INFLUENCE OF STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATION ON SUSTAINABILITY OF SCPS IN TVETS IN WESTERN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Communication is a key component across all factors of their project implementation profile and often seen as lubricant that keeps everything working properly (Eskerod & Jepsen, 2013. The study therefore ascertained the influence of stakeholder communication on sustainability of SCPs in TVETs in western Kenya. This research used descriptive research design which is mainly survey, cross sectional, and correlational. The target population for this study was 12,585 stakeholders as detailed, from the 63 accredited TVETs in Western Kenya. A sample of 375 was deemed fit for the study. The questionnaire was used to collect primary data. Quantitative information was analyzed using both inferential and descriptive statistics. That stakeholder communication has a statistically significant contribution to sustainability of SCPs in TVETs, since a unit change in stakeholder communication is likely to result in the sustainability of SCPs in TVETs in western Kenya by 58.3%. The study recommends that Stakeholders should know what their tasks are, or how to accomplish them and to monitor project progress. It is essential that the project stakeholders know what is expected of them; what they have to do, when they have to do it, and what budget and time constraints and quality specification they are working towards in order to guarantee sustainability of SCPs.

Key Words: *stakeholder communication, knowledge sharing*

INTRODUCTION

This is the process of developing appropriate management strategies to effectively engage stakeholders throughout the lifecycle of the project, premised on the analysis of their needs, interests and potential impact on project success. The key benefit of this process is that it provides a clear and actionable plan of interacting with project stakeholders to support the project's interests (PMI, 2008).

Communication is a key component across all factors of their project implementation profile and often seen as lubricant that keeps everything working properly (Eskerod & Jepsen, 2013). It is therefore essential within the project team, between the team and the rest of the organization, and with the client (Mithas et al., 2011). If stakeholders are not sure of their allocated tasks, how to accomplish them, the entire project will cease (Hwang & Ng, 2013). This is supported by Meredith and Mantel (2011) who add that if one does not know what the tasks of project stakeholders then he/she will be unable to monitor the progress of the project.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Globally, 93% sustainability issues like stakeholder management were critical to the future success of their business as documented by UNGCA; in Asia Pacific, the figure was as high as 98%, while 97% in Africa (Forstater et al., 2010). A similar study done by IEG of the World Bank indicates that in 2010 alone, 39 % of all World Bank projects were unsuccessful, and in Africa alone, the failure rate was over 50 percent (Ika, 2012). Specifically, in Kenya, 79.2 % of the projects initiated exhibited some form of failure between the year 2000 and 2011 and stakeholder participation is also enlisted as a major cause (Nyika, 2012). Prior studies have generally found a positive relationship between stakeholder management process and sustainability of projects (Diba, 2011). However, none has focused on knowledge sharing as having a moderating effect on this relationship. There are also studies where such a relationship has not been found (Wambugu, 2013). The study therefore ascertained the influence of stakeholder communication on sustainability of SCPs in TVETs in western Kenya

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To ascertain the influence of stakeholder communication on sustainability of SCPs in TVETs in western Kenya
2. To establish the moderating effect of knowledge sharing on sustainability of SCPs in TVETs in western Kenya

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

H_{01}: Stakeholder communication has no significant influence on sustainability of SCPs in TVETs in western Kenya.

H_{02}: Knowledge sharing has no moderating effect of on sustainability of SCPs in TVETs in western Kenya

LITERATURE REVIEW

Maintaining open, accurate and regular channels of communication within the different levels of the project stakeholders and staff is vital to ensuring smooth and efficient flow of instructions from initiators of projects to the beneficiaries and sufficient warning of changes and risks to enable preparation and early assessment (Binder, 2016). It is necessary that the project stakeholders know their expectations; tasks, time frame of activities, quality specification, what budgetand time constraints they are working towards (Anantatmula, 2010). Turner (2016) states that an effective communication plan enables team development since, proper communication actually gives the reason for the project team to work together, conceptualise tasks and objectives to be completed. According to him, better communication ensures better performance.

Coombs (2010) equally states, effective communication makes it easier to update stakeholders. Finally, effective communication saves on creation of necessary project documentation by undertaking effective communication steps from the time the project starts; there will be reduction in project documentation.

Companies can not only initiate appropriate stakeholder attitudes and acceptable support behaviors like seeking employment, purchase, and company investment, but also, build corporate image, enhance stakeholders' advocacy behaviors and strengthen stakeholder–company relationships by engaging in CSR initiatives, (Du et al., 2010). Based on the information contained in the communication plan and stakeholder analysis register, the project Manager is responsible for engaging stakeholders throughout the project's lifecycle (Eskerod & Jepsen, 2013). This study links such an analysis to the sustainability of SCPs initiated to stakeholders' defined roles, proximity and urgency to address emergent issues as documented by Preble, (2005).

A study by Heravi, Coffey and Trigunarsyah (2015) is limited to stakeholder involvement level in the planning phase of projects and only utilize the perceptions of only four stakeholder groups. Shah and Naqvi (2014), introduce role clarity as a moderator in stakeholder relationship. Fageha, and Aibinu (2013) come up with a research that guides project managers and investors find the best stakeholder involvement that helps to optimize project scope definition. Whereas these studies are fundamental to defining aspects of project management, they do not link them to sustainability.

A study by Ditlev Simonsen and Midttun (2011) identify branding, stakeholders and value maximization to be key motivators of sustainability. The same thought is read from Kibera (2013) yet these studies do not categorize the nature of participation and the subsequent levels of stakeholder involvement. Whereas Majava and Haapasalo (2015) suggest a need for good internal co-operation and systematic way of working between product management, research and development, and other stakeholders, the research just like others does not categorize external recipients as stakeholders.

MATERIALS AND RESEARCH METHODS

This research used descriptive research design which is mainly survey, cross sectional, and correlational. The target population for this study was 12,585 stakeholders as detailed, from the 63 accredited TVETs in Western Kenya. Western Kenya consists of counties formed from the previous Western Province. Since the population size was about 12,585 and the research desired 95% confidence and 5% sampling error, a sample size of 375 was deemed appropriate since it lies between 370 and 375 which correspond to 10,000 and 15,000 sizes of the universe. The questionnaire was the ideal instrument which was used for collecting the data. Secondary data from the sampled TVETs was collected on different SCPs initiated in the institution, specific functions and sustainability issues using Document analysis form for content analysis.

Quantitative information was analyzed using both inferential and descriptive statistics. Regression model fitness was estimated using coefficient of determination which helped to explain how closely the predictor variable explains the variations in the dependent variable. To test the significance of each individual predictor and make conclusion on whether to reject or accept the null hypotheses, the P value was used. The level of significance of 5% was used as a benchmark. If the P value is less than 0.05 at 5% significance level, reject the null hypotheses and accept the alternative and vice versa (Kothari, 2014). This study applied the following hypotheses generated from the model:

H_{01}: Stakeholder communication has no significant influence on sustainability of SCPs in TVETs in western Kenya.

Sustainability of SCPs = *f* (Stakeholder communication + random error)

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_0 X_0 + \varepsilon$$

To address the research hypothesis, the study will check whether the regression coefficient of stakeholder communication (β_0) is positive (+) and significant (p values of ‹ 0.05) in line with theory and study expectations.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Respondents were requested to rate various aspects of stakeholder communication, according to the findings 4.7 ,31% of the respondents disagreed that all SCPs in the colleges had a communication plan that is made known to all stakeholders while 36% of respondents were uncertain if, information sort for in SCPs helped adjust and respond to problem areas. 44% of the respondents agreed that information shared minimizes stakeholder resistance throughout the life of the project. 33% of the respondents were uncertain as to whether stakeholders clearly understood the project goals, objectives, benefits and risks. It was evident that project teams receive feedback for any communication made as 42% of the respondents agreed that it happened. 26% of the respondents were not sure that all SCPs in the colleges had a communication plan that helps engage the stakeholders throughout the project cycle. Equally, 30% of the respondents generally disagreed that the colleges had project issues log used to address stakeholders' concerns.50% of the respondents disagreed that stakeholders' management risks were captured and managed in all the projects initiated. 36% of the respondents disagreed that these risks were documented in all projects initiated. 35% of the respondents were uncertain as to whether communication among the stakeholders had been fast and efficient throughout the project cycle. On average, the level of effectiveness in stakeholder Communication about Social Corporate Projects (SCPs) in TVETs in western region of Kenya was at approximately 61% [Mean= 3.0569, Std. Dev = 0.87784]; this indicated that the level of effectiveness in

communication to stakeholders on Social Corporate Projects in TVETs in western region of Kenya was partially effective. Give explanation for the findings above (i.e. what does it imply about TVET programmes in western region in terms of stakeholder communication).

Inferential Statistics

Regression model fitness was estimated using coefficient of determination which helped to explain how closely the predictor variable explains the variations in the dependent variable. To test the significance of each individual predictor and make conclusion on whether to reject or accept the null hypotheses, the P value was used. The level of significance of 5% was used as a benchmark. If the P value is less than 0.05 at 5% significance level, reject the null hypotheses and accept the alternative and vice versa (Kothari, 2014). The hypothesis of the study sought to assess the significance of the causal and effect relationship between Stakeholder Communication and Sustainability of SCPs in TVETs in Western Kenya. The hypothesis was:

H_{02}: Stakeholder Communication has no significant influence on the sustainability of SCPs in TVETs in western Kenya

To test the above second objective, the study adopted the approach of Simple Linear Regression analysis and the findings were as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.583[a]	.340	.338	.53753

a. Predictors: (Constant), Stakeholder Communication

Table 2: ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	51.977	1	51.977	179.892	.000[b]
	Residual	100.838	349	.289		
	Total	152.816	350			

a. Dependent Variable: Stakeholder Communication
b. Predictors: (Constant), Sustainability of SCPs

Table 3: Coefficients[a]

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		β	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2.053	.104		19.723	.000
	Stakeholder Communication	.439	.033	.583	13.412	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Sustainability of SCPs

The findings of ANOVA as shown in Table 2 indicates that the Simple Linear Regression model was a good fit to our data [F (1, 349) = 179.892, P = 0.000 < 0.05]. The model (Stakeholder Communication) was able to explain 33.8% of the variation in the sustainability of SCPs in TVETs in western Kenya (Adjusted R Square = 0.338). The coefficients as shown in Table 4.22 indicates that Stakeholder Communication had a statistically significantly contribution in the prediction of the sustainability of SCPs in TVETs in western Kenya, (β = 0.439, *t* = 13.412, *p=0.00 <0.05*); we therefore reject the null hypothesis and conclude that Stakeholder Communication had a significant influence on sustainability of SCPs in TVETs in western Kenya.

Stakeholder Communication had a positive standardized beta coefficient = 0.583 in the coefficients results of Table 3; an indication that a Unit improvement in the Stakeholder Communication is likely to result to an improvement in the sustainability of SCPs in TVETs in western Kenya by 58.3%. The Simple Linear Regression model to predict sustainability of SCPs in TVETs in western Kenya using results of Stakeholder Communication was as follows:

Sustainability of SCPs = 2.053 + 0.439 Stakeholder Communication

The findings affirm that maintaining open, regular and accurate channels of communication with all levels of project staff and stakeholders is vital to ensuring the smooth flow of instructions from initiators of projects to the recipients and sufficient warning of risks and changes to enable early assessment and preparation as complimented by Binder (2016). The findings of Anantatmula (2010) show that it is essential that the project stakeholders know what is expected of them; what they have to do, when they have to do it, and what budget and time constraints and quality specification they are working towards. The findings compliment research done by Turner (2016) which documents that an effective communication plan will facilitate team development in that proper communication actually provides the basis for the project team to work together and understand objectives and tasks to be completed.

The null hypothesis used to test the moderation effect of knowledge sharing on the relationship between stakeholder communication and sustainability of SCPs was:

H_{02}: Knowledge Sharing has no significant moderation effect on the relationship between Stakeholder Communication and Sustainability of SCPs in TVETs in western Kenya

The moderation analysis results using Hierarchical Linear Regression were as shown in Table 4, where the model 2 results (where both Stakeholder Communication and Interaction term are added in the model at the same time) are compared to the model 1 results for which only Stakeholder Identification had been included in the model as shown in Table 4. From the findings in Table 4, the Interaction Effect had a significant influence on the Sustainability of SCPs in TVETs in Western Kenya [*R^2 change = .042, F-change =23.563,* ß *= -0.151, t = -4.854 p=0.00<0.05*]: indicating that Knowledge Sharing had a significant moderation effect on the relationship between Stakeholder Communication and Sustainability of SCPs in TVETs in

Western Kenya. To predict Sustainability of SCPs in TVETs in Western Kenya, given level of Stakeholder Communication in the presence of Knowledge Sharing as moderator is given;

Sustainability of SCPs = 3.463 + 0.368 Stakeholder Communication – 0.151 IE

Where: **IE** = Interaction Effect

Table 4: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
2	.624[b]	.389	.385	.52057	.042	23.563	1	343	.000

Table 5: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
2	Regression	59.126	2	29.563	109.091	.000[c]
	Residual	92.950	343	.271		
	Total	152.076	345			

Table 6: Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients ß	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
2	(Constant)	3.463	.031		111.935	.000
	Stakeholder Communication	.368	.029	.549	12.772	.000
	Interaction Effect (IE)	-.151	.031	-.209	-4.854	.000

To examine the moderation effect of Knowledge Sharing on the relationship between Stakeholder Communication and Sustainability of SCPs in TVETs in Western Kenya, an interaction plot was plotted as shown in Figure 1.

Through examination of the interaction plot in Figure 1, the study revealed that Knowledge Sharing demonstrated an enhancing moderation effect on the relationship between Stakeholder Communication and Sustainability of SCPs in TVETs in Western Kenya. When the level of Knowledge Sharing is low, Stakeholder Communication seem to have a higher influence on the Sustainability of SCPs in TVETs in Western Kenya compared to moderate and low levels of Knowledge Sharing. When the level of Knowledge Sharing is moderate, Stakeholder Communication seem to have a higher influence on the Sustainability of SCPs in TVETs in Western Kenya compared to low levels of Knowledge Sharing. However, the moderation effect seems to be reducing as the level of stakeholder communication improves as shown in Figure 4.1

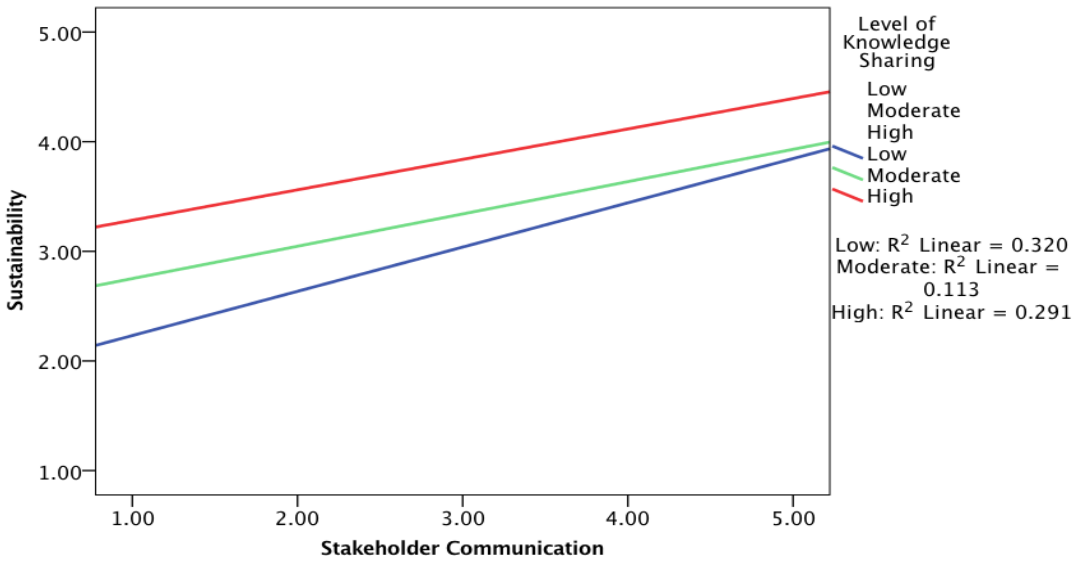

Figure 1: Interaction plot of Knowledge Sharing and Stakeholder Communication

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

That stakeholder communication has a statistically significant contribution to sustainability of SCPs in TVETs, since a unit change in stakeholder communication is likely to result in the sustainability of SCPs in TVETs in western Kenya by 58.3%. That the role clarity, urgency, proximity are the main constructs of stakeholder communication that explain for the changes observed in the sustainability of SCPs in TVETs in Kenya.

CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that Stakeholder Communication did not have a significant partial influence in predicting the sustainability of SCPs; an indication that there was a breakdown in the Stakeholder Management Process thus retarding the sustainability of the SCPs in the TVETs in Western Kenya. Moderating influence of knowledge sharing was found to be significant when stakeholder communication was used to predict Sustainability of SCPs in TVETs of Western Kenya.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Stakeholder Communication should be a key component of project implementation and essential within the project team, between the team and the rest of the organization, and with the beneficiaries. Stakeholders should know what their tasks are, or how to accomplish them and to monitor project progress. It is essential that the project stakeholders know what is expected of them; what they have to do, when they have to do it, and what budget and time constraints and quality specification they are working towards in order to guarantee sustainability of SCPs.

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