (2010) activity of monitoring is concerned with regularly

having a check of whether or not an intervention is rolling on as planned while evaluation is concerned with establishing the worth of an intervention. According to the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC) (2011), the activities of Monitoring and Evaluation do offer significant support to project implementation via providing the requisite details for making decisions, organizational learning and sharing of knowledge. On the other hand, Kipsaina (2010) concluded that project implemented knowledge, skill and attitude influenced project implementation and that project implementers need to be empowered with the right skills, altitude and knowledge in regard to monitoring and evaluation.

Beneficiary involvement and Project performance

The fourth objective of this study was to find out the influence of beneficiary involvement on project performance of One Acre Fund in Kenya. To achieve this, the researcher sought from the respondents' information about the beneficiary involvement. The responses are as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Descriptive Analysis for Beneficiary Involvement

1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Undecided, 4-Agree, 5-Strongly Agree

Beneficiary involvement	5	4	3	2	1	Mean	SDV
1. The structures established for beneficiary involvement enables effective implementation of OAF projects	19 (20)	57 (60)	10 (10.5)	5 (5.3)	4 (4.2)	3.863	.9409
2. Implementation of OAF projects is a collective responsibility that involves all stakeholders including beneficiaries	13 (13.7)	36 (37.9)	36 (37.9)	4 (4.2)	6 (6.3)	3.484	.9985
3. OAF involve beneficiaries in monitoring of various projects	12 (12.6)	61 (64.2)	9 (9.5)	10 (10.5)	3 (3.2)	3.726	0.9276
4. Beneficiaries hold frequent consultative meetings to deliberate on the progress of the project implementation	17 (17.9)	42 (44.2)	25 (26.3)	6 (6.3)	5 (5.3)	3.632	1.0216
5. Generally beneficiary involvement in planning, implementation and evaluation of OAF project influence their performance	26 (27.4)	7 (7.4)	44 (46.3)	11 (11.6)	7 (7.4)	3.358	1.2109
Composite Mean						3.613	1.0199

As indicated in Table 5, majority of the sampled respondents (60.0%) agreed that the structures

established for beneficiary involvement enables effective implementation of OAF project and 20%

strongly agreed on the same with a mean of 3.86. Few of the respondents (37.9%) agreed that implementation of OAF projects is a collective responsibility that involves all stakeholders including beneficiaries although the same index were undecided with a mean of 3.48. However, 64.2% of the respondents agreed that OAF involve beneficiaries in monitoring of various projects and further 12.6% strongly agreed with a mean of 3.72.

The results also revealed that slight majority of the respondents (44.2%) agreed that beneficiaries hold frequent consultative meetings to deliberate on the progress of the project implementation although 26.3% of the respondents were undecided with a mean of 3.63. Lastly, few of the respondents (27.4%) strongly agreed that generally beneficiary involvement in planning; implementation and evaluation of OAF project influence their

performance although 46.3% were undecided with a mean of 3.35. Averagely, the level of beneficiary involvement at the One Acre Fund was at 72.2% mean response (mean=3.613, std. dev. =1.019) rated high. This is an indication that the way in which beneficiary involvement in project planning, project execution, project monitoring & quality control Knowledge on project benefits influences project performance. This supported by Holmes and Moir (2015) who also observed that stakeholder involvement process builds a proactive two-way process between the organization and the stakeholder. The communication, opinions and proposals flow in both directions and the organization, which can change its behaviour because of stakeholder participation which then has an effect on successful implementation of programmes.

Inferential statistics

Table 6: Correlations

		Project leadership	Project financing	Monitoring & evaluation	Beneficiary involvement
Project leadership	Pearson Correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
	N	95			
Project financing	Pearson Correlation	.609**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000			
	N	95	95		
Monitoring and evaluation	Pearson Correlation	.407**	.555**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		
	N	95	95	95	
Beneficiary involvement	Pearson Correlation	.476**	.412**	.485**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	95	95	95	95
Project performance	Pearson Correlation	.610**	.646**	.570**	.527**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	95	95	95	95

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was computed after assumptions of multiple regression models were tested and met. The results in table 7 showed an R square of 0.565, thus we inferred that the study model explained 56.5% of the variations in the

project performance of One Acre Fund while other factors not in this study model accounted for 43.5%, thus, it is a good study model.

Further, ANOVA results also showed that the F-statistical value was significant (F=29.214, significant at $p < .001$), thus confirming the fitness of

the model. That is, from the study model, the significant F value show that the four independent variables (project leadership, project financing, monitoring and evaluation, beneficiary

involvement) are indeed different from each other and that they affect the dependent variable project performance of One Acre Fund) in varied ways.

Table 7: Multiple regression analysis

Model	R	R Square	Model Summary				Change Statistics			
			Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.752 ^a	.565	.546	.475343	.565	29.214	4	90	.000	

a. Predictors: (Constant), Beneficiary involvement, Project leadership, Project financing, Monitoring and evaluation

Model		ANOVA ^a				Sig.
		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	
1	Regression	26.404	4	6.601	29.214	.000 ^b
	Residual	20.336	90	.226		
	Total	46.739	94			

a. Dependent Variable: Project performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Beneficiary involvement, Project leadership, Project financing, Monitoring and evaluation

Finally, from the values of unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors, all the independent variables (project leadership; $\beta = 0.335$ at $p < 0.01$; project financing; $\beta = 0.338$ at $p < 0.01$; monitoring and evaluation; $\beta = 0.208$ at $p < 0.05$, beneficiary involvement; $\beta = 0.219$ at $p < 0.05$; were significant predictors of project performance of One Acre Fund (dependent variable).

Therefore, the final multiple regression equation for overall significant multiple influence of the study's independent variables (project leadership, project financing, monitoring and evaluation, beneficiary

involvement) on project performance of One Acre Fund (dependent variable) was;

$$y = -0.551 + 0.335X_1 + 0.338X_2 + 0.208X_3 + 0.219X_4$$

Where;

y= project performance of One Acre Fund

X_1 = project leadership

X_2 = project financing

X_3 = monitoring and evaluation

X_4 = beneficiary involvement

Table 8: Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
(Constant)	-.551	.385		-1.429	.156
Project leadership	.335	.120	.258	2.797	.006
Project financing	.338	.110	.296	3.061	.003
Monitoring and evaluation	.208	.086	.214	2.413	.018
Beneficiary involvement	.219	.104	.179	2.104	.038

a. Dependent Variable: Project performance

Hypothesis testing

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between project leadership and project performance of One Acre Fund in Kenya.

H_{A1}: There is no significant relationship between project leadership and project performance of One Acre Fund in Kenya.

Results; project leadership; $\beta = 0.335$ significant at $p < 0.01$.

Verdict; we rejected the null hypothesis (**H₀₁**) and accept the alternative hypothesis (**H_{A1}**) that there is significant relationship between project leadership and project performance of One Acre Fund in Kenya.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between fund availability and project performance of One Acre Fund in Kenya.

H_{A2}: There is significant relationship between fund availability and project performance of One Acre Fund in Kenya.

Results; project financing; $\beta = 0.338$ significant at $p < 0.01$.

Verdict; we reject the null hypothesis (**H₀₂**) and accept the alternative hypothesis (**H_{A2}**) that there is significant relationship between fund availability and project performance of One Acre Fund in Kenya.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between the monitoring and evaluation and project performance of One Acre Fund in Kenya.

H_{A3}: There is significant relationship between the monitoring and evaluation and project performance of One Acre Fund in Kenya.

Results; monitoring and evaluation; $\beta = 0.208$ significant at $p < 0.05$.

Verdict; we rejected the null hypothesis (**H₀₃**) and accept the alternative hypothesis (**H_{A3}**) that there is significant relationship between the monitoring and evaluation and project performance of One Acre Fund in Kenya.

H₀₄: There is no significant relationship between beneficiary involvement and project performance of One Acre Fund in Kenya.

H_{A4}: There is significant relationship between beneficiary involvement and project performance of One Acre Fund in Kenya.

Results; beneficiary involvement; $\beta = 0.219$ significant at $p < 0.05$.

Verdict; we rejected the null hypothesis (**H₀₄**) and accepted the alternative hypothesis (**H_{A4}**) that there is no significant relationship between beneficiary involvement and project performance of One Acre Fund in Kenya.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

First, the study concluded that project leadership significantly influence project performance in the One Acre Fund. This was an indication that project leadership which involve leadership accessibility, leadership control and leadership Styles would ensure One Acre Fund projects goals/objectives attained, beneficiary satisfaction and timeliness of project delivery. The project leadership ensured accountability and adequate resources are accessible for project success.

Secondly, project performance of One Acre Fund is significantly influenced by project financing. Improvement in project financing such as adequacy of project funds, accessibility of project funds and sufficient budget allocations resulted to improvement in project performance implemented by One Acre Fund. Project performance entailed goals/objectives attainment, beneficiary satisfaction and timeliness of project delivery was achieved as One Acre Fund ensured it easy to access funds allocated for various projects and funds are allocated per the budgeted activities.

Thirdly, monitoring and evaluation has significant influence on project performance in the One Acre Fund. This postulated that that improvement resource tracking, impact assessment, quality assurance and progress reports during monitoring and evaluation would improve One Acre Fund Projects Performance. In this regards, project monitoring and evaluation informed change in projects, tracked resources, identified areas for improvement in the course of implementation which ensured that the all goals and objectives of all projects are achieved.

Lastly, the study concluded that project performance in the One Acre Fund is significantly influence by beneficiary involvement. This

postulated that that involvement of beneficiaries in project planning, project execution, project monitoring & quality control would improve One Acre Fund Projects Performance. Therefore, implementation of OAF projects is a collective responsibility that involves all stakeholders including beneficiaries’.

The study recommended that, regarding project leadership, due to fact that relationship between project leadership and project performance is positive and significant. The study recommended that management of One Acre Fund projects should place more resources in cultivating good and quality leadership for the benefit of the projects. The leadership should treat each stakeholder in project implementation as a unique being with needs that should be satisfied and strengths that can harnessed for the overall good of the organization in terms of achievement of project performance.

Given positive correlation between project financing and project performance, the study recommended that the management of OAF should also carry out financial resource planning to ensure that finance resources are adequate for the operation of the One Acre Fund projects to ensure timely completion of projects. Further, the study recommended that there should be a clear funding framework that is focused to allocation and disbursement of funds for approved One Acre Fund projects with clear implementation plans to achieve projects’ goals and objectives.

Additionally, given that there was a positive correlation between project monitoring & evaluation and project performance. Based on this finding, the study recommended that management of One Acre Fund should ensure that they carry out project monitoring and evaluation regularly. The staff from different departments should be required to submit a report on their areas of operation and responsibility. Also, enough resources should be allocated so as to have the funds availed at the right

time and be in the right hands in order to have the monitoring and evaluation processes a success.

Finally, there was positive correlation between beneficiary involvement and project performance, the study recommended that management of One Acre Fund should ensure they provide an opportunity for different beneficiaries to participate in the project. The beneficiaries need to feel that their opinions are included in the final decisions making process. Project beneficiaries are very important groups whose contribution is priceless in the efforts to ensure project performs as expected and achieves the set goals.

Areas for further studies

This study focused on determinants of project performance, a case of One Acre fund projects in Kenya. To begin with, the scope of the study was only limited to projects being implemented by One Acre Fund and therefore the findings may not necessarily reflect same projects being implemented by different organization due to different dynamics, thus there is a need for similar study considering other organization in Kenya.

Secondly, the study focused on four determinants which did not fully determined performance of One Acre Fund Projects. This implies there may be other independent, moderating, mediating or intervening variables which may influence performance of One Acre Fund projects such as risk management, organizational structure/culture, and resource management. Therefore, further studies should focus on the said variables.

Lastly, the study recommended that a longitudinal study be conducted on the determinants of project performance. The study on the determinants of project performance will enable the findings of this study to be generalized and replicated for Non-Governmental Organizations in Kenya. This will be useful in providing a more reliable reference material for other researchers interested in the area of project performance.

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