



## THE INFLUENCE OF PROJECT TEAM ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF YOUTH ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT FUND PROJECTS IN MACHAKOS' COUNTY, KENYA

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### ABSTRACT

Africa faces a problem of youth unemployment. This rate is even worsening gradually over the years especially due to economic recession facing many countries. Kenya has experienced high rates of unemployment and has introduced projects that can be able to help the youth. The Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDF) was launched in order to address the youth unemployment issue by ensuring they provide loans and equip the youth with appropriate skills to creatively engage in economically beneficial activities. However, lack of supportive implementation structures has occluded the youth from accessing such loans. This research project aimed at establishing the influence of project team on the implementation of the youth enterprise development fund project in Machakos County, Kenya. The study used a descriptive research design. The target population for this Research was 100 projects under the YEDF. The respondents were the Project Managers and the sample size was determined using Fisher's formula. The Data collection instrument was through questionnaires. The data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The relationship between project team and YEDF projects' implementation was found to be positive and significant. The study concluded those project teams have a positive and significant influence on YEDF projects' implementation and also the project team influences project implementation through total commitment to the project where they devote their time and energy. The study recommended that project team should remain steadfast in their support for the project by coming up with strategies that they can effectively adopt to ensure successful implementation of the projects.

**Keywords:** Project Team, Project Implementation

### INTRODUCTION

The aim of a project is to make the specified end product, to meet the quality and goals that are specified and also to be on budget and on time. A project undergoes four phases which are: Initiation Phase, Planning phase, Implementation phase and Closing phase. It is during the Implementation Phase whereby the project manager uses the resources allocated to the project with the intention to meet the objectives of the project as highlighted in the project plan (PMI, 2013).

According to Jugdev and Muller (2005), the project implementation process is not easy since business today is often influenced externally and there are so many uncertainties coming from politics, policies placed by regulatory authorities, fluctuating project financing and change in management structure. These uncertainties have also been known to be a reason for the failure of so many projects. Studies conducted on sustainability of decentralized programs suggest that; inadequate funding, exclusion of stakeholders in planning and implementation of the projects, lack of political goodwill and lack of appropriate skills in management have been among the major setbacks to successful implementation (Wasike *et al.*, 2001). Through loan provision, Youth Enterprise Development fund (YEDF) projects have created job opportunities for youths (Karengo, 2019). The YEDF also creates jobs for the youths through the jobs in abroad scheme (Youth Employment Scheme Abroad (YESA) and enterprise development. YEDF has established enterprise development projects where youths' enterprises that show possibility of creating jobs for other youths are provided with advancement loans. YEDF is being faced with Internal and external demands and pressure and some of the sources of these demands are from the regulatory frameworks (Wohoro, 2016).

Moreover, the greatest project implementation influencers globally have been found to be the stakeholders. Project success is therefore achieved where stakeholders are included in project implementation since the end users have access to the project output. According to the conclusions by the many studies that have been conducted on road project performance, the stakeholders are seen to play a major role in project implementation in Kenyan roads construction projects. Kimathi (2016) noted that stakeholder involvement was important for the implementation of projects. Olander and Landin (2005) concluded that involving stakeholders is important to ensure realization of Project outcomes. The employees of an organization form a large section of a project implementation phase due to the fact that they are involved greatly in the day-to-day operations of the organization hence in the case of a project then the project team structure will have a great impact on the implementation process.

Joshua and Stanley (2017) advised that in order to achieve the goals of the organization implementation of government projects is critical. Therefore, if the implementation structures are poor then the whole project could fail. One of the ways to create a stable implementation structure is through Stakeholder Involvement and understanding the influence they could have.

Implementation of projects is adopting the proposed project activities in the project plan in order to achieve the set objectives and deliver the outputs. A successfully implemented project is measured in terms of timeliness, effectiveness, on budget and client satisfaction (Sikudi, 2017). Therefore, a successful project is that which has been implemented on time as scheduled, it is on budget, achieves the objective deliberated on initially and is accepted by the client (Kalola & Kavale, 2018). Project implementation is dependent on both some internal factors and external factors. Some of these factors include organization of project team and monitoring of expenditures and project progress.

According to project implementation theory, implementing a project successfully is difficult and is a complex exercise (Pinto, 2019). For a project to be well implemented, there must be a schedule plan that provides a road map or strategy for achieving the desired project success. Successful project implementation is a result of combination of technical skills, budgetary

skills and human attention that is collective and extensive. Successful implementation also depends upon a number of factors that are critical and which should be highly considered and attended to. Pinto and Slevin (2011) asserted that failure to give attention to these critical factors will always lead to project failure. The external influence of project implementation may include but are not limited to, events that are unexpected, requirements that keep on growing, resource flow fluctuations and constraints that keep changing.

According to Mochal (2009) even where there are excellent project team and the plan is well formulated, the rate of success of projects may not be as successful due to some other factors that may not be accounted for. Meredith and Mantel (2011) argue that since project implementation phase requires the use of 80%-85% of the resources and activities all the success factors should be well considered. For successful projects, a combination of both project management and product successes is required.

Started in the year 2006 and transformed into a state corporation, the Youth Enterprise Development Fund mandate is creating employment for the youths in Kenya. The fund program achieves this by providing funds to young Kenyans who have already established businesses and who want to expand their businesses. The Youth Enterprise Development Fund has offices in ten counties which help in enhancing delivery of services and to make it present in the grassroots. The products offered by the Youth Enterprise Development Fund include; market support and linkages, enterprise development, youth employment scheme abroad and commercial infrastructure.

The fund achieves market support and linkages through facilitation of business establishment between larger enterprises and small youth owned enterprises and facilitation of marketing of product and services by youth owned enterprises in the domestic, regional and international markets. They organize and participate in marketing events such as trade fair, convection, roadshows and exhibitions. The Youth Enterprise Development Fund provides training on entrepreneurship and also services on business development to entrepreneurial youths which ensures they have the required skills to carry out business and can identify opportunities for business.

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The YEDF is mandated with the task of increasing capital access by the Kenyan youth entrepreneurs, provision of business development services, facilitation of supply chains linkages, market opportunities creation both in the local and international market for the products and services and also to create the commercial infrastructure which will ensure growth of youth enterprises. Unfortunately, some of the strategic objectives set to attain the main mandate are not being met due to lack of supportive implementing structures (Wohoro (2016).

The YEDF project has failed in its implementation. Most youths especially in rural areas are yet to benefit from the funds. For example, in 2019, the project suffered a great loss of Ksh 208 million when purchases were made for hatcheries meant for five youth groups that were later reported to have become absolute as they gathered dust in stores. This project therefore failed in terms of timely delivery of the project deliverables. This was following the directive by the head of public service stopping the disposal of the machines to the youth groups thereby slowing the

process (Daily Nation, July 5, 2019). Another setback in the project implementation involve disbursement of irregular loans by some of the project staff which resulted in failure of the deserving youths in receiving the funds (Daily Nation, March 5, 2018). The loans therefore have failed to achieve the set objective of supporting the deserving youths.

Further, the rural constituencies have been reported to have a lower access to the YEDF funds is compared to the urban constituencies. In Matungu constituency, a study conducted by Barasa and Githae (2015) showed that only 83 young people had received the funds in 2015. According to Mburunga (2014), lack of awareness in the rural areas has led to little or no information with regards to YEDF. Moreover, the youth in rural areas can only acquire such information through communication from officials and broadcasting networks. Communities those are aware of the projects being implemented in their region leads to a higher prioritization of projects (TISA, 2011).

Although some studies have been conducted on stakeholder influence on project implementation, this has not been exhaustive. Roba (2014) for example conducted a study in Moyale County that aimed at assessing the CDF projects and the factors that influence their implementation. Another study was conducted among projects in the construction industry to evaluate how their implementation (Olander & Landin, 2015). Among the road construction projects in Kenya, Mandala (2018) investigated the performance of such projects and how they are affected by proper project management such as involvement of stakeholders. It is therefore evident that none of the projects have touched on the Youth Enterprise Development Funds in Kenya. This study therefore sought to fill the gap by investigating the influence of project team on project implementation in Youth Enterprise Development Funds in Machakos County, Kenya.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Theoretical Review**

This theory was based on stakeholder theory that was developed by Mitroff (1983) and later published by Edward Freeman. According to the theory, an organization that manages its stakeholders well and puts value on the stakeholders has the likelihood to be successful. The organization also is set to experience improvements in every area of its operation. The company that gives value to its stakeholders has an added advantage of getting value for its self also leading to the elevation of its social economic status. This theory also puts emphasis on companies applying the business ethics such as ethics, morals, and values especially when it comes to dealing with the stakeholders.

According to the theory, as described by Parmar and Freeman (2010), it has descriptive, instrumental and normative aspects that support each other. The Descriptive concept defines how companies are managed; The Instrumental concept emphasizes on the use of empirical data to understand the relationship of management and stakeholders while the normative concept focuses on how the organization can morally carry out its processes.

Many authors are in support of the Stakeholder Theory, Bourne (2006) concluded that project implementation failure could be due to the bad perception by the stakeholders and a strained stakeholder- project team relationship. A stakeholder analysis is what is carried out in order to

understand the stakeholder perception in regards to the project which is usually finalized by a stakeholder Management. However, some critics argue that the theory has problems since according to them the different stakeholder's interests differ and therefore balancing the against each other is problematic since it's impossible to please all the stakeholders at all levels.

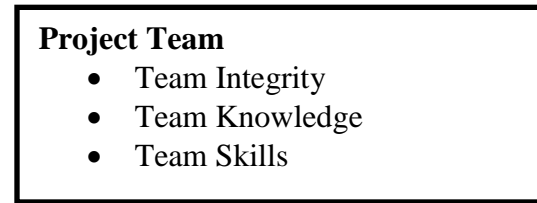
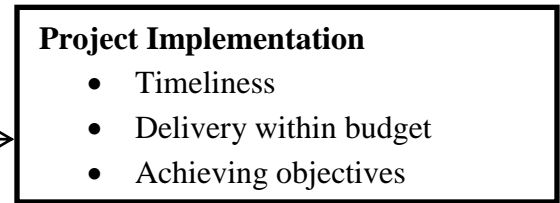
Freeman (2010) asserts that the stakeholder theory is a management theory which calls for urgency and adherence to power for the managers to serve the interests of the stakeholders. Stakeholder Management was therefore developed in order to create positive relationships by managing their expectations. Stakeholder Management goes through a process of first identifying your stakeholder, whereby your stakeholder could be either internal or external. The next step of stakeholder Management is to prioritize your stakeholder in terms of power and influences and ensuring that the stakeholders are well understood. Finally, manage the stakeholders and develop an effective strategic plan

Johnson and Scholes (1999) formulized a framework for stakeholders called the power/interest matrix which was later developed in the project environment by Olander and Landin (2015) whereby they concluded that Stakeholders' power, interest, legitimacy, urgency, proximity and relationship network affect project success. The stakeholder theory is therefore very important for this project as it is effective in carrying out an analysis on stakeholders, classifying them according to their power and urgency levels and being able to manage them. Further, this theory will be very helpful for understanding the various stakeholders and their influences on projects.

### **Empirical Review**

Roba (2014) conducted a study seeking to establish the factors that influence Moyale constituency CDF projects implementation. One of the factors that was studied was project team and its effect on implementation. The research design that was used was descriptive research design. The study used CDF projects stakeholders who included project management committee, constituency development fund committee and the line ministries key departmental heads as the population. A census was adopted and the ample was 51. Data collection instruments were a semi-structured questionnaire that was first pilot tested to test the validity and reliability and an interview guide. Quantitative analysis was conducted on the data and content analysis used to analyze the data obtained from open ended questions. The study established that project team had significant influence on the project implementation.

Peter (2013) on a study of the challenges facing project implementation in selected public sector organizations in Kenya. The respondents were the employees in these four parastatals. The specific employees were those who worked in the project, finance and donor liaison offices who were the respondent. Data was obtained through a structured questionnaire. The data analysis was by descriptive statistics and correlation and regression analysis. The study found out that the project managers' inability to anticipate disruptions, inability to encourage resourcefulness and resourcefulness, inability to conduct work inspections on engineers and contractors can be inhibiting to the project implementation. This study focused on the inhibiting skill that can lead to poor implementation but failed to show the competence guidelines that can lead to successful implementation.

**CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK****Independent Variable****Dependent Variable****Figure 1: Conceptual Framework****RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

In this research, the design of choice was descriptive. The descriptive design was chosen since it portrays things as they are without affecting them in any way (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). One hundred YEDF projects in three sectors were targeted in this study. The sectors were agriculture, poultry farming, and art. The targeted respondents were project managers from each active project selected and the Funds' management official of the YEDF Machakos County office. In this study, project managers were selected as the study respondents and were sampled using purposive sampling technique. The sample size for the study was 78 respondents who were project managers in each of the projects. The Data collection instrument was through questionnaires. The data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

**FINDINGS**

The study sought to establish the influence of project team on the implementation of the youth enterprise development fund project in Machakos County, Kenya. The findings are given in Table 1.

**Table 1: Descriptive Summary of Project Team influence**

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Std. Dev.
Project teams are committed to the success of projects	0.00%	1.40%	4.20%	42.30%	52.10%	4.45	0.65
YEDF officials have the capacity to meet deadlines set	1.40%	4.20%	8.50%	39.40%	46.50%	4.25	0.89
The project team provide ideas on the way to carry out the projects	2.80%	5.60%	7.00%	46.50%	38.00%	4.11	0.96
Project teams are trained with the necessary skills	4.20%	5.60%	7.00%	43.70%	39.40%	4.08	1.04
Project teams strictly adhere to the project's mission	1.40%	5.60%	5.60%	43.70%	43.70%	4.23	0.90
<b>Average</b>						<b>4.22</b>	<b>0.89</b>

All the statements had overall mean of 4.22 and a standard deviation of 0.89 which meant that the majority agreed on the project teams' influence statements. The summary for the responses regarding project team' influence showed that the statement that project teams are committed to the success of projects had the highest mean of 4.45 and a standard deviation of 0.65. This means that the majority of the respondents agreed with the statement. The statement that YEDF officials have the capacity to meet deadlines set attracted a mean of 4.25 and a standard deviation of 0.89. This means that the majority of the respondents agreed with the statement. The statement that Project teams are trained with the necessary skills had a mean of 4.08 and a standard deviation of 1.04. This means that the majority of the respondents agreed with the statement. This implied that there is a positive influence by the project teams on the YEDF projects. This was in line with the findings by Roba (2014) who established that project team had significant influence on the project implementation.

### Results of Inferential Statistics Analysis

**Table 2: Correlation Analysis**

		Project team	
Project Influence	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	71	
Project Implementation	Pearson Correlation	.574**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	71	

From the results it was evident that project team influence had a positive association with project implementation ( $r=0.574$   $p=0.000$ ).

**Table 3: Model Summary of Regression Analysis**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.796a	0.633	0.611	0.279151

It was revealed that the R square for the model was 0.633 which indicated that the predictor variable (project team influence explain 63.3% of the dependent variables (project implementation) variation. The adjusted R square tells us how much variance in Y would be accounted for if the model had been derived from the population. The adjusted R square is 61.1% indicating that the cross-variability of this model is relatively good. The remaining variation of 36.7% could be explained by other factors that were not discussed in the study.

**Table 3: Coefficient of Determination of the Variable**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.034	0.412		0.083	.000
	Project team	.247	.102	.225	2.425	.001

The results as illustrated in Table 3 shows that holding project team to a constant, project implementation of YEDF would be at 0.034. The study revealed that the variable project team influence also positively and significantly predicts the variable YEDF project implementation ( $\beta=0.247$   $p=0.018<0.05$ ). The findings concurred with findings by Roba (2014) who established that project team had significant influence on the project implementation.

The resulting regression equation was  $Y= 0.034 + 0.247X_1$

Where  $Y$  = Project implementation

$X_1$ = Project team

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concluded that the study concluded that project team have a positive and significant influence on YEDF projects' implementation. The project team influences project implementation through total commitment to the project where they devote their time and energy. It is through total commitment that project team train for the proper leadership skills hence adhering to the projects mission and provides ideas for the projects. They are also able to meet the set timelines due to commitment to the project.

The study makes recommendations to the project team leaders and project managers who are responsible for guiding the running of the projects. They are recommended to remain steadfast in their support for the project by coming up with strategies that they can effectively adopt to ensure successful implementation of the projects. They are also recommended to ensure that their leadership skills are up to date for the proper leadership of the project team and eventual successful implementation of the projects.

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