

# **PROJECT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND IMPLEMENTATION OF GOVERNMENT PROJECTS IN KENYA, CASE OF MACHAKOS COUNTY GOVERNMENT**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The Government of Kenya undertakes a variety of projects through its county governments, which are aimed at developing infrastructure, social welfare, health services, urban and rural development, as well as preserving culture and heritage. This directly or in-directing affects the lives of citizens and also reflects on the effectiveness and efficiency of Government. Thus far, all county governments in the country have shown major management gaps with regards to effective implementation of almost all their planned projects. This study seeks to investigate the extent to which project management practices impact the implementation of government projects in county governments, using Machakos County Government as an example. The specific objectives will include; evaluating the influence of project planning on management practices and implementation of government projects; determining the effects of stakeholders' participation on management practices and implementation of government projects; and finding out the effects of monitoring and evaluation on management practices and implementation of government projects. The study will employ a qualitative descriptive survey

research design on a population of 90 employees that are directly involved in the completion of county government projects. The respondents will be purposively selected; top-level management, middle-level management, and lower level management in order to get the sample size of 30% of the target population, which is termed as a good benchmark for use in a research analysis. The researcher will use semi-structured questionnaires to collect primary data from the sample population, and secondary data will be collected from the Government reports and other related studies. There will be a pilot test for the questionnaire before carrying out the data collection to determine instrument reliability. In addition, both closed and open-ended semi-structured questions will be used in the self-administered questionnaire. After collection, the data will be edited, coded, classified and analyzed through descriptive statistics and inferential statistics using SPSS software. Conclusions and recommendations will be drawn from the study findings.

**Key Words:** *project management practices, implementation, government projects, Kenya, Machakos County*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The practice of project management details the use of skills, knowledge, tools, and techniques that can be applied in the execution of project activities, to finally achieve project needs. Additionally, project management is attained by the use of procedures that include; initiating, planning, executing, monitoring and controlling, in addition to closing. The major challenges of project management are to accomplish all of the aims and objectives of the project while at the same time mitigating the constraints of the projects (Lewis, 2006). Notably, Lewis (2006) outlined the scope, time, cost and quality of being the major project constraints.

Governments are continuously faced with the huge challenge of supervising the implementation of numerous planned projects in an effective manner through the application of abiding methodologies. The projects are to a great extent required to create a strong foundation base for a future successful nation. According to the World Bank, projects have a definite life cycle that is only complete when the project has achieved the desired objectives. Kaliba, Muya and Mumba (2009) in their study indicated that there are several kinds of projects ranging from the government or public funded infrastructural facilities like roads, electricity, railway lines, housing units, and industries among others to small run individual ventures such as retail businesses. In addition, they noted that projects require human, capital and non-capital resources such as a positive and enabling culture for effective implementation.

According to the study of Arnaboldi, Azzone, and Savoldelli (2014) in the Italian government, the use of project management practices in the public sector has been proven to be an effective way that would aid in the advancement of management abilities in addition to enabling public sector to effectively complete projects and realize developmental objectives. In their study Arnaboldi et.al. (2014), noted that use of project management strategy in public sector was due to the pressure on the government to leave rigid organizational structures in favor of flexible structures. A notable point was that project management approach required to be improved and specially tailored towards the requirements of public institutions.

In a study carried out by White and Fortune (2002) in the United Kingdom public sector, they assessed the present project management practice through gathering data from 236 project managers in selected public organizations. The study inquired from the respondents to what extent the project management methods, tools, and techniques they had applied to the project success, were effective. The outcome of the study showed that 41% of the reported projects were termed to be entirely successful in applying project management practices, although there were some challenges that were encountered.

In India, after the government realized the state of its development in relation to the population increases, it called for major Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) on major infrastructural projects between the private sector and the government. However, this couldn't be done from the central government because of the geographical size and location of the projects, cultural differences between communities in the country and differing needs of development projects among the Indian people. This then forced the government to come up with decentralized operations that classified the country into councils (equated to the county governments) that managed a population of not less than 1.5 million people (Al-Kharashi and Skitmore, 2009). In his study on the state of development in Asian countries, Alsuwaidi (2011) argued that India's development was tied to the decentralization of its development projects due to various reasons that are not limited to: financial resources constraints, insecurity, differing taxes imposed, infrastructural developments, community beliefs, stakeholder participation and levels of technology.

In less developed nations such as in Africa, tools and techniques of project management are being implemented in maiden phases. The practice is comparatively current and looks to attain planned objectives in specific periods and cost limits via the optimal use of resources and applying an incorporated planning and control system. By way of example, in a study carried out in Nigeria, by Idoro and Patunola-Ajayi (2009), the implementation of present-day project management tools, approaches and techniques is still not well recognized in the public sector, this leads to failure of public institutions as well as their contractors in carrying out their obligations on the budget, specifications, along with deadlines of the projects awarded. Studies have noted social as well as political systems, cultural blocks plus lack of financial support as challenges the proper implementation of projects in the Nigerian public sector (Idoro & Patunola-Ajayi, 2009). In Ghana, (Public Procurement Authority, 2010), there has been a vast improvement as regards the accomplishment of projects. Agyeman (2010) in his research found out that project implementation has been the core operational center of almost all governments since ancient times, in his study.

In Kenya, there are numerous factors that affect development projects implementation including; politics, corruption, financial embezzlements, tribalism/nepotism, misplaced priorities, and low levels of technology (World Bank, 2012). The UNDP (2010) published a report that sought to find out the nature of projects and the rate of polarization in the country and found out that major projects in Kenya fail due to tribalism and nepotism were the major tribes with big populations dominated the public offices and projects. One of the major reasons as to why Kenya welcomed the new constitution was to eliminate the barriers to development and bring such developments close to all people through devolution. Also included in devolution, was bringing relevant development projects to deserving needy people in the villages, slums and the marginalized areas in the country.

According to the GOK report (2014), the country has made a significant improvement in infrastructural projects, education, mining projects, water projects, SMEs projects and general industrialization since the new constitution was promulgated. The 47 counties in Kenya own their projects and development plans, fund part of their projects and get the deficit financial resources from the central government (the Republic of Kenya, 2013). Nonetheless, performance during the process of implementation of projects in the counties continues to not be up to expectations as a result of several reasons. The lack of explicit internal coordination mechanisms as well as regulations in public institutions, poor participation of stakeholders, the absence of enough personnel, and lack of motivation for the projects through late pay or no pay at all have heavily contributed to failing or stalling of projects. The lack of applying project management practices while implementing government projects is a major challenge in the country and no studies have concentrated on this area to give recommendations on how such practices could be introduced to aid the situation. This project will look to address practices that can help in the improved implementation of government projects in Kenya by looking at projects in Machakos County as a

case study, and present recommendations on what could be improved and replicated to other counties in the country.

### **Machakos County Government**

Machakos County Government, nicknamed 'Macha', is now an administrative county that consists of 8 constituencies, which are, Kathiani, Matungulu, Machakos Township, Masinga, Yatta, Kangundo, Mwala, and Mavoko. Machakos County has an approximately Total Population of 1,098,584 people with 264,500 Households. Machakos County covers a ground area of 6,208 square kilometers and a population density of averagely 177 persons per SQ. KM. Machakos is predominantly a stronghold of the Kamba native speakers known as the Akamba. Machakos county is the front for the yet to be established Konza Technology city project. One of the major factors for setting up this massive project in Machakos County was the availability of land and space and more so the close proximity to the capital Nairobi. The County government through its elected Governor and recruited Ministers for trade, education, transport, water and sanitation, tourism among others have come up with several projects that aim at bettering the lives of the Machakos residents. Such cited projects include construction of educational institutions like the Machakos Youth Polytechnic, roads construction projects like the Junction-Machakos road, tourism projects like the Machakos people's park and Machakos Convention Center, the building of hospitals, water reservoirs, solid waste management among others (GOK, 2013).

However, the World Bank (2013) shows that only 21% of the intended projects have been effectively and efficiently implemented, 45% are still struggling while the remaining have been abandoned or failed. Some of the major factors limiting the projects implemented in the county are factors such as nepotism and tribalism in county boards' employment, poor roads, lack of water supply, lack of railway linkage, poor planning, low level of technology, cultural beliefs, lack of proper stakeholder participation and corruption. This has continued to hinder effective implementation of development projects in the county.

### **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Government projects are of great interests to the people who are beneficiaries (World Bank, 2010). There are conditions that a project must fulfill for it to be considered successful, a project must be timely, completing within the stipulated timeframe, must be serviced by the budget and must meet the quality standards that the client has set. According to the Education for All Global Monitoring Report (2010), these deliverables must be achieved within the given duration for the public handover. The factors put forth clearly show that implementing government projects is usually a challenging task for project managers. At any financial year, the Kenyan government funds numerous projects for both the central and county governments, some of which include construction of roads, educational and IT projects, dams and irrigation projects, settlements etc. in these projects, the main beneficiaries are the citizenry with stakeholders like the business community and the investors. The decentralization policy of Kenya is aimed at promoting the

participation of citizens as well as the ownership of machinery of government by shifting the process of governance from command to consultations processes, and by transferring power, authority and functions, competence and resources to the county level (Wanjiru, 2008; Kamau, 2007). Counties have already implemented a number of projects. Despite this progress, a few challenges in the projects are emerging and slowing the transition process. The County Government has been facing serious challenges in managing projects, over and above creating the conditions required for the success of these projects. Some of the challenges facing the County Government include inadequate personnel with the required project management skills, inadequate financial resources, inefficient project planning, and the un-involvement of the various project stakeholders among others. These projects are aimed at improving the living standards of the citizens, by so doing the implementation process has to be transparent and accountability is key. In their studies, Marangu (2012); and Naidoo (2011) inferred that the private sector projects have higher success rates than government projects. The success rate reduces even further when the projects are in a developing nation such as Kenya. A major challenge that is faced in county government projects is that they do not stick with the budget, nor meet the timelines set or even yield a product that kowtows to the quality standards established. Besides, projects have failed to be completed within a given duration hence they at times fail to meet the intended purpose. Despite the carrying out of government-funded projects being a complex undertaking for any project manager, there is a need to assess how project management practices can be improved to enhance delivery. This study looks to address this gap by looking at project management practices and the implementation of government projects in Kenya with a case of Machakos County.

## **GENERAL OBJECTIVE**

The general objective of this study is to determine project management practices and implementation of government projects in Kenya in Machakos County Government.

## **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

1. To evaluate the influence of project planning on management practices and implementation of government projects in Machakos County Government.
2. To determine the effects of stakeholders participation on management practices and implementation of government projects in Machakos County Government.
3. To find out the effects of monitoring and evaluation on management practices and implementation of government projects in Machakos County Government.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **Institutional Theory**

Institutions are collected of regulative and cultural-cognitive elements which when coupled with other activities and resources give life meaning (Scott, 2004). Scott further describes other pillars



of the institution such as normative, regulatory and cultural-cognitive. The Normative pillar entails of norms of how the order of things should be and the preferred or desired values, the regulatory pillars entails of laws, rules and possible sanction as the act as mechanisms of enforcement. The cultural cognitive pillar informs on selective and shared understanding which involves symbols, common beliefs and shared understanding.

Scholars call for a reinstatement of agency, power, and interest in institutional analysis. As a result, a body of literature has emerged and is referred to as institutional entrepreneurship. The notion of institutional entrepreneurship was introduced as a way to reintroduce actors' agency into the institutional analysis and refers to the activities of institutional entrepreneurs, who not only initiate diverse changes in the institutional environment but also actively participate in the implementation of such changes (Battilana, Leca, & Boxenbaum, 2009). Acknowledging the importance of multiple institutional orders and joint actions and interactions between institutional entrepreneurs as conditions conducive to institutional entrepreneurship, Battilana et al. (2009) further suggest that institutional entrepreneurs implement changes by three means: creating a vision for change, mobilizing resources and supporting others to attain and sustain the vision.

Another concept inextricably linked to institutional entrepreneurship is institutional work. It was originally proposed by Lawrence and Suddaby (2006), and described the intended actions of individuals and organizations focused at creating, maintaining and disrupting the institutions (p. 215), while connected to the institutional entrepreneurship literature that mainly deals with how active and actors create institutions, the institutional work approach extends its focus to issues of maintaining and managing institutions.

There is a plausible prediction from the institution theory that there is the response of institutions to such coercion that may involve engaging in visible activities like streamlining and restructuring operations. Restructuring may be viewed as a way of mimicking the many actions that were taken by institutions especially businesses during the 90s, for instance, there had been reports by the subject institution that, as the restructuring process was taking place, objectives of academics would be realigned, there would be re-engineering of the administration and support services, reshaping of resource allocation and reinforcement of participation of stakeholders in order to meet the mission of the institution.

The theory is fundamental especially in the implementation of sustainable projects in public organizations. According to Brammer and Walker (2012), organizational culture is greatly involved in this process and the extent to which the prevailing organizational climate is supportive to sustainability and general change. This theory helps in understanding the parameters used to govern project management practices in implementing projects.

In light of the institution theory and the government stakeholders described, we can suggest that there are possible incoherencies deemed to occur in the interpretation of elements of government stakeholders and the projects of various institutions elements. These incoherencies are expected

to be larger in value, smaller in regulation and law and least in practice. According to Scott (2012), the elements are interdependent, this means that, if there are no or are limited incoherencies in government stakeholders and implementation of projects in a single element, then the incoherencies in some other two elements may vitiate the whole institution system. In this case, then, laws and regulations are needed to be supported by behavior with required values and practices.

### **Stakeholders Theory**

Proposed by Freeman in 1984, the theory's general idea of the concept of the stakeholder is to entirely redefine the organization. It idealizes how the organization should be and what it would be conceptualized. According to Freeman (2006), the organization should be idealized as a group of stakeholders with the views, interests, and needs of the shareholders being put as the purpose of the organization. It is the managers of the organization who fulfill the management in the organization. Freeman inputs that there are two roles of the manager in the organization, one the manager should run the organization to the benefit of the stakeholders for the purpose of ensuring that their rights in decision making is catered for and the second role is to the manager acts as the stakeholders agent in ensuring the existence of the organization in safeguarding the stakes of each group.

The stakeholder theory thus inputs that an organization is a social construction made of interactions of the various stakeholders. According to Sloan (2009), the organization is the central conduit of the entire stakeholder system of exchanging services, influence, resources, and information. On the other hand, Harrison, Bosse et al. (2007), argued that the value of the organization rests solely on its ability to meet the needs of the important stakeholders in a win-win situation between the stakeholders and the shareholders. There two categories of stakeholders, secondary and primary stakeholders. According to Jawahar and McLaughlin (2001) primary stakeholders are identified as people/groups who are directly negatively or positively affected by the actions of the organization, for instance, employees, shareholders, customers, or suppliers, meanwhile, secondary stakeholders are the individuals or groups who can in indirect measure impact the action of the organization or vice versa, these are the general public, the government and its agencies, Non-Government Organization and funding agencies. The theory thus supports the study's second variable of the stakeholder participation.

Cooper (2004) infers that the stakeholder theory is more of a normative approach that may be argued to be more morally and ethically acceptable than the shareholder value approach. Stakeholders are viewed as important by the instrumental stakeholder theory since by addressing the stakeholder's needs is viewed as a good practice of business, by taking good care of the stakeholders, they positively influence good management of the same which leads to success in the marketplace and profit maximization, for this reason then, the stakeholders concerns are only considered worthy of the organization's decision-making process if they are of profitable strategic value. On the other hand, the normative stakeholder theory stipulates how the



organization should treat their stakeholders. The theory thus is discussed with massive pillars of moral and ethical principles which inform the organizations to view their stakeholders as having intrinsic value (Freeman, 2007).

The instrument stakeholder theory is given preference amongst other theories since it seeks to address the needs of the stakeholder and its needs of the good business practice. By managing the stakeholders well, there are higher chances of marketplace success and more maximization of profits. The major objective of the instrument theory is to benefit the organization. The stakeholder's opinions and inputs are considered worthy of the organization's decision-making process if they are of beneficial importance. The primary perspective of the instrument theory is an organizational performance which is part and parcel to financial growth. For increased organizational performance the, proponents of the perspective inferred that there must be a focus on staff and stakeholders. Consequently, since the main goal of the perspective is to gain financial benefit, the stakeholders and staff have to be managed well (Dietz & Stern, 2008).

According to Newing and Frish (2009), in instances when the integration of stakeholders in formal decision making is done, the process usually becomes overly bureaucratic which in the long run brings huge drawbacks, however, the participation process is usually manipulated by the management in order to promote the stakeholders and the shareholders, what is important in this process is reaching the desired outcome without putting much detail on the selection process. The process of participation can usually initiate in order to meet the requirements of the administration, this is done to please the other interested members like the citizenry to avoid litigation. Further, the process may be rigged by vocal members representing a minority group or wealthier stakeholders since they might monopolize the process as they have the resources to pull other stakeholders as they have the masses, resources and time to attend meeting frequently. According to Sunstein (2001), differences arising in the organization may make the process backfire hence further making decision making and agreements futile and further prolonging the earlier positions.

Various stakeholders perceive that they have immense stakes in government projects, this is one of the major application of the stakeholder theory in project management. In regard to the stakeholder's perception about having stakes in government projects, there is usually a tussle in ways that they act which convinces them that they will achieve them and accomplish the objectives of their own projects which may or may not be aligned to the projects manager's vision, mission or objectives. Thus, it is utterly important for the project manager to make it his/her concern to discern the needs of each stakeholder in the project, and to efficiently to manage their needs and desires. For effective completion of a project, the project manager has to be adept at handling multiple interests of various stakeholders within the various government project management process.

## **Resource-Based Theory**

Wernerfelt was the proponent of the theory in 1984. An organization has various production processes that require resources, these resources are input in form of capital, skilled employees, patents, talented managers, equipment, and finance. There are two types of resources, tangible or intangible. As the organization's effectiveness increases so do the set resources increase. Resources that are individually owned may not prove to have a competitive advantage. Competitive advantage is achieved through integration and combination of sets of resources. According to Kellen et al. (2012), the resource-based theory is extensively used in project management as it examines the usefulness of resources ones incorporated to achieve competitive advantage. The theory becomes one of the most influential theory in the literature of project management due to its validity, ease of grasp and an appealing core message (Kraaijenbrink et al., 2010). That notwithstanding, these advantages are highly contested, according to Truijens (2013), the scholars who are against the theory's application usually criticize the application of the theory in areas related to its definition based on the empirical methodology, conceptual framework and the concept deficiencies. The theory helps in understanding the utility of resources available in carrying out projects, aid in choosing projects and effectively implements a project through prioritizing.

It is important to note that the organization is a compilation of resources composed of various capabilities of financial, physical, tangible and human assets. The theory operates by the fact that resources are limited to mobility and homogeneity, for his reason, the organization has the ability to transform the resources and capabilities into an advantage as long as they are valuable, inimitable and rare. In the formulating strategy, the resource theory considers internal capabilities to aid in achieving a sustainable advantage in the industries and markets. When an organization is viewed as a composition of resources and capabilities which are modified to achieve a competitive advantage, then this perspective means that the capabilities within the organization are used to determine its ability to compete in its external environment, in some cases, however, the capabilities of the organization may help it to create new markets by adding value to its customers, for areas where competitive advantage is dependent on capabilities, the organization pays more attention to the formation of its new value chain activities that aid in creating more competitive advantage.

Earlier perspectives of the resource-based theory placed heavy emphasis on resources bound to the organization's resources developed internally over time. In areas where organizational boundaries are fluid and the environment is fluid attention shifts from resources to the ability to create alliances and networks, since acquiring resources may be as effective as developing them. The global market has seen many alliances develop especially between leading institutions and the the world at large. The future success of the organization will solely be based upon their ability to create international networks as a conduit of streams of income.

One of the shortcomings of the resource-based theory and the main base of its criticism its failure to account fully for the management process. Simon, Hitt, and Ireland (2007), infer that resource models that have come later portray this process to including the resource portfolios building capabilities and leveraging the available capabilities for value to customers all for competitive advantage. There are bigger and bigger tasks that face the manager of organizational institutions as the environments become more uncertain and competitive. Currently, there are no guaranteed incomes and more players have entered the project managed business such as consultancy firms which creates more competition. Consequently, institutions need to be properly managed as commercial entities and for this reason, better mental models need to be devised by the senior management teams. The current arena needs managerial capabilities that are able to shape and sense opportunities, seize them and reshape the tangible and intangible assets.

The managerial strategy involves exploiting and developing the unique resources, capabilities of the organization in a continuous process strengthening and maintaining them. The theory asserts that for advantage and convenience purposes, it is empirical that organization ventures into strategies that are not being perused by other competing organization, this means that the strategies must be rare, difficult to copy or not easily substitutable. The theory suggests that over time, an organization is able to create and develop competencies over great mileage against its rivals hence setting a brand of performance. It further predicts that strategic resources and capabilities enable organizations to enjoy excellent performance.

## **EMPIRICAL REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **Project Planning and Implementation**

According to Baldwin and Bordoli (2014), despite the definition put forth for project planning, there are a number of objectives that are achieved by project planning which include, completion of projects as per the set standards design, quality, resources, safety and health according to the costs scheduled to the expectations of the stakeholder. It was the early construction studies that the importance of project planning was recognized from which it was argued that it needed to be improved by examining more management planning strategies.

There is a strong correlation between the success of a project and proper project planning as per the perspective of the stakeholders (Dvir and Lechler, 2014). The two scholars also indicated that through clear definition of technical and functional specifications in project planning there are higher chances of efficient and effective setting up of projects. Further, they found out that successful implementation of procedures of planning is directly proportional to benefits of project stakeholders. This means that the success of a project can be equated to the amount of planning that has been laid down, Dvier and Lechler (2004) further inferred that poor planning causal for alteration in a variable of time, quality, and cost. Benefits of good planning include the ability to forecast requirement of resources, to create more realistic schedules under clear deadlines, the ability to provide reliable information for opportunity and risk assessment, the ability to

communicate with clarity about the project to the stakeholders, provides information for control and monitoring with waste minimization and further providing a basis for strong team coordination.

In his study, Kariungi (2014) looked at the benefits that are achieved through strong commitment and knowledge of project managers and the stakeholders coupled with effective scheduling and planning in the most effective way. Regardless of the theoretical discussions on the importance of project planning and there is less empirical research for better understanding of the effectiveness of its allocation in projects. Furthermore, there is little or no evidence in to indicate the project planning strategy used in Machakos County Government to enhance effective implementation of government projects. Kerzer (2012), in the study, noted that one of the primary merits of developing an implementation methodology is the fact that there is an organizational contingency. Increase in interconnected organizational units is caused by integration of the project management implementation process. Strategic project planning communicates overall goals to all management levels within the organization. This provides for feedback from top to bottom, bottom to top, and from one functional unit to another and thus helps reduce resistance to change. This provides for feedback from top management to bottom and vice versa and from a functional unit to another and thus helps reduce resistance to change. With strategic project planning, there is equal opportunity to participate in all levels thus eliminating possible resistance and reducing the fear of the unknown. For excellent project management in an organizational project, strategic planning is usually paramount, this entails from the relationship of the employees, managers, stakeholders, staff and the overall management and commitment to various roles of all players for example roles of the executive sponsors to the organization's culture and structure. Strategic planning is paramount for any organizations survival. The difference between long-term success and failure is effective strategic planning.

### **Stakeholder Participation and Project Implementation**

Stakeholder participation can be defined as a social process through which groups sharing living needs in a specified geographical area identify similar and necessary needs, go through a decision making process and set up ways in which to achieve set goals and objectives (Adesina, 2010). Nonetheless, in heterogeneous groups and individuals may become a community and thence may take collective action to attain specific and shared goals and objectives. Stakeholder participation in one of the most fundamental factors that influences sustainability and project implementation. The determinants of whether a project is established, quickly and successfully and whether it responds and adapts to changes and needs is the level of stakeholder support. In consequence, stakeholder participation is a vital component of community development which further reflects a grassroots approach to problem-solving.

According to Abbot (2004), it is a worldwide recognition that government scheme participation means utilizing the services/inputs offered to support the project. Participation in government schemes is usually contrasted in involving control over decisions, plans, priorities which are

forms of implementation. These forms are usually induced, spontaneous, or assisted to achieve collective goals. Stakeholder participation is the most fundamentally important and complicated aspect of the local development and planning. Appropriate and effective participation leads to social/personal empowerment, development in the social/political and economic spheres (Kaufman & Alfonso, 1997). Yet still, there are obstacles which include the powers of the central bureaucracies, inadequate or lack of local skills, social stratifications, experience in organizational management and the effects of national or transnational structures.

In his study, Cavaye (2011) indicated that transformation of regional communities is caused by the social and economic changes. The ability of the communities to adapt to the changes is dependent on service delivery, infrastructure maintenance, and economic development. Further, there is reliance on the local population to utilize assets in new and diverse ways, gaining more networks, cooperation, mobilization of existing skills, technological innovation and actualizing the innovations. The outcomes of the above actions are job creation, improvement in economy and infrastructure and a stronger community that is able to embrace manages change. Action, participation, and contact create a more vital community that has more skills, networks, better leadership and passion with the ability to create and manage change. Cavaye (2011) also noted that long-lasting development within the existing rural areas is dependent on the minimally tangible components of development like local leadership, motivation and rethinking, community ownership and action. On the matter of literature of stakeholder development on community participation or a prescription that ensures it, there is no clear-cut agreement, that notwithstanding, there is a need for stakeholder participation in management and development is accepted and recognized in the project management professional literature. Stakeholder participation, therefore, should be aimed at empowering people by ensuring that skills developed to lead to employment creation.

In another study, Hofisi (2013) noted that the failure of rural communities to sustainable development in government-funded projects is caused by inadequate empowerment by the project, further he points out that government-funded projects are sustainable if the participatory process is allowed from project identification to completion. In as much as the participatory projects are able to address the basic community needs through involvement, unsustainability may arise in cases where there are over ambition. Consequently, it should be ensured that there is manageability of coordination of all the institution involved in the project designs. The recommendation put by Hofisi (2013) is that project design should be clearly described exit strategies and handover of projects assets once the project is completed. Finally, the community involved in the project should be duly involved in the existing strategies in the project.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation of Project Management and Implementation**

Evaluation and monitoring of projects are of great importance to the various stakeholders and sponsors as it ensures that id similar projects are replicated elsewhere being undertaken by the same financial sector would revolve around the same areas (Marangu, 2012). According to

Naidoo's (2011) study, the process of evaluation and monitoring is taken seriously if it is associated with significant powers of decision making. The study further deduces that units of monitoring and evaluation want to be viewed as value additions and for their sake be able to justify their efforts, for this case, the credibility of M&E managers is bolstered by success factors. This means that the monitoring team needs a lot of support and strengthening in order to effectively carry out its mandate with power and authority, other than these the teams need frequency of scope monitoring in order to identify changes, big personnel capacity for project scheduling and to monitor the cost overruns (Ling et al., 2009).

The use of technology in monitoring and evaluation contributes majorly to the success and efforts of the monitoring and evaluation team, which in turn leads to value added by the team. Georgieva & Allan (2008), infer that some of the processes used to manage project work include managing the stakeholders, monitoring the processes and teamwork among the members. In this, it is conclusive to say that a good monitoring team is one that has excellent stakeholder representation. Similarly, an M&E team that has teamwork shows strength and an ingredient of better performance in project management. In addition, Gwadoya (2012), there is a collective need for properly understanding the monitoring and evaluation practices in projects. This shows that the earlier studies of project management lacked a proper understanding of the evaluation and monitoring practices among project teams. Though the studies carried out mainly dealt with critical success factors, monitoring and evaluation being one of them, few of the studies have focused on monitoring and evaluation. Several other studies reviewed also focused on monitoring and evaluation for example (Naidoo, 2011; Mwala, 2012; Marangu, 2012) but none have addressed to the specific link between monitoring and evaluation in relation to effective project management practices and implementation.

According to Pinto & Slevin (2007), the project control processes are monitoring and feedback, which at each stage of implementation, there ought to be a team to receive feedback as per how the project is fairing in relation to initial projections. Feedback is also given to the donors, sponsors, implementers, and beneficiaries of the project which is also a practice of monitoring. The feedback is thus used for decision making in order to improve the performance of the project (Bartle, 2007). Allowing for sufficient monitoring and feedback mechanisms gives the project manager the capacity to predict challenges, oversee counteractive actions and to ensure that no weaknesses are overlooked.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

The study adopted a descriptive survey to make proclamations on how project planning stakeholder participation and monitoring influence the practices of management and implementation of government projects in Machakos County government. The Descriptive survey was of a qualitative nature trying to answer the 'what if' questions in the practices of



management and implementation of government projects in Machakos County government. According to Ordho (2003), preliminary and explanatory studies can utilize descriptive survey in order to allow the study to collect information, summarize, present and interpret data for clarification purposes. The descriptive survey aimed at casting more light on in the practices of management and implementation of government projects in Machakos County government through a qualitative research design. It was enabled for the collected information to give a description of the situation in a complete manner than was possible before (Ordho, 2003).

### **Target Population**

The target population comprised all employees at Machakos County Government engaged in the implementation of public projects. The respondents were drawn from employees at various levels of management at the Machakos County Government which involved 90 employees. According to Mugenda & Mugenda (2003), the target population possesses some observable characteristics which the study anticipates to generate the results of the study.

### **Sample Size and Sampling Technique**

The plan of sampling describes the procedures of sampling and the sample size of the study. According to Kothari (2010), a sample frame describes the list of the entire population units from which the sample is taken from. The method of stratified random sampling is utilized in cases where the population of the study is heterogeneous meaning it can be subdivided into strata or groups to obtain a representative sample. As stated by Mugenda & Mugenda (2012) any sample size that is between 10% and 30% is a good demonstration of the target population and as a result, 30% was used for analysis. From the target population of 90 employees, the study selected 27 employees. These employees majorly included those that have been involved in the running of projects in Machakos. The selection was as follows:

### **Data Collection and Instrument**

Questionnaires were used to collect data. It was developed to contain items that are aligned towards achieving the set objectives of the study. The questionnaire consisted of closed and open-ended questions that are ideal to collect the opinions of respondents in qualitative research. The set of closed questions consist of answer fixed questions to be answered by the respondents in a sequence with a predesigned set of responses. Open-ended questions were not restrictive to the respondents. The questionnaire was divided into four sections. Section one request the respondents to fill in background information about themselves and the organizations, whereas the remaining three sections consist of variables which the study intend to research on.

### **Data Analysis and Presentation**

The data primarily collected was gathered and sorted for ease of manipulation and analysis. The data was then edited, coded and classified with the aid of the Statistical Package of Social

Sciences version 21 (SPSS). Summary of the data was done using a descriptive statistics technique which enabled the study to describe the distribution using values of indices. Frequencies distribution modes of presentation and percentages will be used to present the data analyzed. Data was also be analyzed using multiple linear regression models which were aimed at establishing the impact of the independent variables on the dependent variable. A regression model was used to test the effectiveness of project management practices and implementation of government project at Machakos County Government. The general form of multiple Regression:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3+ \varepsilon$$

Where: Y = effective project implementation; X<sub>1</sub> = Project Planning; X<sub>2</sub> = Stakeholder participation; X<sub>3</sub>= Monitoring and evaluation of projects; β<sub>0</sub>= Constant Term; β<sub>1</sub>, β<sub>2</sub>, β<sub>3</sub>, = Beta coefficients; ε = Error Term.

## **RESEARCH RESULTS**

The outline of discoveries compresses each of the discoveries under each of the targets of the examination. The investigation looked to establish the management practices and the implementation of management practices in Machakos County Government.

On the strategic planning for project management, the available research cannot unmistakably demonstrate the procedures and the effect of the absence of or accessibility of strategic planning for project management. There limited data on the degree to which monitoring an evaluation impacts powerful execution of projects. The review of literature audits that a couple of organizations, like the County Government of Machakos, completely comprehend the use of strategic planning monitoring and evaluation together with stakeholder participation in the management of the projects. Moreover, the investigations do not demonstrate to what degree the absence of stakeholder support influences the realization of viable projects. Most often than not, the accessible and available information demonstrates that much research has been done on projects funded by the government. However, there is very little consideration regarding projects funded by county governments like Machakos on the effectiveness of project management practices and implementation, for which this investigation will help give more data about.

The examination uncovered that a large portion of the projects had a strategic plan. Likewise, the examination discovered that every one of the associations had a mission statement, a vision and core values. In addition, the investigation found out that the project plan and log frame are the instruments which are significantly utilized while planning for the association. The discoveries additionally depict that the project objective identifies with the general hierarchical objective and is all-around composed of the project team. It can likewise be derived that strategic planning guarantees representatives and different stakeholders are progressing in the direction of shared objectives. It also builds up understanding around expected results, evaluates and alters the association's course in light of an evolving situation. In conclusion, the examination demonstrated

that strategic planning for project management puts into thought best practices where an authoritative culture must exist, that values and supports best practices.

From the study findings, it can be abridged that lion's share of the projects in the County Government of Machakos utilizes monitoring design and monitoring tools. Likewise, the investigation determined that a large number of the respondents showed that they mostly followed the monitoring design. The investigation goes further to show that project leaders mirror the project and that they gave criticism to the beneficiaries in the wake of monitoring. Finally, the examination represents that composed reports were for the most part used to offer input to the legatees.

The investigation uncovered that the key stakeholders in the project are teachers and parents and that stakeholders are associated with project implementation for the conceptualizing of the ideas of a project. The discoveries compress the methods for advancing project possession and supportability by the stakeholders to include: plan and accomplishment forms which fulfill all and stakeholders in a project, focusing on stakeholders so as to fulfill those included or influenced, and guaranteeing the greatest investment of the considerable number of stakeholders.

## **INFERENCE ANALYSIS**

This study additionally applied the Linear Model in order to establish the effectiveness of project management practices and implementation of government project at Machakos County Government. This linear model included the model analysis regression analysis, Analysis of Variance and coefficient of determination. There was also the regression analysis on multiple variants testing the relationships between them on the effectiveness of project management practices and implementation of government project at Machakos County Government. A statistical package for social sciences (SPSS V 17.0) was applied by the researcher. This was used to code, enter and analyze the measurements in the regression models for the study.

The coefficient of determination gives an explanation to the changes in the dependent variables can be explained by the changes in the independent variables or even the rate of variation in the dependent variable (the effectiveness of project management practices and implementation of government project at Machakos County Government). This can be determined or explained by the independent variables used in the research namely monitoring and evaluation, strategic planning, and stakeholder participation. The regression analysis results were represented as follows;

$\beta$  = A measurement of the strength of each independent variable being influenced by the dependent variables,  $p$  = determined by t statistic, which is the probability of arriving at a result as extreme as one found while collecting random data where the variable has no effect and  $t =$  statistic which is the coefficient divided by its standard error

**Table 1: Model Summary**

<b>Model</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R Square</b>	<b>Adjusted R Square</b>	<b>Std. Error of the Estimate</b>
1	0.928	0.905	0.678	0.653

The three independent variables that were studied, explain only 90.5% of the effectiveness of project management practices and implementation of government project at Machakos County Government as represented by the square of R. This means, therefore, that there are other factors that this research has not studied that contribute to 9.5% of effective project management practices and implementation of government project at Machakos County Government. There is, therefore, need to conduct further research on those other factors on the effectiveness of project management practices and implementation of government project at Machakos County Government.

**Table 2: Regression analysis**

<b>Model</b>	<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Regression	2.628	50	1.312	9.585	.000a
Residue	7.308	200	2.345		
Total	9.936	250			

The value of significance is 0.000 and is less than 0.05. This means that the model is significant, statistically speaking while predicting how strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation, and stakeholder participation affect the effectiveness of project management practices and implementation of government project at Machakos County Government. At 5%, the F critical level of significance was 2.33 and the since F calculated value is 9.585 is greater than the F critical, the model overall was significant.

**Table 3: Coefficient of determination**

<b>Model</b>	<b>Unstandardized Coefficients</b>	<b>Standardized Coefficients</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	
	<b>B</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>		
1	(Constant)	1.171	0.2355	5.212	0.000
Project planning	0.760	0.1101	0.1101	7.291	.000
Monitoring and evaluation	0.478	0.3535	0.1535	3.399	.000
Stakeholder participation	0.509	0.2001	0.1040	4.101	.000

The table on the coefficient of determination shows several regression analyses done to determine the level at which the three practices affect the effectiveness of project management practices and

implementation of government project at Machakos County Government. This is done according to the table generated via SPSS and the regression equation  $Y = (\beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \epsilon)$  is represented as:

$$Y = 1.171 + 0.760X_1 + 0.478X_2 + 0.59X_3$$

Taking all factors of strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation, and stakeholder participation into account and according to the regression equation established with the constant at zero, the effectiveness of project management practices and implementation of government project at Machakos County Government will be 1.171. From the analysis of the data findings, while taking all the other variables to be at zero, an increase per unit in strategic planning will cause to an increase of 0.760 in the effectiveness of project management practices and implementation of government projects. Assertively, a unit increase in monitoring and implementation and stakeholder participation will see the effectiveness of project management practices and the implementation of government projects increase by 0.478 and 0.590 respectively.

This is interpreted to mean that strategic planning has the most contribution to the effectiveness of project management practices and implementation of government projects by the County Government of Machakos. At 95% level of confidence and 5% level of significance, stakeholder participation and stakeholder participation were both significant in the effectiveness of project management practices and implementation of government projects in the County Government of Machakos.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

In view of the research findings, this investigation made several conclusions. The investigation reasoned that the majority of the projects by the County Government of Machakos had a strategic plan. Moreover, it was observed that the County Government of Machakos had a mission statement, a vision and core values. Moreover, the investigation presumes that Project plan is the apparatus which is significantly utilized while planning for the County Government of Machakos' projects. The finding further presumes that the project objective identifies with the general hierarchical objective and it is very much organized by the project group. It can likewise be presumed that strategic planning guarantees representatives and different stakeholders are moving in the direction of shared objectives, builds up assertion around proposed results/comes about, and evaluates and alter the association's heading because of an evolving domain. The investigation reasons that planning strategically for the management of a project puts into thought best practices in an authoritative culture must exist, that values and supports best practices in the County Government of Machakos.

From the research findings, it can be presumed the County Government of Machakos' projects had a monitoring plan and monitoring tools. Additionally, the examination inferred that respondents took after the monitoring plan much of the time. The investigation goes further to reason that project managers monitor the project and that they gave criticism to the beneficiaries

subsequent to monitoring. Additionally, the investigation presumes that composed reports were for the most part used to offer input to the beneficiaries.

The examination inferred that the key stakeholders in the project were teachers, parents, members of the community, government officials and donors. More so, stakeholders are associated with project implementation for the conceptualizing of project ideas and strategies. The discoveries close the methods for advancing project proprietorship and supportability by the stakeholders in County Government of Machakos to include definition and implementation forms which fulfill all and stakeholders in a project, focusing on stakeholders with a specific end goal to fulfill those included or influenced, and guaranteeing most extreme cooperation of the substantial number of stakeholders.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

From the findings of this study, the researcher came up with several recommendations for the County Government of Machakos.

1. The project team should be sharpened to comprehend the necessity for project planning, monitoring, and implementation at all levels.
2. To improve maintainability of the projects, particularly once the contributors have left, every project needs to have an end strategy, one for in between the project and one before the project even commences
3. Monitoring and evaluation ought to be attempted in each progression of project implementation and not a one-time occasion as it is normal with the numerous financed projects. This will help distinguish, escape clauses and deviations from general projects objectives, and correct them ahead of schedule as to guarantee effective quality implementation. County Government of Machakos' supported projects ought to put resources into change, as well as training of the project group on the use of a similar innovation. This will expand abilities and their transfer and level of proficiency in expanding project implementation.
4. From the investigation, it is obvious that innovation is appraised profoundly as impacting the implementation of contributor subsidized projects. Organizations like the Machakos County Government, consequently, ought to give enough resources to this factor while guaranteeing satisfactory training to all staff on the use of the various innovations in project management practices and implementation. This will improve the execution of the County Government of Machakos' financed projects as it were.
5. With an end goal to economically actualize the county's projects past their courses of events, there appears to be a necessity for an exhaustive system in management rehearses that will consolidate all on-monitor characters being developed. This could, along these lines, imply all the actualizing organizations, government bodies, private area and the recipients completely take part in the entire project management cycle.



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