

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AND PERFORMANCE OF COUNTY GOVERNMENT PROJECTS IN KENYA: A CASE OF MARKET PROJECTS IN TANA RIVER COUNTY

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ABSTRACT

County-funded projects are critical for the growth and development of local communities. The performances of market projects have a significant impact on the economic growth of Tana River County. Despite the socio-economic benefits of market projects in Tana River County, market projects still face performance issues. According to Auditor General's report a significant number of market projects in the county have been stalled or delayed therefore the study sought to assess the influence of governance practices on performance of market projects in Tana River County. Specifically, the study sought to assess the influence of strategic planning practices on the performance of market projects in Tana River County. The study was anchored on the stakeholders' theory. The study adopted descriptive research design. The unit of analysis was 6 market projects while the unit of observation was 1 municipal manager, 2 projects managers, 3 projects engineers, 1 CEC trade, 1 chief officer trade, 1 director trade, 1 CEC finance, 9 budget committee members and 500 traders from 6 market projects in Tana River County. Since the target population for municipal manager, projects managers, projects engineers, CEC trade, chief officer trade, director trade, CEC finance and budget committee members is

manageable the study adopted census technique to incorporate all the 19 officers. For the traders the study used Slovin's formula to sample 222 traders. Questionnaire was used to collect data from municipal manager, projects managers, projects engineers, CEC trade, chief officer trade, director trade, CEC finance and budget committee members. Interview schedule was used to collect data from traders. Data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive statistics involved the use of percentages, frequencies, mean and standard deviation. Inferential statistic involved the use of correlation analysis. After analysis quantitative data was presented in form of tables and bar charts while qualitative data was presented in pros form. From the analysis the researcher revealed that strategic planning facilitates effective resource management by identifying resource requirements and allocation strategies upfront. The study recommended that the county government authorities should strengthen strategic planning practices by developing long-term plans for market development, incorporating community needs, market trends, and economic factors.

Key Words: Strategic planning Practices and Performance of County Government projects.

INTRODUCTION

Strategic leadership is the process by which individuals at the top levels of an organization guide and influence its direction, goals, and actions to achieve long-term success and sustainable competitive advantage (Tauringana & Chamisa, 2019). It involves setting a compelling vision, formulating strategies, making key decisions, and aligning resources and efforts towards achieving strategic objectives. On the other hand, strategic leadership practices encompass the specific actions, behaviors, and approaches that strategic leaders employ to effectively guide their organizations toward achieving long-term goals and competitive advantage (Semmar, 2021). In the context of government projects, strategic leadership practices refer to the specific approaches, actions, and behaviors that government leaders and officials employ to effectively plan, implement, and manage projects that align with broader governmental goals and objectives (World Bank, 2020).

Strategic leadership practices adopted among government-funded projects in India encompass a range of proactive strategies aimed at navigating the complexities of public sector initiatives and maximizing their impact on society (Krishna & Kumar, 2023). Effective strategic leadership involves visionary decision-making, goal alignment, and stakeholder engagement to drive sustainable development outcomes. In India, government-funded projects often rely on strategic leadership practices to address diverse challenges such as infrastructure development, healthcare provision, education enhancement, and poverty alleviation (Kumar & Shekhar, 2020). Key practices include the formulation of clear objectives aligned with national priorities, the establishment of robust project management frameworks, and the cultivation of partnerships with various stakeholders including government agencies, private sector entities, non-profit organizations, and local communities. Through strategic leadership practices, government-funded projects in India strive to catalyze socio-economic progress, foster inclusive growth, and enhance the well-being of citizens across the nation (Aithal, 2019).

In China, strategic leadership practices adopted among government-funded projects emphasize centralized planning, rigorous execution, and adaptability to dynamic socio-economic conditions. Strategic leaders within government-funded projects in China prioritize the alignment of project objectives with national development priorities outlined in long-term strategic plans such as the Five-Year Plans (Hout, 2023). These leaders leverage top-down decision-making processes to allocate resources efficiently, mobilize stakeholders effectively, and ensure the timely implementation of projects.

In Nigeria, strategic leadership practices adopted among government-funded projects emphasize the importance of inclusivity, transparency, and accountability to address the country's socio-economic challenges and promote sustainable development (Nwanekezie, 2022). Strategic leaders within government-funded projects in Nigeria prioritize community engagement and participation to ensure that projects are responsive to the needs and priorities of local populations. These leaders employ bottom-up approaches to project planning and implementation, empowering communities to take ownership of initiatives and fostering a sense of ownership and accountability.

In Kenya, strategic leadership practices adopted among government-funded projects emphasize collaboration, innovation, and responsiveness to local needs to drive socio-economic development and improve livelihoods. Strategic leaders within government-funded projects in Kenya prioritize multi-stakeholder partnerships, including engagement with civil society organizations, private sector actors, and local communities, to leverage diverse expertise and resources for project success (Wafula, 2019). These leaders also champion innovative approaches such as digital technologies and participatory decision-making processes to enhance project efficiency and effectiveness (Nguti & Oduor, 2018).

Abedian, Strachan and Ajam, (2019) describes a project as a set of interrelated tasks that should be executed within a fixed time period within the cost and other limitations. Performance of projects can then be interpreted as the accomplishment of a set interrelated task against conditions of accuracy, completeness, cost, time period and other limitations. The performance of county government projects refers to the effectiveness, efficiency, and impact of initiatives undertaken by local government authorities at the county level. These projects encompass a wide range of activities aimed at addressing the diverse needs and priorities of citizens within a specific geographic area. The performance of county government projects is evaluated based on various criteria, including the extent to which project objectives are achieved, the quality of service delivery, adherence to budgetary constraints, and the level of stakeholder satisfaction. Effective performance of county government projects requires strategic leadership practices (Abedian, Strachan & Ajam, 2019).

The measure of projects can be done using Key Performance Indicators (KPI) which include, cost, time, quality, clients satisfaction, clients changes, safety, business performance, all these geared toward best practices (Navon, 2018). The key performance indicators are however the cost, time and quality. Market construction projects in Kenya encompass the construction or renovation of physical market structures such as market stalls, warehouses, and trading centers, aimed at improving market access, enhancing trade efficiency, and supporting economic growth (Pheng and Chuan, 2019). The measure of performance of these projects involves assessing various key indicators such as project completion timelines, adherence to budgetary constraints, quality of construction work, and functionality of market facilities. Additionally, factors such as market utilization rates, revenue generation, market user satisfaction, and socio-economic impact are considered in evaluating the success and effectiveness of market construction projects (Posner & Weyl, 2017).

County Governments in Kenya are independent legal entities with administrative and legal powers delegated by the Kenyan Constitution and County Government Act, (CGA, 2013). The Constitution of Kenya (2010) and CGA (2012 among other legislation, envisage a situation where citizens are actively engaging in leadership at various levels. Leaders whether elected, nominated or appointed should therefore facilitate participation of citizens in leadership process. The senate in Kenya which is considered the upper house (legislative body) is tasked with ensuring that County Governments have the institutional and policy framework systems and capacity to effectively provide the required local services in a responsive, efficient accountable and transparent manner.

Tana River County is a county in the former Coast Province of Kenya. It is named after the Tana River, the longest river in Kenya. It has an area of 38,437 km² (14,841 sq mi) and a population of 315,943 as of

the 2019 census. While market development projects in Tana River County have had significant positive impacts on the local economy and community, there are several performance issues that have been identified. One of them is infrastructure. This is a critical issue facing market development projects in Tana River County. While the construction of a market center has been a key feature of many initiatives, there are still challenges related to road infrastructure and transportation. Poor roads and limited access to transportation make it difficult for farmers and traders to transport their goods to market, which can result in spoilage and loss of income. Another factor is financing. Financing is another major issue facing market development projects in Tana River County. Despite efforts to provide access to financing for entrepreneurs and businesses, many still struggle to access the capital they need to start or expand their operations. This can be due to a variety of factors, including a lack of collateral, high interest rates, and limited knowledge of available financing options (Tommasi, 2017).

Statement of the Problem

County-funded projects are critical for the growth and development of local communities. When these projects succeed, they can address local needs and challenges, create jobs and stimulate economic growth, enhance public trust in the government, and promote sustainability and environmental stewardship. The performances of market projects have a significant impact on the economic growth of Tana River County. Despite the socio-economic benefits of market projects in Tana River County, market projects still face performance issues. According to a 2020-2021 Auditor General's report there are a number of stalled market projects in Tana River County. The State Department for Housing and Urban Development under the Economic Stimulus Program (ESP) was set to construct at least three modern market in Tana River County. Once completed, the markets are to benefit about 2,000 people from within and outside the county who have been trading in open air and makeshift sheds. According to the report, a significant number of market projects in the county have been stalled or delayed. Only, one market famously known as Garsen market has been completed which has been sitting idle for the past three years since it was completed. The market has been dormant in the hands of the contractor, who was claiming unpaid dues from the administration. As a result, traders were forced to squeeze within Garsen town, causing congestion. The Auditor General Report highlight various factors contributing to poor performance of market projects. One of them is poor planning. In some cases, projects have been started without a clear understanding of the local market demand, resulting in low usage and revenue. In other cases, projects have been poorly designed, with inadequate facilities and services for vendors and customers. Mismanagement of funds is also another major challenge in the implementation of market projects in Tana River County. The report highlights instances of funds being misused or diverted for other purposes, resulting in incomplete or substandard projects.

Several studies have been conducted on the influence of strategic leadership practices on project performance. For instance, Shimengah, (2020) did a study to assess the influence of strategic leadership practices on service delivery within county governments in Kenya: a literature review. The study found that strategic leadership practices enhance service delivery. However, the study focused on service delivery while the current study focused on performance of county government projects. Another study was conducted by Viviane, Onjure & Aseka, (2023) on the effect of strategic leadership practices on institutional performance. A Case of Christian Bilingual University of Congo. The study found that

human capital development insignificantly affects institutional performance. The study concluded that Christian universities are not carefully evaluating openly the capacity required for their programs, services, and activities. They lack known procedures for selection and prioritization of training components based on the defined assumptions. However, the study was conducted on Christian Bilingual University of Congo hence the findings might not be applicable to the current study which focused on project performance of market projects in Tana River County.

Objective of the Study

To determine the influence of strategic planning practices on the performance of market projects in Tana River County.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on the Stakeholder theory which posits that organizations have a responsibility to consider the interests and needs of all stakeholders affected by their actions, rather than solely focusing on maximizing shareholder value. The theory emphasizes the importance of recognizing and managing the diverse interests of stakeholders, including employees, customers, suppliers, communities, and government agencies (Freeman & Harrison, 2010). According to stakeholder theory, organizations should strive to create value for all stakeholders, not just shareholders, and should actively engage with stakeholders to understand their perspectives, concerns, and expectations. By adopting a stakeholder-centric approach, organizations can build trust, enhance relationships, and achieve long-term sustainable success.

Critiques of stakeholder theory include concerns about its practicality and implementation challenges. Critics argue that stakeholder theory may lack clear guidelines for identifying and prioritizing stakeholders, leading to ambiguity and conflicting interests. Additionally, some critics question the feasibility of balancing the diverse interests of stakeholders, particularly when they are in conflict with each other (Friedman & Miles, 2002). Critics also argue that stakeholder theory may lead to decision-making paralysis and inefficiency, as organizations attempt to accommodate the needs of all stakeholders without prioritizing strategic objectives or shareholder value. Furthermore, stakeholders themselves may have divergent and conflicting interests, making it difficult for organizations to satisfy all stakeholders simultaneously (Galant, 2017).

Despite its critiques, stakeholder theory is highly relevant in explaining the influence of stakeholder engagement practices on the performance of market projects in Tana River County. By actively engaging with stakeholders such as local communities, government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other relevant parties, market projects in Tana River County can build trust, foster collaboration, and enhance project outcomes. For example, by involving local communities in project planning and decision-making processes, market projects can ensure that projects are aligned with local needs, preferences, and cultural sensitivities. Additionally, by partnering with government agencies and NGOs, market projects can access valuable resources, expertise, and support to overcome challenges and

maximize project impact. Through effective stakeholder engagement practices informed by stakeholder theory, market projects in Tana River County can create shared value, promote inclusive growth, and contribute to the sustainable development of the region.

Empirical Review

Performance of County Government Projects

Mwangi (2018) focused on the factors influencing performance of county government projects in Gatundu modern market, Kiambu County, Kenya. The study used the theory of change as used in monitoring and evaluation. The study adopted descriptive research designs. The study adopted a probabilistic sampling technique with the stratified random technique targeting 269 respondents from the target population of 895. The primary data was collected using structured questionnaires. The study found out that, management competencies is an important factor for the performance of projects, management experience, skilled staff, team's expertise, proper planning and effective communication were key.

Oluteyo, (2018) focused on the strategy implementation and performance of projects in Kakamega county government, Kenya. The study used a descriptive research design. The population of study was 248 projects managers of the 62 projects initiated and implemented by the County Government of Kakamega between 2013 and 2016. Stratified random sampling was used to select a sample size of 73 respondents. The study concluded that the county government projects faced funding challenges however funding had a positive effect on the performance of the projects.

Mutheu and Muturi, (2018) studied projects specific factors affecting performance of county government projects in Nyandarua County. The target population consisted of 384 finance managers in all development projects that were completed in the financial year 2016/2017 in Nyandarua County. Using simple random sampling method 80 respondents were selected from the target population. The data collection was administered using questionnaires. The study concluded that financial factors including access to funding, budgetary control and training on financial management had a statistically significant effect on performance of projects implemented by county government of Nyandarua.

Strategic Planning Practices and Performance of County Government Projects

Nnko (2023) did an analysis of the strategic planning practices of public institutions in Tanzania. The study used a qualitative approach and conducted interviews with 14 senior officials from various public institutions in Tanzania sampled purposively. The study findings of the study inform that despite the recognition of the significance of strategic planning in public institutions, there are several challenges that hinder its successful implementation.

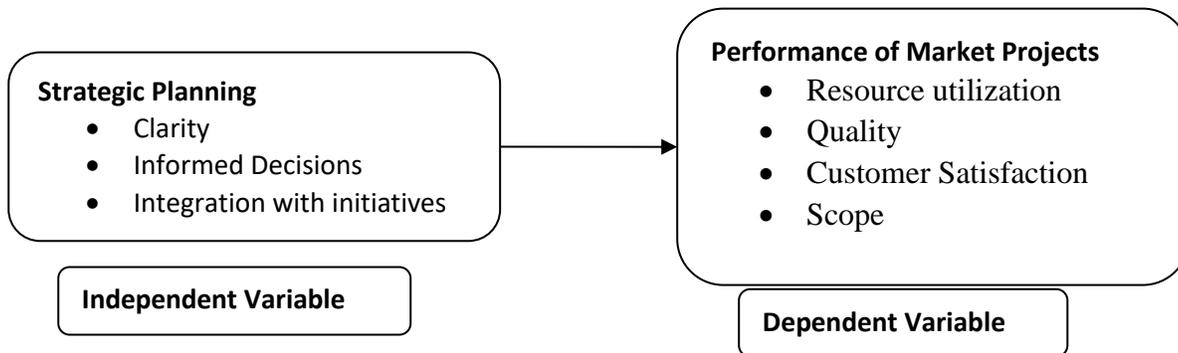
David and Okeyo (2020) did a study on strategic planning, external environment and performance of county governments in Kenya. The study adopted descriptive research design was adopted in this study which targeted a total of 246 employees of Nairobi County government of whom 23 were top level managers, 61 middle level managers and 162 low level managers. Data was collected using structured questionnaire administered through drop and pick from a sample of 80 employees. Stratified and

sequential random sampling methods were used. Correlation and linear regression analysis were used. Regression results revealed that there was a positive and significant relationship between strategic planning and performance of the county government.

Mwangi, Kariuki and Muturi (2020) did a study on the influence of strategic planning on performance of state corporations in Kenya. Data was gathered from 102 respondents that were randomly selected from a population of 200 State Corporations in Kenya. The results of correlation indicated that for any improvement in strategic plan, there was a corresponding improvement in the performance composite score and vice versa.

Kemboi and Misango (2021) did an analysis of influence of strategic planning practices on organization performance: A Case of Baringo County Government, Kenya. Data was analyzed and presented using methods of dispersion statistics such as means, frequencies, percentages and standard deviations and regression analysis was also used to determine the relationship of the variables. The findings of the study revealed that fundraising was the main form of resource mobilization in Baringo County Government and further that financial resources were the highly allocated resources and that there was a significant positive relationship between resource mobilization strategies, resource allocation strategies and organization performance at the county government. The study concluded that resource mobilization on organization performance through fundraising is an important way of resource mobilization.

Conceptual Framework



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive research design. Descriptive research design is effective for this study as it was used to solicit the desired information through an adoption of a questionnaire. The unit of analysis was 6 market projects while the unit of observation was 1 municipal manager, 2 projects managers, 3 projects engineers, 1 CEC trade, 1 chief officer trade, 1 director trade, 1 CEC finance, 9 budget committee members and 500 traders from 6 market projects in Tana River County.

Table 1: Target Population

Respondents	Target Population
Municipal Manager	1
Projects Managers	2
Projects Engineers	3
CEC Trade	1
Chief Officer Trade	1
Director Trade	1
CEC Finance	1
Budget Committee Members	9
Traders in the markets	500
Total	528

Source: Department of Trade and Development Tana River County (2024)

The study used multiple sampling techniques. Since the target population for municipal manager, projects managers, projects engineers, CEC trade, chief officer trade, director trade, CEC finance and budget committee members is manageable the study adopted census technique to incorporate all the 19 officers. For the traders the study used Slovincs formula to sample 222 traders.

Questionnaire and interview guides were used to collect primary data. Data obtained from the questionnaires were first cleaned and edited before being coded and subjected to further analysis. The Likert scales in closed ended questions in the questionnaires were converted to numerical codes and be scored on 1–5-point scale in order of magnitude of the construct being measured, then be entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24. The data was then analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive statistics involved the use of percentages, frequencies, measures of central tendencies (mean) and measures of dispersion (standard deviation). Inferential statistic involved the use of correlation and regression analysis. After analysis quantitative data was presented in form of tables and bar charts while qualitative data was presented in pros form.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The study targeted a sample size of 222 respondents out of which 175 filled and returned the questionnaires giving a response rate of 79%. Therefore, the response failure was 21%. With a 79% response rate, the study had a considerable sample size adequate for the research.

On general information about the respondents, Gender distribution statistics indicated that 55% of the respondents were male while 45% of the respondents were female. This implies that majority of the respondents were male. The gender distribution among respondents suggests that there is a slightly higher representation of males compared to females. Data on age distribution showed that 13% indicated they were aged 20-30 years, 34% indicated they were aged between 31-40 years, 32% indicated they were aged 41-50 years while 21% were aged 50 years and above. This implies that majority of the respondents were aged between 31-40 years and 41-50 years. The distribution across different age brackets indicates a varied range of experiences and perspectives among respondents. Younger respondents (20-30 years) may bring fresh ideas and technological adeptness to project management, while older respondents (50 years and above) may offer wisdom and institutional knowledge.

Data on highest level of education attained indicated that 16% of the respondents had a certificate, 37% had a diploma, 34% had bachelor's degree while 10% had masters and 3% had Postgraduate. This implies that the majority of respondents had diploma and bachelors level of education. The diverse educational qualifications of respondents highlight the breadth of knowledge and skills available within the project management workforce. Individuals with higher educational qualifications, such as diplomas, bachelor's, master's, and postgraduate degrees, bring distinct expertise and analytical capabilities to project planning and execution. Data on the Length of Engagement with Project Management indicated that 8% of respondents stated that they have been engaged with project management for less than 1 years, 24% of stated that they have been engaged with project management for 1-5 years, 42% stated that they have been engaged with project management for 6-10 years while 26% stated that they been engaged with project management for 11 years and above. This implies that majority of the respondents have been engaged with project management for 6-10 years. The varying lengths of engagement with project management underscore the continuum of experience among respondents.

Effect of Strategic Planning Practices on Performance of Market Projects

The second objective of the study sought to examine the effect of strategic planning practices on performance of market projects in Tana River County. The results were as shown in Table 2

Table 2: Effect of Strategic Planning Practices on Performance of Market Projects

Strategic Planning Practices	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	STD
Clarity ensures that all stakeholders have a clear understanding of the project's objectives, scope, and desired outcomes.	47%	43%	2%	8%	0%	4.403	0.557
Clarity of the project helps to align efforts across different departments, agencies, and stakeholders involved in the project	56%	34%	3%	7%	0%	4.419	0.667
Strategic planning fosters collaboration and communication among project stakeholders, including contractors, subcontractors, suppliers, and regulatory agencies	47%	34%	13%	6%	0%	3.887	1.073
Strategic planning facilitates effective resource management by identifying resource requirements and allocation strategies upfront	59%	31%	3%	7%	0%	4.177	0.932
Integration ensures that project activities are coordinated and focused, minimizing inefficiencies and maximizing productivity throughout the construction process	50%	34%	3%	7%	0%	3.984	1.032
Strategic planning enables project teams to anticipate potential challenges and risks	45%	34%	13%	8%	0%	4.145	0.921
Strategic planning is essential for driving the performance of market construction projects by providing a clear direction	49%	38%	5%	8%	0%	4.145	0.807

Source: Research Data (2024)

Based on the findings, 47% of the respondents strongly agreed, 43% agreed, 2% were neutral while 8% disagreed that clarity ensures that all stakeholders have a clear understanding of the project's objectives, scope, and desired outcomes with (Mean=4.403, Std=0.557). Also, the findings indicated that 56% of the respondents strongly agreed that clarity of the project helps to align efforts across different departments, agencies, and stakeholders involved in the project, 34% agreed, 13% were neutral while 7% disagreed that clarity of the project helps to align efforts across different departments, agencies, and stakeholders involved in the project with (Mean=4.419, Std=0.667). These findings match with David and Okeyo (2020) who revealed that clarity in project scope and objectives helps define the roles and responsibilities of each department, agency, and stakeholder involved.

Further, the findings showed that 47% of the respondents strongly agreed, 34% agreed, 13% were neutral while 7% disagreed that strategic planning fosters collaboration and communication among project stakeholders, including contractors, subcontractors, suppliers, and regulatory agencies with (Mean=3.887, Std=1.073). Moreover, the findings revealed that 59% of the respondents strongly agreed that, 31% agreed, 2% were neutral while 6% disagreed that strategic planning facilitates effective resource management by identifying resource requirements and allocation strategies upfront with (Mean=4.177, Std=0.932). The findings agree with Kemboi and Misango (2021) which concluded that strategic planning ensures that resource management aligns with broader organizational objectives and priorities. Considering the strategic goals of the organization help the project managers to make informed decisions about resource allocation that support long-term growth and sustainability.

Additionally, the findings showed that 50% of the respondents strongly agreed, 34% agreed, 3% were neutral while 7% disagreed that integration ensures that project activities are coordinated and focused, minimizing inefficiencies and maximizing productivity throughout the construction process with (Mean=3.984, Std=1.032).

Also, the findings revealed that 45% of the respondents strongly agreed that, 34% agreed, 13% were neutral while 8% disagreed that strategic planning enables project teams to anticipate potential challenges and risks with (Mean=4.145, Std=0.921). Moreover, the findings revealed that 49% of the respondents strongly agreed that, 38% agreed, 5% were neutral while 8% disagreed that strategic planning is essential for driving the performance of market construction projects by providing a clear direction with (Mean=4.145, Std=0.807). The findings are in agreement with Nnko (2023) who stated that strategic planning helps to establish clear and achievable objectives for market construction projects including defining the scope of work, target market segments, desired outcomes, and project timelines.

The researcher sought to find out how clear the objectives and goals of the market projects were implemented in Tana River County. While the respondent acknowledges some clarity in the objectives and goals of the market projects, they also suggest room for improvement. This indicates a potential communication gap or ambiguity in project objectives, which could impact stakeholder understanding and project alignment. Enhancing clarity in project objectives can improve project focus and effectiveness.

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objectives, which could impact stakeholder understanding and project alignment. Enhancing clarity in project objectives can improve project focus and effectiveness.

The researcher sought to assess the level of clarity in the decision-making process for the market projects. The respondent notes variability in the clarity of the decision-making process for the market projects. This suggests potential inconsistencies or gaps in communication and decision transparency. Understanding the factors contributing to decision clarity or ambiguity can inform improvements in decision-making processes for future projects.

Performance of Market Projects

The dependent variable of the study was to establish the sustainability of Multinational Tea Companies. The results were as shown in Table 3

Table 3: Performance of Market Projects

Performance	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	STD
Market projects are completed on time.	44%	28%	14%	12%	2%	4.145	0.921
Market project implemented are of good quality	52%	24%	12%	10 %	2%	3.855	1.185
Market project implemented are sustainable to the community	30%	52%	8%	10%	0%	4.403	0.778
Projects have positive impact to the community.	32%	34%	10%	20%	4%	4.307	0.738
Market project are implemented within the stipulated budgets	38%	34%	10%	16 %	2%	4.145	0.807

Source: Research Data (2024)

From the findings 44% strongly agreed that market projects are completed on time, 28% indicated agreed, 14% were neutral while 12% disagreed while 2% indicated strongly disagree market projects are completed on time, with a (Mean=4.145, Std=0.921). In addition, 52% of the respondents strongly agreed that market project implemented are of good quality while 24% agreed, 12% were neutral, 10% disagreed while 2% strongly agreed that market project implemented are of good quality, with a (Mean=3.855, Std=1.185). Also, from the findings, 30% of the respondents strongly agreed that market project implemented are sustainable to the community, 52% agreed, 8% were neutral while 10% disagree that market project implemented are sustainable to the community, with a (Mean=4.403, Std=0.778). According to Mwangi (2018), by conducting a thorough needs assessment, the government is able to identify the priorities and challenges of the community. This ensures that projects are tailored to address real community needs and are aligned with local priorities.

Additionally, from the findings, 32% of the respondents strongly agree that projects have positive impact to the community, 34% agreed, 10% were neutral, 20% disagreed while 4% strongly disagree that projects have positive impact to the community, with a (Mean=4.307, Std=0.738). Moreover, the findings revealed that 38% of the respondents strongly agree that market project are implemented within the stipulated budgets, 34%

agreed, 10% were neutral, 16% disagreed while 4% strongly disagree that market project are implemented within the stipulated budgets, with a (Mean=4.145, Std=0.807). Mutheu and Muturi, (2018) showed that comprehensive project planning includes a detailed cost estimation and budgeting. This help to identify all project requirements, estimating costs for materials, labor, equipment, and overhead, and developing a realistic budget based on these estimates.

The respondents were asked on how satisfied are were with the market projects in Tana River County. Majority of the respondent rates their satisfaction with the market projects as moderate (5 out of 10). This suggests a neutral or mixed sentiment towards project outcomes. Understanding the factors influencing satisfaction levels can help identify areas for improvement and enhance project performance and stakeholder satisfaction.

From the analysis the respondents revealed that the specific aspects of the market projects do you believe have contributed most to the development and improvement of local markets in Tana River County. From the analysis the respondent highlights infrastructure improvements as the most significant contribution to the development and improvement of local markets. This underscores the importance of infrastructure investments in enhancing market accessibility, functionality, and attractiveness to stakeholders.

The researcher further sought to assess the market projects that have impacted the socio-economic development of communities in Tana River County. From the analysis the respondent acknowledges positive socio-economic impacts of the market projects, such as job creation and improved access to goods and services. This suggests that the projects have contributed to local economic development and livelihood enhancement. Further exploration of these socio-economic impacts can provide valuable insights into the project's broader developmental outcomes.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

From the findings of the study, it was concluded that clarity of the project helps to align efforts across different departments, agencies, and stakeholders involved in the project. The study also concluded that strategic planning facilitates effective resource management by identifying resource requirements and allocation strategies upfront. Further, the study concluded that strategic planning enables project teams to anticipate potential challenges and risks. Furthermore, the study concluded that strategic planning is essential for driving the performance of market construction projects by providing a clear direction.

Recommendations

In the light of the findings and conclusions, the study recommends that;
The county government authorities should strengthen strategic planning practices by developing long-term plans for market development, incorporating community needs, market trends, and economic factors.
Improve stakeholder engagement practices by establishing mechanisms for involving local communities, market traders, and other stakeholders in project planning, decision-making, and implementation processes.

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