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Stakeholders Management and Implementation of Community Development Projects in Tana-River Sub-County, Kenya

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Abstract

Purpose: The main aim of this study was to examine the extent to which stakeholder management influences the successful implementation of community development projects in Tana-River sub-county, Kenya.

Methodology: The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The study was conducted in Tana River Sub-County, located in Tana River County, Kenya. The target population for this study consisted of project beneficiaries, project coordinators, local administrators, NGO/CBO representatives, and community leaders. A stratified and simple random sampling techniques was adopted. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire composed of both closed-ended and Likert-scale questions. Descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to summarize demographic characteristics and stakeholder engagement indicators.

Findings: The study found that all four dimensions of stakeholder management (identification, communication, decision-making, and monitoring) had a positive and significant effect on the successful implementation of development projects in Tana River, Kenya.

Unique Contribution to Theory Practice and Policy: The study recommended strengthening stakeholder identification, communication, decision-making, and monitoring to enhance project success. The study also recommended identifying stakeholders early as it helps project managers understand their interests, influence, and potential impact, enabling better risk anticipation and engagement strategies.

Keywords: *Stakeholder Management, Project Implementation, Stakeholder Engagement, County Government*

INTRODUCTION

Globally, development initiatives have long been central to improving the quality of life in underserved communities. Their success, however, depends significantly on the active involvement of the very communities they aim to serve. Community participation is defined as the engagement of locals in planning, implementation, and monitoring to ensure that projects are not only responsive to actual needs but also sustainable and culturally appropriate (Pandey, 2024). Despite this, stakeholder mismanagement remains a persistent challenge. For example, India's Swachh Bharat Mission faced resistance due to poor coordination and minimal community involvement (UNICEF, 2021), while participatory slum upgrading in Brazil and Colombia faltered from inadequate stakeholder engagement (UN-Habitat, 2020). In Canada, development projects involving indigenous communities were delayed or cancelled due to conflicts stemming from poor consultation (Papillon & Rodon, 2022). These cases underscore the global imperative for effective stakeholder management which encompasses identification, interest alignment, communication, and inclusive participation (Freeman, 2020). This is regarded as a cornerstone of successful community development.

Regionally, Sub-Saharan Africa mirrors these global challenges. In Nigeria, World Bank-funded projects suffered from weak coordination among local government units and civil society organizations (Okereke, 2019). Ghana's CBRDP struggled due to insufficient stakeholder training and top-down planning (Boakye, 2019), while South African housing projects faced resistance and poor outcomes due to exclusionary practices (Naidoo, 2021). East African experiences further reinforce this pattern: Uganda's NAADS program was undermined by elite capture and limited farmer involvement (Benin et al., 2008); Tanzania's Local Government Reform Programme lacked community buy-in and accountability (Tidemand & Msami, 2020); and Rwanda's resettlement initiatives, though framed as participatory, were criticized for their top-down nature (Ansoms, 2021). These examples highlight that even in policy-rich environments, stakeholder misalignment can derail development efforts. They also provide a critical bridge to the Kenyan context, where similar governance and coordination gaps persist.

In Kenya, and specifically in Tana-River Sub-County, community development projects continue to face implementation challenges such as delays, cost overruns, and abandonment. Despite increased investments and decentralization through devolution, many initiatives fail to meet their objectives due to poor stakeholder engagement (Omolo, 2020; Ndungu, 2021). Studies show that involving community members fosters trust, ownership, and sustainability (Wanjue, 2023), yet many organizations neglect this approach. NGOs, as key service providers in rural areas, benefit

from community involvement through enhanced efficiency and impact (Mutanguha & Kamuhanda, 2021). Factors such as education and culture also influence participation levels (Mohamed et al., 2018). In Tana-River, low stakeholder participation, conflicting interests, and limited transparency have repeatedly compromised project outcomes. This points to a critical research gap: while global and regional evidence affirms the value of stakeholder management, its specific influence on project success in marginalized Kenyan regions like Tana-River remains underexplored. This study sought to address that gap by contextualizing stakeholder dynamics within the local development landscape.

Problem Statement

Community development projects are expected to be timely, need-driven, inclusive, and sustainable. When well-planned and executed, they can improve livelihoods, enhance access to basic services, and empower communities economically and socially (World Bank, 2020). Successful projects typically have clear objectives, efficient resource utilization, strong monitoring and evaluation systems, and a long-term sustainability vision (UNDP, 2022). However, in Tana-River Sub-County, these expectations are not being met. Projects such as water access points, health centres, education infrastructure, and food security programs often face delayed completion, cost overruns, poor quality, and limited sustainability. This challenge is not unique to Tana-River but reflects a broader trend in marginalized counties across Kenya, where limited resources, governance challenges, and poor execution continue to affect service delivery (Mwangi & Muriithi, 2020). As a result, many initiatives fail to generate lasting impact, leading to wastage of public resources and erosion of community trust (Nyanjom, 2021).

Despite increased investments and the adoption of decentralized governance through devolution, project performance in counties like Tana-River remains poor. Measures such as capacity building for local officers, community engagement forums, and participatory budgeting frameworks have been introduced (CRA, 2021), yet outcomes remain underwhelming due to poor coordination, duplication of efforts, and lack of follow-up mechanisms (Kariuki & Wanjiru, 2019). This points to a disconnect between policy intentions and practical realities. While studies from other contexts show that coordinated stakeholder involvement enhances project ownership, accountability, and performance (Omolo & Mutua, 2020), limited research has explored how stakeholder management specifically affects development outcomes in Tana-River Sub-County. This study therefore seeks to fill that gap.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is anchored on three key theories that inform its conceptual and analytical approach. The first one is Stakeholder Theory by Freeman (1984) that holds the position that the interests of all stakeholders rather than shareholders must be considered in the process of organizational decision making. This theory forms a basis of identification and involvement of different actors in the community development, including local community members, governmental agencies, NGOs, and donors (Harrison et al., 2019; Fontaine, 2020). It outlines open communication and constant feedback as key to the development of trust and the maintenance of cooperation (Minoja, 2020). Vazquez-Maguirre and Portales (2020) also confirm that the sustainable and acceptable outcomes of projects are achieved when there is adequate stakeholder management. The fact that the study centers on stakeholder identification, communication, participation, and monitoring as key aspects of project realization is a direct result of this theory.

The second theory is the Theory of Participatory Development which was championed by Chambers (1997) and which proposes that communities' members should be involved in every development process including development planning and development evaluation. It advocates the bottom-up approach that ensures that communities are agents of action, as opposed to passive receivers. More recent researchers include Mansuri and Rao (2019) and Ahmad and Sulaiman (2022), who point to the fact that participatory solutions increase the sense of ownership, sustainability, and context-based solutions. This theory is consistent with the focus of the research on stakeholder engagement and feedback systems and supports the significance of inclusion and empowerment. The third theory is the Theory of constraints (TOC) by Goldratt (1984), which is concerned with identification and management of bottlenecks that lead to the failure of the project. It helps to prioritize resources and schedule tasks by using critical paths to enhance efficiency in resource allocation and minimize delays. TOC applies especially to project time and risk management, and its application into the current research demonstrates the importance of stakeholder engagement in the process of predicting and preventing constraints (Blackstone, 2021). The theories collectively offer a solid framework of study in a setting involving stakeholder management in the execution of community development projects in Tana-River Sub-County.

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Conceptual Framework

This is a diagram illustrating the linear relationship between independent variables (Stakeholder Identification, Stakeholder communication, Stakeholder Participation and Stakeholder Monitoring) and the dependent variable (Performance at County Government) as shown in figure 1).

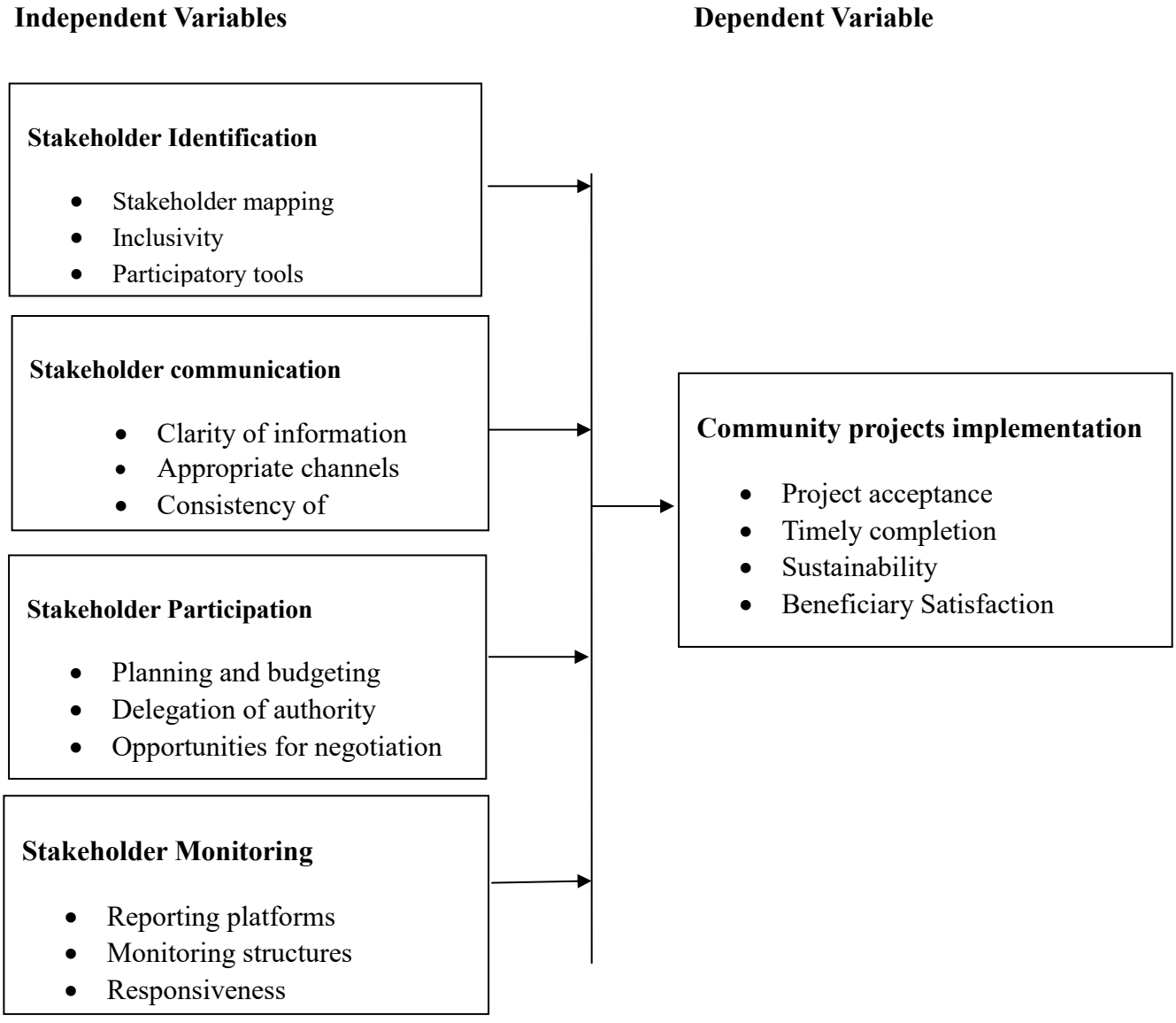

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Empirical Review

Nambi and Tumusiime (2022), examined stakeholder identification in Uganda's water resource management projects and found that political affiliations often influenced who was selected as a stakeholder, rather than actual relevance or influence. This politicized approach eroded community trust and compromised project effectiveness. However, the study focused narrowly on water projects and did not explore how stakeholder identification practices affect broader community development outcomes in decentralized settings. This gap justifies a localized inquiry into how stakeholder mapping and inclusivity influence project success in Tana-River Sub-County.

Agyeman and Boakye (2019), assessed stakeholder communication in Ghana's smallholder agriculture projects and reported that effective information sharing between NGOs and farmers improved coordination and uptake of innovations. They emphasized the role of radio and mobile platforms in enhancing accessibility. While the study demonstrates the value of communication tools, it does not address how communication structures function in marginalized or resource-constrained counties. This leaves room to explore how communication clarity and consistency affect project implementation in rural Kenyan contexts.

Pongsiri and Suriyawong (2024), investigated community engagement in climate change adaptation projects in Thailand. Their findings showed that when villagers were involved in selecting climate-smart technologies and crop plans, project outcomes were more durable and aligned with local knowledge systems. Although the study offers strong evidence for participatory planning, it is situated in an environmental context and does not address broader development sectors such as health or infrastructure. This underscores the need to examine how stakeholder participation in decision-making influences diverse community development projects in Kenya.

Chepkemoi and Ngetich (2023), reported that many community projects in Kenya lacked structured monitoring systems, resulting in misallocated funds and poor implementation. Projects that established community oversight committees showed improved stakeholder satisfaction and delivery outcomes. However, the study did not delve into the mechanisms of stakeholder responsiveness or how monitoring structures interact with other engagement practices. This opens a pathway for deeper analysis of stakeholder monitoring as a determinant of project success in Tana-River.

Menon (2024), emphasized the importance of adopting best practices in project management, including the establishment of a Project Management Office (PMO), appropriate methodology selection, and competency development. Using a critical success factor approach, the study

identified barriers such as ineffective stakeholders, PMO inefficiency, and poor planning. While comprehensive, the study is largely organizational and does not focus on community-level dynamics or stakeholder engagement in public development projects. This reinforces the need for a context-specific study that examines how stakeholder management practices shape implementation outcomes in Kenya's rural counties.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The target population for this study consisted of stakeholders directly involved in or affected by community development projects within Tana River Sub-County. These included project beneficiaries, project coordinators, local administrators, NGO/CBO representatives, and community leaders. The area is a recipient of numerous community development initiatives implemented by local government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and community-based organizations (CBOs). The approximate target population was 600 individuals, based on estimates from county development records and lists of active community projects. The sample size of 240 was calculated using Yamane's (1967) formula. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure fair representation of the different stakeholder groups. The population was first categorized into five main categories: project beneficiaries, project staff, local government officials, NGO/CBO representatives, and community leaders. From each stratum, respondents were then selected using simple random sampling. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire composed of both closed-ended and Likertscale questions. A pilot study was conducted among 10% of the sample size (24 individuals) in a neighboring subcounty not included in the final study. The study used both face and content validity. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was, then used to test the reliability (internal consistency) of the questionnaire. A coefficient of 0.7 or higher was considered acceptable (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Following approval from relevant authorities, the researcher visited selected sites within Tana River Sub-County to administer the questionnaires in person. The collected data was coded and entered into SPSS for analysis. Descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to summarize demographic characteristics and stakeholder engagement indicators. To determine relationships between variables, Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted. Additionally, multiple regression analysis was used to evaluate the influence of independent variables (stakeholder identification, communication, participation, and feedback) on the dependent variable (project implementation). The statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$.

RESULTS

Response Rate

Out of the 240 questionnaires sent out to the respondents, 164 of them completed and returned their questionnaires. This was equivalent to a response rate of 64.33% which agrees with Babbie, (2015) who opined that for excellent presentation of the findings response rates should be 60% and above.

Descriptive Statistics

This section presents descriptive statistics on stakeholder identification, communication, decision making, monitoring and project implementation in Tana River Sub-County in Kenya. The study generated qualitative and quantitative data. The findings from the open-ended questions were displayed in narrative form. The closed ended questions were measured on a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 representing strongly disagree, 2 representing disagree, 3 representing neutral, 4 representing agree and 5 representing strongly agree.

Stakeholder Identification

The first objective of the study was to determine the influence of stakeholder identification on implementation of development projects in Tana River County. The respondents were requested to indicate their agreement level on diverse statements regarding the practices. The findings are as presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive Results for stakeholder Identification

	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Std. Deviation
The project identifies individuals or groups who have a vested interest in the success or outcome of their project.	3.2	4.8	3.2	62.9	25.8	4.032	0.883
Leaders ensure that all relevant parties are recognized and considered throughout the project	8.1	9.7	3.2	59.7	19.4	3.726	1.129
leaders strive to understand stakeholder needs, expectations, concerns, and potential impact on the project.	9.7	11.3	3.2	59.7	16.1	3.613	1.174
Investigate what each stakeholder cares about regarding the project	4.8	6.5	4.8	62.9	21.0	3.887	0.973
Evaluates the level of influence each stakeholder holds over project	4.8	3.2	1.6	61.3	29.0	4.065	0.935
Anticipate potential risks and opportunities associated with each stakeholder group	4.8	6.5	3.2	64.5	21.0	3.903	0.966

The findings in Table 1 indicate that stakeholder identification is prioritized in most projects, with respondents strongly agreeing that individuals or groups with vested interests are clearly identified (M=4.032, SD=0.883). Leaders are also seen to recognize relevant parties (M=3.726) and strive to understand stakeholder needs and concerns. The highest-rated item was the evaluation of stakeholder influence (M=4.065, SD=0.935), followed closely by the anticipation of risks and opportunities (M=3.903) and investigation into stakeholder interests (M=3.887), suggesting a comprehensive approach to stakeholder analysis across the project cycle.

Stakeholder Communication

The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on statements on stakeholder comunication. The findings were as presented in Table2.

Table 2: Descriptive Results for Stakeholder Communication

	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Std. Deviation
Develops communication plans tailored to the preferences and needs of different stakeholder groups.	24.2	65.3	5.6	4.0	0.8	1.919	0.728
Determines the frequency, format, and content of communication to keep stakeholders informed and engaged.	23.4	66.9	4.0	4.8	0.8	1.927	0.734
Provides opportunities for input, and demonstrating responsiveness to their needs.	16.9	74.2	2.4	5.6	0.8	1.992	0.704
Builds and maintains positive relationships with stakeholders by addressing their concerns	8.1	9.7	11.3	71.0	0.00	3.452	0.966
Stakeholders take an active role in every stage of the project and communicate their interests clearly and often.	0.00	8.1	0.00	83.9	8.1	3.919	0.632
Stakeholders receive outcome reports or updates	0.00	14.5	8.1	50.0	27.4	3.903	0.966

Table 2 revealed a weak stakeholder communication practices, with respondents largely disagreeing that project teams tailor communication plans, determine appropriate formats, or provide responsive input channels (M≈1.92). However, they agreed that stakeholders receive outcome updates (M=3.54) and that teams build positive relationships by addressing concerns (M=3.919). These findings highlight a gap between strategic communication theory and practice, reinforcing calls by scholars like Koschmann and Kopszynski (2017) and Taranekar (2021) for more dialogic, structured, and inclusive communication to improve stakeholder engagement and project success.

Stakeholder Decision-Making

The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with various statements on stakeholder decision-making. The findings are as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Descriptive Results for Stakeholder Decision making

	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Std. Deviation
Leaders use insights gained from stakeholder analysis to inform decision-making processes throughout the project lifecycle.	11.3	66.1	6.5	11.3	4.8	2.323	0.984
Involves stakeholders in risk assessment and decision-making to enhance their resilience and avoid potential pitfalls.	9.7	14.5	8.1	37.1	30.6	3.645	1.314
Involves customers, employees, and suppliers in the decision-making process.	6.5	8.1	4.8	59.7	21.0	3.807	1.064
Identifies and prioritizes the key stakeholders relevant to the decision at hand.	11.3	9.7	3.2	45.2	30.6	3.742	1.300
Involves actively seeking input and feedback from stakeholders.	6.5	3.2	6.5	64.5	19.4	3.871	0.979
Strive to provide clear and accurate information about the decision-making process	8.1	6.5	4.8	54.8	25.8	3.839	1.129

Table 3 shows that respondents agreed projects actively seek stakeholder input (M=3.871) and provide clear decision-making information (M=3.839), while the lowest-rated item was the use of stakeholder analysis to guide decisions (M=2.323), indicating a gap in applying insights. Involving diverse actors such as customers, employees and suppliers was also positively rated (M=3.807). As OECD (2015) and Manumbu (2020) noted, stakeholder participation enhanced policy quality and project performance. However, Njue et al. (2021) highlighted that bureaucratic constraints often limit meaningful engagement, prompting public organizations to adopt more inclusive decision-making frameworks.

Stakeholder Monitoring

The respondents were asked to specify their level of agreement on diverse statements on stakeholder monitoring. The findings were as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Descriptive Results for Stakeholder Monitoring

	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Std. Deviation
Reviews items from the stakeholder engagement Plans.	27.4	53.2	8.1	6.5	4.8	2.081	1.025
Checks in with stakeholders regularly	32.3	56.5	8.1	3.2	0.00	1.823	0.711
Provides information through status meetings, reports, and project correspondence.	25.8	58.1	8.1	4.8	3.2	2.016	0.911
Monitors conflict at the stakeholder level.	3.2	6.5	9.7	54.8	25.8	3.936	0.952
Educates stakeholders on project fundamentals and negotiates.	6.5	8.1	4.8	64.5	16.1	3.758	1.031
Make stakeholders aware of potential risk events.	4.8	8.1	8.1	54.8	24.2	3.855	1.034

Table 4 revealed weak practices in stakeholder monitoring, with respondents disagreeing that companies review engagement plans (M=2.081), provide regular updates (M=2.016), or conduct consistent check-ins (M=1.823). However, they agreed that teams effectively monitor stakeholder-level conflict (M=3.936), educate stakeholders (M=3.758), and raise awareness of potential risks (M=3.855). These findings align with Alami (2016) and Kariuki & Reddy (2017), who emphasize the importance of clear monitoring systems for project success.

Implementation of Development Projects

The respondents were requested to indicate their agreement level on different statements regarding implementation of development projects. The findings were as shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Successful Project Implementation

	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Std. Deviation
Project leaders directly manage projects to ensure it meets the objectives outlined in the planning phase.	6.5	4.8	8.1	51.6	29.0	3.919	1.071
Project managers effectively produce the deliverables required to satisfy the clients or key stakeholders of the project.	0.00	8.1	8.1	50.0	33.9	4.097	0.859
Assesses the project and determine roles	6.5	6.5	4.8	58.1	24.2	3.871	1.059
Measures the project's timeline against the projected schedule and monitor resources	6.5	9.7	6.5	61.3	16.1	3.710	1.057
Project manager makes changes as needed during the project implementation	17.7	14.5	1.6	35.5	30.6	3.468	1.495
provide reports to the project team, clients and stakeholders outlining how the project performed against the projected budget and timeline.	4.8	8.1	6.5	54.8	25.8	3.887	1.038

Table 5 indicated a strong agreement among respondents that project managers effectively deliver outcomes (M=4.097) and that leaders manage projects to meet planned objectives (M=3.919). They also affirmed that teams assess roles (M=3.871), provide performance reports (M=3.887), and monitor timelines and resources (M=3.710). These findings align with Mwangi and Muchelule (2022), who found that scope planning, budgeting, scheduling, and control significantly influence the successful implementation of infrastructural health projects, underscoring the importance of structured scope management in achieving project goals.

Correlation Analysis

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was utilized to assess the strength of association between the independent variables and the dependent variable. The findings were as presented in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Correlation Coefficients

		PI	SI	SC	SD	SM
Project implementation	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2tailed)	1				
	N	124				
SI	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2tailed)	.367** .000	1			
	N	124	124			
SC	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2tailed)	.212* .018	.475** .000	1		
	N	124	124	124		
SC	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2tailed)	.350** .000	.424** .000	.364** .000	1	
	N	124	124	124	124	
SM	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2tailed)	.616** .000	.310** .000	.443** .000	.299** .001	1
	N	124	124	124	124	124

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). *.
Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The study revealed positive and significant relationships between various stakeholder management practices and the successful implementation of development projects in Tana River, Kenya. Stakeholder identification showed a moderate correlation (r=0.367, p=0.000), aligning with Mwangi and Muchelule (2022) who emphasized the role of project scope in implementation success. Stakeholder communication also demonstrated a significant but weaker relationship (r=0.212, p=0.018), while stakeholder decision-making was moderately correlated (r=0.350, p=0.000). The strongest relationship was observed in stakeholder monitoring (r=0.616, p=0.000),

underscoring its critical role in enhancing project outcomes. All p-values were below the 0.05 threshold, confirming statistical significance across all variables.

Regression Analysis

Multivariate regression analysis was carried out to examine the relationship between independent variable (stakeholder identification, communication, decision making and monitoring) and dependent variable (successful implementation of development projects in Tana River, Kenya).

Table 7: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.862[a]	.743	.638	.24904

a. Predictors: (Constant), stakeholder identification, communication, decision making and monitoring

As depicted in Table 7, R-squared for the relationship between stakeholder management practices and successful implementation of development projects in Tana River, Kenya was 0.743 which means that 74.3% of the variation of dependent variable could be explained by the four independent variables.

Table 8: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	6.187	4	1.547	24.938	.000[b]
	Residual	7.381	119	.062		
	Total	13.568	123			

a. Dependent Variable: successful implementation of development projects in Tana River, Kenya

b. Predictors: (Constant), stakeholder identification, communication, decision making and monitoring

In this study, the ANOVA was performed to determine if the model was good fit for the data. As shown in Table 8, the F-calculated was 24.938 and the F-critical from the F-distribution table was

2.46. Because the F-calculated was greater than F-critical and the p-value (0.000) was not more than the significance level (0.05), the model was considered to be a good fit for the data.

Table 9: Regression Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.621	.340		1.825	.070
	Identification	.154	.058	.216	2.669	.009
	Communication	.151	.059	.212	2.548	.012
	Decision making	.180	.088	.157	2.046	.043
	Monitoring	.814	.105	.595	7.756	.000

a. Dependent Variable: successful implementation of development projects

Regression equation was;

$$Y = 0.621 + 0.154X_1 + 0.151X_2 + 0.180X_3 + 0.814X_4 + \varepsilon$$

The study established that stakeholder identification significantly influences the successful implementation of development projects, with a regression coefficient of β1=0.154 and a p-value of 0.009, indicating statistical significance at the 0.05 level. This suggests that improving stakeholder identification practices could lead to a 0.216 increase in project success. Similarly, stakeholder communication was found to have a positive and significant effect (β2=0.151, p-value=0.012), implying that better communication strategies could enhance project implementation by 0.212 units. These findings affirm the importance of early and clear stakeholder engagement in driving project outcomes.

Additionally, the study revealed that stakeholder decision-making plays a significant role in project success (β3=0.180, p-value=0.043), with improvements in decision-making expected to yield a 0.157 enhancement in implementation. The strongest effect was observed in stakeholder monitoring, which showed a highly significant relationship (β4=0.814, p-value=0.000), indicating that strengthening monitoring mechanisms could result in a 0.595 increase in successful project implementation. These results underscore the critical role of stakeholder engagement across

identification, communication, decision-making, and monitoring in achieving development goals in Kenya.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The study found that all four dimensions of stakeholder management (identification, communication, decision-making, and monitoring) had a positive and significant effect on the successful implementation of development projects in Tana River, Kenya. Early identification of stakeholders helped align expectations and engagement strategies, while effective communication strengthened relationships and reduced risks. Involving stakeholders in decision-making enhanced transparency, trust, and shared ownership, and robust monitoring practices ensured alignment with project goals and improved data-driven decision-making. Together, these practices contributed to more responsive, inclusive, and sustainable project outcomes.

Conclusions

The study concludes that stakeholder identification, communication, decision-making, and monitoring each have a positive and significant effect on the successful implementation of development projects in Tana River County, Kenya. Effective stakeholder analysis helps prioritize and engage relevant actors early, while strategic communication strengthens relationships and improves decision-making and risk management. Inclusive stakeholder participation fosters trust, collaboration, and shared ownership, enhancing project success. Moreover, stakeholder involvement in monitoring and evaluation processes contributes to more responsive, impactful, and sustainable development outcomes.

Recommendations

The study recommended strengthening stakeholder identification, communication, decision-making, and monitoring to enhance project success. The study also recommended identifying stakeholders early as it helps project managers understand their interests, influence, and potential impact, enabling better risk anticipation and engagement strategies. Regular two-way communication is encouraged to foster feedback, build strategic relationships, and support informed decisions. Engaging stakeholders in decision-making from the outset promotes trust, shared ownership, and resilience during project challenges. Lastly, inclusive stakeholder

monitoring is vital for effective M&E, as it improves data accuracy, ensures diverse perspectives are considered, and guides adaptive project strategies that better serve community needs.

Suggestions for Further Study

The study set out to establish the relation between stakeholder management practices and successful implementation of development projects in Kenya. The study was carried out in One County and only one Sub County within it was used. Future studies could expand the scope beyond the county. Furthermore, the study found that the independent variables adopted could only explain 74.3% of successful implementation of development projects. As such, more studies should to be conducted to examine other factors that may influence successful implementation of development projects.

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