

EFFECT OF STAKEHOLDER EXPECTATION ON PERFORMANCE OF PROJECTS FUNDED BY NON- GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN NAIROBI CITY COUNTY, KENYA

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Abstract: The success of a project relies on effective leadership and coordination among the many project stakeholders. Nevertheless, numerous NGO initiatives worldwide still struggle to meet their goals and do not meet expectations. Because of ineffective stakeholder management methods, more than 30% of NGOs in Kenya experience project failures and may not achieve their objectives. Therefore, the objective of this research was to evaluate the impact of stakeholder expectations on the project outcomes of NGOs operating in the healthcare industry in Nairobi County. The suggested assessment was based on a descriptive study design. A total of 118 NGO staff in the health sector involved in seven projects in Kenya were targeted for the research study. Using a method of stratified sampling, one hundred and ten 110 respondents were randomly selected from senior managers, project managers, project supervisors, project and team members of chosen Health sector NGOs, and community leaders of project beneficiaries. Structured questionnaires were used to collect primary data through the drop and pick method. The findings uncovered in the survey noted an insignificant negative effect of stakeholders' expectation on project performance funded by NGOs. This implies that the level of expectation held by stakeholders, such as community members, beneficiaries, or other relevant actors, does not have a substantial direct effect on the outcomes of the projects funded by NGOs in Nairobi City County. The study recommends that NGOs should prioritize developing and implementing effective stakeholder engagement strategies.

Keywords: Stakeholder expectations, Project performance.

1. INTRODUCTION

Projects are structured sets of tasks with start and end dates that are designed to achieve a particular goal, as stated by Riahi in 2018. The individuals and groups involved as stakeholders in a project greatly influence its planning, implementation, and outcomes (Groom, 2021). NGOs worldwide have suggested and implemented projects in various sectors like agriculture, healthcare, and community development to help governments enhance their citizens' well-being. However, the designated recipients worldwide have yet to witness the efficacy of NGOs' endeavors.

Even though the government and NGOs have made efforts, this situation emphasizes the ineffective programs and projects aimed at addressing societal problems (Riahi, 2018). Concerns have arisen about the effectiveness and efficiency of NGO projects. Government officials, individuals, donors, legislators, academics, and NGO representatives are increasingly interested in and worried about the effectiveness of development NGOs in implementing their projects. Due to the need for NGO initiatives to succeed and last long, NGOs are feeling pressure to increase their involvement in stakeholder

management. Weaknesses in the procedures within global NGOs' health divisions hinder the achievement of project outcomes.

According to a study by Pim Chang Thong and Boon Jing (2018), over 50% of projects in the United States in 2015 failed to meet their deadlines or stay within their budgets. A report from Standish Group in 2019 revealed that just 32% of projects in the USA achieve success, while 44% encounter obstacles and 24% ultimately fail. Furthermore, Stewart (2018) claimed that only a quarter of projects remain successful. In Canada, NGO project performance typically emphasizes inputs and outputs rather than focusing on results, implications, or overall community benefits. Due to this, organizations such as the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) are urging NGOs to demonstrate advancement or face potential funding cuts (Wyld, 2018).

Furthermore, the failure of projects in developing countries is especially concerning. According to Ahmed (2018), NGO project performance in Bangladesh has been described as lackluster. It is evident that NGOs face challenges when carrying out their projects in health systems, especially those focusing on overall health and research and development. Aside from giving primary healthcare services, unskilled and inexperienced community health workers are responsible for collecting data about patient births, deaths, pregnancies, and the occurrence of certain infectious diseases (WHO, 2019). Due to these deficiencies, it can be deduced that the data quality generated by the healthcare industry is not dependable and could potentially distort the overall project.

In Botswana, there are worries about the project performance of health-related NGOs implementing health initiatives in Gaborone city. The projects lack sufficient best practices, with many practices being inconsistently used or not used at all. Insufficient stakeholder management by local leaders, cultural groups, and community members in national health campaigns has led to unreliable and ineffective campaigns, contributing to the failure of health projects (SU, 2019). NGOs in Ethiopia have also been criticized for their ineffective project performance, especially in Addis Ababa, despite their access to resources (Clark, 2020).

In Kenya, non-governmental organizations in the health sector have developed over time and are seen as essential for enhancing healthcare services and the economic progress of the nation. During the last two decades, CARE International has supplied water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) initiatives to nearly one million individuals. Programs have been aimed at displaced populations, those in water-scarce areas, and places with poor sanitation coverage (CARE International, 2022). Moreover, AMREF Health Africa implemented the "Afya Mtoto" project in Kenya to improve health outcomes for mothers and children (AMREF website, 2019). Nevertheless, annual reports suggest that NGO projects in Kenya fail due to inadequate project management and staff shortages (NSE, 2018). In Kenya, around 11262 NGOs are registered, and the entire nation relies heavily on foreign funding for financial support. NGOs allocate Ksh 172 billion in total, with a significant Ksh 78 billion earmarked for projects. The achievements and effectiveness of NGO initiatives in Nairobi County and its different urban areas have been very disappointing. Reported programs by them include environmental preservation, childcare for young ones, youth sports, educational opportunities, and disaster readiness (NGOB, 2019). The main focus of many NGOs is on the outcomes and consequences their projects will have on the local community.

Eskerod, Huemann, and Savage (2018) state that stakeholders need to be actively involved in the project's process as it directly impacts the project's overall success through four key rationales. The outcome of the project will affect stakeholders positively or negatively. Furthermore, the project's success is greatly influenced by the significant contributions from stakeholders, both financial and non-financial. In addition, if stakeholders do not provide support, the project's performance will be negatively impacted, and they are responsible for determining the metrics to measure the project's success. Managing stakeholders is an ongoing process that requires constantly identifying and prioritizing their needs and expectations (Oppong, Chan, & Danso, 2018).

Stakeholders' expectations refer to the compilation of every individual and group that is affected in some way by a company's activities or has a vested interest in them (Wanjiru, 2018). It reflects the viewpoints of individuals who use, purchase, or are involved in the operations of a business, in connection to a specific problem or opportunity, by detailing the requirements for a solution that can provide the necessary services in a defined setting. Identifying project stakeholders and understanding how their involvement can impact projects is referred to as stakeholder needs and identification (Kremmer, 2018). Identifying and managing project stakeholders is crucial from the beginning to the end of a project's cycle. Recognizing and addressing the needs of important project stakeholders is crucial in meeting their demands for

effective project management (Kremmer, 2018). This research involved evaluating stakeholders, determining their needs, and uncovering their expectations.

Project performance relates to the general aspects of a project, such as its effects on recipients and whether the arrangements are suitable. The significance of project management performance is demonstrated by prioritizing continuous improvement through various types of projects (Mathenge, 2020). A project is typically a brief assignment focused on creating unique products and services within a set period of time. Typically, an organization's objectives are utilized to guide these initiatives (Ohara, 2018). The primary goal of project performance is to enhance the overall success of projects, so it is necessary to have a baseline for comparison to determine what truly constitutes a successful project.

In recent years, the diverse range of NGOs in Kenya has been increasing at a level never seen before (Romanchenko et al., 2019). The majority of the approximately 350,000 registered NGOs have closed, and the count is increasing. Every registered Kenyan NGO is required to self-regulate by the NGO council, in accordance with the Non-governmental Organizations Coordination Act of 1990, which was passed in August 1993. The NGO Council in Kenya represents national, regional, and international NGOs working with CBOs and organizations (World Economic Forum report, 2018). The healthcare sector is struggling to meet the changing healthcare needs and growing expectations of the population. This gap worsens individuals' discontent with the inadequate national coverage levels offered by healthcare services. Healthcare systems need to adjust to the challenges brought about by an ever-changing world (Golensky & Hagar, 2020).

Only through collaboration between governments, NGOs, businesses, and citizens can effective solutions be found to enhance living standards, promote long-term sustainability, and advance fair development. NGOs with poor management could hinder all of these efforts (Couture & Harvey, 2021). Corruption and lack of credibility have significantly hindered the supervision, transparency, administration, and efficiency of NGOs in Kenya throughout history. Despite receiving billions of dollars in donations for healthcare, individuals still perish from preventable illnesses (Chelegat, 2021).

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Effective management of stakeholders is crucial for the success of projects, especially ones supported by Non-Governmental Organizations (Smith et. al, 2021). Effective stakeholder management practices are essential for project performance in Nairobi City County, Kenya, where many projects are launched and implemented by NGOs. Nevertheless, while stakeholder management is recognized as important, there is still a lack of understanding regarding how it affects project performance in this specific situation. NGOs in Kenya implement a range of projects that benefit various stakeholders involved in these projects and also contribute to the well-being of people in the community (Njeri, 2018). Throughout the years, these non-governmental organizations have successfully implemented a range of programs focused on improving the economic well-being of the country's population, particularly those in poverty and the lower socioeconomic class (Mkutano, 2018).

Numerous NGO initiatives were launched in various regions of Kenya, aiming to enhance healthcare access by establishing more health facilities. Nevertheless, delays in finishing projects beyond initial estimates have become a significant issue prompting worries about the duration of schedules. In terms of expenses, the projects have gone over budget in ways that were not expected, despite being predicted (Wafula et al, 2019). The project's performance is the key evidence that shows funds were used successfully to meet project goals and objectives. Many initiatives do not see the expected benefits come to fruition as predicted (Baily, 2018). Assessing project success often relies on performance metrics, but there are various challenges linked to project results.

According to Turner and Muller (2018), numerous projects are unsuccessful due to inaccurate budgeting, inadequate funding, time constraints, and excessive costs. Issues like team incompetence, stakeholder disengagement, and budget constraints have greatly affected the effectiveness of NGO projects in the health industry (Acheing, 2018). Likewise, the majority of NGO projects do not succeed and do not reach completion due to issues with time, financial resources, and handling stakeholders. Furthermore, Njeri and Were (2018) reported a 30% failure rate for NGO projects. Identifying the primary reason for inadequate project performance is essential. Approximately 30% of healthcare NGOs in Kenya have encountered project failures (Mathew, 2018). Kerzner (2019) states that projects can fail to achieve their objectives and goals due to lack of dedication, lack of motivation, and inadequately handled relationships within the project team. Hence, successful stakeholder management is crucial for improved performance in different projects (Yang, 2019). Jason (2018) stated that to secure resources for project objectives and guarantee the accomplishment of all projects, support in managing stakeholders is essential.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Literature Review

Stakeholder Theory

Freeman (1984) introduced the Stakeholders' theory. An individual stakeholder's perspective, various opinions and ideas, and connections to the stakeholder's core values and objectives are considered in this definition. The stakeholder theory emerged from research in organizational management that concentrated on the four primary organizational types. Organizational theory, strategic organizational planning, systems theory, and social responsibility are among the topics covered (Strand and Freeman, 2015). Freeman (1984) argued that the stakeholder theory tackled the problem of managers often using terminology that involves the idea of a stakeholder. The executive's role is to oversee the connections between the company's parties and stakeholders (Freeman, 1984).

The stakeholder theory challenges the importance of issues raised by shareholders and argues that a project should be assessed considering the valid concerns of all its stakeholders. As per the concept, ethics are closely associated with projects, and project managers need to articulate the shared importance they bring in bringing together the main stakeholders of the program. Participants feel a sense of personal accountability and engagement when they receive necessary resources from a project (Tembo, 2003). Establishing strong connections with stakeholders is crucial for a business to ensure long-term sustainability; management needs to understand and involve not only customers, employees, and shareholders, but also all related communities. Therefore, stakeholders' relationships should be a main focus in managerial decision-making.

CEOs are concerned about resolving conflicts and finding solutions when different stakeholder groups disagree (Harrison, Bosse & Philips, 2010). Establishing strong relationships with stakeholders contributes to the success and sustainability of businesses within the capitalist system (Phillips, 2003). Globally, a variety of fields have recognized the significant importance of the stakeholder concept (Freeman et al., 2010). Freeman and other scholars worldwide coined the terms in the 1980s and 1990s to specifically address issues related to value creation, trade, ethics, and management in the market.

The stakeholder theory emphasizes considering the needs of important stakeholders to improve business performance. Stakeholders remain the main driving factor for a company, however, it is crucial to find a harmonious alignment between their requirements and the company's goals (Phillips, 2003). The theory of stakeholders focuses on recognizing the requirements of individuals involved in projects within organizations. This idea was crucial in establishing the foundation for determining the involvement of stakeholders in NGOs' initiatives in the healthcare sector in Nairobi.

Empirical Literature Review

Mugata and Muchelule (2018) examined the impact of stakeholders' needs and expectations on the success of road development projects in Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya. The study employed a stratified random sampling technique, categorizing participants into two (2) separate groups. 103 participants were selected at random from the initial group through simple random sampling, while 377 were chosen from the second group through proportionate random sampling. The selected individuals were next provided with self-administered surveys. Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were both utilized in the analysis. The findings of the study indicated that the requirements of stakeholders have a significant influence on the outcomes of road construction projects. The study took place in Nairobi County, instead of Elgeyo Marakwet County where the previous study was conducted.

Maina (2018) carried out research in Nyeri County, Kenya, focusing on the performance of open-air market projects and identifying stakeholders' needs. The study focused on all open-air improvement projects in Nyeri County and utilized both exploratory and descriptive methods. The sample of participants required for the research was selected using the cluster sampling method, which involved segmenting the markets into six (6) main categories. The selected participants were provided with surveys to fill out, and descriptive statistics were utilized with SPSS to examine the gathered data. The findings of the research indicated that enhancing project performance greatly benefits from recognizing stakeholders' needs and desires. The previous study involved Nyeri County while the current study focused on Nairobi County.

In a study conducted in Australia, Nguyen, Mohamed, and Panuwatwanich (2018) examined the requirements of stakeholders in difficult projects. Information gleaned from published articles was analyzed to ascertain the quantity of documents per year, the distribution of articles, and the areas of investigation between 2005-2016 which encompassed significant advancements related to stakeholder participation, requirements, tactics for management, and involvement. The

data from the sources was analyzed using the technique of content analysis. At the end of the research, it was determined that evaluating stakeholders' needs was seen as a crucial requirement for analyzing stakeholders' complexity. The study mentioned earlier was conducted in Australia, a country with specific characteristics. Hence, Kenya was where the study took place.

Agwu (2019) examined how stakeholders' requirements impact the performance of Nigerian banking institutions. The research examined how two Nigerian financial institutions compare by using a case study approach. The key stakeholders were identified based on the vision, purpose, and core principles of each selected organization. According to the study, in order for the organizations in question to survive long-term, it is essential to address the needs and concerns of the stakeholders appropriately. The study mentioned earlier was conducted in Nigeria focusing on banks. In Kenya, a recent research was carried out on non-governmental organizations.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted using a descriptive study design. The research study focused on 118 NGO workers in the health field, participating in seven projects in Kenya. By employing stratified sampling, 110 participants were randomly chosen from various roles within selected Health sector NGOs, including senior managers, project managers, project supervisors, project and team members, as well as community leaders of project beneficiaries. Structured surveys were utilized to gather original data via the drop-off and pick-up approach. Descriptive statistical methods such as mean and standard deviation were utilized to analyze quantitative data. The study utilized statistical analysis, including correlation and regression, to evaluate the degree of association between the variables.

5. FINDINGS

The descriptive statistics results on stakeholder expectations are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Stakeholder Expectations

| Statement | Percentage | | | | | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--|------------|---|---|------|------|---------------|----------------|
| | SD | D | N | A | SA | | |
| All stakeholders within the rests have been recognized in the project | 0 | 0 | 0 | 28.6 | 71.4 | 4.7143 | .45426 |
| Stakeholders' needs and identification were identified before the project begins | 0 | 0 | 0 | 25.3 | 74.7 | 4.7473 | .43699 |
| Stakeholders' identification helps to find out who has unique knowledge related to any aspect of the project | 0 | 0 | 0 | 18.7 | 81.3 | 4.8132 | .39192 |
| Key stakeholders identified well at the planning stage | 0 | 0 | 0 | 36.3 | 63.7 | 4.6374 | .48342 |
| Stakeholders' ideas are identified and contributed in the projects | 0 | 0 | 0 | 25.3 | 74.7 | 4.7473 | .43699 |
| An appropriate stakeholder register is developed and continuously monitored and updated | 0 | 0 | 0 | 20.9 | 79.1 | 4.7912 | .40870 |
| Average Score | | | | | | 4.7417 | 0.44071 |

When assessing the proposition that all pertinent stakeholders were acknowledged in the project, the majority responded favorably – 28.6% agreed and 71.4% strongly agreed. In contrast, none opted for neutrality or disagreement. The quantitative analysis yielded a mean score of 4.7143, highlighting generally positive sentiment that comprehensive stakeholder mapping occurred. This was further corroborated by a standard deviation of 0.45426 characterizing the response distribution. The survey also evaluated whether needs/identities were determined before the project launch. Findings showed 25.3% agreed and 74.7% strongly agreed with this statement. No respondents selected neutrality, disagreement, or strong disagreement. The computed mean score of 4.7473 validated strong endorsement that proper preparatory work was done. This reinforcement was represented statistically through a low standard deviation of 0.43699, numerically capturing the clustered feedback.

The survey examined the proposition that stakeholder identification aids in determining those with project-specific expertise. Findings showed 18.7% agreed, while 81.3% strongly agreed. Notably, none selected disagreement or strong disagreement, and no participants chose neutrality. With a mean score of 4.8132, quantitative analysis substantiated a generally favorable view of this claim, though the standard deviation of 0.439192 represented some variation in responses. In addition, surveyed was whether key stakeholders were appropriately recognized during the planning phase. Results revealed 36.3% agreed and 63.7% strongly agreed with this statement. Interestingly, none disagreed or strongly disagreed, and none opted for neutrality. A mean score of 4.6374 validated a positive perspective of accurate identification at planning according to statistical examination of the survey data, further supported by a low standard deviation of 0.48342 characterizing the response distribution.

Furthermore, stakeholders' ideas are identified and contributed in the projects claim was agreed by 25.3% of the participants which was strongly agreed by 74.7% with the other options having none of the respondents. The validation of the responses is unveiled by the mean value of 4.7473 and deviation of 0.43699 standards. In addition, an appropriate stakeholder register is developed and continuously monitored and updated was agreed by 20.9% of the participants with more number of the participants showing strong agreement with 79.1% participants as none of the participants acted otherwise with the claim. The mean of 4.7912 and standard of the deviation of 0.40870 further validates the claim.

Extracting the survey outcome from items regarding the stakeholders' expectation, a composite mean of 4.7417 and 0.44071 deviations from the standard was realized. This outcome affirmed the assertion that stakeholders' expectation plays a significant role in enhancing the outcome of projects funded by NGOs in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The output aligned with Mugata and Muchelule (2018) who uncovered that performances of road constructions' projects are substantially impacted by the needs of stakeholders. Maina (2018) also arrived that loans identifying stakeholders' requirements and expectations considerably improves project performance. Nguyen, Mohamed, and Panuwat wanich (2018) further unveiled that stakeholders' demands was considered to be an important prerequisite for stakeholders' complexity analysis.

Inferential Statistics Results

Table 2: Correlation Analysis

| | Project Performance | Stakeholders Expectation |
|--------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Project Performance | 1 | |
| Stakeholders Expectation | -.089 | 1 |

The results revealed a slight negative correlation ($r = -.089$) between stakeholders' expectations and project performance, indicating that higher expectations from stakeholders are linked to lower project performance. This suggests that effectively managing stakeholders' expectations would require reducing the project's performance in Nairobi City County, even if only slightly.

Regression Analysis Results

Table 3: Model Summary

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | .702 ^a | .493 | .470 | .28024 |

The R value of 0.702 in Table 3 shows a moderately strong positive connection between stakeholder expectations and project performance. The value of 0.470 for the adjusted R-Square indicates that around 47% of the fluctuations in project performance can be accounted for by stakeholder management practices.

Table 4: Analysis of Variance

| Model | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|-------|------------|----------------|----|-------------|--------|-------------------|
| 1 | Regression | 60.572 | 1 | 60.572 | 76.192 | .000 ^b |
| | Residual | 70.754 | 89 | .795 | | |
| | Total | 131.326 | 90 | | | |

The data in Table 4 reveals that the p-value of 0.000 is lower than the anticipated significance level of 0.05. The results demonstrate that the F value of 76.192 surpasses the mean square value of 60.572. The validation of these requirements justifies the significance of the model.

Table 5: Coefficients

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|-------|------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|------|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| 1 | (Constant) | 1.789 | .673 | | 2.656 | .009 |
| | SE | -.089 | .147 | -.069 | -.606 | .546 |

The result shown in Table 5 revealed a significant and positive constant of 1.789. This means that even without the explanatory factors, the project's performance remains favorable. The stakeholder expectation standardized coefficient is -0.069. The coefficient is not significant at the 0.05 significance level ($p = 0.546$) indicating a negative relationship between stakeholders' expectation and project performance, as shown by a t-value of -0.606. The stakeholder control standardized coefficient of 0.040 implies a positive link between stakeholder control and project performance. The coefficient is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level based on a t-value of 0.369 ($p = 0.713$).

The final regression equation is presented as follows:

$$\text{Project performance} = 1.789 - 0.089X_1$$

6. CONCLUSIONS

The research results uncovered various insights and conclusions regarding the diverse stakeholder management practices identified in the study. Specifically, the analysis indicated that stakeholders' expectations have a negligible and opposite effect on the performance of projects funded by NGOs. The study concludes that stakeholders' expectations do not significantly influence project performance within the specified setting. This suggests that the level of expectations held by stakeholders, including community members, beneficiaries, and other relevant parties, does not have a substantial direct impact on the outcomes of NGO-funded projects in Nairobi City County.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Drawing from the significant factors of the survey, the following recommendations were highlighted reflecting the result of the survey. In views of the findings, the study recommends that NGOs should prioritize developing and implementing effective stakeholder engagement strategies. This includes actively involving stakeholders in project planning, decision-making, and evaluation processes. This can be through NGOs establishment of mechanisms for regular communication, feedback collection, and meaningful participation of stakeholders throughout the project lifecycle.

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