

DETERMINANTS OF EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF ECONOMIC STIMULUS PROJECTS IN OLKALOU CONSTITUENCY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Economic Stimulus refers to the use of monetary policy to stimulate the economy. Various projects were identified for implementation under the ESP initiative various sectors of the economy across the country including education, public health, local government, industrialization and provincial administration offices. Studies indicate that implementation of ESP initiatives in Kenya has been very low. The current study therefore attempted to establish the factors influencing effective implementation of ESP projects in Olkalou Constituency, Kenya. The study employed a descriptive design using quantitative approaches. The target population was all 130 project beneficiaries, management committees and constituency planning and development officers in all ESP projects. The study used closed ended questionnaires to collect data. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences Version 23 was used to analyze the data and the results obtained was presented using tables. The R^2 value obtained of 0.6388 implies that 63.88% of the variations in the effective implementation of ESP projects can be explained by the variations in independent variables. This therefore means that other factors not studied in this study contribute 36.12% of effective implementation of ESP projects. It was also established that project financing had the greatest influence on effective implementation of ESP projects while management skills had the least influence on effective implementation of ESP projects. The study recommends that stakeholders should enhance usage of funds, that the funds provided should be disbursed on time and that there should be effective monitoring and evaluation of fund utilization in order to enhance effective implementation of ESP projects.

KEYWORDS: Financing, Planning, Community Participation, Economic Stimulus

INTRODUCTION

Economic Stimulus has been a subject of scrutiny in the recent years following the wave of economic recessions in both developed and developing nations of the world. Various governments of the world have in the past used tactics such as lowering interest rates, increasing government spending and quantitative easing to stabilize the economy (Greenspan, 2009). In Kenya, it was initiated to boost economic growth and lead the Kenyan economy out of a recession situation brought about by economic slowdown. Its aim was to jumpstart the Kenyan economy towards long term growth and development, after the 2007-2008 Post Election Violence that affected the Kenyan economy, prolonged drought, a rally in oil and prices and the effects of the global economic crises. According to Shikha (2010), the global economy, which has been showing nascent recovery, is facing renewed threats from events in Europe coupled with geopolitical uncertainties affecting oil production in the Middle East. The study further asserted that global monetary authorities are continuing to fund programs designed to support economic activity through a variety of channels, including borrowing-to-buy, refinancing to bolster cash flows, and a shift into risk assets. The key objectives of economic stimulus were to boost

the country's economic recovery, invest in long-term solutions to the challenges of food security, expand economic opportunities in rural areas for employment creation, improve infrastructure, quality of education and health care for all Kenyans, invest in the conservation of the environment, expand access to and build the ICT capacity of the Kenyan people and to promote regional development for equity and social stability. Various projects were identified for implementation under the ESP initiative various sectors of the economy across the country. The sectors were education, public health, local government, industrialization and provincial administration offices. Among the beneficiaries of ESP initiatives was Olkalou Constituency, Kenya. In the constituency, ESP funds were used to construct primary schools and secondary schools to serve as centers of excellence, enhance enrollment and improve the quality of education. The ESP funds were further used to construct a model health center geared towards improving maternal and child health. In addition, one fresh produce and wholesale market were constructed.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Economic stimulus initiatives were considered a major driving force that could have led to tremendous growth of the country's economy. Successful implementation would have led to an increase in government spending from a national point of view played a major role in reducing unemployment in the country, encouraging entrepreneurship, stimulating economic growth, fostering education and innovation. A number of studies however indicate that the realization of these goals was not adequately achieved partly due to poor infrastructure and management practices within the localities, lack of adequate finances and minimal community participation among other reasons. In their studies, they also report that most of the projects were not completed within the intended completion duration. There were a host of challenges experienced during implementation stage which included experienced cost overruns, prolonged completion periods beyond the initially envisaged dates thereby denying clients of the opportunity to enjoy the facilities in good time while others have never to date been practically completed. This research study intended to identify those factors and assess their influence on the implementation of projects. The current study attempted to establish how project planning, project financing, management skills and community participation influences project implementation. A clear understanding of how these factor influence government funded projects coupled with the nature of the area under study will be of vital importance to policy makers when undertaking projects in such localities.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the study was to establish the factors influencing effective implementation of economic stimulus projects in Olkalou Constituency, Kenya. This study was guided by the following research objectives:

- To evaluate the influence of project planning on effective implementation of economic stimulus projects in Olkalou Constituency, Kenya.
- To investigate the influence of project financing on effective implementation of economic stimulus projects in Olkalou Constituency, Kenya.
- To establish the influence of management skills on effective implementation of economic stimulus projects in Olkalou Constituency, Kenya.
- To examine the influence of community participation on effective implementation of economic stimulus projects

in Olkalou Constituency, Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Without implementation, even the most superior strategy is useless. Implementing would thus be perceived as being about allocating resources and changing organizational structure (Beer & Eisenstat, 2000). For the purpose of this study we present four factors influencing effective implementation of projects.

Influence of Project Planning on Effective Project Implementation

Project planning can be seen as a set of established processes used to make a decision on what tasks must be performed to achieve the project's set objectives within schedule and cost (Pierce, 2013). Project planning can also be regarded as an iterative process or procedure utilized to define project scope, develop and refine project objectives and set the course of actions to run a project according to specified standards of quality (Faniran et al., 1998). Baldwin and Bordoli (2014) state that regardless of the definition chosen for project planning, it has the objective of achieving a number of common factors including the production of realistic schedules and costs, the completion of a project to defined standards of quality, design criteria, project resources, health and safety, and meeting project stakeholders' expectations. According to Dvir et al., (2003), there is a strong correlation between successful project planning and the success of a project from the perspective of project stakeholders. They also found a strong correlation between successful implementation of planning procedures and benefits to project stakeholders. Such findings are confirmed in a later study which indicated that project success can be measured in view of the quality of project planning; whereas poor planning means uncontrolled alterations in the planning variables of time, cost and quality (Dvir & Lechler, 2004). According to Kariungi (2014), these benefits cannot be achieved without strong commitment and knowledge on the part of project managers and other project stakeholders on how to manage planning and scheduling most effectively. Despite these theoretical discussions, there is little or no evidence in to indicate the project planning and scheduling tools used by ESP teams in Kenya to enhance effective implementation of ESP projects.

Influence of Project Financing on Effective Project Implementation

According to Webster (2000), project financing is one of the key determining factors in the sustainability and full effectiveness of a project. The study noted that funding projects not only requires start-up funds but also running costs. It concluded that many projects find funding for running costs very difficult to obtain and as a result, projects have constantly reinvented themselves so as to qualify again for set-up funding. Another study by Bosch (2010) argued that risk identification and allocation is a key component of project finance in project implementation. The study points out that a project may be subject to a number of technical, environmental, economic and political risks, particularly in developing countries and emerging markets. The financing of projects must be distributed among multiple parties, so as to distribute the risk associated with the project while simultaneously ensuring profits for each party involved. The study highlighted the issues of risk spreading to various multiple players. Several studies carried out in Kenya on project implementation (Ochieng & Tubey, 2014) indicated that project financing plays a critical role in ensuring project implementation and sustainability. They further propose that there should also be regular auditing of the project funds and resource allocated to projects so as to enhance efficiency and effectiveness. The studies point out that effective financial management calls for fund managers to be skilled and competent. It is therefore evident that project financing is critical in a project life cycle.

There is however shortage in literature specifically focused on economic stimulus projects more so in the developing countries such as Kenya. Furthermore, studies on economic stimulus projects in Kenya have not explored all the factors that influence effective implementation of projects from the Kenyan perspective.

Influence of Management Skills on Effective Project Implementation

Project management entails planning, organizing, motivating, and controlling resources to achieve specific goals of a give project. The temporary nature of projects stands in contrast with business operations, which are repetitive, permanent, or semi-permanent functional activities to produce products or services. In practice, the management of these two systems is often quite different, and as such requires the development of distinct technical skills and management strategies (Ivancevich et al., 2003). They further noted that management support for projects, or indeed for any implementation, has long been considered of great importance in distinguishing between their ultimate success and failure. A study on the harmonization of decentralized development in Kenya, examined the effects of the existence of multiple funds and the duplication of implementation jurisdictions. The study established that these funds have largely deterred citizen engagement in local governance. A similar study by Ochieng and Tubey (2014), argued that management faces varied challenges, some of which include: The organization structure in managing projects, project identification criteria, political interference and corruption. Leadership is defined as ability to influence activities of others through communication they may be as a group or a single person towards achievement of specific goals or objectives (Ivancevich et al., 2003). Kimenyi, (2005) in his study on efficiency and efficacy of Kenya's CDF, noted that unlike other development funds that filter from the central government through longer and more layers of administration organs and bureaucracies, this fund goes directly to the local people. He highlighted some characteristics that determine efficiency and efficacy of CDF among them as; citizen demand and constituency characteristics, size and population density and dispersion of a constituency and strategic choice of projects among others.

Influence of Community Participation on Effective Project Implementation

Community participation is described as a social process in which groups with shared needs living in a "certain geographical area" actively identify needs, make decisions, and set up mechanisms to achieve solutions/goals (Adesina, 2010). However, heterogeneous groups and individuals can become a community and collectively take action to attain shared and specific goals. The level of community support determines whether a project becomes established, how quickly and successfully it consolidates, and how it responds and adapts to meet changing needs. In the context of development, community participation refers to an active process whereby beneficiaries influence the direction and execution of development projects rather than merely receive a share of project benefits. It is widely recognized that participation in government schemes often means no more than using the service offered or providing inputs to support the project (Abbot, 2004). This is contrasted with stronger forms of participation, involving control over decisions, priorities, plans, and implementation; or the spontaneous, induced, or assisted formation of groups to achieve collective goals. The most important and complicated issue bearing on local level planning and development is community participation. Effective community participation may lead to social and personal empowerment, economic development, and sociopolitical transformation (Kaufman & Alfonso, 1997). Yet there are obstacles: the power of central bureaucracies, the lack of local skills and organizational experience, social divisions, and the impact of national and transnational structures. There is no clear-cut agreement in the literature of community development on the nature of community participation or on

a prescription to ensure it.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive research design. Saunders et al., (2009) describes descriptive research design as a systematic, empirical inquiring into which the researcher does not have a direct control of independent variable as their manifestation has already occurred or because the inherently cannot be manipulated. The target population comprised all 130 project beneficiaries and management teams in 6 project types carried out in Olkalou Constituency, Kenya. The study utilized simple random sampling technique which ensured that the target population was representative, reliable, flexible and efficient. In this study an appropriate method to collect the primary data was a questionnaire survey. For the purposes of this study, quantitative data was collected using a closed-ended questionnaire. The primary data was sourced from the answers the participants gave during the survey process. The data collected from the questionnaires was analyzed with Statistical Package for Social Sciences.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

According to the findings, majority of the respondents were male (75%) while the female were 25%. The reason attributed to this may be due to the existing gender gap in employment in Kenya. Majority of the were of the age group 46 - 55 years (45.2%) while the least age group was between 26 – 35 years (7.2%). The study found that 23.8% of the respondents had a certificate and below qualification. Further, only 40% had either a bachelors or masters degree further indicating moderate uptake of education in the region and thus it was generalized that most members of ESP projects had moderate level of educational qualifications. In terms of working experience, most of the respondents (29.8%) had between 5 – 10 years working experience. Cumulatively, more than 42% had less than 5 years of experience while only 27.3% had more than 10 years working experience. In terms of awareness of ESP projects, it was found that all the respondents were aware of ESP projects in the area with majority of the respondents (33.3%) being aware of construction of a school.

Influence of Project Planning on Effective Implementation

This section presents aspects on project planning and effective implementation as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Influence of Project Planning on Effective Implementation

	n	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
Projects are clearly planned for in terms of scope, time and completion schedule	84	2	5	4.18	.732
We normally develop realistic schedules for project implementation and completion	84	2	5	3.52	.884
The project stakeholders also develop realistic cost estimates with accompanying contingent plans	84	1	5	3.72	.979
In planning for projects we often assign and coordinate resources based on budgets and timelines set in the project plan	84	1	5	3.46	.817
The views of all project stakeholders are taken into account in every step of project planning	84	1	5	3.27	.975

There is always a deliberate attempt to include health and safety and environmental management aspect in planning for projects	84	2	5	3.69	.871
The planning team ensures there are quality standards and indicator for every stage of the project lifecycle	84	1	5	4.02	.779
Project planning normally involves provision of functional and technical specifications to be met for every section of the implementation stages	84	3	5	4.33	.649
Project planning is the greatest hindrance to implementation of CDF projects	84	3	5	3.11	.819

Majority of the respondents agreed that projects were clearly planned for in terms of scope, time and completion schedule (4.18), that they normally develop realistic schedules for project implementation and completion (3.52), that the project stakeholders also developed realistic cost estimates with accompanying contingent plans (3.72), that there was always a deliberate attempt to include health and safety and environmental management aspect in planning for projects (3.69), that the planning team ensured there are quality standards and indicator for every stage of the project lifecycle (4.02) and that project planning normally involved provision of functional and technical specifications to be met for every section of the implementation stages (4.33). The respondents were however unsure when asked whether the views of all project stakeholders were taken into account in every step of project planning (3.46) or whether the views of all project stakeholders were taken into account in every step of project planning (3.27) and whether project planning was the greatest hindrance to implementation of ESP projects (3.11). An analysis of the standard deviations showed that all responses had a standard deviation of <1.00 which indicated smaller dispersion from the mean which was interpreted to mean convergence of responses on the particular propositions.

Influence of Project Financing on Effective Implementation

Table 2 shows the findings related to project financing and implementation of ESP Projects. From Table 2, the results indicate that majority of the respondents agreed that funds provided for project implementation were adequate (3.73), that most of the financing originates from the government (3.75) and that there is no proper supervision of funds usage thus hindering implementation of ESP projects (4.01). Further, the respondents disagreed that there was a deliberate effort to enhance usage of funds in order to enhance project implementation (2.32) and that funds provided were disbursed on time to facilitate implementation of ESP projects (1.98). However the respondents were unsure as to the criteria followed on the distribution of funds to facilitate implementation of ESP projects (2.87) or whether there was a deliberate effort to enhance usage of funds in the constituency to enhance implementation (3.09). In addition, majority of the respondents (3.67) agreed that financing is the greatest hindrance to project implementation.

Table 2: Influence of Project Financing on Effective Implementation

	n	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
Financing is the greatest hindrance to implementation of ESP projects	84	1	5	3.67	.981
Funds provided are adequate to facilitate implementation of ESP projects	84	1	5	3.73	.963
Funds provided are disbursed on time to facilitate implementation of ESP projects	84	1	5	1.98	.678
There is no criteria followed in the distribution of funds to facilitate the implementation of ESP projects	84	1	5	2.87	.977
Most of the funds for implementation of ESP projects originate from government	84	1	5	3.75	.982
There is no proper supervision of fund usage thus hindering the implementation of ESP projects	84	1	5	4.01	.973
There is a deliberate effort to enhance usage of funds in the constituency to enhance project implementation	84	1	5	3.09	.997
Project financing is one of the important factors influencing effective implementation of ESP projects in your constituency	84	1	5	2.32	.998

Influence of Community Participation on Effective Implementation

In this section the researcher presents various aspects touching on community participation and effective implementation of ESP projects in line with the third objective. From the results in Table 3, it was established that majority of the respondents agreed that community mobilization and participation was a long process which impedes negatively to some extent the implementation process (3.87). The respondents however disagreed that the project stakeholders effectively involved the community in every aspect of project implementation as per regulations (2.18), that there was adequate community participation in decision making thereby enhancing implementation of ESP projects (2.42), that community members participated in contributing of resources whether land, electricity or water but they did not involve themselves in field activities of projects (2.45), that community members were illiterate and had no skills to facilitate effective implementation of projects (2.16), that there was a deliberate effort to community participation issues in the constituency to enhance project implementation (2.37) and that community participation was the greatest hindrance to the implementation of ESP projects (1.78).

Table 3: Influence of Community Participation on Effective Implementation

	n	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
The project stakeholders effectively involve the community in every aspect of project implementation as per regulations	84	1	5	2.18	.895
Community mobilization and participation is a long process which impedes negatively to some extent the implementation process	84	1	5	3.87	.947
There is adequate community participation in decision making thereby enhancing implementation of ESP projects	84	1	5	2.42	.962
Community members participate in contributing of resources whether land, electricity or water but they do not involve themselves in field activities of projects	84	1	5	2.45	.971
Community members are illiterate and have no skills to facilitate effective implementation of projects	84	1	5	2.16	.633
There is a deliberate effort to community participation issues in the district to enhance project implementation	84	1	5	2.37	.963
Community participation is the greatest hindrance to implementation of ESP projects	84	1	5	1.78	.844

Management Skills and Effective Implementation

In this section the researcher presents various aspects touching on management skills and effective implementation of ESP projects.

Table 4: Management Skills and Effective Implementation

	n	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
Project stakeholders are selected depending on their management skills and thus are able to effectively implement all projects undertaken	84	1	5	2.09	.785
Project stakeholders depend solely on their management skills when implementing projects and are not influenced by any outside force	84	1	5	4.47	.631
Stakeholders are not adequately trained to ensure effective project management thereby hindering implementation of ESP projects	84	1	5	4.32	.645
Project stakeholders lack essential management skills which would enhance implementation	84	1	5	3.17	.976
Decision making in project implementation is inclusive thereby enhancing implementation of ESP projects	84	1	5	3.46	.991
Communication channels between various stakeholders are open thereby enhancing implementation of ESP projects	84	1	5	2.85	.973
Stakeholders morale is high thereby enhancing implementation of ESP projects	84	1	5	2.31	.832
There is a deliberate effort to improve management issues to enhance project implementation	84	1	5	2.12	.753
Management is the greatest hindrance to implementation of ESP projects	84	1	5	3.87	.954

The results in Table 4 indicate that most of the respondents agreed that majority of the stakeholders were not adequately trained to ensure effective project management thereby hindering implementation of ESP projects (4.32), that

project stakeholders depend solely on their management skills when implementing projects and are not influenced by any outside force (4.47) and that decision making in project implementation was inclusive thereby enhancing the implementation process (3.46). The respondents generally disagreed when asked whether project stakeholders were selected depending on their management skills and thus are able to effectively implement all projects undertaken (2.09), whether stakeholder's morale was high thereby enhancing project implementation (2.32) and whether there was a deliberate effort to improve management issues in order to enhance project implementation (2.12). However, the respondents were unsure whether communication channels between various stakeholders were open thereby enhancing implementation of ESP projects (2.85) or whether project stakeholders lack essential management skills which would enhance implementation (3.17). The respondents however agreed that management was the greatest hindrance to the implementation of ESP projects (3.87).

Effective Implementation of Economic Stimulus Projects

In this section the researcher presents various aspects touching on measurement of the dependent variable which was effective implementation of ESP projects and the findings are depicted in Table 5. From the findings it was established that majority of the respondents agreed that ESP projects were implemented according to the intended quality standards (3.76), that ESP projects were implemented according to the set technical requirements (3.96), that ESP projects were implemented to user satisfaction (3.99) and that ESP projects were implemented and evaluated according to set objectives (3.97). The respondents however disagreed that ESP projects were implemented according to the set timelines (2.41) and that ESP projects were implemented according to the cost/budget provisions (2.17).

Table 5: Effective Implementation of CDF Projects

	n	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
ESP projects are implemented according to the set timelines	84	1	5	2.41	.993
ESP projects are implemented according to the cost/budget provisions	84	1	5	2.17	.969
ESP projects are implemented according to the intended quality standards	84	1	5	3.76	.902
ESP projects are implemented according to the set technical requirements	84	1	5	3.96	.766
ESP projects are implemented to user satisfaction	84	1	5	3.99	.693
ESP projects are implemented and evaluated according to set objectives	84	1	5	3.97	.796

Regression Analysis

The study carried out a regression analysis to test the significance of the influence of project planning, project financing, management skills and community participation. The model summary is depicted in Table 6.

Table 6: Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std Error of the Estimate
1	0.7993	0.6388	0.6194	0.3451

The R² value of 0.6388 implies that 63.88% of the variations in the effective implementation of ESP projects can be explained by the variations in independent variables. This therefore means that other factors not studied in this study contribute 36.2% of effective implementation of ESP projects. The researcher further conducted a multiple regression analysis and the findings of the multiple regression models is depicted in Table 7.

Table 7: Multiple Regression Analysis

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p
		B	SE	B		
1	Constant	5.482	1.398		3.443	0.072
	Project Planning	0.331	0.109	0.213	2.327	0.029
	Project Financing	0.497	0.178	0.339	3.906	0.017
	Community Participation	0.347	0.109	0.288	2.779	0.028
	Management Skills	0.299	0.115	0.203	1.718	0.045

From the multiple regression model, holding project planning, project financing, management skills and community participation constant, effective implementation of ESP projects would increase by 5.482. It was established that a unit increase in project planning would cause an increase in effective implementation of ESP projects by a factor of 0.331, a unit increase in project financing would cause an increase in effective implementation of ESP projects by a factor of 0.497, a unit increase in management skills would cause an increase in effective implementation of ESP projects by a factor of 0.299 and a unit increase in community participation would cause an increase in effective implementation of ESP projects by a factor of 0.347. The un-standardized beta coefficients in Table 7 were then used to obtain the following model:

$$Y = 5.482 + 0.331X_1 + 0.497X_2 + 0.347X_3 + 0.299X_4$$

Where Y = Effective Implementation of ESP Projects, X₁ = Project Planning, X₂ = Project Financing,

X₃ = Community Participation, X₄ = Management Skills

Since all p-values were less than 0.05, all the null hypotheses were rejected and the alternatives confirmed to be true. From the model it was established that all the independent variables positively related to effective implementation of ESP projects and were statistically significant at the 5% significance level. It was also established that project financing had the greatest influence on effective implementation of ESP projects while management skills had the least influence on effective implementation of ESP projects.

CONCLUSIONS

The study concluded that for effective implementation of ESP projects the said projects should be clearly planned for in terms of scope, time and completion schedule, the project stakeholders should develop realistic schedules for project implementation and completion and that project stakeholders should also developed realistic cost estimates with accompanying contingent plans. It was concluded that there was no proper supervision of funds usage thus hindering implementation of ESP projects. Further, for effective implementation, the criteria followed on the distribution of funds to facilitate implementation of ESP projects should be clear and that there should be a deliberate effort to enhance usage of funds in the constituency to enhance implementation. Finally, it was established that financing was the greatest hindrance

to project implementation. It was concluded that since community mobilization and participation was a long process which impedes the implementation process, stakeholders must have effective strategies to enhance participation. Furthermore, project implementers must therefore enhance community participation and involvement to ensure completion, ownership and sustenance of such ESP projects.

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