

Stakeholder Involvement and Infrastructure Projects Implementation at Kenya Ports Authority

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to examine stakeholder involvement and implementation of infrastructure projects in Kenya Ports Authority. The specific objectives were to examine the influence of stakeholder empowerment, stakeholder communication and stakeholder grievance management on the implementation of infrastructure projects in Kenya Ports Authority. Implementation of projects at KPA has had challenges such as unmet timelines, cost overruns, scope variations and compensation demand by the local community. Theories that anchored this study are stakeholder theory, empowerment theory, game theory and communication theory. The study employed descriptive survey research design. The cadres of target population included persons in port electrical engineering, projects development and management, civil engineering, container operations, and conventional cargo operations departments totalling to 3,336 persons. The study used stratified sampling approach and the sample size was 358 persons. A structured questionnaire, containing close-ended questions was employed as the primary tool for data collection. Validity of the instruments was ensured using content validity, construct validity and face validity. Cronbach alpha coefficient test was used to test the reliability of the instrument. Microsoft Excel software and Statistical Package for Social Scientists software were used for data analysis. Multiple Regression analysis was used to determine the relationships and significance between independent and dependent variables. Tables and charts were used in the presentation of findings. The study established that stakeholder empowerment, communication and grievance management had a positive and significant effect on project implementation. This study concluded that stakeholder empowerment increases the ability and confidence of stakeholders to make choices and decisions. Effective communication helps the organization to build positive relationships with the project stakeholders whereas management of grievances provide a way to reduce projects' risk, provide an effective avenue for expressing concerns and promote a mutually constructive relationship towards implementation of projects. The study recommended that stakeholders be empowered by allowing them to participate in decision making. Giving them more control over what happens in their work environment through control over work tasks, work pace and freedom from supervision. Project managers should establish regular communication with stakeholders and create a positive understanding to help build effective long-term relationships with key project stakeholders. The organization should adopt a structured mechanism for management of grievances that will be known to all employees.

Key Words: Stakeholder Involvement, stakeholder empowerment, stakeholder communication, stakeholder grievance management, Infrastructure Projects Implementation, Kenya Ports Authority

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1. Introduction

A project is generally considered to be successfully implemented if it comes in on-schedule (time criterion), comes in on-budget, achieves the goals originally set for it and is accepted and used by the clients for whom the project was intended (PMI, 2013). Usadolo and Caldwell (2016) argue that regardless of the type of project, decisions regarding the degree of participation from various stakeholders are a significant issue that project management should consider. Therefore, it can be argued that when those who have a stake in the projects take part in shaping decisions through participation, their interests are likely to be addressed. This leads to perceived success of the project by the different stakeholders in terms of quality of service. Shanks (2010) indicates that a project is properly implemented when its objectives are consistently realised and yields expected outcomes to the beneficiaries. However, Pinto and Prescott (2016) observe that most project implementation problems come from actors and factors outside the project manager's direct control. It is, therefore, crucial that project managers understand the project objectives and criteria against which project success will be measured.

Takim (2017) discloses that a formalised process is more effective in identifying project stakeholders in the development of construction project in Malaysia. Priority criteria used to manage stakeholders' needs and expectations vary between public and private sectors in Malaysia, depending on their interests. Similarly, Newcombe (2018) confirms that the Malaysian government and consultants put more emphasis on keeping their stakeholders satisfied, well-informed, and educating them by means of providing forums, open communications interfaces, and visual techniques. This reinforces the belief that any criteria possibly affecting a project in terms of social obligations and political interference are most likely to be of great importance to the Government and their consultants. Magassouba, Tambi, Alkhlaifat and Abdullah (2019) observe that stakeholder involvement in project identification, planning, implementation, and monitoring enhances project performance in Guinea and further state that the key project identification needed is an understanding of the project environment and ensuring that all necessary requirements and technical specifications are integrated into the project. Therefore, legitimate and valid stakeholders need to be identified and their power, proximity and influence understood to deal with their potential impact on the project. Nyabera (2015) avers that projects with stakeholder representation record successful implementation as was observed in compassion international assisted projects in Mwingi Sub-County. He further suggests that organizations should continuously train project staff on both stakeholder analysis and participation in their projects to enable them competently include stakeholders in implementation of project.

Kenya Ports Authority is a state corporation with the responsibility to "maintain, operate, improve and regulate all scheduled seaports' on the Indian Ocean coastline of Kenya, including principally Kilindini Harbour at Mombasa. Other KPA ports include Lamu, Malindi, Kilifi, Mtwapa, Kiunga, Shimoni, Funzi and Vanga. The Port of Mombasa is the key entry and exit point for cargo belonging to a vast hinterland that include Kenya, Uganda Rwanda, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania, South Sudan, Somalia and Ethiopia. The port of Mombasa dates back to 18th century when the Portuguese and the Arabs came to the East African Indian ocean shore for spice and slave trade. KPA has been undertaking infrastructure expansion projects intended to enhance her operational capacity and position the Mombasa seaport as a competitive global shipping hub as enshrined in her mission of providing efficient and competitive port services to facilitate global trade (RoK, 2007; KPA, 2016; KPA, 2018; KPA, 2019). The project for relocation of Kipevu Oil Terminal (KOT), whose initial planned start date was 2015, is yet to commence as at October 2019

(KPA, 2016; KPA, 2018). New KPA headquarters project whose originally planned start and finish dates were 2018 and 2021 respectively, is also yet to begin (KPA, 2018; KPA, 2019). Many other infrastructure projects are lined up for implementation by KPA whose success will greatly enable a transformative impact in the maritime transport sector and by extension enhance growth of the economies of Kenya and the hinterland countries (KPA, 2018; KPA, 2019). KPA (2014) and KPA (2018) state the need for a clear monitoring and evaluation framework as well as a comprehensive stakeholder consultation process to boost implementation and ownership of the organization's programmes and projects.

2. Statement of the Problem

Considering that more than 80% by volume of international trade and greater than 70% of its worth is transported by sea vessels and moved through harbours globally, the existence and impact of a maritime transport infrastructure is extremely important in any economy (UN, 2017). Kenya Ports Authority (KPA) is the state Agency mandated to develop, maintain, operate, and regulate all scheduled seaports along the country's coastline and its inland waterways (KPA, 2018). In line with this elaborate mandate and Kenya's development blueprint Vision 2030. The implementation of projects at KPA has had challenges such as unmet timelines, cost overruns, scope variations and compensation demand by the local community (KPA, 2016; KPA, 2018; Kenya Law, 2017). Kilindini channel dredging phase I project, intended to increase the depth of the channel and berths to enable docking of much larger vessels, was planned to take one year but ended up dragging for six years with fishermen complaining of negative impact to their livelihoods by the project hence sought to discontinue it through a court process (Kenya Law, 2017; KPA, 2016).

Erkul, Yitmen and Celik (2016) did a survey on elements that impact on performance of construction projects and submitted that stakeholder engagement is vital in the avoidance of disputes and further averred the importance of stakeholder communication in assuring cosy relationships among stakeholders. They however failed to show how concerns of stakeholders would be resolved in the event of disagreements. Assessments by Shah and Naqvi (2014) and Ocharo and Kimutai (2018) agree to the important role played by stakeholders in project success. They add that enhancing participation of stakeholders creates good communication framework which ensures early detection of challenges hence helping to avert delays in project execution. In their submissions, however, they didn't provide a mechanism for handling grievances in the event they crystallised in the course of project implementation. Magassouba *et al.* (2019) submitted that participation of stakeholders in project monitoring plays a huge role in ensuring quality outcomes. A robust monitoring and evaluation framework that will track implementation and review of planned projects at KPA is required (KPA, 2014; KPA, 2016; KPA, 2018). Challenges experienced in implementation of projects are captured as poor monitoring and evaluation framework, low-key stakeholder involvement and court battles arising from stakeholder grievances (KPA, 2016; KPA, 2018; Kenya Law, 2017). Analysis of past studies on stakeholder involvement and project implementation reveals lack of documented content in the context of port infrastructure projects. Therefore, this study sought to explore stakeholder involvement and implementation of projects, focusing on infrastructure projects in KPA.

3. Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study was to investigate the influence of stakeholder involvement on the implementation of projects, focusing on infrastructure projects in KPA.

The study was guided by the following specific objectives:

- i. To examine the influence of stakeholder empowerment on the implementation of infrastructure projects in KPA.
- ii. To establish the influence of stakeholder communication on the implementation of infrastructure projects in KPA.
- iii. To explore the influence of stakeholder grievance management on the implementation of infrastructure projects in KPA.

4. Theoretical Literature Review

Theories are sets of agreed statements and facts for given phenomena. Theoretical framework helps dissect existing statements of facts that have been accepted by scholars and peer reviewers to offer technical underpinning for a given academic concept or philosophy. This study integrates four theories notably: the stakeholder theory and empowerment theory.

4.1 Stakeholder Theory

The stakeholder theory is credited to the works of Edward Freeman throughout his seminal pitches on strategic management in the industrial age of the mid 80's. Researchers, Ogolla and Moronge (2016) found credence in stakeholder theory for the implementation of mega projects. The stakeholder theory puts into perspective the internal and external effect of organizational policies and programs. According to Piketty (2015) the organization must consider that the initiatives and programs they undertake exert significant impact on the surrounding communities thus necessitating the need for close cooperation. The theory submits a framework for stakeholder management with the role of stakeholder given the highest priority (Uribe, Ortiz-Marcos & Uruburu, 2018). This enables the determination of stakeholder roles and its overall effect in the delivery of the project. According to Kathongo (2018) the stakeholder theory pays attention to the utilization of ethical guidance in administration of stakeholder roles during project implementation. The stakeholder theory supports the participatory factor in project implementation from the conceptualization stage to its full implementation. This basis effectively fits well with the integration of all stakeholders in project decision making. According to Dagli (2018) all the stakeholders, internal and external, should be in same line of agreement on the project implementation process to enhance prospects of project's success. According to Uribe *et al.* (2018) stakeholder theory proposes for comprehensive stakeholder involvement throughout the project lifecycle.

4.2 Empowerment Theory

Empowerment theory was propounded by Kanter (1993) and deals with dialogue of organizational performance and employee autonomy. According to the theory, empowerment is crucial in work settings that give individual access to information, resources, support, and the occasion to learn and develop. Kanter (1993) noted that emotional empowerment embraces feelings of competence, autonomy, job meaningfulness, and an ability to influence the organization. Empowered individuals are highly committed to the organization, more accountable for their work, and better able to effectively fulfil job demands. According to Abdollahi and Naveh (2011) empowerment is thought to occur when an organization sincerely engages people and progressively responds to this engagement with mutual interest and intention to promote growth. Empowerment develops over time as employees gain greater control over their lives and increasingly take part in decisions, which affect them. This theory is applicable to the study because when stakeholders are empowered, they can show willingness to invest in decision-making and sharing a sense of responsibility for individual and collective outcomes towards effective project implementation.

5. Conceptual Framework

Independent Variables

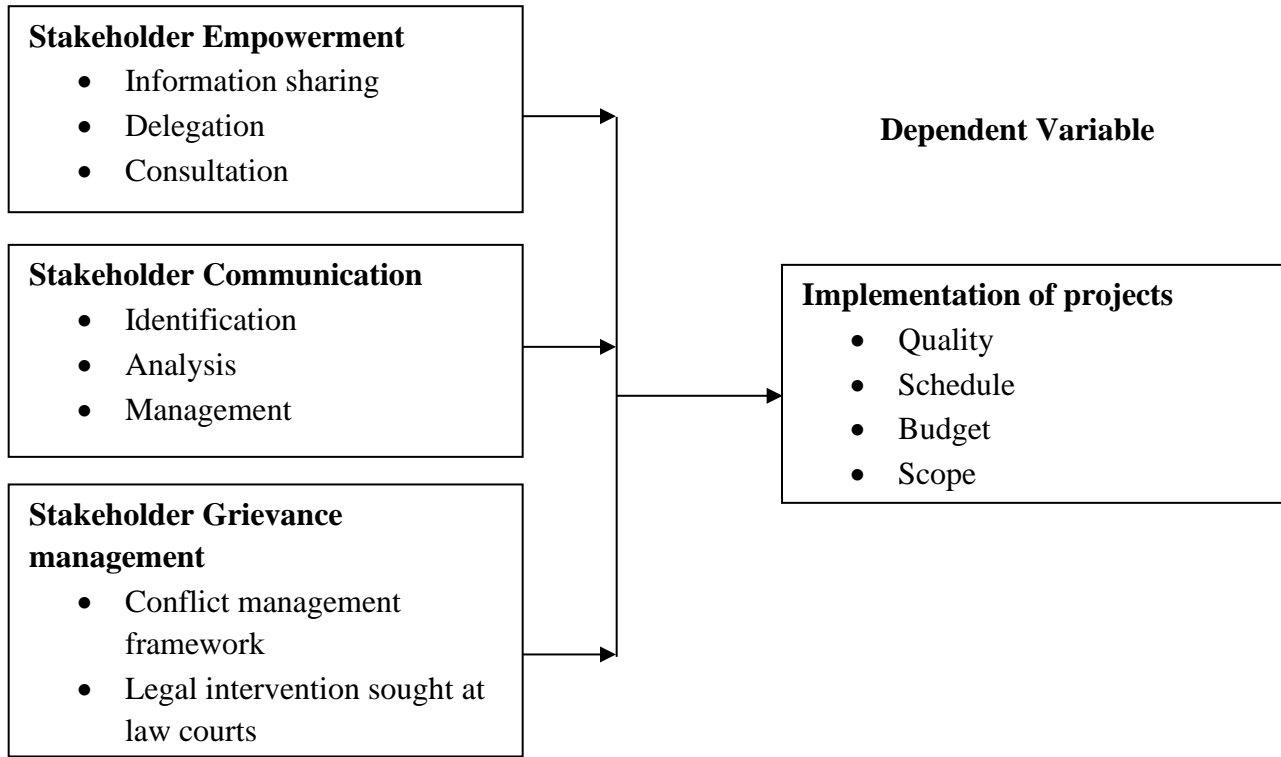


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Researcher (2020)

6. Research Methodology

The study employed descriptive survey research design. The target population in this study included officers from five departments that have either been at the forefront in facilitating implementation of infrastructure projects by KPA and/or are immediate beneficiaries of the projects' outcomes. These five departments forming the target population included; projects development and management, port electrical engineering, civil engineering, container terminal operations, and conventional cargo operations. In this study, different persons were drawn from the projects' development and management, port electrical engineering, civil engineering, container terminal operations, and conventional cargo operations departments. Borrowing from Mandala (2013) approach, the sample for each sub-group was determined using the Slovin's sample size formula. The study employed a structured questionnaire as the primary data collection instrument in seeking respondent's opinions. The questionnaires were structured with close-ended questions which ensured efficient and faster response time from the respondents. The researcher booked appointments with the concerned authorities and explained to them the objective of intending to carry out a study within their organization. After getting consent from management, the researcher used a 'drop and pick' method in the administration of questionnaires. The questionnaires were picked in duration of 4 weeks that gave the respondents an ample time to go through all the questions. This aided in enhancing the response rate and ensuring that information

gathered was accurate and reliable. Multivariate regression analysis was used to determine the relationships and significance between independent and dependent variables.

7. Data Analysis

Inferential statistics including correlation analysis and regression analysis was done to reach conclusions about the relationship between variables. They results are presented as follows:

Table 1: Correlation Analysis

		Stakeholder Empowerment	Stakeholder Communication	Stakeholder Grievance management	Project implementation
Stakeholder Empowerment	Pearson Correlation	1	.308**	.794**	.155**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.004
	N	346	346	346	346
Stakeholder Communication	Pearson Correlation	.308**	1	.485**	.689**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	346	346	346	346
Stakeholder Grievance management	Pearson Correlation	.794**	.485**	1	.836**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	346	346	346	346
Project implementation	Pearson Correlation	.155**	.689**	.836**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.000	.000	
	N	346	346	346	346

Source: Research Data (2020)

The results in Table 1 show that the Pearson's r for the correlation between stakeholder communication and project implementation variables is 0.659 and vice versa which is close to 1 with a significant value of 0.00 which is less than 0.05. This shows a strong relationship meaning that communication is strongly correlated with the project implementation. This is in agreement with Rajhans (2018) who observed that communication platform is a project management tool that enables interaction between stakeholders in project implementation and influences project outcome. Stakeholder grievance management was found to be strongly related to project implementation as indicated by the Pearson's r at 0.836 implying that grievance management is directly proportional to project implementation. This concurs with Davis (2017) who noted that project implementation team must first develop a comprehensive grievance management policy which has substantial influence on the project implementation process.

Table 2: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.605 ^a	.766	.761	.484	.366	65.832	3	342	.000

Source: Research Data (2020)

The three independent variables (stakeholder empowerment, stakeholder communication and stakeholder grievance management) that were studied, explain a factor of 0.766 of the implementation of infrastructure projects at KPA as represented by the adjusted R square. This therefore means that other factors not studied in this research contribute to a factor of 0.234.

Table 3: Analysis of Variance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	46.282	3	15.427	65.832	.000 ^a
	Residual	80.146	342	.234		
	Total	126.428	345			

Source: Research Data (2020)

The significance value is 0.000^a which is less than 0.05 thus the model is statistically significance in predicting how empowerment, communication and grievance management affected the implementation of infrastructure projects at KPA. The F calculated at 5% level of significance was 65.832. Since F calculated is greater than the F critical (p value = 15.427), this shows that the overall model was significant.

Table 4: Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.777	.254		7.005	.000
	Stakeholder Empowerment	0.611	.048	1.110	2.332	.001
	Stakeholder Communication	0.728	.036	2.316	6.346	.000
	Stakeholder Grievance management	0.501	.060	4.427	8.285	.000

Source: Research Data (2020)

From the above regression model, holding stakeholder empowerment, stakeholder communication and stakeholder grievance management to a constant, the implementation of infrastructure projects at KPA would be at a factor of 0.777. It was established that a unit increase in empowerment would lead to increase in the implementation of infrastructure projects at KPA by a factor of 0.611, a unit increase in communication would lead to increase in the implementation of infrastructure projects at KPA by a factor of 0.728 and a unit increase in grievance management would lead to increase

in the implementation of infrastructure projects at KPA by a factor of 0.501. The study established that stakeholder empowerment had a positive and significant effect on the implementation of infrastructure projects at KPA as indicated by t-value ($\beta= 2.332$, $p < 0.05$). These findings are consistent with Dahou and Hacini (2018) study that revealed that sharing information, job design, transformational leadership and decision-making authority have a positive effect on project implementation. The study revealed that stakeholder communication had a positive and significant effect on the implementation of infrastructure projects at KPA as indicated by t-value ($\beta= 6.346$, $p < 0.05$). The findings are supported by Alqaisi (2018) who submitted that communication factor in project management is key in creating cooperative working relationship between stakeholders and the project implementation team. The study found that stakeholder grievance management had a positive and significant effect on the implementation of infrastructure projects at KPA as indicated by t-value ($\beta= 8.285$, $p < 0.05$). This is consistent with Pirozzi (2018) study that established that, building an integrative framework that accommodated contributions from all the critical stakeholders was crucial in limiting conflicts triggered by stakeholder acrimony.

8. Conclusions

This study concluded that empowerment of stakeholders is a benefit index in which a higher level of empowerment results in improved planning processes for organisations. Empowerment increases the ability and confidence of stakeholders to make choices and decisions, and access opportunities relating to their personal development and issues that concern them. This may be through access to information, resources, capabilities, or institutional changes. The study concluded that effective communication helps the organization to build positive relationships with the project stakeholders. Communication with stakeholders builds dialogue through setting forums or inviting other forms of feedback, the project managers can gain a better understanding of the project stakeholders' interests and attitudes towards implementation of the project. The study concluded that management of grievances serves as a way to meet requirements, prevent and address stakeholder concerns, reduce risk, and assist larger processes that create positive social change towards implementation of projects. Provides a predictable, transparent, and credible process to all parties, resulting in outcomes that are seen as fair, effective, and lasting, builds trust as an integral component of broader community activities and enables more systematic identification of emerging issues and trends, facilitating corrective action and pre-emptive engagement.

9. Recommendations

The study recommended that stakeholders can be empowered by allowing them to participate in decision making. Giving them more control over what happens in their work environment through control over work tasks and work pace. Empower them through upgrading their skills, assigning increasingly challenging projects and duties as well as communicating information about the strategy and its implementation. This gives them access to information based on decisions to be made. The study recommended that project managers should establish regular communication with stakeholders and create a positive understanding to help build effective long-term relationships with key project stakeholders. Different stakeholders have different interests, attitudes, and priorities. Effective communication is recommended to ensure stakeholders receive information that is relevant to their needs and builds positive attitudes to the organization. The study recommended that the organization should have proper structure of grievance management procedures which should be known to all employees. It should create more channels for receiving stakeholders' complaints that will encourage them air their grievances peacefully and in harmony.

Develop and publicize good policies and strategies for grievance management according to the organization's structure and working environment to guide decision making.

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