
PROJECT MANAGERS' SOFT SKILLS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF DONOR-FUNDED INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS IN KIAMBU COUNTY, KENYA

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Abstract

Over the years, donor funding has played a significant role in supporting programs and projects in Kenya. Despite the significance of donor-funded infrastructure projects contributing to 11% of the GDP, there exist implementation problems. Despite the existing problems facing successful implementation of donor funded projects, few studies have focused on the topic. Due to the existing conceptual and contextual research gap, this study sought to examine the influence of project managers' soft skills on implementation of donor funded infrastructure projects in Kiambu County, Kenya. The study specifically sought to determine the influence of project managers' leadership skills and project managers' problem-solving skills on implementation of donor funded infrastructure projects in Kiambu County, Kenya. The study adopted cross-sectional research design. The study used purposive sampling procedure to select all the 42 project managers and simple random sampling to select 10% of the targeted project beneficiaries to arrive at 230 project beneficiaries. This study used both primary and secondary data, which was collected using a structured questionnaire and desktop reviews. Quantitative data collected was analysed using descriptive statistics techniques. Multiple regression models were fitted to the data in order to determine how the independent variables influence the dependent variable. The findings were presented in tables. From the findings, it was established that project managers' leadership skills and project managers' problem-solving skills have a direct effect on implementation of donor funded infrastructure projects. The study recommended that project managers should coach and mentor team members. Project managers should focus on effective prioritization to maintain order within their projects, strategize and employ problem-solving tools to address issues efficiently. Finally, there is need for the policy makers to incorporate soft skills into the academic curriculum as they form a fundamental component in making prospective employees to perform better in their project work.

Keywords: *Leadership Skills, Problem-Solving Skills, Implementation of Donor Funded Projects*

INTRODUCTION

In more than a half a century, sectors such as infrastructure development, social and community development, education, agriculture and public health has been the largest beneficiaries of donor

funded initiatives in developing countries such as Kenya, (Wood, 2015). These projects have played a significant role in uplifting and improvement of social and economic development in these countries. Project managers are accountable for successful management and execution of various donor funded infrastructure projects (Bourne & Walker 2014), and despite this fact and the crucial nature of these projects, success in terms of stakeholder satisfaction, cost, time and quality, remains a subject of debate (Azhar, *et al.*, 2018). Donor projects in many developing countries are characterised by incompatibility with organisations routines and discontinuous and unpredictable personal interactions, which points to the presence of managerial and implementation challenges (Prencipe & Tell, 2021). Until recently, focus has been improving practice and skills of project managers through enhancing methods and techniques for effective scope, cost and time management. For instance, Project Management Institute (PMI), mainly tends to focus primarily on the management competencies and the “hard” skills expected of a practicing project management (PM) professional with knowledge areas such as project communication management and project human resource management (soft skills) which are essential for project relationship management, relegated to the secondary roles (PMI, 2018).

In the US, project owners have scaled down or eliminated donor funded infrastructure projects mainly due to uncertainty related to costs, lack of financing, and concerns over delays that may significantly impact the projects’ feasibility (Chism & Armstrong, 2020). Similarly, conflicts exist within the UK donor funded projects, between the projects’ objectives concerning the scope, time, cost and quality appropriateness. The essence of project managers possessing soft skills has been revealed very crucial for the success of donor-funded projects (Fapohunda & Stephenson, 2020). Many countries especially the developed ones have pursued results focused development projects by adopting more effective practices. This says a lot why stakeholders in international development set out a new agenda to improve the effectiveness of aid. This is embodied in the Paris declaration on Aid effectiveness which articulates ownership, alignment, harmonisation, results management and mutual accountability as the key tenets (Siddique & Shadbolt, 2016). As part of the broader initiatives to institutionalize managing for Development results (MfDR), most Governments such as Canada, USA among others have taken specific steps to reinforce Results based service delivery practices at their national levels.

Donors have been providing much of the funds for reform initiatives, particularly in Africa. Most The donor funded infrastructure projects in Nigeria faces implementation challenges such as project delays leading to serious problems such as cost overruns. Implementation of donor-funded projects is also affected by political insurgency and absorptive capacity in the construction of infrastructure (Ogunsemi & Jagboro, 2016). Ghana on the other end suffer unmet donor funded infrastructure projects objectives, unsatisfactory, delayed completion and cost overruns in most of these projects. Some of the initiatives have been put in place in this country to combat the above problems such as resource allocation to construction projects, but little efforts have been placed on project manager’s capacity.

In Kenya, the donor funded infrastructure projects has experienced significant growth, mainly due to foreign investors’ keenness to own a stake in the Kenyan sector since the country is considered a gateway to East and Central Africa markets (KNBS, 2017). Consequently, Major towns in Kenya, such as Nairobi, Mombasa, Kiambu, Kisumu and Nakuru, and their environs continue to experience booming donor funded urban upgrading and infrastructural projects. The projects are sanctioned mainly by the national and county governments, institutions, or private companies and individuals, in conjunction with foreign donors (Mbogo, 2016). Significantly, these donor- funded infrastructure projects have been characterised with numerous challenges including abortive works, demolition of

business and residential houses and completion delays hence causing cost overruns (World Bank, 2014).

Donor organizations have in the past been involved in relief, emergency or longer-term development work or a mixture of all three. In Kiambu County, Jhuthi (2015) indicates that more than half of all projects carried out by donor organizations are not sustainable and collapse in less than one year after the exit of the donors. For example, according to Nyanje and Wanyoike (2016), poor project performance and low sustainability of donor projects can be explained by poor management. For instance, 40% of the projects implemented by donors were facing time overrun due to poor management. Therefore, it is essential to establish the role of project managers' soft skills on implementation of donor funded infrastructure projects in Kiambu County, Kenya. Project managers' soft skills play a crucial role in the successful implementation of donor-funded projects in Kiambu County. Effective project managers require skills in communication, leadership, problem-solving, negotiation, and stakeholder engagement, among others. According to a study conducted by the World Bank, strong project management skills are crucial for the success of donor-funded projects in developing countries (World Bank, 2014). Project managers with the right soft skills can ensure efficient implementation of donor-funded projects, effective utilization of resources, and timely delivery of project objectives.

Statement of the Problem

Over the years, donor funding has played a significant role in supporting programs and projects in Kenya. Despite the significance of donor funded infrastructure projects contributing to 11% of the GDP, there exist implementation problems (KNBS, 2018). It is estimated that about 58% of the donor funded infrastructure projects in Kenya have shown poor performance in terms of completion on time, within budget, within the scope and achieved client satisfaction (Muchungu, 2017). Delays resulted to losses of over 19.82% in the year 2020 (UNCHS, 2020). These projects have also been characterised with, cost overruns ranging from 5.9% to 85% and time overruns ranging between 12 months to 24 months, this has contributed to higher failure rates of donor funded-projects, which is more than 30% (Gachui, 2017; Future Development, 2021).

According to a 2019 report by the World Bank on the performance of donor-funded projects in Sub-Saharan Africa, around 40% of projects fail to achieve their development objectives (World Bank, 2019). The report identifies several reasons for this, including poor project design, weak project management, inadequate stakeholder engagement, and limited institutional capacity. A 2018 report by the Kenyan National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) on the status of development projects in Kenya also revealed that many development projects do not achieve their objectives (KNBS, 2018). According to the report, only 34% of development projects in Kenya were completed on time, while 53% had a cost overrun. The report identified factors such as corruption, poor project management, and inadequate stakeholder engagement as some of the reasons for the poor performance of development projects in Kenya.

The existence of challenges and experience of poor project performance in donor funded infrastructure projects points to the lack of soft skills or failure by project managers to utilize the skills appropriately in leading and managing project team and stakeholders (Siguroarson, 2019). Kilian (2018) states that the need for soft skills in projects is significant, indicating that 80% of reported projects performance was linked to project managers soft management skills, while Haddad (2019) adds that owing to the increasing emphasis on a project managers' soft skills as indispensable management elements in successful implementation of donor funded projects, there is corresponding interest on what specific role soft management skills play in determining the outcome of these projects.

Despite the existing problems facing successful implementation of donor funded projects, there is scanty information on this topic. For instance, globally, Amoah and Marimon (2021), examined competencies of project managers for effective project management in Ghana. Closer home, Blen (2019) examined factors affecting successful implementation of projects in international NGOs in Ethiopia. Locally, Kassim and Mutiso (2019) examined the determinants of successful implementation of donor funded infrastructure projects in Wajir, while Kavita-Musembi, *et al.*, (2019), studied the performance of public sector energy projects and how it is affected by project employees' soft skills in Kenya. None of the reviewed studies were conducted in Kiambu County. Further, none of these studies showed how project managers' soft skills (leadership skills, problem-solving skills, stakeholder management skills, and communication skills) influence implementation of donor funded infrastructure projects in Kiambu County, Kenya. This study therefore seeks to fill the research gap by examining the influence of project managers' soft skills on implementation of donor funded infrastructure projects in Kiambu County, Kenya.

Specific Objectives

- i. To determine the influence of project managers' leadership skills on implementation of donor funded infrastructure projects in Kiambu County, Kenya.
- ii. To examine the influence of project managers' problem-solving skills on implementation of donor funded infrastructure projects in Kiambu County, Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

Agency Theory

Agency theory was developed by Jensen and Meckling (1976). This theory gives a detailed account of the factors that lead to either project success or failure. In the context of the theory, there is a contract between the project managers and the system developers which in turn reduces goal conflict (Mahaney & Lederer, 2019). The resulting outcome is a superior project performance. On the other hand, when the projects are monitored, it reduces privately held information leading to project success.

Further, on the same, Makena (2019) elucidated that if monitoring is done for an information system, the likelihood of information asymmetry is reduced which directly predicts project overall performance which in extension project leader's soft leadership skills play a significant role. Ceric (2018) also cites application of agency theory in the construction projects, highlighting that the theory has been used successfully to focus on the relationship between the project owner and the contractor as the agent to achieve the desired project performance. The Malibu (2017) contributes that contract type checking, goal clash, and privately held data are multidimensional develops and gives instruments to their estimation. Moreover, recommending that the checking of frameworks engineers and other colleagues in ventures might be a more compelling approach to improve venture result than promising to compensate them for that result.

The Agency Theory has been employed in other projects apart from information systems projects to drive assured project performance thus the project managers operate on an outcome basis (Malibu, 2017). In addition, Mahaney (2019) cites that the Agency Theory forces the project manager's application of leadership skills to be able to meet the project goals within budget, time and scope or in the contract guidelines. In this study, the theory is used to explain project managers' leadership skills.

Theory of Human Problem Solving

The standard theory of problem solving, initially out-lined by Newell, Shaw, and Simon (1958), focuses on how humans respond when they are confronted with un-familiar tasks. Early work

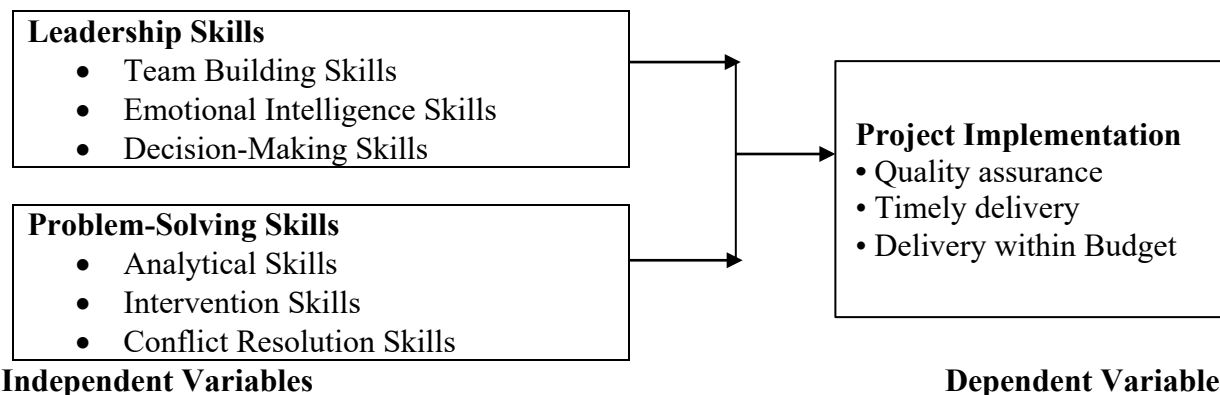
focused on abstract problems like proving theorems in propositional logic and solving the Tower of Hanoi puzzle.

Its focus is on how human beings respond when confronted with unfamiliar tasks. According to this theory, problem solving involves the use of “the problem space hypothesis.” Problem solvers applying this theory apply the means-ends analysis concept. This involves identifying variances between the expected and prevailing situation, choosing operators which will lessen the variances, and then relating the operators to the present situation. This theory is applicable to this study because it offers an organized, methodical approach to resolving difficulties and making improvements (Connelly, 2015).

The theory argues that issues and problems could be resolved effortlessly and with better outcomes by using a problem-solving model which is an organized, orderly approach to resolving issues and creating enhancements. Problem solvers applying this theory apply the means-ends analysis concept. This involves identifying differences between the preferred and current state, selecting operators which will minimize the variances, and then relating the operators to the prevailing state of affairs. This theory is applicable in this study in explaining the influence of project managers’ problem-solving skills.

Conceptual Framework

The independent variables are leadership skills, problem-solving skills, stakeholder management skills, and communication skills. The dependent variable is implementation of donor funded infrastructure projects in Kenya.



Independent Variables

Dependent Variable

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Project Managers’ Leadership Skills

Project managers play a significant role in determining the success or failure of any project (Young, 2019). As the key decision makers and executioners, project managers’ soft leadership skills not only dictate how project activities are carried out to achieve project objectives, but also the nature of inter and intra organizational relationships between and among the individuals and teams involved (Munns & Bjeimi, 2020). Project managers accomplish assigned project work through their project teams. They acquire the necessary technical, business, and leadership skills to help manage their project teams effectively. They apply effective leadership skills in motivating their teams in accomplishing project objectives and completing the project deliverables to achieve the project goals (Flannes & Levin, 2017). Essential leadership skills for project managers start with motivating and inspiring teams. Other leadership skills including negotiating, communicating, listening, influencing skills, and team building are also important, especially to the extent that they contribute towards improving team performance (Verma, 2019). As a project manager or leader, he

or she must engage in team building skills as necessary for achieve the objective of project. Every decision made by the project manager should let the subordinates know and sharing the knowledge between the team (Raiden, Dainty & Neale, 2018). For project manager it is necessary to have problem solving skill, know how to differentiate the source of problem, identify the solution and make the decision (Oduami, 2018).

Project Managers' Problem-Solving Skills

According to Mumford et al. (2020), problem solving skills refer to the manager's ability to resolve new and unusual challenges facing the organisation. The skills also imply the capability of the management team to address undefined issues in the organisation. This skill is about project manages ability to identify problems in advance, analyse problems, come up with some suitable feasible solutions, and tackle problem in timely manner (Deepa & Seth, 2019). Without good problem solving skills, a project manager may identify problem too late to be solved which can reduce the chances of making project successful. According to Leslie (2018), managers spend a significant portion of their time in problem solving and decision-making processes. The two tasks are closely related. As a result of this relationship, a manager who is well equipped with problem solving skills is also competent in decision making. Leslie (2018) further argues that activities related to problem solving and decision making are inherent to managers. In most cases, these professionals are expected to come up with solutions to various problems arising in the organisation. In addition, they are supposed to follow up on these solutions with decisions, even if doing so might be unpleasant.

Implementation of Donor Funded Infrastructure Projects

Implementation of projects implies how successful they are. Therefore, in this study project implementation and project performance are used interchangeably. Narayanaswamy, Grover, and Henry (2019) describe project success as situation when a project meets its expectations and completed within given time frame and cost. Projects are said to be performing when they achieve the project goals and objectives, within the set time, using the specified budget at the agreed performance level while utilizing the available resources efficiently (Landau, 2019). Pitagorsky (2017) expounds on the measurement of project performance as ways and means of identifying how things are going, to enable a project manager to detect early warnings of challenges that may hinder the project from performing at its best. He further states that when measuring project success for an on-going project, it is critical to pay attention to the overall performance against a given schedule and budget estimates. Pitagorsky (2017) goes further to explain that project performance may seem easy to measure; all you need is to track time, cost and scope.

Empirical Literature Review

Zeeshan (2017) explored leadership skills' impact on project success in Islamabad's corporate sector. The study emphasized the significance of leadership attributes for project success and the need for competent project managers possessing these qualities. The research employed qualitative and quantitative techniques to identify key factors for effective project management. Huwein (2019) investigated soft leadership skills' influence on project success within Sinov Construction Company. The study focused on communication, interpersonal, coordination, team building, delegation, problem-solving skills, and teamwork. It found a positive relationship between these skills and project performance. Kariuki (2018) studied leadership skills' influence on IT project success in the banking sector. It highlighted seven crucial leadership skills for project managers and concluded that training positively impacts project success.

Ngiri (2018) examined the role of leadership skills in the performance of Rural Development Community-Based Projects in Murang'a South District, Murang'a County. The study employed

descriptive research and found a significant relationship between leadership skills, monitoring, evaluation, planning, and resource adequacy with project performance. Yunus et al. (2021) explored the influence of online project collaborative learning and achievement motivation on problem-solving ability, particularly in citizenship education. The study used a quasi-experimental design and revealed a positive impact of online collaborative learning and achievement motivation on civic problem-solving ability.

Subuola and Adebimpe (2017) researched the contributions of self-efficacy and problem-solving skills to secretaries' job performance in Ogun State Public Service, Nigeria. Their study found a significant combined contribution of self-efficacy and problem-solving skills to the prediction of job performance. Hagemann and Kluge (2017) studied complex problem-solving in teams and its impact on team process demands. They conducted controlled team experiments in complex situations and found that trust and cohesion had no direct relationships with team performance. The study focused on factors influencing action processes and teamwork in complex scenarios. Hamilton (2018) identified eight key aspects aiding project teams in effective problem-solving. These included planning, training, evaluating solutions, emphasizing critical thinking, appreciating diversity, and using online tools for virtual collaboration. The focus was on fostering effective teamwork and maximizing training effectiveness.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a cross-sectional research design. The target population for this study was 2,342 individuals comprising of 42 project managers and 2,300 direct project beneficiaries of the 12 donor funded infrastructure projects in Kiambu County distributed in its six municipalities. These projects form the unit of analysis while the unit of observation are the project managers. Due to the small size of section of target population, the study used purposive sampling procedure to select all the 42 project managers and simple random sampling to select 10% of the targeted project beneficiaries to arrive at 230 project beneficiaries. This is because according to Mugenda and Mugenda (2018), 10% of the total population is a good representative sample. A sample size of two hundred and seventy-two (N=272) respondents took part in the study. This study used primary data collected using a structured questionnaire. Quantitative data collected was analysed using descriptive statistics techniques such as frequency, percentages, and means and summary graphs, pie charts, and frequency distribution tables. Qualitative data was analysed using content analysis and presented in prose form. Before the data is analysed, it was first coded, cleaned, and grouped as per their variables. Quantitative data collected was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools. Multiple regression models was fitted to the data in order to determine how the independent variables influence the dependent variable.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Response Rate

Two hundred and seventy-two (272) questionnaires in total were administered but the researcher managed to obtain two hundred and fifty-eight (258) completed questionnaires representing a 95% response rate. The questionnaire contained questions that addressed the objective of the study.

Descriptive Analysis

Project Managers' Leadership Skills

The goal of the study was to determine how project managers' leadership abilities affected the execution of infrastructure projects supported by donors. The distribution of responses on the impact of project managers' leadership abilities on the execution of infrastructure projects supported by donors is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Influence of Project Managers' Leadership Skills on Implementation of Donor Funded Infrastructure Projects

Statement	SA		A		UD		D		SD		Mean	St.D
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
Project leadership assists in planning, organising, delegating and task allocation within the project team	132	51.2	89	34.5	-	-	37	14.3	-	-	25.0	19.5
There has been a contingency plan for managing risks that may occur during the project life cycle	92	35.7	148	57.4	-	-	18	7	-	-	25.0	23.0
Project leader monitors the entire project cycle as well as putting in place an action plan to the project team which leads to better project performance	86	33.3	149	57.8	-	-	23	8.9	-	-	25.0	22.5
Project leadership builds and sustain effective communication among different stakeholders	147	57	91	35.3	-	-	20	7.8	-	-	25.0	22.6
A project manager directs as well as guides his team in designing appropriate standards during the project design phase	61	23.6	197	76.4	-	-	-	-	-	-	33.3	31.9

As shown in table 1 above, more than half (51.2%) of the respondents strongly agreed that project leadership assists in planning, organising, delegating and task allocation within the project team. This was supported by more than a third (34.5%) of them who agreed with the statement while the remaining percentage of them (14.3%) felt otherwise. Regarding whether there was a contingency plan for managing risks that may occur during the project life cycle, 57.4% of the respondents who took part in the study agreed with the statement. This was supported by 35.7% of them who strongly agreed with the statement. Only 7.0% of them indicated otherwise. More than half (57.8%) of the respondents were in agreement that project leader monitors the entire project cycle as well as putting in place an action plan to the project team which leads to better project performance. This was supported by slightly more than a third (33.3%) of them who strongly agreed with the statement while only 8.9% of them felt otherwise. On whether project leadership builds and sustain effective communication among different stakeholders, 57.0% strongly agreed with the statement as this was also supported by more than a third (35.3%) of them who agreed with the statement. The remaining percentage of them (7.8%) disagreed with the statement.

Majority (76.4%) of the respondents who took part in the study were in agreement that a project manager directs as well as guides his team in designing appropriate standards during the project design phase. This was supported by 23.6% of them who strongly agreed with the statement. From this table, it can be concluded that a project managers' leadership skills influence the implementation of donor funded infrastructure projects by directing as well as guiding his team in

designing appropriate standards during the project design phase. This finding is in line with a study carried out by Kafashpoor (2013) where it was established that there is a significant relationship between context variables and project managers' knowledge management and also knowledge management plays a mediating role in relationship between context variables and organizational effectiveness. This was also revealed by a study done by Huwein (2019) where it was established that was a statistically significant positive relationship between each of identified soft leadership skills and project performance.

Project Managers' Problem-Solving Skills

The distribution of replies on the impact of project managers' capacity for problem-solving on the execution of infrastructure projects financed by donors is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Influence of Project Managers' Problem-Solving Skills on Implementation of Donor Funded Infrastructure Projects

Statement	SA		A		UD		D		SD		Mean	St.D
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
Conflict resolution helps to form strong relationships within the project team.	35	13.6	198	76.7	-	-	25	9.7	-	-	33.3	30.3
There is constant communication on issues affecting the team	92	35.7	155	60.1	-	-	11	4.3	-	-	33.4	24.5
Problems are solved as they arise to ensure that they do not become bigger	146	56.6	59	22.9	-	-	17	6.6	-	-	28.7	21.9
Creativity is applied when generating ideas to ensure that original and useful ideas are put in place	169	65.5	59	22.9	-	-	30	11.6	-	-	33.3	24.7
Problems are tackled early so that they don't get out of control	153	59.3	95	36.8	-	-	10	3.9	-	-	33.3	24.4
Both internal and external stakeholders collaborate when solving issues.	156	60.5	97	37.6	-	-	5	1.9	-	-	33.3	25.4
The solutions obtained have been implemented and results assessed	98	38	160	62	-	-	-	-	-	-	50.0	25.5
The root cause of the problem has always been established	67	26	191	74	-	-	-	-	-	-	50.0	30.7

Table 2 shows that majority (76.7%) of the respondents who took part in the study were in agreement that conflict resolution helps to form strong relationships within the project team. This was supported by 13.6% of them who strongly agreed with the statement while only 9.7% of them felt otherwise. Majority (60.1%) of the respondents agreed that there was constant communication on issues affecting the team. This was supported by more than a third (35.7%) of them who strongly agreed with the statement while the remaining percentage of them (4.3%) felt otherwise. Regarding whether problems were solved as they arise to ensure that they do not become bigger,

56.6% of the respondents who took part in the study agreed with the statement. This was supported by 22.9% of them who agreed with the statement. Only 6.6% of them indicated otherwise.

Majority (65.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed that creativity is applied when generating ideas to ensure that original and useful ideas are put in place. This was supported by slightly less than a quarter (22.9%) of them who agreed with the statement while only 11.6% of them felt otherwise. On whether problems are tackled early so that they don't get out of control, 59.3% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement as this was also supported by more than a third (36.8%) of them who agreed with the statement. The remaining percentage of them (3.9%) disagreed with the statement. Majority (60.5%) of the respondents who took part in the study strongly agreed that both internal and external stakeholders collaborate when solving issues. This was supported by 37.6% of them who agreed with the statement while the remaining percentage (1.9%) of them disagreed with the statement. On whether the solutions obtained have been implemented and results assessed, majority (62.0%) of the respondents who took part in the study were in agreement with the statement. This was supported by 38.0% of them who strongly agreed with the statement.

Majority (74.0%) of the respondents who took part in the study were in agreement that the root cause of the problem has always been established. This was supported by 26.0% of them who strongly agreed with the statement. In this table, it can be conclude that project manager's problem solving skills affect the implementation of donor funded infrastructure projects whereby they always ensure that solutions obtained have been implemented and results assessed. This is also done by ensuring that the root cause of the problem has always been established. These statements have the highest mean of 50.0. Similar findings were made from a study done by Subuola and Adebimpe (2017) where it was revealed that the predictor variables (self-efficacy and problem solving skills) accounted for 61.1% of the variance in the job performance of Secretaries in the public service of Ogun State which implies that there is a significant combined contribution of self-efficacy and problem solving skills in the prediction of job performance of Secretaries in the public service of Ogun State. In the same line, it was also established that there were significant and positive relationship among self-efficacy, problem solving skills and job performance.

Implementation of Donor Funded Infrastructure Projects

The distribution of responses regarding the execution of infrastructure projects funded by donors is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Implementation of donor funded infrastructure projects

Statement	SA		A		UD		D		SD		Mean	St.D
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
All projects are completed and delivered within the allocated time	139	53.9	67	26	-	-	52	20.2	-	-	25.0	19.3
Projects that are completed have utilised the set budget/ resources	108	41.9	-	-	122	47.3	28	10.9	-	-	25.0	20.0
Completed projects are of the required quality	44	17.1	173	67.1	-	-	41	15.9	-	-	25.0	25.2
Project accomplish the set goals and objectives	57	22.1	185	71.7	-	-	16	6.2	-	-	25.0	28.1
Project performance are delivered within budget	45	17.4	-	-	176	68.3	37	14.3	-	-	25.0	25.8

More than half (53.9%) of the respondents strongly agreed that all projects are completed and delivered within the allocated time. This was supported by more than a quarter (26.0%) of them who agreed with the statement while the remaining percentage of them (20.3%) felt otherwise. Regarding whether projects that are completed have utilised the set budget/ resources, 41.9% of the respondents who took part in the study strongly agreed with the statement while 47.3% of them were undecided. Only 10.9% of them indicated otherwise. On whether completed projects were of the required quality, 67.1% of the respondents agreed with the statement as this was also supported by 17.1% of them who strongly agreed with the statement. The remaining percentage of them (15.9%) disagreed with the statement. Majority (71.7%) of the respondents who took part in the study were in agreement that the project accomplished the set goals and objectives. This was supported by 22.1% of them who strongly agreed with the statement while the remaining percentage (6.2%) of them disagreed with the statement. Regarding whether project performance was delivered within budget, 17.4% of the respondents who took part in the study strongly agreed with the statement while more than two thirds (68.3%) were undecided. The remaining percentage of them 14.3% of them felt otherwise. This finding is in agreement with the findings of a study done by Chavangi (1995) where it was revealed that timely implementation of projects being cited as one area that requires adequate attention and participation is an effective mechanism for ensuring that quality projects are completed and delivered within the allocated time.

Regression Results

Table 4: Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.307 ^a	0.95	.080	.95740	0.95	6.602	2	255	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Project managers' soft skills

b. Dependent Variable: Implementation of donor funded infrastructure projects

Table 4 above presents the model summary, which depicts the values of R and R Square. The table includes information about the quantity of variance that is explained by the predictor variables. The first statistic, R, is the multiple correlation coefficients between all of the predictor variables and the dependent variable. In this model, the value is .307, which indicates that there is a great deal of variance shared by the independent variables and the dependent variables. This is frequently used to describe the goodness-of-fit or the amount of variance explained by a given set of predictor variables. In this case, the value is 0.095, which indicates that 95.0% of the variance in the dependent variable is explained by the independent variables in the model.

Table 5: F- test on ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	27.204	2	13.602	8.415	.000 ^b
	Residual	412.178	255	1.61638		
	Total	439.382	257			

a. Dependent Variable: Implementation of donor funded infrastructure projects

b. Predictors: (Constant), Project managers' leadership skills, project managers' problem-solving skills

It can be concluded from the ANOVA that at 5 % significance level, there exist sufficient evidence to justifiably conclude that the slope of regression line is not zero. As such, Project managers' soft skills included in the model are useful predictors of implementation of donor funded infrastructure projects since the p value is 0.000 which is less than 0.05. Sig = 0.000 suggests that

the model adopted for the current study is significant for predicting the implementation of donor funded infrastructure projects in Kiambu County, Kenya.

Table 4: Coefficients table

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	2.878	.586		
1Project managers' leadership skills	.024	.061	-.024	-.392	.696
Project managers' problem-solving skills	.225	.080	.173	2.826	.005

a. Dependent Variable: Implementation of donor funded infrastructure projects

The B values and the p-value to check for significance are depicted in table 4. We reject H_0 if $p < .05$. This means the relationship is reliable and can be used to make predictions. The findings also show the contribution of each variable in explaining the influence of project managers' soft skills on implementation of donor funded infrastructure projects in Kiambu County, Kenya as depicted by unstandardized beta values which assess the contribution of each variable towards the prediction of the dependent variable. The overall equation as suggested in the conceptual framework can be represented by use of unstandardized coefficients as follows:

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \varepsilon$$

Therefore, the regression model is as follows;

$$Y = 2.878 + (0.024 X_1) + (0.225 X_2) + \varepsilon$$

This means that even without the four variables under study, implementation of donor funded infrastructure projects would be 2.878. The findings also indicate that a unit change in project managers' leadership skills would result in 0.024 change in implementation of donor funded development projects, a unit change in Project managers' problem-solving skills would result in 0.225 change in implementation of donor funded infrastructure projects. Findings in the table also show that project managers' problem-solving skills ($p=0.005$) was statistically significant.

Conclusions

The study concludes that leadership skills positively affect the implementation of donor funded projects. The project managers should coach and mentor, empower and inspire the project team members so that they can perform to their fullest.

In addition, the study concludes that problem solving skills significantly affect the implementation of donor funded infrastructure projects in the County. To solve problems in projects, a problem solving strategy and problem solving tools are required. The project team also plays a major role in solving problems in the project.

Recommendations

Project managers should coach and mentor team members while maintaining clear communication. Defining roles and processes within the project is vital, ensuring a sense of belonging among employees. Regular and concise communication should convey the project's mission, broken down into measurable outcomes. Project managers should motivate employees, fostering a positive project attitude. Recognizing achievements, both individual and collective, is crucial for morale and commitment. Team members should work independently, with minimal interference. Managers should provide enriched job information and empower employees for maximum potential. This involves following procedures and addressing issues. Employee development is supported through training, participation, competitive compensation, and improved employment terms.

Project managers should focus on effective prioritization to maintain order within their projects. They need to strategize and employ problem-solving tools to address issues efficiently.

Encouraging open communication among project members allows for early identification and resolution of problems. Researching and understanding emerging issues is crucial to prevent them from escalating. Additionally, planning ahead and considering alternative solutions can help in resolving problems effectively. It's important for policymakers to recognize the significance of soft skills in project management. Incorporating these skills into academic curricula can enhance the performance of prospective employees in project work, ensuring they are better equipped to tackle challenges and find solutions.

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