

# **DRIVERS OF PROJECT PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT PRACTICES INFLUENCING PERFORMANCE OF COUNTY PROJECTS: A CASE OF ISIOLO COUNTY, KENYA**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Project portfolio management is becoming established as a tool for prioritizing and managing multiple projects at the enterprise level and organizations are increasingly recognizing that portfolio management can help them make the decisions that was set them apart from their competitors. However, despite the quantifiable benefits of portfolio management, relatively few organizations have perfected the practice. The study established the factors influencing implementation of project portfolio management practices at Isiolo County Government. The study was guided by the following objectives; to establish the effect of staff competence, communication systems, project evaluation process and management support on the implementation of project portfolio management practices at Isiolo County Government. The study was grounded on the systemic theory. The target population for this study composed County representatives, Community Worker, Project Management team and Chiefs, assistants & village elders in Isiolo County Government. A sample population of 158 was arrived at by calculating the target population of 268 using the formula taken from Kothari (2004). The study selected the respondents using stratified proportionate random sampling technique. Primary data was obtained using self-administered questionnaires. The questionnaire was made up of both open ended and closed ended questions. The drop and pick method were preferred for questionnaire administration so as to give respondents enough time to give well thought out responses. After data cleaning, which entailed checking for errors

in entry, descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, mean score and standard deviation were estimated for all the quantitative variables and information presented inform of tables. The qualitative data from the open-ended questions were analyzed using conceptual content analysis and presented in prose. Multiple regression analysis was used to establish the relations between the independent and dependent variables. The study found that there is a great influence by information base, communication timing and media types on implementation of project portfolio management practices at Isiolo County Government. It was clear that management support greatly influences implementation of project portfolio management practices. Further the study found that investment evaluation, final product evaluation and corrective actions greatly affect implementation of project portfolio management practices at Isiolo County Government. The study concluded that staff competence had the greatest effect on implementation of project portfolio management practices in Isiolo county followed by management support, then communication systems while project evaluation process had the least effect on the implementation of project portfolio management practices in Isiolo County. The study recommends that county governments should train staff on the use of project portfolio management practices in order to enhance the implementation of project portfolio management practices. The study also recommends that that the project managers should provide the necessary

resources and facilities for project management without under budgeting.

**Key Words:** *project portfolio, management practices, performance, county projects, Isiolo County, Kenya*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Project management as a theorized discipline has trespassed its initial field of application and has been extended to so that the project-based approach is embraced by a vast number of organizations in different sectors (Brigman, 2015). Projects are initiated to achieve diverse objectives, ranging from organizational change, to technology innovation and value creation. Project Portfolio Management (PPM) is a particular form of portfolio management that is engaged in selecting, prioritizing and managing the optimum mix of projects or investments to achieve maximum benefit to the citizens in the public sector. In this decision-making process, management can focus their scarce resource on investment that is achievable and strategically aligned with public sector goals. The resulting portfolio drives to a balancing of what is possible and what is needed. It uses structured approach to make educated decision about a collection or portfolio of projects, their associated investment mix, and their contribution to the organization's business mission capabilities. The portfolio management method support organizations to secure the strategy alignment of projects, especially when the strategy shifts (Padovani & Carvalho, 2016).

Project Portfolio Management (PPM) is a dynamic decision process, whereby a public-sector list of active new product (and development) project is consistently updated and reviewed. In this process new projects are evaluated, selected and prioritized; existing projects may be accelerated, killed or de-prioritized; and resources are allocated and re-allocated to active projects. The portfolio decision process is characterized by uncertain and changing information, dynamic opportunities, multiple goals and strategic considerations, interdependence among projects, and multiple decision makers and locations. The portfolio decision process encompasses or overlaps a number of decision-making processes including periodic review of the total portfolio of all projects (looking at all projects holistically, and against each other), making decision on individual projects on an on-going basis, and developing a new product strategy for the public sector, complete with the strategic resource allocation decision (Too & Weaver, 2015).

Project Portfolio Management is a tool for effective resource allocation, for the selection of those projects with the highest potential to become tomorrow's new product and service winners. The accurate implementation of project portfolio methodology is ultimately linked to sound innovation management practices in public sector. The aim of PPM is to provide a methodology to transform strategy and goals into the most lucrative projects as well as deals. It also involves a focus on the management and implementation of projects so as to deliver the desired business goals and objectives. With the correct PPM practice, managers can understand how to prioritize their focus and efforts on various projects so as to get the maximum positive impact on accomplishing core objectives. The concept of project portfolio management appears in various

guises. Program management and multi-project management are examples of closely related terms. PPM concept integrates operating activities and projects of an organization. Actually, it harmonizes projects, strategies and all other organizational activities. PPM is the art and science of applying a set of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to a collection of projects, in order to meet or exceed needs and expectations of an organization's investment strategy. As the PM, and much more, PPM is a specific junction of science and art (Oltmann, 2009).

Project Portfolio Management implementation as a phase of the PPM process is often faced up with a starting dilemma. Usually, organizations start with current projects evaluation, some projects delaying, some projects cancelling and other projects tuning with organizational resources and strategies. Whether you start with the current project evaluation or project new candidates' prioritization you have to choose criteria for projects ranking. Project Portfolio Management implementation could be considered as a project itself. Moreover, it has to be treated as a very special and complex project. Notwithstanding, these projects can be chosen in a specially appointed way, at the impulse of a Government official, because of a need or open weight, or as a 'hallowed cow' These activities draw on assets that different tasks, which should experience a great deal more investigation, should vie for. It has likewise been remarked that "there are typically a larger number of undertakings accessible for choice than can be attempted inside the physical and money related requirements of a firm, so decisions must be made in making up a reasonable project portfolio in public sector (Archer & Ghasemzadeh 2015).

Project Portfolio Management implementation in organizations today confront an exceedingly environment defined by quick changes, expanding multifaceted nature, and dangers from worldwide rivalry. In their endeavors to secure their own particular position and all the more basically to enhance their intensity, satisfactory systems must be produced and executed in the public sector. From the corporate level, system can be delivered by project portfolio management utilizing projects and tasks of various sorts and sizes as effective instruments. All the more critically, firms are inclined to assess their tasks from a portfolio's point of view in which a set or a sub-set of the projects are assessed together, in connection to each other. Portfolio management strategies (techniques) can help key chiefs in assessing whether an arrangement of project is satisfactory from the point of view of long haul achievement (West & Brereton, 2013).

In the developed countries, project portfolio management implementation point is to boost aggregate estimation of projects through accomplishing their most extreme adjust of cost, returns and the dangers inside the organization assets restricted in this way deciding the ideal asset for conveyance and to timetable exercises to best accomplish an organization's operational and budgetary objectives. An ideal project portfolio is a composed accumulation of activities that accomplish a higher esteem to the organizations than the aggregate whole of commitments of the people. Having a formal portfolio management handle helps officials figure out which extends most nearly adjust to the organization's key objectives, permits the organizations to stage activities to dodge asset bottlenecks, and enhances the checking of proposed project asks for that can be formally affirmed (Martinsuo, 2014).

In the United States of America, projects are designed, planned and implemented in tandem with the sequence displayed by the project cycle Chikati (2009). Advantages of a project portfolio management implementation handle incorporate better correspondence among project partners, enhanced data sharing over all levels of the organizations through status reporting, and upgraded basic leadership (extend supervisors can better respond and conform to changes that effect their activities). A very much characterized work process controlling a project through the project management life cycle empowers extend supervisors to concentrate on the projects and have certainty that management and partners know about the project's status (Project Management Institute, 2013). Extend portfolio management can be characterized as the management of numerous undertakings with an attention on single project commitment to the achievement of the endeavor (Dye & Pennypacker, 2011).

The Project Management Institute (PMI) characterizes a project, as a transitory attempt embraced to make an extraordinary item, management or result (Project Management Institute, 2008a) underscoring the brief way of the endeavor (implying that each project has a distinct start and end) and its non-tedious nature (project makes interesting deliverables). Then again, portfolio is an accumulation of projects held by a speculation organization, flexible investments, budgetary establishment or person. Portfolios incorporate the measurements of market freshness and specialized creativity. Facilitate, extend portfolio is a gathering of activities that are done under the sponsorship and additionally management of a specific organizations (Archer and Ghasemzadeh, 2011).

In Japan, the implementation of public projects requires the execution of planned activities which converts human and physical resources into a product or service of value to the customers (Drucker 2014). Project portfolio management has for some time been the most used principle for managing the development of organizations (De Reyck, 2015), as organizations increasingly become multi-project environments more work is organized by projects. Now, organizations experience that effective management of single projects do not fulfill organizational objectives sufficiently. Thus, today project portfolio management is considered to be one of the most important areas for organizational development. However, research reveals that a large number of organizations are gaining below their potential in terms of creating value from their project portfolio and that insufficient management of the project portfolio is a significant reason. Furthermore, Jeffery and Leliveld (2014) show how organizations' lack of a centralized overview of the portfolio results in bad investments and the development of redundant applications.

In African continent, Tobin (2017) contended that if public managers of state institutions are to prevail in what they do, they should distinguish needs, deal with the matter of project management and be watchful towards the organizations vision keeping in mind the end goal to stay away from low creation, dissatisfaction and an absence of inspiration in their representatives. In like manner, the journalists kept up that, in any event, it is not inaccurate to trust that the battles of open hirelings to effectively actualize and apply management culture and

practice, obviously demonstrates how activities are seen and comprehended by project chiefs in broad daylight establishments. Be that as it may, these essayists were resolved to see more "firm, steadfast devoted units working, for example, those with right part character, those that can spur specialists to participate and interface well with each other. The Governments of many creating nations essentially are not effectively overseeing admirably their rare assets. The nations are still confronted with much insufficiency issues that are clear and all around settled in numerous open segments, Government organizations and offices (NPO, 2008).

African countries public project implementations are affected by the external or macro-economic which relates to high interest rates and prices, tariff barriers, embargoes and shipping restrictions, among other influences, of which the project manager have no control over. They guarantee that project management hones have advanced with time, and keeping in mind the end goal to enhance execution, a great deal of center is required in the nature of management practice itself. Today, extends in broad daylight foundations are increasingly being consolidated into the organization's business structure as a major aspect of a general objective or mission and along these lines, state organizations and offices are relied upon to receive great project administration culture and practices, which will prompt to effective results. However, many still translate extends as recognizing undertakings that are exceptionally organized, and the sort that inherently includes a building approach. This is not generally genuine (Frigenti & Comninos, 2012).

Nations that are best have been found to have a ceaseless stream of activities in which thoughts are produced, assessed and executed. These different undertakings, when combined and incorporated for investigation and basic leadership turn out to be a piece of the nation's project portfolio. In South Africa, project intensive organizations depend on delivering every project successfully and profitably, but many public institutions have no standardized project management practices and have no enterprise level project management system in place (Leonore & Werner, 2013).

Nowadays many Africa nations are confronting some of the four greatest widespread issues, for example, excessively numerous dynamic projects, frequently twofold what an organizations ought to have; a number of these aren't right tasks that won't give esteem to the organizations; undertakings are not connected with the key objectives of an organizations and along these lines they don't meet the objectives of the organizations; besides, regardless of the possibility that each dynamic project is a positive one, there is a general unevenness in asset use both in short and long haul projects (Archer & Ghasemzadeh, 2011).

In Kenya devolution has been underway since March 2013; this is when the county Governments were formed under the 2010 constitution. The County Government have so far completed the first full budget cycle (2013 – 2014 (RoK, 2015). The new constitution (2010) came up with a devolution structure which ensured power is taken to the people; in return the people would exercise the given power for development of their own good. Process of devolution has faced a number of challenges. Counties are entitled to 15% of the total National Revenue Collected.



Though Counties are currently getting enough funding, still there is a desire to increase the budgetary allocations; the central Government is reluctant to do this. The constitution has given the National Government administrative power to reduce Counties financial control, by ensuring counties spend money in a certain way. The World Bank has urged Kenyan Government to come up with proper mechanism of sharing national resources between future Counties and the National Government so as to ensure the devolution promise is achieved. Different levels of Government shift blame for service delivery when it comes to decentralization of systems. It is important for the Government to have broad discussion on how all resources flowing from the National Government to 5 Counties should be organized so as to ensure the inequality is eliminated not exacerbated by devolution (Schwab, 2017).

As a result of the rapidly expanding population, devolution into the 47 Counties and Kenya's quest for Vision 2030, project management demand is expected to grow further as different counties rush to meet the needs of its citizens through a myriad of different projects (RoK, 2015). Programs and projects by County Government have hit the headlines in the past few years due to poor management some stalling while others undertaken below the customers' expectations (World Bank, 2015). There are three vital questions that the management of the region ought to ask itself. As a matter of first importance the management ought to ask itself regardless of whether it is conveying the right projects and activities. Furthermore, it ought to ask itself regardless of whether senior management addresses client issues and whether there is conveyance of the vital targets. Finally, the management ought to ask itself whether the Government offices' vision and targets are accomplished by the different activities they embrace. This must be accomplished through great project portfolio management (RoK, 2015).

In Isiolo County, camels are traditionally kept under pastoral (nomadic) production systems, characterised by low production inputs and herd/household mobility. This is a subsistence-based system utilising large mobile herds grazing on vast rangeland pasture resources. In Isiolo County, politics manifests itself in all organizations as opinions and attitudes of the different stakeholders in these organizations. In addition, the stakeholders relied upon by the project may also have their own agenda and preferences for participating in the project. The relationships to the project by these stakeholders can vary from very supportive to antagonistic, but depending on their field of influence, must be considered and managed (Waswa, Kilalo, Mwasaru & Kennedy, 2014).

The portfolio management standards are the establishment whereupon fruitful portfolio management is assembled; they give a favorable authoritative environment in which there is powerful standards operation of portfolio definition and conveyance. Doubts have been raised as to whether the Isiolo County development fund has met its stated objectives. For instance there is lack of transparency in allocation of funds for development projects; it is not clear how decisions are arrived at on what development projects to be implemented and the formation of project committees that are the center of decision making is characterized by political patronage. The organization of these standards ought to be custom fitted in a way that suits the predominant

conditions of the firm while likewise guaranteeing that the hidden reasons is kept up. Portfolio Management depends on adaptable standards which offer the establishment for fruitful portfolio management. There are some PPM implementation problems that should be stressed particularly; project risk estimation and risk management, project management – operation management communication, organization for PPM and PPM model components and the overall model maturity level measuring (Wiersma, 2017).

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Project portfolio management is becoming established as a tool for prioritizing and managing multiple projects at the enterprise level and organizations are increasingly recognizing that portfolio management can help them make the decisions that will set them apart from their competitors. However, despite the quantifiable benefits of portfolio management, relatively few public sectors have perfected the practice. The problem of accurately estimating time and cost gets worse when multiple projects are being performed at the same time. Each project in the projects portfolio will have indirect effect on the other projects. Sometimes, this effect can be a kind of butterfly effect where all parameters start behaving chaotically. Every project in the portfolio has an arrangement of assignments to be finished. Every one of these errands has a cost and time allotment in light of its temperament. Poor management and the absence of a sound management culture and hardworking attitude is frequently reprimanded for the separate in the province's ability to convey open merchandise and projects to its nationals. Performance culture and great practice by open directors utilized in the district to handle projects have relapsed, and therefore, activities are viewed as neglecting to meet the objectives and goals of the province. There has been a lot of criticism, from various quarters, on the way the Isiolo County projects are managed and implemented. According to Transparency International (2016), doubts have been raised as to whether the Isiolo County development fund has met its stated objectives. For instance, there is lack of transparency in allocation of funds for development projects; it is not clear how decisions are arrived at on what development projects to be implemented and the formation of project committees that are the center of decision making is characterized by political patronage. There are some PPM implementation problems that should be stressed particularly; project risk estimation and risk management, project management – operation management communication, organization for PPM and PPM model components and the overall model maturity level measuring. Project risk estimation and risk management seem to be the greatest problems of the project portfolio management implementation. Be that as it may, notwithstanding the quantifiable advantages of portfolio management, generally couples of open organizations have consummated the practice (Mateen et al., 2016). Locally studies have been done on project portfolio management such as Kinanu (2016) who established project portfolio management practices on performance of county governments: the case of Nairobi County, Kenya. Ngatia (2016) determined the nexus between project portfolio management capabilities and performance of local road construction firms in Nairobi County, Kenya. However, none of the studies reviewed has studied factors influencing implementation of project portfolio



management practices at Isiolo County Government. This study therefore bridged this gap by answering the question; what are the factors influencing implementation of project portfolio management practices at Isiolo County Government?

## **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The study sought to establish the factors influencing implementation of project portfolio management practices at Isiolo County Government.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To assess the influence of communication systems on the implementation of project portfolio management practices at Isiolo County Government
2. To evaluate the influence of project evaluation process on the implementation of project portfolio management practices at Isiolo County Government
3. To determine the influence of management support on the implementation of project portfolio management practices at Isiolo County Government

## **THEORETICAL ORIENTATION**

This study is anchored on the systemic theory by Hagel (1991). The systems theory tries to explain the dynamics of complex and dynamic systems. Systems Theory leads onto Systems Thinking that teaches us to look at the total system performance and the relationships between systems. Project management systems are plagued with misunderstanding of interdependence versus independence, finite versus limited capacity and strategic versus individual safety (Mikkola, 2011). Every project is a 'system' in that it consists of many interrelated and interconnected parts or elements which must function together as a 'whole'. Project Managers need to be concerned with the 'big picture', and as such, they must be systems thinkers and allocate adequate attention to every part of the project management system (Jim, Shankar & Tim 2012).

It is necessary to understand how each element fits in the whole scheme of things and how it will impact if we change it. This is what risk management is all about. The systems theory postulates that the project portfolio management implementation complex system tries to reach a state of equilibrium and then resists any significant change. This is due to the fact that the parts are connected and their connections define the system properties. But when the change occurs, it can be sudden and dramatic. With complex systems the effect may not be proportional to the cause. Many a times a small change in key part introduces a dramatic effect in the whole system (Koskinen, 2010).

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

The study adopted a descriptive research design. A descriptive design is concerned with determining the frequency with which something occurs or the relationship between variables (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Thus, this approach is suitable for this study, since the study intends to collect comprehensive information through descriptions which was helpful for identifying variables. Bryman and Bell (2011) assert that a descriptive design seeks to get information that describes existing phenomena by asking questions relating to individual perceptions and attitudes.

### **Target population**

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2010), a population is the total collection of elements about which we wish to make inferences. The target population for this study composed County representatives, Community Worker, Project Management team and Chiefs, assistants and village elders in Isiolo County Government as shown in Table 3.1.

### **Sample size and Sampling Procedures**

Sampling is a deliberate choice of a number of people who are to provide the data from which a study drew conclusions about some larger group whom these people represent. The section focused on the sampling size and sampling procedures. The sample size is a subset of the population that is taken to be representatives of the entire population (Kumar, 2011). A sample population of 158 was arrived at by calculating the target population of 268 with a 95% confidence level and an error of 0.05 using the below formula taken from Kothari (2004).

$$n = \frac{z^2 \cdot N \cdot \hat{p}^2}{(N - 1)e^2 + z^2 \hat{p}^2}$$

Where:  $n$  = Size of the sample;  $N$  = Size of the population and given as 268;  $e$  = Acceptable error and given as 0.05;  $\hat{p}$  = The standard deviation of the population and given as 0.5 where not known;  $Z$  = Standard variate at a confidence level given as 1.96 at 95% confidence level.

The sample size fits within the minimum of 30 proposed by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012). The study selected the respondents using stratified proportionate random sampling technique. Stratified random sampling is unbiased sampling method of grouping heterogeneous population into homogenous subsets then making a selection within the individual subset to ensure representativeness. The study used simple random sampling to pick the respondents in each stratum.

## **Research Instruments**

Primary data was obtained using self-administered questionnaires. The questionnaire was made up of both open ended and closed ended questions. The open-ended questions were used so as to encourage the respondent to give an in-depth and felt response without feeling held back in illuminating of any information and the closed ended questions allow respondent to respond from limited options that had been stated. According to Saunders (2011), the open ended or unstructured questions allow profound response from the respondents while the closed or structured questions are generally easier to evaluate. The questionnaires were used in an effort to conserve time and money as well as to facilitate an easier analysis as they are in immediate usable form.

## **Data Collection Procedures**

The researcher obtained an introduction letter from the university which was presented to each stakeholder so as to be allowed to collect the necessary data from the respondents. The drop and pick method were preferred for questionnaire administration so as to give respondents enough time to give well thought out responses. The researcher booked appointment with respondent organizations at least two days before visiting to administer questionnaires. The researcher personally administered the research instruments to the respondents. This enables the researcher to establish rapport, explain the purpose of the study and the meaning of items that may not be clear (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

## **Data Analysis Techniques**

Data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 21.0). All the questionnaires received were referenced and items in the questionnaire was coded to facilitate data entry. After data cleaning which entailed checking for errors in entry, descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, mean score and standard deviation was estimated for all the quantitative variables and information presented inform of tables. The qualitative data from the open-ended questions were analyzed using conceptual content analysis and presented in prose. Inferential data analysis was done using multiple regression analysis. Multiple regression analysis was used to establish the relations between the independent and dependent variables. Multiple regression was used because it is the procedure that uses two or more independent variables to predict a dependent variable. Since there are four independent variables in this study the multiple regression model generally assumed the following equation;

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \varepsilon$$

Where: Y= PM&E implementation;  $\beta_0$ =constant;  $\beta_1$ ,  $\beta_2$ ,  $\beta_3$  and  $\beta_4$  = regression coefficients;  $X_1$ = Staff competence;  $X_2$ = Communication Systems;  $X_3$ = Project Evaluation Process;  $X_4$ = Management support;  $\varepsilon$ =Error Term

**INFERENTIAL STATISTICS**

Multiple regression analysis was used to test the relationship between the variables where it shows how the dependent variable is influenced by the independent variables. The findings were presented in Table 1, 2 and 3.

**Table 1: Model Summary**

| Model | R     | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|-------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1     | 0.844 | 0.712    | 0.702             | 1.117                      |

From the results, the adjusted R square for the regression of staff competence, communication systems, project evaluation process and management support on implementation of project portfolio management practices Isiolo county was 0.702. This means that staff competence, communication systems, project evaluation process and management support explain 70.2% of the variations in implementation of project portfolio management practices Isiolo county. The

**Table 2: ANOVA Test**

| Model |            | Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Square | F      | Sig. |
|-------|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|--------|------|
|       | Regression | 342.907        | 4   | 85.727      | 66.803 | .000 |
| 1     | Residual   | 138.594        | 108 | 1.283       |        |      |
|       | Total      | 481.501        | 112 |             |        |      |

The ANOVA tests whether the model is fit for data. The study found that the p-value was 0.000 and the calculated F was 66.803. Since p-value of 0.000 was less than 0.05 and calculated F (66.803) was greater than 2.4558, then the overall model was significant and fits the data.

**Table 3: Coefficients of Determination**

| Model                      | Unstandardized Coefficients |            | Standardized Coefficients | t      | Sig. |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|------|
|                            | B                           | Std. Error | Beta                      |        |      |
| (Constant)                 | 1.231                       | 0.112      |                           | 10.991 | .000 |
| Staff competence           | 0.812                       | 0.341      | 0.887                     | 2.381  | .019 |
| Communication Systems      | 0.617                       | 0.246      | 0.745                     | 2.508  | .014 |
| Project Evaluation Process | 0.531                       | 0.054      | 0.586                     | 9.833  | .000 |
| Management support         | 0.788                       | 0.278      | 0.881                     | 2.835  | .005 |

From the findings in Table 3, the equation derived using the regression coefficients was:

$$Y = 1.231 + 0.812X_1 + 0.617X_2 + 0.531X_3 + 0.788X_4$$

Where: Y= Implementation of project portfolio management practices;  $\beta_0$ =constant; X<sub>1</sub>= Staff competence; X<sub>2</sub>= Communication Systems; X<sub>3</sub>= Project Evaluation Process; X<sub>4</sub>= Management support

From the regression equation it was clear that if all variables are kept constant then implementation of project portfolio management practices will be 1.231. The findings presented also show that taking all other independent variables at zero, a unit increase in the staff competence would lead to a 0.812 increase in implementation of project portfolio management practices. Thus, variable was significant since  $0.019 < 0.05$ .

Further it was found that a unit increase in Communication Systems would lead to a 0.617 increase in implementation of project portfolio management practices. Thus, variable was significant since  $0.014 < 0.05$ . Moreover, the findings show that a unit increase in Project Evaluation Process would lead to significant 0.774 increase in implementation of project portfolio management practices since p-value (0.000) is less than 0.05.

The study also found that a unit increase in management support would lead to a significant 0.733 increase in implementation of project portfolio management practices since p-value (0.005) is less than 0.05. Generally, staff competence had the greatest effect on implementation of project portfolio management practices in Isiolo county followed by management support, then communication systems while project evaluation process had the least effect on the implementation of project portfolio management practices in Isiolo County.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The study concluded that the competence of the staff affects implementation of project portfolio management practices at Isiolo County Government significantly. This was clear since if most of the staff have knowledge on policies guiding project portfolio management and have undergone many trainings as well as being professionally and academically qualified, they would be able to implement the project portfolio management practices. Also, staff experience and technical expertise makes them able to carry out implementation of project portfolio management practices effectively.

The study concluded that communication systems affects implementation of project portfolio management practices at Isiolo County Government significantly. There is a great influence by information base, communication timing and media types on implementation of project portfolio management practices at Isiolo County Government. It's clear that feedback gathering moderately affect implementation of project portfolio management practices at Isiolo County Government.

Further, the study concluded that project evaluation process significantly affects implementation of project portfolio management practices at Isiolo County Government. It was clear that investment evaluation, final product evaluation and corrective actions greatly affect

implementation of project portfolio management practices at Isiolo County Government. Further loss avoidance was found to lowly affect implementation of project portfolio management practices at Isiolo County Government.

Finally, the study concluded that management support affects implementation of project portfolio management practices at Isiolo County Government significantly. It was clear that management support greatly influences implementation of project portfolio management practices. Staff allocation and commitment was further found to greatly affect implementation of project portfolio management practices. Leadership Style also affects implementation of project portfolio management practices moderately and managing societal demands and motivation lowly affect implementation of project portfolio management practices at Isiolo County Government.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings, the study recommends that county governments should train staff on the use of project portfolio management practices in order to enhance the implementation of project portfolio management practices. The institutions should also employ qualified staff and avail them with technical expertise and assist in the implementation of project portfolio management practices. Similarly, the institution should also establish an information and communication technology section with competent staff in order to provide technical support during the implementation of project portfolio management practices.

The study recommends that the project managers should provide the necessary resources and facilities for project management without under budgeting. This will facilitate effective implementation of implementation of project portfolio management practices. The study further recommends that the qualified staff should be recruited and trained on project management. This will give them the skills and knowledge in project management and increase innovativeness among employees.

The management team of County Governments should consider portfolio inventory in their projects. Component identification should take a lead in regard to proposed, delayed and ongoing projects. The management team should also establish strong project categorization which is used to match organizational resources.

In addition, projects evaluation should be done to determine optimal mix as well as to determine resource required for the project. In relation to portfolio analysis the study recommends that the management team should always perform Portfolio analysis to ensure good portfolio balance that will enable the County to achieve growth objectives.

The study further recommends that in order to facilitate time planning management team should establish proper portfolio planning. This will result in to organizational stability and flexibility. The study also recommends that the management team should prioritize components selection



based on evaluation scores. The study also recommends that County Government should aim to have a strong portfolio tracking which will enhance process of communicating changes once they are identified and approved. Portfolio tracking implemented in the institution should ensure that non-viable projects are identified and removed from the portfolio.

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.

The study recommends that communication should flow freely both upward and downward. Emails, status meeting and verbal communication should be frequently used. In case of technical projects emails should be used in order to give the respondent time to think before replying.

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