FACTORS INFLUENCING PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH IN KIAMBU COUNTY

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ABSTRACT

Project implementation also referred as project execution, is a phase in which the project vision and all the plans of the project become a reality and financial resources of the project are allocated. Many projects fail during implementation and often lack to meet the local people's needs or the beneficiaries need. This study focused on factors influencing project implementation in the department of public health in Kiambu County. The department has nine programs but the study focused on three interventions in those programs.

The study applied descriptive study design and targeted a population of about 230 members of staff; a sample size of 69 members of staffs who were directly involved in implementation were interviewed using questionnaires. Stratified random sampling method was applied, where the staffs were divided into strata's and then a simple random carried out to obtain a representative sample size. The questionnaires obtained from the field were screened for completeness and entered into Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS). Data was analyzed and presented inform of tables, charts graphs. In collection of data, the researcher maintained confidentiality of information obtained from the respondents in ensuring this researcher used principle of anonymity where no identifying information was required from the respondents.

According to the study findings, Majority of the respondents believed that factors related to top management influenced project implementation to a large extent. Communication was identified as the critical role played by the top management during project implementation. Other roles included motivation, allocation of duties and offering directions to the project team. The study recommended that the top management should devote more time on the projects so as to keep the implementation process under control.

Key words: Project Implementation, Training, Funding, Stakeholders, Top Management Support

INTRODUCTION

A project is a temporary endeavor undertaken by people who work together to create a unique product or service (PMI 2000) within an established time frame and within established budget to produce identifiable deliverables. A project consists of three main pillars namely; cost, quality and time Project success have been defined by the criteria of time, budget and deliverables (Flaman and Gallagher, 2001). In addition project success is considered if it meets the schedule, budget, quality expected, and the achievement of the deliverables that were originally intended and the acceptance by the target beneficiary or the project client.

According to Sid (2004), about 80% of projects run late or over budget. Standish Group (2005). During the previous century major transport projects overspent seriously on their budget and there seemed to be no trend towards reducing over expenditure over a period of 80 years. According to Mobey and Parker (2005), the chances of a project succeeding can be increased if firms have an understanding of what the critical success factors are to systematically and quantitatively assess these critical variables, anticipating possible effects, and then choose. Projects differ from operations, because operations are continuous and repeating whereas projects are temporary. In addition, operations deliver the same or almost the same results over time whereas project results are in contrast unique. Implementation is the stage where all the planned activities are put into action. Before the implementation of a project, the implementers who are spearheaded by the project committee or executive should identify their strength and weaknesses including internal forces, opportunities and threats which include external forces. The strength and opportunities are positive forces that should be exploited to efficiently implement a project. The weaknesses and threats are hindrances that can hamper project implementation. The implementers should ensure that they devise means the weaknesses. Monitoring is important at this implementation phase to ensure that the project is implemented as per the schedule. This continuous process should be put in place before project implementation starts. As such, the monitoring activities should appear on the work plan and should involve all stake holders. If activities are not going on well, arrangements should be made to identify the problem so that they can be corrected. According to Kiambu county website major projects being implemented in Kiambu focused on roads either maintenance or construction of new roads, the major project being re-carpeting of Thika town roads. This project commenced on July 2015 with a contract period of 18 months and cost of Kenya shilling 221,005,870.30 the progress report shows that no payments had been done even after 19.4% of the time had elapsed and only 5% of the work had been executed. Another project, being undertaken, was the re-carpeting of Githunguri CBD roads. The project had a cost of Kshs.103, 997,581.50 and commenced on 11/04/2015 with a contract period of 24 Months and by the end of six months 25% time elapse only 7% of work had been completed and only a payment of Kenya shillings15, 454,764.89 had been made. These are among the many other projects that the study looked at and the major challenges were funding and delay in the execution of the projects. According to Standish group (2005), project implementation requires genuine commitment to both the donor and the recipient country. This is often lacking, ultimately leaving most of the already started project to tarry from implementation. Ad hoc projects would be of more benefit to the poor if they are involved from the start in identification and design as well as implementation. Development partners increasingly recognize the limits of projects, and are seeking to enhance impact by supporting sector-wide approaches, especially in the social sectors. This

involves more budgetary funding, improved coordination among the funders, led by national governments, and increased trust between partners.

Statement of the problem Statement

According to (PMI 2008) many projects often fail in the implementation stage and they do not meet the local people's needs. These projects even after being well thought in the conception stage but major discrepancy usually arise between what was planned and the actual implementation. During the implementation of projects, disconnect may arise between commitments made at different levels and actual implementation on the ground. These commitments are designed to achieve the projects' desired results and would determine the success or failure of the projects. The success of any project can be defined in terms of several things and this includes timeliness, working within the budget and meeting stakeholder's expectations. Likewise failure of any project failure would entail several things which may include: lateness of the project in terms of not adhering to the initial schedule, cost ineffectiveness dissatisfied stakeholders and failure to be accountable. In Kiambu county statistics show that there is are a real challenge in implementation of the several construction projects. According to Kiambu county website the major projects being implemented in Kiambu focus on roads maintenance or construction of new roads, the major project being the re-carpeting of Thika town roads. This project commenced on July 2015 with a contract period of 18 months and a cost of Kenya shilling 221,005,870.30 the progress report shows that no payments had been done even after 19.4% of the time had elapsed and only 5% of the work had been executed. Another project, being undertaken, was the re-carpeting of Githunguri CBD roads. The project had a cost of Kshs.103, 997,581.50 and commenced on 11/04/2015 with a

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Objective of the study

The main objective of this study was to establish the influence of top management support on the implementation of projects in department of public health in Kiambu County.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical review

Fredrick Taylor's "Scientific Management theory"
According to Fredrick Taylor, (1934) the key role of the management should be to ensure the maximum wellbeing of the personnel in the organization as well as to attain maximum welfare of the employer. Taylor described that managers have to shoulder certain responsibilities and fulfill certain mandate and missions to which they are not accustomed in order to completely understand the scientific method and implement it. Frederick Taylor's hypothesized techniques of increasing efficiency of the work process that is based on systematic study of people, tasks and work behavior, Taylor's subdivided the work process into the smallest possible units, or sub-tasks, in an effort to determine the most efficient possible method that can be applied to complete a task in a particular job. According to Paxton, (2011).Taylor came with several principles that the managers have to apply. He argued that the managers have to develop a science for each element of a man's work that replaces the old rule-of-thumb method. Taylor argues that the managers need to scientifically

select and then train, capacity build or develop the workman, whereas in the past he chose his own work and trained himself as best he could. He observed that the management has cooperate with the men or the workmanship in order to ensure all the work being done is in accordance with the principles of the science which has been developed. According to Brennan, (2011) the scientific theory of management assumes that the interest of the employee and the employer are the same and if the employer cannot be able to provide the employees welfare he or she cannot be assured of owns welfare in the long run and in this case the employer needs to pay the employee good salaries as much as he can.

According to Paxton,(2011).Taylor observed that that the management has to cooperate with the workman so as to ensure that all the work being done is in accordance to the principles and procedures laid out, in the case of the project top management or the project manager has to work together with the project so as to ensure that the team is caring out the project activities in accordance to the laid down plan, this working together or cooperation will enable the project manager or top management clarify issues which may not be clear to the project team.
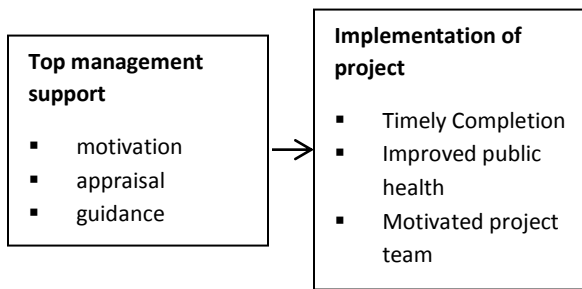
Max weber's Bureaucracy theory of management.

Bureaucracy is comes from two words; "bureau" and "Kratos." While the word "bureau" refers to the office "kratos" refers to power or rule. "Bureaucracy" therefore refers to the power of the office. According to weber bureaucracy would mean the concentration of the material means of management in the hands of the master. Weber says that bureaucracy is that rule which is conducted from a desk. According to Weber (1946) bureaucracy is efficient because of its consistent, availability of records, continuity, and possibility of secrecy, unity, rigorous coordination and

minimization of conflicts amongst the workers in an organization. Weber noted the following principles in the bureaucratic theory of management in organizations. A formal hierarchical structureWeber noted that in organizations there are formal structures that show flow of authority and each of these levels controls the level below it and the chain continues to flow to the last level. Organizational controlling rules which allows the decision to be made by certain levels in an organization and to be effected by all other levels.

According to Weber, (1968).Individuals within organization are organized into small units which are based on their level or specialization as the job is concerned**.** Work is to be done by specialists, and people are organized into units based on the type of work they do or skills they have. The organization mission statement that the organization is guided by a mission statement which is either to serve the stakeholders or the agency that has empowered it in this case referred to as up focused mission, or to serve, or to serve the organization itself referred to as in focused in this case is to produce high profits gain market share or to produce a stream of cash.

According to Weber, (1968).organizations treat all employees fairly and it's not influenced by the employee's differences. Weber also notes that the employees are employed according to the merits and are protected from unfair dismissal. Max webers theory of management has several advantages. Rules and procedures and procedures helps employees to have consistency in their work because they follow certain procedures that are strictly laid down. The roles and duties of all the employees are outlined clearly and there are no conflicts over the duties that are overlapping. Since the selection of all employees is based on merit the organization therefore is able to put the right person on the right job.

Conceptual frame work


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┌──────────────────────┐      ┌──────────────────────────┐
│ Top management       │      │ Implementation of        │
│ support              │      │ project                  │
│                      │ ──►  │                          │
│  ▪ motivation        │      │  ▪ Timely Completion     │
│  ▪ appraisal         │      │  ▪ Improved public       │
│  ▪ guidance          │      │    health                │
│                      │      │  ▪ Motivated project     │
│                      │      │    team                  │
└──────────────────────┘      └──────────────────────────┘
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Independent Variable   Dependent Variable

Figure 1: conceptual framework

Empirical Review

Top management support

According to Schultz (1975) top management support in any project endeavor is of importance as it determines its success or failure. Project implementation is a key stage in the project cycle and therefore it requires the support of the top management in the direction and coordination of the activities. Project not only dependent on top management for authority, direction, and support, but as ultimately the conduit for implementing top management's plans, or goals, for the organization. According to Beck, (1983). Further shows that the degree of management support for a project will lead to significant variations in the clients' degree of ultimate acceptance or resistance to that project or product. Top Management's support of the project may involve aspects such as allocation of sufficient financial, manpower and time resources as well as the project manager's confidence in their support in the event of crises. Top management commitment is all about offering support to the project, which goes beyond funding and provision of resources. The top management should dedicate their time and skills to the project. Top management offers Leadership and guides people towards achievement of project goals through setting an example. According to Carmeli (2006) the importance of top management support by being active stakeholders and the clarity of goals throughout the project management and implementation stage are found to be strong factors that must be present to ensure a successful project implementation and outcome. The managers also need to be aware of the importance of the project team's competency as often the human factor is neglected and the competency is normally expected from the selected team, often times external factors were blamed for a poor implemented project but when really look into the root cause, it all boils down to the basic which is recruiting, selection and equipping of the leader and members of the team.

Research Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Creswell (2003) observed that descriptive research design is used when data is collected to describe the following; persons, organizations, settings or phenomena. The population of interest in this study was the employees working in the department of public health in Kiambu County. The study took 30% from a population of 230 members of staffs giving a sample size of 69 respondents; this included three-sub county public health officer, 40 public health officer and 26 public health technician. The study adopted Stratified random sampling technique in the selection of the sample from the target population. According to Mugenda & Mugenda, (2003) stratified random Sampling technique is preferred because it is applicable where the population of interest is not homogeneous. The target population was grouped into strata's (sub county public health officers, public health officers and public health technicians). The researcher then carried out a simple random sample so as to select the required sample size.

Creswell (2002) defines data collection as a means by which information is obtained from the selected subjects of an investigation. In this setting, the

study applied structured questionnaires in data collection. According to Mugenda & Mugenda (2003), questionnaires are easy to analyze, they save on time and cost and are cheap to administer to the respondents. The study therefore adopted questionnaire as tool of data collection.

The questionnaires were delivered to the various selected sub counties that make up the Kiambu county public health department where the respondents will be required to answer the questions. The research gave the respondents sufficient time to answer the questions as they are observed for clarification and reliability of the process.

According to Mugenda & Mugenda (2003) data analysis is the process of gathering meaningful information from the vast or complex information collected and making it easy to understand. The questionnaires collected from the respondents were screened for errors and completeness after which they were coded and entered into a computer software SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 16.0.Descriptive analysis was then done so as to generate descriptive statistics inform of percentages and frequencies. Information obtained was then presented inform of tables, charts and graphs.

Results and Discussions

This section describes data analysis and presentation of the key principal findings which are based on the study objective under investigation.

Rating of top management support in implementation of previous projects

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Excellent	12	17.4
Good	24	34.8
Moderate	27	39.1
Bad	6	8.7

Study findings showed about (39.13%) considered the top management support in implementation of projects as moderate, 34.8% considered top management support as good, 17.4% rated top management support as excellent and only 8.7% of the respondents felt that top management support was bad. The findings therefore indicated that there was moderate top management support in project implementation

Extent to which the factors related to top management influence project implementation

Variable	Frequency	Percent
To very large extent	18	26.1
Large extent	25	36.2
Moderate	19	27.5
Limited	6	8.8
Not at all	1	1.4

According to the study findings, Majority of the respondents (36.23%) believed that factors related to top management influence project implementation to a large extent, about 27.5 %

believed that top management support has moderate influence on project implementation, about 26.1% said that top management has very large influence on project implementation, about 8.8% said that top management support has limited influence while very few of the respondents (1.45%) believed that the above stated factor had no influence in project implementation. From the above findings, it was clear that top management had a major influence on the implementation of the projects. The study also concurred with a study conducted by Carmeli (2006) who said that top support is of importance by being active stakeholders and the clarity of goals throughout the project management and implementation stage are found to be strong factors that must be present to ensure a successful project implementation and outcome.

Critical role-played by top management during project implementation

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Communication	14	20.3
Motivation	13	18.8
offering direction	11	15.9
Resource allocation	19	27.5
Allocation of duties	12	17.4

Findings showed that the critical role played by top management in project implementation was considered to be resource allocation by a majority of the respondents who formed about (27.54%). 20% of the respondents considered communication as the critical role played by the top management, 18.8% said that the top management main role was motivation, 17.4% viewed the top management main role as allocation of duties while only 15.9% said that top management critical role is offering direction. Majority of the respondents in this study therefore considered top management critical role as allocation of resources and communication during project implementation. This study therefore concurs with study conducted by Beck, (1983) who found out that top management's support of the project may involve aspects such as allocation of sufficient financial, manpower and time resources as well as the project manager's support in times of crisis

Summary

The participants stated that there was good to moderate top management support in the implementation of previous projects. They agreed that the critical roles played by top management during project implementation were resource allocation, communication, motivation, allocation of duties and offering direction and that factors related to top management influence project implementation to a large extend.

Conclusion

The success of any project can be defined in terms of several things and this includes timeliness, working within the budget and meeting stakeholder's expectations. Likewise, failure of any project failure would entail several things which may include: lateness of the project in terms of not adhering to the initial schedule, cost effectiveness dissatisfied stakeholders and failure to be accountable.

Top support management was of importance by being active stakeholders and the clarity of goals throughout the project management and implementation. The top management offers direction, motivation and support to the team

implementing the project. The top management also monitors the project throughout its implementation and communicates progress of the project to the stakeholders. The study therefore concludes that top management is one of the major factors that influence project success or its failure. The top management offers leadership and direction without which all the other factors would not be effectively coordinated.

Recommendations

The study came up with specific recommendations which are discussed here below:

Top managements should devote their support to the projects to ensure that all the resources needed for implementation of the project are available. The top management must continue to communicate with all the stakeholders during implementation of the project so as to get their support. The top management has a major role in motivating and directing the project team so that they can work towards the attainment of project goals.

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