INFLUENCE OF PROJECT LEADERSHIP ON THE SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF COUNTY GOVERNMENT PROJECTS IN NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA

Christabel Mwende Ireri  
Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JRUAT), Kenya

Dr. Allan Njogu Kihara, PhD  
Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JRUAT), Kenya


ABSTRACT

The new Kenyan constitution introduced devolution which saw development of the county governments across the country. The motive was to take government services close to the people and thus enhance development. In this regard, county governments have been coming up with various projects aimed at delivering service and promoting welfare of the common people. However, despite the tremendous efforts by the county governments to enhance development through these projects, their success has been sabotaged due to factors such as incompetent management, lack of enough funds as well as increased malpractices such as corruption. This has seen many projects by the county governments underperform and others collapse. It is on this background that the study sought to find out the influence of project leadership on successful completion of the county government projects. The study was guided by the specific objectives: To find out the influence of worker engagement on completion of county government projects, to establish the influence of leadership traits on completion of county governments projects, to find out the influence of leadership style on completion of county government projects and to evaluate the influence of leadership competency on completion of county government projects. The study adopted theories to enhance deeper analysis of the variables. The theories included: contingency theory, leadership behavioural theory, leadership trait theory and Resource based theory. The study employed descriptive research design and targeted employees of the Nairobi County in the departments of public works, roads and Transport sector, Public Service management, Education, Youth affairs, culture, children and social services and Health services. The study used a sampling formula and stratified random sampling to obtain 178 respondents. Questionnaires were used to collect the data which was analysed and presented in form of tables and graphs for easier interpretation and understanding. The study used a regression model to examine the influence of project leadership on the successful completion of county government projects in Nairobi County. The study found that worker engagement, leadership style, leadership traits and leadership competency were significantly and positively related to completion of County government projects in Nairobi. This implied that project leadership through the four aspects (worker engagement, leadership style, leadership traits and leadership competency) was key in enhancing successful completion of projects by Nairobi County. The study concluded that project completion was dependent of the leadership offered by the project leaders. The study recommended that project leaders should engage workers as well as being role models so as to steer completion of the projects through promoting employees’ productivity. The findings from the study will be significant to the county government’s project managers who will use them to identify the key areas to focus on in order to enhance performance of the county government projects. Future scholars and researchers will also benefit from the results of the study.
1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In the current 21st century business environment, every organization; be it public or private, small or large, is focusing on having strategies that promote its competitiveness and expansion put in place. One of those strategies is initiating various projects that focus on having the firms expand their income draw taps and thus promoting their performance. Organizations have been initiating different projects most of which are based on the differentiation in a bid to make the firm more far-reaching in terms of market share and sales revenue.

Project leadership work is to find out about the feelings and proposals of undertaking group towards recognizable proof and arrangement of issues by giving best learning condition amid venture work. A task pioneer has the obligation of pushing the venture alluded as informal support in such a way along these lines, to the point that each concerned individual need to keep and make important undertaking duty (Gaddis & Strange, 2012).

Understanding traits of initiative in firm ventures and their connection is basic for associations execution and all together for these associations to work adequately in the present worldwide business condition (Gupta and Govindarajan, 2011). In spite of the fact that the need to create pioneers with satisfactory abilities to oversee ventures has turned out to be clear as of late, there is as yet a noteworthy hole between the connection between the undertaking initiative and task fruition (Morrison, 2013; Suutari, 2010).

Guillot (2013) contends that performance of public projects is highly dependent on the leadership traits escalated by the relevant project managers. O'Reilly and Tushman (2011) contend that project leadership is a key determinant of successful completion of government projects taking into consideration on the need to have a role model when carrying out a certain projects. According to O'Reilily and Tushman (2011), employees will work more effectively in a field whereby their managers are acting as examples by leading them through example.
Project leadership has been recognized as a competitive tool but this has been made practical among very few organizations. Mapetere, Mavhiki, Nyamwanza, Sikomwe and Mhonde (2012) noted that among the major root-causes of poor performance among organizations in the country is their failure to utilize and adopt the strategy of leadership through embracing social skills, setting example and using of power judiciously. This gains support from Ejere and Ugochuku (2012) who indicated that organizations in Nigeria enhanced their management portfolios through embracing leadership-oriented procedures of management and gearing-up the organization visions to the employees and other organizational stakeholders.

In Kenya, project leadership has been a low intake strategy in public projects where the reports indicate that the cooperation between the project managers and the team members is extremely low (KBS, 2017). County governments have been carrying out a wide range of projects since their incorporation in the year 2013. Project leadership has also been embraced in other Kenyan sectors such as Non-governmental Organizations and commercial banks. Kissi, Dainty and Tuuli (2012) found that project leadership is one of the aspects that enhanced performance of NGOs in Kenya. Kissi et al. (2012) revealed that private sectors embrace project leadership than the public sectors and this evidently shows the disparities that have been there between public and private projects.

The 2010 Kenyan constitution came up with a wide range of changes which were all centred at enhancing Service delivery to the common people at the ground level. The County governments are responsible for ensuring that these sectors thrive and perform for increased welfare and living standards of the common people (Njiru, 2011). In a bid to ensure success of the devolved functions, county governments through the executive councils have initiated several projects all aimed at improving the state of the public services at the ground level (Mwaniki, 2014). These projects as recorded by the respective county governments include water projects, building of classrooms, equipping county hospitals and constructions of rural roads (GOK, 2017). These projects are all aimed at augmenting welfare of the common people who directly are affected by the projects.

Nairobi County is the capital city of Kenya and the largest county in terms of population density (GoK, 2015). The county contributes to more than 60% of the country’s GDP, while at the same time being the business hub not only in the country but to the entire East Africa (WB, 2016). This clearly shows that the expectations of Nairobi County in terms of
performance and completion of its projects is high both at a local and international glance. Being one of the Counties that receive the greatest share of the national revenue and also making the biggest local revenue collection (ROK, 2017); Nairobi is expected to have high flowing projects that are focused towards enhancing effective flow and operation of businesses. The county through the county government is expected to see to it that roads are well and properly made, water and sanitation are impoverished, drainage systems are properly done as well as high standards of cleanliness to provide an ample environment for businesses. This is all expected through several projects that unless they are effectively managed and good leadership insinuated, their completion and performance is on high mantle of doubt.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In the wake of devolution as presented in the new Kenyan constitution which introduced the County governments through devolution, projects started by the County governments have been anticipated to enhance services delivery in several magnitudes such as roads, hospitals, classrooms for preschools and other social amenities at the county levels (KPMG Africa, 2015; and RoK, 2017).

However, despite the massive projects instigated by the County governments, their outcome has been cataclysmic with more than 68% of the projects not meeting the completion deadlines while others not even making a step further from the investiture dates (Gathu, 2014; and GoK, 2017).

On the other hand, project leadership is a critical aspect in successful project completion. In many government projects especially in the developing countries, it has been crystal clear that project leadership has been in the lowest stake and could be argued as the major cause of underperformance of such projects (UNDP, 2016). Empirical studies across the globe reveal mixed results on the relationship between project leadership and performance and completion of projects (Serfontein, 2010; Avolio & Bass, 2011; & Guillot, 2013). The current study therefore sought to fill the gaps revealed herein by establishing the influence of project leadership on successful completion of county government projects in Nairobi County, Kenya.
1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 General Objective

The main aim of the study was to establish the influence of project leadership on completion of county government initiated projects in Nairobi County, Kenya.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

The following were the specific objectives for the study:

i. To establish the influence of worker engagement on successful completion of county government projects in Kenya.

ii. To find out the influence of leadership style on successful completion of county government projects in Kenya.

iii. To determine the influence of Leadership traits on successful completion of county government projects in Kenya.

iv. To examine the influence of leadership competency on successful completion of county government projects in Kenya.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 Resource Based Theory

The theory was popularised by Barney (1991) in an attempt to bring out into a clear context the concept of human resources and firm competitiveness. According to Barney (2001), resource based theory is the approach that best describes how organizations can gain competitive advantage and increase their performance. According to the RBT, organizational resources are the most important determinants of the competitiveness and performance of the organization. The theory suggests that organizations need to integrate their resources which are the key capabilities that they are assured of having for the sake of their internal operations and existence (Srivastava & Gnyawali, 2011). Employees (human resources) and the skills are some of the resources that according to RBT make organizations produce different products and perform differently from the competitors despite them being in the same market and with the same chances of winning the market.
The resource based theory extrapolates the need for organizations to focus on employees as the key organizational resources for competitiveness. One of the dimensions of focusing on the resources is therefore to engage the employees which according to Wiklund and Dean (2013) and Hambrick (2007), is the major determinant of a good organizational leader. The RBV theory was therefore adopted in the study to shine more light onto the first objective of the study which was to find out the influence of worker engagement of successful completion of County government projects.

### 2.1.2 Leadership Behavioural Theory

According to Lenk and Bockenholt (2012) behavioural theory states that leaders are best described by their behaviours. This is to mean that the way a person handles issues and how he or she expresses his or her abilities and way of doing things best describes the type of a leader he or she is. In a more practical perspective, a leader who behaves in a certain manner when it comes to decision making and dealing with the followers, was viewed to belong to certain type of leaders who behave in a similar manner (Zaccaro, 2001). According to behavioural theory, leaders can be categorized into two types; people oriented and task oriented leaders (Robbins et al, 2010; and Welch, 2015). The theory was therefore adopted in the study to bring out a clearer context on the second objective of the study which was to find out the influence of leadership style on successful completion of County government projects.

### 2.1.3 Leadership Trait Theory

The theory was put forward as an attempt by the scholars and other researchers to examine the reason behind some leaders being better than others. This was based on the fact that some managers would produce better results that other managers even when the production parameters were similar. By so doing, the researchers found that leaders had different traits which best described their performance (Goleman, 1995, 1998; and Mayer & Salovey, 1995). A survey by Stogdill (1974) identified eight traits that were observable in the best performing leaders. These traits are; intelligence, alertness, insight, responsibility, initiative, persistence, self-confidence, and sociability. Through these traits, leaders were seen to be more influential and practical than those who didn’t possess the traits.
2.1.4 Contingency Theory

The theory attempts to contemplate that the methods of leadership and tactics used to provide leadership by a certain leader depends on the contextual situation in which the leader experiences (Robbins, Judge and Campbell, 2010). In a clearer view, the theory states that leadership traits and methods used in one sector or organization cannot necessarily fit to be used in another sector or organization or a time period. In this perspective therefore, when a leader is dealing with a different organization from the one he or she was before, or the time has changed with changes organizational management, the leader should embrace changes in the leadership strategies as well so as to accommodate and be able to cope with the new changes (Aver and Cadez, 2009). The theory contemporarily extrapolates the competencies that makes one a good leader. In this view therefore, contingency theory was adopted in the study in the view of enhancing the information on the influence of leadership competency as an objective in the study.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

![Conceptual Framework Diagram](image_url)

**Worker Engagement**
- Inspiring Team work
- Delegation of Tasks
- Team building

**Leadership Style**
- Transformational leadership
- Transactional leadership
- Paternalistic leadership

**Leadership Traits**
- Good listener and open mind
- Flexible
- Ethical Behavior

**Leadership competency**
- No. of years worked
- Level and frequency of training
- Education background

**Successful Project Completion**
- Complete within stipulated time
- Finish within the set budget
- Finish within project scope

**Independent variables**

**Dependent Variable**

**Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework**
2.3 Empirical Review

2.3.1 Worker Engagement

Jamil and Naeem (2013) did a study on the impact of worker engagement on firm performance. Their study was based on empirical evidence from the telecommunication sector of Pakistan. Jamil and Naeem (2013) used descriptive research design and targeted 411 telecommunication firms’ employees in Pakistan. The scholars established that engaging workers was a key factor in promoting firm performance through enhancing their commitment and support to the organizational activities.

Ogunyomi and Ojikutu (2014) carried out a study on the effects of employee engagement on performance of Small and Medium Enterprises in Lagos. The study focused on establishing the relationship between holding interactive meetings and seminars with the employees and SME performance in Lagos. Cross sectional research design was used and 98 SMEs were picked as the study sample. The study found that engagement of employees was not a major aspect in promoting performance of the SMEs directly but instead enhanced the retention and motivation of the employees which did not directly result to increased performance (Ogunyomi & Ojikutu, 2014). The scholars argued that through other aspects such as training of the employees and sourcing the best experienced employees enhanced SME performance in the country.

2.3.2 Leadership Style

Quartey (2013) did a study on the implications of leadership style on firm performance. The study focused on telecommunication firms in Ghana and employed a descriptive research design where 316 employees in the industry were sampled. The study established that leadership style by the organizational or project managers played the central role in promoting performance of the telecommunication firms. According to Quartey (2013), through the leadership style, a good framework for the employees and other members in a team is well established and this streamlines the performance metric by the firm.

2.3.3 Leadership Traits

Morrison and Lee (2011) did a study on the influence of leadership traits on firm performance. Their study focused on manufacturing firms in Canada. The scholars used a cross sectional research design and had a sample of 493 respondents drawn from the steel
manufacturing medium firms in Canada. The study found that the traits in a manager played a major role in determining the extent to which the managers were able to influence the employees and team them up for a conjoined performance. The researchers further had it that the listening skills and flexibility of the project leaders in the manufacturing firms were some of the major traits that played a huge impact in promoting performance.

### 2.3.4 Leadership Competency

Intagliata Ulrich and Smallwood (2010) did a study on the Leveraging Leadership Competencies to reduce Leadership Brand and enhance firm performance. The study aimed establishing the role or leadership competency on firm performance and it was based in UK. The study used a descriptive research design and had a sample of 129 respondents driven from employees in public corporations in UK. According to Intagliata, et al. (2010) competencies of the firm managers played a major role in promoting the performance of the firms in that they are the main strategizers in a firm and once they have the leadership competency, they are able to make more reliable and sound strategies for firm growth and performance. Moreover, competent leaders will create followers out of the employees and this will enable the firm to benefit not only from the skills of the employees but also from their support out of the loyalty (Intagliata, et al., 2010).

### 2.4 Research Gaps

Meriel (2014) conducted a study on the influence project leadership on transformation of public service reform initiatives. There exists an objective gap since this study did not address other variables such as social awareness leadership competencies, and social skills leadership competencies. O'Reilly, Caldwell, Chatman, Lapiz and Self (2010) conducted a study on the effects of leaders' alignment on strategy implementation. The study was conducted in the context of large health care organization physicians in eight specialty departments – emergency. There exists an objective gap since this study did not address other variables such as leadership competencies, self-awareness leadership competencies and social awareness leadership competencies. In addition, there exists a contextual gap in that the study focused on large health care organizations while this study focused on County government.

Zakaria and Taiwo (2013) conducted a study on the effect of team leader skills and competencies team based on the assumption that self-management leadership competencies do affect team performance. The study was conducted in Universiti Teknologi Petronas (UTP) using a survey method. There exists an objective gap since this study did not address
other variables such as social awareness leadership competencies, self-awareness leadership competencies and social skills leadership competencies. Similarly, there exists a conceptual gap in that this study used a survey research design while this study used a descriptive research design. In addition, there exists a contextual gap in that the study focused on a university while this study focused on County government.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design
The study employed descriptive research design to collect and analyse the data. This is a study design that systematically describes the characteristics of the study objects in all aspects. It gives a wide range of information on the research phenomenon that the research seeks to focus on. This design was deemed appropriate for the study in that it gives both qualitative and quantitative data about the study objects thus giving the researcher a wider view and deeper understanding of the phenomenon (Babbie, 2012).

3.2 Target Population
The target population for this study was the county government of Nairobi. Specifically the study targeted four departments which included; public works, roads and Transport sector, Public Service management, Education, Youth affairs, culture, children and social services and Health services. According to NCC (2016) these departments are responsible for management and delivery of projects in the major devolved sectors which include water and sanitation, county roads, street lighting, health care, early childhood education. This therefore means that the department is well conversant with the county government projects and how they are managed thus making it the appropriate target population for the study.

3.3 Sampling
Creswell (2013) defines sampling as the process of obtaining representatives of a certain population to be used in a study. Stratified random sampling was used in the study. Yamane (1967) as refered to by Singh and Masaku (2014) gives a rearranged recipe to ascertain test sizes. This equation is utilized to ascertain the example sizes where the populace is huge. It assumes a certain level of significance which normally ranges from 0.01 to 0.1 but 0.05 is the most commonly used.

\[ n = \frac{N}{1+N*e^2} \]
Where \( n \) is the sample size, \( N \) is the population size (325), and \( e \) is the level of significance (0.05). When the formula is applied to the above sample, we get an equation as below:

\[
n = \frac{325}{1+325(0.05)^2} = 179.31
\]

The sample size of the study was therefore 179 respondents.

3.4 Data Collection
A self-administered Questionnaire was used in this study. A questionnaire is a set of questionnaire that is designed bearing a certain specific flow of questions that are meant to seek some information from the respondents based on a certain study problem. The questionnaire contained both closed and open-headed questions. This was in order to enhance better responses that best fits the research questions. Questionnaire was considered appropriate based on the ability for them to collect the more data and with less time as well as avoiding biasness.

3.5 Data Collection Procedures
Polls were dropped at the respondents’ working spots and singled out a concurred date. In view of the adjustments in innovation, a few respondents were not accessible physically at their assigned working stations. This was, along these lines, called for looking for of elective strategies for contacting them and one of the techniques utilized was sending them the survey by means of messages. They were required to fill in the polls and send them back for examination. The polls were later gathered and united for arranging and examination.

3.6 Data Analysis and Presentation
Information was dissected subjectively and quantitatively. Subjective information was broke down utilizing content examination while quantitative information was dissected utilizing clear measurements investigation which was finished by estimating focal propensities which incorporate frequencies, means and standard deviations. Inferential insights which included connection (\( r \)) and relapse (\( R^2 \)) using Multiple Linear Regression display was utilized to set up the importance of the free factors on the reliant variable. The following was the regression model formula adopted in the study:

\[
Y = \beta + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \beta_4X_4 + \epsilon
\]
4.0 RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Response Rate
The study had a sample of 179 respondents out of which 148 filled the questionnaires and returned them for analysis. This represented a response rate of 83% which according to Creswell (2013) is adequate for analysis and making conclusions and recommendations in a study. Non-response rate was 17% where 31 respondents either did not fill the questionnaires, filled the questionnaires partially or did not return the questionnaires for analysis.

4.2 Worker Engagement and Successful Project Completion
The first objective of the study was to establish the influence of worker engagement on successful completion of projects by Nairobi County government. The study sought to find out the role played by team building, delegation of tasks and inspiration of teamwork in promoting employee performance which is critical to project completion.

The respondents were further asked to indicate their level of agreement on specific statements on the worker engagement and successful completion of projects in Nairobi County. As the findings portray in table 4.2, majority of the respondents agreed on the first statement that inspiring teamwork enhances effective project completion as evidenced by a mean of 3.86 and a standard deviation of 0.73. Majority of the respondents agreed that motivating and mobilizing workers keeps them focused thus enhancing project success as shown by a mean of 4.01 and a standard deviation of 0.49. The last statement was that worker engagement in the department was effectively done to enhance successful project completion where majority of the respondents disagreed as evidenced by a mean of 2.47 and a mean of 1.03.

The findings concur with those by Gould (2013) that engaging employees through consultations and having their views considered enhances the employee performance thus promoting the successful completion of projects. According to the resource based theory, employees need to be well invested in through rewarding, motivation and engagement so as to make them feel part and puzzle of the organization (Barney, 1991).
Table 4.2: Level of Agreement on Aspects of Worker Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inspiring teamwork enhances effective project completion</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delegation of tasks plays a key role in enhancing project completion</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building a team enhances problem solving thus promoting project completion</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivating and mobilizing workers keeps them focused thus enhancing project success</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork is encouraged and measures to in place to make it effective in our department</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees are always consulted and their opinions put into consideration in decision making process</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worker engagement in my department is effectively done to enhance successful project completion</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3 Leadership Style and Successful Project Completion

The second objective of the study was to find out the influence of leadership style on successful completion of projects by Nairobi County. The study sought to find out the role played by transformational, transactional and paternalistic types of leadership styles adopted by the project leaders in enhancing the completion of the County government projects. The findings are as herein presented.

The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on specific statements on influence of leadership style on project completion. On the first statement that the project leaders encourage their staff to look at problems from different angles, a slight majority of the respondents agreed with this as shown by a mean of 3.75 and a standard deviation of 1.01. On the second statement that the project leaders frequently suggested new ways of looking at how to complete assignments, majority of the respondents agreed as shown by a mean of 3.96 and a standard deviation of 0.91 while on the statement that the project leaders are allowed to have their own judgment in solving problems, majority of the respondents disagreed as evidenced by a mean of 2.96 and a standard deviation of 1.73.
The findings compare with those by Avolio and Bass (2011) who found that through a well-articulated, leadership and goodwill of the leaders, most of the goals of the organization as well as the projects are met thus steering performance and growth. As the findings portray, leaders should be focused on finding better ways to solve day to day organizational problems through which performance and completion of the projects is promoted (Safarzadeh et al., 2015). The behavioral theory of leadership outlines two types of leaders who include the people oriented leaders and work oriented leaders. In the modern business market, a leader ought to be both people oriented and work oriented such that as much as they focus on influencing the employees towards a common agenda, they should as well articulate the main mainstreams of the work expected (Lenk & Bockenholt, 2012).

Table 4.3: Leadership Style and Project Completion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As a project leader, I encourage my staff to look at problems from different angles</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I frequently suggest new ways of looking at how to complete assignments</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am allowed to have my own judgment in solving problems</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>1.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The leadership gives the employees feedback on their job performance</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>1.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership style is well articulated in my department to enhance project completion</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>1.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I always emphasize on the need for strong values and sense of purpose in my department</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I frequently sacrifice my own interests and free time for the interests of the projects</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>1.62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4 Leadership Traits and Successful Project Completion

The third objective of the study was to find out the influence of leadership traits on successful completion of projects by Nairobi County government. The study sought to establish the extent to which leadership traits outskated by the project leaders affected successful completion of projects. According to Welch (2015) leadership traits such as being committed to organizational matters and adhering to ethical standards serves to enhance the ability of an individual to lead the firm into success. The study therefore focused on underpinning the role played by these aspects to promote project completion. The findings are as herein presented.
The study sought to establish the respondents’ level of agreement on specific statements on leadership traits and its influence on the completion of projects by the County government. The findings as shown in table 4.4 revealed that on the first statement that the project leaders had established good working relation with the co-workers, majority of the respondents agreed as shown by a mean of 3.91 and a standard deviation of 0.83. The respondents disagreed that Employees in their respective department were given equal chances to raise their views as indicated by a mean of 2.19 and a standard deviation of 1.54.

The findings correspond to those by Bateman and Snell (2012) who established that leading is not just a matter of being the head but focusing on the traits that best describe a leader. According to Bateman and Snell (2012), organizational leaders who give and dedicate their time for the purpose of company’s goals tend to steer growth more than those who do not. As indicated in the trait theory of leadership, for a leader to provide good guidance and steer performance, they ought to focus on dedicating their time to business and adhering to ethics in business.

### Table 4.4: Leadership Traits and Project Completion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have established good working relation with the co-workers</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a leader I express with a few simple words what the employees could and should do</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility of the leaders for consultations enhances effectiveness of the employees thus promoting project success</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring employees maintain code of ethics keeps them disciplined and up on their job thus enhancing project completion</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through leadership traits performed in my department, the projects are successfully completed</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees are given equal chances to raise their views</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>1.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am (the project managers are) flexible and available for consultations with the employees</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I frequently emphasize on ethical behaviour among the employees</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>1.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I frequently (project leaders) hold up consultative meetings to have a word with the employees</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>1.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.5 Leadership Competency and Project Completion

The fourth and last objective of the study was to find out the influence of leadership competency on successful completion of projects by the Nairobi County government. The study sought to find out the role played by the number of years worked, training and education level by the project leaders in enhancing the completion of the projects. The findings are as herein discussed.

The respondents’ levels of agreement or disagreement with specific statements on leadership competency and project completion were sought. The findings as shown in Table 4.5 revealed that majority of the respondents agreed that leaders who have worked for longer years lead their projects to better completion than those with lesser years as evidenced by a mean of 3.78 and a standard deviation of 0.96. The findings further had it that majority of the respondents disagreed with the statement that project leaders undergo leadership training frequently in various departments at the County and this is evidenced by a mean of 2.80 and a standard deviation of 1.01 while on the statement that performance and completion of projects by various department could be attributed to the competency of the project leaders majority of the respondents disagreed as evidenced by a mean of 2.65 and a standard deviation of 1.22.

The findings concur with those by Gregersen et al. (2009) who found that competency in leadership was the key driver of firm performance through giving the employees a contextual direction to handle various organizational matters to steer productivity. The findings support the contingency theory of leadership that portrays leadership as matter of example-setting and practicing leadership duties perpetually to enhance competency and expertise (Robbins et al., 2010).

Table 4.5: Level of Agreement with Statements on Leadership Competency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leaders who have worked for longer years lead their projects to better completion than those with lesser years</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequent training equips a project leader with better skills to manage and run the project thus leading to its successful completion</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly educated project leaders lead projects to better completion</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence leadership enhances completion of the projects more effectively</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project leaders undergo leadership training frequently in my department</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The performance and completion of projects by our department can be attributed to the competency of the project leaders</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>1.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.6 Completion of Projects by Nairobi County Government

The main motive of the study was to find out the influence of project leadership on successful completion of projects by Nairobi County. This implies that project completion was the dependent variable for the study hence the need to identify the level at which the projects were successfully completed by the county government. The specific measures used to identify the completion of the projects were; completion within the stipulated time, completion within the set budget, and completion within the projected scope. According to Chatman et al. (2010), a successfully completed project ought to be completed within the set budget, scope and time.

The study sought to find out the respondents’ level of agreement or disagreement with specific statements on project completion at the County government. The findings as shown in table 4.6, majority of the respondents disagreed that projects in their respective departments were completed within the set timelines as evidenced by a mean of 2.73 and a standard deviation of 1.37. On the statement that there are minimal/no user-complaints on the projects completed by the County government, majority of the respondents disagreed and this is shown by a mean of 2.97 and a standard deviation of 1.73 while on the statement that the number of positive feedbacks from the users of the projects completed by County government surpasses the negative ones, majority of the respondents agreed as shown by a mean of 3.81 and a standard deviation of 0.91.

Table 4.6: Level of agreement with statements on Project Completion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Projects in our department are usually completed within the set timelines</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>1.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projects attached to our department are completed within the set budget</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>1.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are minimal/no user-complaints on the projects completed by our</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>1.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>projects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of positive feedbacks from the users of the projects completed</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by our department surpasses the negative ones</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We have put key measures in our department to enhance successful project</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>completion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In case of delays in our projects we inform the customers (users) in due</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>1.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.7 Analysis of the Study Model

The study adopted a regression model to help in establishing the statistical relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. The model was of the form:
The results for the model summary are as presented in Table 4.7 where $R^2$ (coefficient of multiple determinants) is shown. As the model depicts, the $R^2$ is 0.696, an indication that there is a strong relationship between independent variables and the completion of projects. This means that a proportion of 69.6% of successful project completion is explained by the combined effect of worker engagement, leadership style, leadership traits and leadership competency.

Table 4.7: Model Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.834 $^a$</td>
<td>.696</td>
<td>.679</td>
<td>.050674</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The overall model significance was presented using the ANOVA test. Results in Table 4.8 shows that the significance of the F-value of 40.278 was at 0.000<0.05. This implies that when combined, worker engagement, leadership style, leadership traits and leadership competency are significant to successful project completion.

Table 4.8: ANOVA Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>72.400</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18.100</td>
<td>40.278.014</td>
<td>.000$^b$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>31.585</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>.221</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>103.985</td>
<td>147</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The regression coefficients are as presented in Table 4.9. The results indicate that the relationship between worker engagement, leadership style, leadership traits and leadership competency and project completion was significant. The relationship was however positive implying that an increase in any of the factors results to an increase in project completion.
Table 4.9: Regression Model Coefficients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>.116</td>
<td>.078</td>
<td>1.487</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worker Engagement</td>
<td>.624</td>
<td>.111</td>
<td>.563</td>
<td>5.617</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Style</td>
<td>.421</td>
<td>.049</td>
<td>.691</td>
<td>8.592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Traits</td>
<td>.603</td>
<td>.091</td>
<td>.545</td>
<td>6.655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Competency</td>
<td>.545</td>
<td>.156</td>
<td>.395</td>
<td>3.496</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CONCLUSION

On the first objective, the findings revealed that worker engagement significantly influenced the completion of the projects. It can therefore be concluded that worker engagement is a key factor in promoting successful project completion. Moreover, a conclusion can be drawn that the project leaders at the county government do not effectively involve the employees on key matters in the projects to put them on board and enhance their productivity an aspect that could be sabotaging the completion of the projects.

On the influence of Leadership style on project completion, the study revealed that leadership style had a positive and significant influence on the project completion. This leads to the conclusion that leadership style portrayed by the project leaders determine whether the projects will successfully be completed or not. The study further concludes that the project leaders and other relevant authorities at the County government have not efficiently and effectively exhibited key leadership styles which could be the stumbling block to successful project completion.

The study concluded that leadership trait is a key factor in determining the completion of projects by the County government. Despite there being a decline in completion of the projects as it was noted in the problem of the study and the study findings, the respondents indicated that the project leaders did not exemplify the main aspects of leadership traits while
indicating that these aspects were essential in determining project completion. The conclusion therefore goes that leadership traits that promote project completion had not been effectively embraced by project leaders at the Nairobi County hence the continued decline in project completion.

On the last objective of the study, a conclusion is drawn that leadership competency is a key aspect of project leadership that promotes the completion of the projects. The study further concluded that training of leaders as well considering the experience and education level of the project leaders were not effectively upheld despite them being key components of leadership competency that promote the successful completion of projects.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Projects by the County governments are critical in promoting service delivery, social welfare of the citizens and as well as economic growth and development. In fact, this is the main drive towards devolution – to enhance service delivery and this is done through projects by the County governments. This therefore means that not unless the projects are successfully completed, the goals of devolution will not be achieved.

The study therefore recommends that the County governments through the project leaders should ensure that the employees are engaged fully and effectively in any matters of concern to ensure that they feel part and puzzle of the projects. This way, their performance was enhanced and eventually the successful completion of the projects was achieved.

The project leaders at the County government should embrace effective leadership styles that ought to steer the completion of the projects they lead. The project leaders should embrace transformational, transactional and paternalistic leadership styles which are all key metrics of promoting effective leadership in the projects.

Leadership traits are key in determining how a leader relates with the followers. The study therefore recommends that the project leaders at the county government should adopt noble leadership traits that ought to enhance their relationship with the workers thus steering the completion of the projects. The project leaders should listen to the workers as well as encourage ethical behaviour while acting as examples to the followers. This way, the employees was steered to be more collaborative thus enhancing productivity and project completion.
Competent leaders are focused towards having their teams perform as required towards achievement of the project/organizational goals. The study therefore recommends that the project leaders should embrace skills that ought to enhance their leadership capability so as to steer project completion. The county governments should ensure that they appoint individuals with higher level of experience to lead key projects as well as offering frequent training to the project leaders to increase their competency.

REFERENCES


Office of the president, (July 29, 2013), *State Corporation Advisory Committee (SCAC), Http://www.scac.go.ke*


