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Project Planning Practices and Implementation of National Government Constituency Development Funded Projects in Kiambu County, Kenya

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Abstract

The main objective of this study was to examine the influence of project planning practices on the implementation of NG-CDF projects in Kiambu County, Kenya. Specifically, the study sought to establish the influence of project team competency and the influence of stakeholder engagement on the implementation of NG-CDF projects in Kiambu County, Kenya. This study adopted a descriptive survey research design, allowing for an in-depth understanding of people's knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding the issue under investigation. The target population included NG-CDF project managers, NG-CDF committee members, Ward Administrators, and project beneficiaries in the three constituencies. A total of 221 respondents, including 30 NG-CDF project managers, 24 NG-CDF committee members, 17 Ward Administrators and 150 project beneficiaries, formed the unit of analysis. A sample of 143 was used as obtained through Slovin's (1960) formula. The inferential results showed that stakeholder engagement was the strongest predictor ($B = 0.551$, $\beta = 0.611$, $t = 6.284$, $p < .001$), while project team competency ($B = 0.240$, $\beta = 0.261$, $t = 5.286$, $p < .001$). These findings highlight the central role of stakeholder engagement and developing competent project teams in improving the likelihood of successful NG-CDF project implementation in Kiambu County. The study concludes that project planning practices are significant in the implementation of NGCDF projects in Kiambu County. The study recommends strengthening of the capacity of project teams at the constituency level. NG-CDF committees should invest in regular training programs focused on technical skills, project management, procurement procedures, and decision-making. Stakeholder engagement should be treated as a central planning priority requirement. Project planning practices, project team competency, stakeholder engagement, implementation of NG-CDF projects.

Keywords: *Project Planning Practices, Implementation National Government Constituency, Development Funded, Projects*

1.0 Background of The Study

The successful implementation of development projects is often contingent upon the effectiveness of project planning practices. The National Government Constituencies Fund (NG-CDF) was established in Kenya to promote equitable development and to address socio-economic disparities at the grassroots level. However, despite the availability of funds, many projects still face challenges related to delays, cost overruns and quality issues. The principles of project management such as planning, execution, monitoring, and evaluation, are essential for the sufficient use of NG-CDF resources. Studies by scholars such as Kerzner (2022) and Meredith et al. (2021) emphasized the importance of robust project planning practices in enhancing project success rates. According to Kerzner (2022), effective project planning practices can significantly mitigate risks and ensure that projects are completed on time and within budget. Similarly, Meredith et al. (2021) argued that systematic project planning practices are crucial for aligning project goals with organizational objectives, thereby enhancing overall project performance.

Internationally, countries like Jamaica, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Nepal, and India have adopted Constituency Development Funds (CDFs) (Awofeso & Irabor, 2020). A study in Solomon Islands by Futaiasi (2023) on the governance of CDFs suggested that more collaboration between state actors, non-state actors, and international actors in the regulation and governance of CDFs may strengthen the regulatory system around CDFs. In the Philippines, the evolution from Pork barrel funds to Countrywide Development Fund aimed at addressing unequal fund allocation issues. In Africa, the implementation of projects financed by constituency development has served as a focal point for assessing the application of project planning. In Tanzania, the Constituencies Development Catalyst Fund (CDCF) was established in 2009 to enhance parliamentary functionality by overseeing grassroots projects. A study in Zambia by Chulu et al. (2021) reported that CDFs have not yet had the desired effect, as the intended beneficiaries are not well aware of their rights to full participation. Additionally, the issues of transparency and stakeholder involvement have not yet been adequately addressed.

In Kenya, the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) allocates at least 2.5% of the government's ordinary revenue to each of the 290 constituencies in the country. With the local Member of Parliament serving as an ex officio member, the fund is overseen by committees and a board at the constituency and national levels, respectively. In addition to addressing poverty and inequality, the fund was designed to bring development closer to the people and establish financial independence for the legislative arm of the government from the executive (National Council for Law Reporting, 2023). A study conducted in Kenya by Gathoni and Ngugi (2016) reported that NG-CDF projects are highly influenced by the project manager's planning and management skills. The authors recommended that enhancing planning and managerial abilities will help projects funded by the NG-CDF function efficiently. Additionally, the authors contended that in order to ensure that the projects are carried out efficiently, competent project managers are required. Project managers ought to be involved in the planning, development, and execution of NG-CDF initiatives and they should have regular access to planning and management training so they can learn new skills.

Kiambu County is located in proximity to Nairobi County. Kiambu County has 12 constituencies: Gatundu North, Gatundu South, Githunguri, Juja, Kabete, Kiambaa, Kiambu, Kikuyu, Lari, Limuru, Thika Town, and Ruiru. The county boasts the highest population in Kenya (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2019). Kiambu County is a major beneficiary of NG-CDF allocations across its constituencies. The resources are directed towards the provision of bursaries to needy students, construction and rehabilitation of schools, streetlighting projects,

improvement of health facilities, facilitation of sporting activities, construction of police posts and administrative offices such as chiefs' camps, among others.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Despite Kenya's continued investment in grassroots development through the NG-CDF, a significant number of projects remain stalled, incomplete, or poorly executed. In public development projects, the application of project planning practices is crucial, as they provide a structured approach to defining project requirements, outlining the scope, allocating resources, scheduling the project, monitoring progress, and adapting to changes that may arise during implementation (Kitungo & Musembi, 2024; Kerzner, 2022; PMI, 2021). In Kiambu County, evidence shows that many NG-CDF-funded initiatives fail to reach completion or deliver the expected benefits, even after funds are allocated and disbursed. In Kikuyu Constituency, Kiambu County, 62.9% of projects were incomplete, and 58% had budget and cost overruns due to inadequate funding, disbursement delays, and price fluctuations, a major obstacle to cost control and project completion (OAG, 2023a). Gathoni and Ngugi (2016) contended that, to ensure that NG-CDF projects are carried out efficiently, competent project managers are required. This study aims to investigate how project planning practices influence the implementation of NG-CDF projects in Kiambu County.

1.2 Objective of The Study

The main objective of this study was to examine the influence of project planning practices on the implementation of NG-CDF projects in Kiambu County, Kenya.

Specifically, the study sought:

- i. To establish the influence of project team competency on the implementation of NG-CDF projects in Kiambu County, Kenya.
- ii. To examine the influence of stakeholder engagement on the implementation of NG-CDF projects in Kiambu County, Kenya.

2.0 Literature Review

The section presents the theoretical, empirical review and the conceptual framework.

2.1 Theoretical Review

This study is founded on competency and stakeholder theories. The primary proponents of the competency theory, which was developed in the 1980s, were McClelland and McBer. According to the theory, competence is regarded as the ability to communicate, employ mediation strategies and exhibit receptive behavior. Managerial skills include; interpersonal skills, practical skills and theoretical skills. According to McClelland, tests should be calculated in relation to changes in what individuals have already learned. According to competency theory, it is hard, if not impractical, to identify traits that are unchangeable via training and experience. Hence, if it is not possible to find individuals with competencies that are desirable, training can be done for development. This theory is applicable as it focuses on the importance of project managers with desirable skills for planning NG-CDF projects.

The main proponent of stakeholder theory is regarded as Richard Edward Freeman in the year 1984. The theory posits that organizations must consider the interests and influences of all parties affected by their operations. Stakeholder theory underscores the importance of identifying and engaging with a wide array of stakeholders, including government officials, community members, project beneficiaries, local leaders, and contractors. By involving these diverse groups in the project planning process, the likelihood of successful project implementation increases. This is because stakeholder participation ensures that the diverse

interests, needs, and concerns of all parties are addressed, leading to enhanced project ownership and support. The theory adopts that individuals' inclusion in project work assists in the attainment of the goals, objectives and needs of the impacted community. By engaging stakeholders, project managers can ensure the management of their expectations, reduction of conflicts, and the optimization of teamwork (Sanyaolu et al., 2023). If engagement of stakeholders is given a priority in NG-CDF projects in Kiambu County the projects will achieve greater effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability, ultimately leading to more significant community development outcomes.

2.2 Project Team Competency

According to Armstrong and Taylor (2023), competency is the capacity of a person, group or organization to gather and integrate resources in order to carry out an action effectively. Oh and Choi (2020) outline one of the foundational frameworks for understanding project team competency. They suggest that competencies in project management are multifaceted, involving technical skills, contextual knowledge, and behavioral attributes. Their research emphasized that successful project managers exhibit a balance of these competencies, tailored to the specific demands of the project at hand. For instance, technical skills are crucial for understanding and planning the project scope, while contextual knowledge helps in navigating the project's environment, including stakeholder dynamics. In developing countries like Kenya, the role of project team competency becomes even more pronounced due to the unique challenges present. According to Irfan *et al.* (2021), project managers in developing countries often face constraints such as limited resources, inadequate infrastructure, and regulatory hurdles. Project teams with higher competency levels are better equipped to mitigate these challenges, leading to well-planned and successful projects. This is particularly relevant for NG-CDF projects, which aim to address local development needs through efficient resource utilization and community involvement. Kerzner (2018) argued that ongoing training programs help project teams stay updated with the latest methodologies and best practices in project management.

2.3 Stakeholder Engagement

The successful implementation of development initiatives is greatly influenced by stakeholder engagement in project planning, which is a crucial element of efficient management of projects. The involvement of stakeholders in project planning is anchored in various theoretical perspectives. Arnstein's (1969) Ladder of Citizen Participation categorizes levels of stakeholder involvement, ranging from non-participation to full citizen control. This framework emphasizes that genuine participation entails stakeholders having substantial influence over decision-making processes. Similarly, Freeman's (1984) Stakeholder Theory posits that all stakeholders' interests should be considered and balanced to achieve organizational objectives. According to Ndungu and Karugu (2019), participatory development is effective in enhancing project outcomes, as it leverages local knowledge and fosters community ownership. According to their research, initiatives that involve the community more are typically more sustainable and more suited to the requirements of the beneficiaries. Nyabera (2015) discovered that participation of stakeholders had a major impact on project delivery in Kenya. The study showed that including stakeholders at every stage of the project lifecycle, from planning to evaluation, improves accountability, transparency, and eventually the performance of the project. In Embu County, Karimi and Mungai (2024) conducted a study on the participation of stakeholders and the execution of rural electrification projects and reported that active involvement of the community improved project results. By ensuring that projects reflect the actual requirements of the community, stakeholder engagement promotes a feeling of responsibility and dedication towards the project's success.

2.4 Project Implementation

Project implementation is a critical phase in the project management lifecycle, encompassing the execution of planned activities to achieve project objectives (PMI, 2021). Successful implementation is vital for realizing the intended project benefits. Project implementation is influenced by some of the following factors: project planning, stakeholder involvement, M&E, project leadership, team competence, and communication (Abdi Farah, 2020; Gaibo & Mbugua, 2019; Kerzner, 2022; Oh & Choi, 2020). Effective project planning and scheduling are foundational to successful project implementation. According to Kerzner (2022), comprehensive planning helps in identifying potential risks and allocating resources efficiently. Clear timelines and milestones ensure that project activities are systematically executed, minimizing delays and cost overruns. Engaging stakeholders and maintaining open communication channels are essential for aligning project goals with stakeholder expectations. According to Masika (2020), active stakeholder participation enhances transparency and project ownership and thus facilitates smoother implementation. Regular updates and feedback mechanisms help in addressing concerns promptly and keeping the project moving forward. Critical insights into the performance and progress of a project are obtained through ongoing monitoring and evaluation (M&E). Effective M&E frameworks, as mentioned by Okafor (2021), allow project managers to recognize deviations from the plan and implement corrective actions in a timely manner.

2.5 Empirical Review

The section presents the empirical studies for each objective.

2.5.1 Project Team Competency and Implementation of Projects

A study by Gathoni and Ngugi (2016) recognized that the success of development projects was affected by the skills of managers. The study identified that staff had inadequate planning and managerial capabilities to assure effectiveness and competency in implementing projects. Furthermore, staff members lacked the skills needed to carry out creative endeavors that would enhance project execution. As a result, the study suggested that skilled and capable project managers are necessary for the projects to be carried out successfully. The study found that regular training is necessary for project managers to advance their skills and proficiency in project implementation. Therefore, to ensure that projects are implemented effectively, project managers' training and other stakeholders is an important aspect that cannot be underestimated. According to a study conducted by Carbone and Gholston (2014), a limited number of organizations engage in the professional development process of their project managers. According to the findings, 41% of the projected managers indicated that their organizations prepared them for their roles through training. Six out of seven organizations that participated in the study had an authorized project manager title despite the fact that only three organizations had distinct project manager roles and responsibilities. According to another study by Lamprou and Vagona (2018), technical skills are critical in the planning and execution phases of a project. In the Middle East, Gunduz and Yahya (2018) reported that implementing teams with strong technical competencies achieve high project success rates.

2.5.2 Stakeholder Engagement and Implementation of Projects

Effective stakeholder engagement during project planning can significantly enhance project implementation by ensuring that the needs and expectations of all parties are considered. According to Waweru (2023), active involvement of stakeholders throughout the project lifecycle leads to more effective and sustainable outcomes. Their research highlighted that when stakeholders, including community members, government officials, and other relevant parties, are engaged from the planning to the execution phases, projects are more likely to meet their

objectives and deliver tangible benefits. Public projects, such as those funded by the national and county governments, often require a higher degree of stakeholder engagement due to their impact on local communities.

A study by Kimanzi and Ngugi (2022) on projects in Kitui County found that project implementation is positively associated with stakeholder involvement. The study observed that a trustworthy environment that values stakeholders’ perspectives enhance the success of projects providing a proof of devoted stakeholders’ support for the project enhances its performance. According to the study, project team members should be accountable to project stakeholders so as to improve success. As per the National Government Constituencies Development Fund Act of 2023, projects were required under this Act to be austere communal. Gathoni & Ngugi (2016) in their research established that community involvement formed an important component towards realization of the success of projects. Additionally, the authors found that the contribution of stakeholders in engagements to deliberate on project matters was insignificant and that stakeholders were hardly provided with status updates in relation to the project.

2.6 Conceptual Framework

Conceptual framework helps give a glance about the relationship between the independent variables (project team competency and stakeholder engagement) and the dependent variable (implementation of NG-CDF projects). Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework.

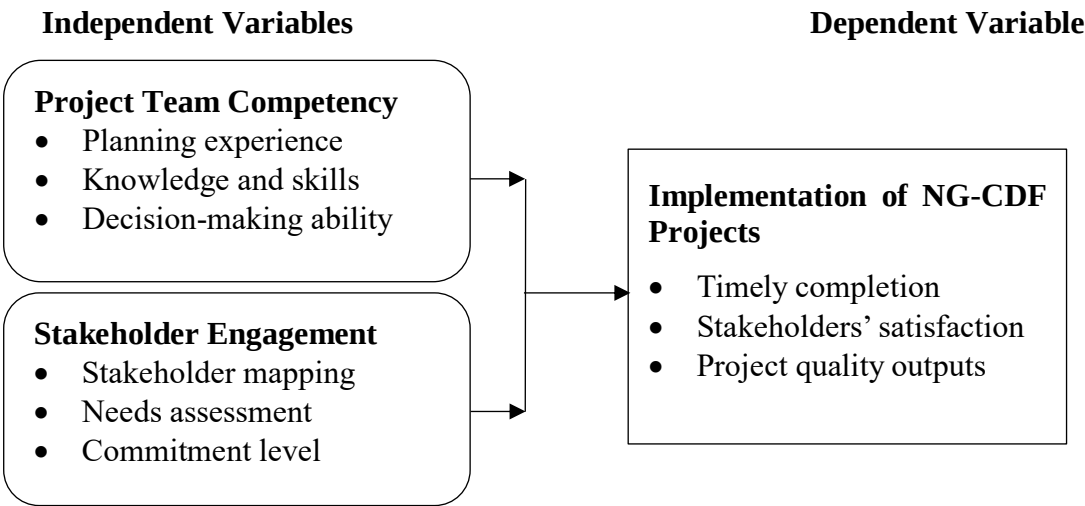


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

3.0 Research Methodology

A descriptive research design was employed for this study, allowing for an in-depth understanding of people’s knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding the issue under investigation. This study focused on NG-CDF projects initiated in the 2019/2020 to 2023/2024 financial years in Ruiru, Juja, and Kiambu constituencies as its unit of analysis. These include school projects, police post projects, and chiefs’ camp projects. The target population included NG-CDF project managers, NG-CDF committee members, Ward Administrators, and project beneficiaries in the three constituencies. The unit of observation in this study consisted of 30 NG-CDF project managers, 24 NG-CDF committee members, 17 Ward Administrators and 150 project beneficiaries. A total of 212 respondents will be targeted in this study. This study employed a stratified sampling method under four strata: NG-CDF project managers, NG-CDF committee members, Ward Administrators, and project beneficiaries. Simple random sampling was applied within each stratum since these strata share similar characteristics, and the

probability of being chosen is equal. The sample size, representing a sub-set of the total population (212), was 143 respondents drawn from the target population using Slovin's Formula (1960) since the target population is below 1000 respondents. Primary data was collected by administering open and closed-ended questionnaires to the respondents. Descriptive and inferential statistics was adopted for the study. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for analysis.

4.0 Research Findings, Analysis and Discussion

The questionnaire was distributed to a sample size of 143 respondents in the Kiambu County for the final study. About 125 questionnaires were returned; hence, the response rate was 87.5% excellent for project management surveys targeting public sector stakeholders like those in NG-CDF initiatives.

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize key variables, including project team competency, stakeholder engagement, and NG-CDF project implementation. This provides a clear picture of how these variables are measured and helps to detect any unusual patterns or extreme values before proceeding to inferential analysis.

4.1.1 Project Team Competency

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics for project team competency, summarizing respondents' perceptions across eight items.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Project Team Competency

Project Team Competency Items	SD %	D %	N %	A %	SA %	Mean	St. dev
The project team has planning experience in similar projects.	19.2	21.6	14.4	28.8	16	3.00	1.188
The project team has a track record in planning	16.8	11.2	17.6	32.8	21.6	3.31	1.276
Previous lessons learned are applied to current planning.	12	17.6	18.4	14.4	37.6	3.48	1.245
The team members possess the technical skills for effective project planning.	3.2	18.4	24.8	32.8	20.8	3.50	1.111
The project team has the necessary problem-solving skills to adapt plans	0	8	21.6	37.6	32.8	3.95	0.932
The project team members are well trained in project planning.	12	7.2	15.2	35.2	30.4	3.65	1.209
The project team makes timely and effective planning decisions.	8	17.6	22.4	33.6	18.4	3.37	1.201
The project team is proficient in using project planning software.	2.4	13.6	23.2	35.2	25.6	3.68	1.075
<i>Average Team Competency</i>	9.2	14.4	19.7	31.3	25.4	3.49	1.155

The results indicate that the overall level of project team competency is relatively high, with an average mean of 3.49 on a 5-point scale. This suggests that, on average, respondents agree that the project teams possess the skills and experience necessary for effective project planning. The standard deviation of 1.155 indicates moderate variability in perceptions, meaning that while

most respondents have a positive view of the teams, there is some diversity in opinion. Specifically, the highest-rated aspect is that the project team has the necessary problem-solving skills to adapt plans as required (mean = 3.95, SD = 0.932), with 70.4% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. This shows that respondents particularly value the team's ability to handle unforeseen challenges and make adjustments to project plans when needed. Another strong area is proficiency in using project planning software (mean = 3.68, SD = 1.075) and being well trained in project planning practices (mean = 3.65, SD = 1.209), where over 60% of respondents agree or strongly agree. These findings indicate that the teams are equipped with both technical tools and practical knowledge, which supports effective planning and execution of projects. Items with relatively lower ratings include having previous experience in planning similar projects (mean = 3.00, SD = 1.188) and making timely and effective planning decisions (mean = 3.37, SD = 1.201). In these areas, there is a noticeable portion of respondents of over 40% who were neutral or disagreed, suggesting some room for improvement in applying past experiences and improving decision-making speed.

The descriptive statistics indicate that project teams are competent, technically skilled, and capable of problem-solving, which are essential for successful project planning (Khan & Siddiqui, 2024). However, minor gaps exist in leveraging past project experience and decision-making efficiency, which could be addressed through targeted training or mentoring programs. Armstrong and Taylor (2023) posit that competency is the capacity of a person, group or organization to gather and integrate resources in order to act effectively. However, Irfan et al (2021) postulate that in developing countries, project managers face constraints such as limited resources, inadequate infrastructure, and regulatory hurdles, though project teams with higher competency levels are better equipped to mitigate these challenges, leading to well-planned and successful projects.

4.1.2 Stakeholder Engagement

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics for stakeholder engagement in project planning, summarizing responses across eight items and reporting the mean, standard deviation, and percentage distribution of responses from Strongly Disagree (SD) to Strongly Agree (SA).

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder Engagement Items	SD %	D %	N %	A %	SA %	Mean	St. dev
Stakeholder mapping is done during project planning.	10.4	20	30.4	20	19.2	3.18	1.251
Stakeholders' roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and communicated.	0	30.4	10.4	29.6	29.6	3.58	1.206
Stakeholders are informed about project goals and objectives	10.4	20	20	29.6	20	3.29	1.281
A comprehensive stakeholder needs assessment is conducted in the project	0	19.2	30.4	10.4	40	3.71	1.183
Stakeholders' suggestions and feedback are considered during the planning phase.	30.4	9.6	20.8	19.2	20	2.89	1.219
Stakeholders demonstrate a high level of interest in project planning activities.	20	9.6	20.8	29.6	20	3.20	1.203
Local leaders and community members are supportive in the projects.	0	10.4	20	40	29.6	3.89	0.952
Stakeholders participate in project planning meetings and related discussions.	9.6	20	20	40	10.4	3.22	1.168
<i>Average Stakeholder Engagement</i>	10.1	17.4	21.6	27.3	23.6	3.37	1.183

The results show an average mean of 3.37 with a standard deviation of 1.183, indicating a moderate level of stakeholder engagement overall. This suggests that while stakeholders are involved in project planning, the degree of engagement varies across different aspects and among respondents. Examining individual items, the highest-rated aspect is support from local leaders and community members (mean = 3.89, SD = 0.952), with 69.6% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. This highlights strong community backing for the projects, which is critical for successful implementation. In addition, conducting a comprehensive needs assessment to understand stakeholder priorities received a high mean of 3.71, with 50.4% agreement, indicating that stakeholder needs are actively considered during project design. On the other hand, items related to considering stakeholders' suggestions and feedback during planning had the lowest mean (2.89, SD = 1.219), with 40% of respondents disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. This suggests that while stakeholders are identified and informed, their input may not always influence planning decisions. Consistent participation in planning meetings also scored moderately (mean = 3.22), indicating that stakeholder presence in discussions could be more regular and structured. Other items, such as clarity of roles and responsibilities (mean = 3.58) and informing stakeholders about project goals (mean = 3.29), received moderate agreement, suggesting that communication is fairly effective but could be strengthened further.

The findings indicate that stakeholder engagement is present but uneven. Key achievements include community support and initial involvement in needs assessments, but gaps exist in actively incorporating stakeholder feedback and maintaining consistent participation in planning processes. Masika (2020) posits that stakeholder participation can also boost community members' dedication and project ownership. Stakeholder theory emphasizes on participation to ensure the diverse interests, needs, and concerns of all parties are addressed,

leading to enhanced project ownership and support (Freeman, 1984). For NGCDF projects which benefit the community, their participation is crucial to ensure their interests are met and ownership of the development projects. Stakeholder participation in development projects has been emphasized in previous studies. Otieno (2022) emphasized on participatory budgeting where community members and local officials are involved in financial decision-making for government funded projects. Karimi and Mungai (2024) emphasized on stakeholder engagement to promote a feeling of responsibility and dedication towards the project’s success by ensuring that projects reflect the actual requirements of the community.

4.2 Correlation Analysis

The study employed Pearson correlation to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between the variables before regression analysis was undertaken.

Table 3: Correlation Coefficients

		Project Team Competency	Stakeholder Engagement
Project Implementation	Pearson Correlation	.396**	.833**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
	N	125	125

The relationship was considered significant at a p-value of <0.05. The findings indicate a moderate positive correlation between project team competency and project implementation ($r = 0.396$, $p < .01$). This suggests that projects with more competent teams tend to show better levels of implementation. Stakeholder engagement shows a very strong positive correlation with project implementation ($r = 0.833$, $p < .01$). This indicates that projects where stakeholders are actively involved and engaged are much more likely to be implemented successfully. Kimanzi and Ngugi (2022) in Kitui County found that project implementation is positively associated with stakeholder involvement.

4.3 Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was used to determine how well the independent variables jointly explain variations in project implementation, and to assess the individual contribution of each predictor while holding the others constant. Table 4 presents the regression coefficients showing how project team competency, budgeting, stakeholder engagement, and risk planning individually influence project implementation, while controlling for the effects of the other variables in the model.

Table 4: Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.188	.196		.960	.339
Project Team Competency (X_1)	.240	.045	.261	5.286	.000
Stakeholder Engagement (X_2)	.551	.088	.611	6.284	.000

The regression results show that all the independent variables have a statistically significant and positive influence on project implementation. Among them, stakeholder engagement has the strongest effect, followed by project team competency. These findings suggest that strengthening stakeholder involvement and building competent project teams are key to achieving successful project implementation. The findings are supported by Samo *et al* (2024), Wabwile (2023), and Kitungo and Musembi (2024) who found project planning practices to significantly influence implementation of projects and improved project performance.

The model was fitted using the following regression model equation;

$$\gamma = .188 + .240X_1 + .551X_2 \dots \dots \dots (i)$$

The constant term has a coefficient of 0.188, but it is not statistically significant ($t = 0.960$, $p = .339$). This suggests that when all the independent variables are held at zero, the baseline level of project implementation is not meaningfully different from zero. Project team competency has a positive and statistically significant effect on project implementation ($B = 0.240$, $t = 5.286$, $p < .001$). This means that a unit increase in team competency leads to an increase of 0.240 units in project implementation, holding other factors constant. The standardized beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.261$) indicates that team competency makes a meaningful contribution to explaining project implementation. This finding highlights the importance of having skilled, experienced, and well-coordinated project teams. The findings concurred with previous findings of Khan and Siddiqui (2024) as well as Ayinkamiye and Akimana (2025), who emphasized on the importance of project management skills and project managers' competencies in ensuring the successful implementation of projects. Stakeholder engagement emerged as the strongest predictor in the model with the 1526 and statistically significant effect on project implementation ($B = 0.551$, $t = 6.284$, $p < .001$), with the highest standardized beta ($\beta = 0.611$). This indicates that active involvement, communication, and collaboration with stakeholders substantially improve project implementation outcomes. The strength of this variable suggests that projects benefit greatly when stakeholders are meaningfully engaged throughout the project lifecycle. The findings are in line with previous studies on stakeholder management and implementation of community projects and public projects (Muga & Lwegado, 2025; Samwel et al., 2023).

In addition, evidence from annual reports of the National Government Constituencies Development Fund shows that infrastructure projects consistently take up the largest share of NG-CDF allocations. On average, between 2018 and 2023, infrastructure accounted for about 55–60% of total NG-CDF expenditure nationally. However, implementation performance has been uneven. Auditor-General reports indicate that approximately 30–35% of NG-CDF infrastructure projects experience delays beyond the planned completion period, while about 10–15% stall entirely due to planning-related challenges such as inadequate budgeting, weak risk assessment, and limited stakeholder coordination (The National Assembly of Kenya, 2021). Concerning project team competency, secondary data suggest a strong link between staff skills and project outcomes. A review of county-level project evaluations indicates that constituencies with trained project managers and technical committees recorded completion rates of about 75–80%, compared to less than 60% in areas where project teams lacked formal training in project management (Wambua, 2022; OAG, 2023b). In Kiambu County, internal NG-CDF monitoring reports show that projects supervised by teams with engineering or construction-related backgrounds were completed, on average, three to five months faster than those managed by non-technical teams. Data on stakeholder engagement further highlight its importance in project implementation. Studies on community-driven development projects in Kenya show that projects involving beneficiaries during planning and monitoring stages report fewer disputes and stoppages. For example, projects with active community committees

recorded dispute rates below 5%, while those with minimal stakeholder involvement experienced dispute rates of up to 18%. In Kiambu County, constituency reports indicate that schools and health facilities where local stakeholders were consulted early had smoother implementation and better utilization after completion (The National Assembly of Kenya, 2021).

5.0 Conclusion

The study found that project planning practices are strongly correlated with the implementation of NGCDF projects. The study, therefore, concludes that project planning practices are significant in the implementation of NGCDF projects in Kiambu County. For the first objective, the study found that project team competency significantly influences the implementation of NGCDF projects in Kiambu County. Through planning experience, appropriate knowledge and skills and the ability to make sound decisions, ensures the successful implementation of NGCDF projects in Kiambu County. The study, therefore, concludes that project team competency is significant for implementation of NGCDF projects in Kiambu County. The second objective of the study found that stakeholder engagement significantly influenced the implementation of NGCDF projects in Kiambu County. The study established that through effective stakeholder mapping, needs assessment, and community-level engagement, the implementation of NGCDF projects in Kiambu County. The study concludes that stakeholder engagement is significant for the implementation of NGCDF projects in Kiambu County.

6.0 Recommendation

There is therefore a need to strengthen the capacity of project teams at the constituency level. NG-CDF committees should invest in regular training programs focused on technical skills, project management, procurement procedures, and decision-making. Continuous professional development will help team members stay updated and handle complex project demands more confidently. authorities to ensure consistent compliance. Updating regulatory frameworks dynamically to align with modern construction standards is equally critical. Stakeholder engagement should be treated as a central planning priority rather than a routine requirement. NG-CDF committees should conduct thorough stakeholder mapping at the start of every project to identify key actors, including community leaders, beneficiaries, technical experts, and local administrators. Beyond consultation, stakeholder input should be clearly integrated into final project plans. Consistent communication throughout the project lifecycle will strengthen community ownership, reduce resistance, and improve sustainability after completion.

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