

Collaborative Project Management And Project Performance: A Case Of Kenya Youth Employment Opportunity Project In Nairobi City County, Kenya

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Abstract: Project performance is a critical focus for any project team to benefit all stakeholders. In this case, several kinds of projects have been established globally to curb the high unemployment rate in various countries. As the initiatives kick on, many of the project team have critically focused to ensure project's performance to benefit all stakeholders. In Kenya, several kinds of projects such as KYEOP have been established to curb the high unemployment rate, however, its performance is wanting. As a result, this research therefore is necessary to fill the void identified by examining the impact of collaborative project management on the performance of a specific project, in this case the Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunity Project in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The study has four goals, all of which pertain to the project's performance: better understanding the impact of communication, project planning, leadership, and change management. The study will use a descriptive research design, underpinnings on system theory, the theory of constraints, and the theory of contingencies. Project managers (18), project operation employees (117), and project stakeholders (30) will serve as the units of observation, while the Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunity Project (KYEOP) itself will serve as the unit of analysis. Data will be gathered through the use of a standardized questionnaire, and SPSS will be used for both descriptive and inferential analysis.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Currently, youth unemployment has become a global challenge that requires collaborative efforts according to Kluge, Puerto, Robalino et al. (2019). In Europe, on average the unemployment rate stands at 16.8%, and in the US stands at 8.1% (Ristevska-Jovanovska, and Jovanovski, 2022; Schleimer, Pear, McCort, et al., 2022). Low unemployment rates reported in some countries are a result of numerous youth employment projects that have been launched worldwide which focused on promoting the employability and job prospects of youthful generation. According to Bello and Fagbemi (2023); Patel, Graham, and Chowa (2020), for example, the International Labour Organization (ILO) developed the Youth Employment Programme (YEP), which aimed to promote decent work for young people through a

range of interventions, including policy support, capacity building, and knowledge sharing across United Nations in partnership with inter-agency cooperation and global peer networks. According to Shehu (2021) so far the project has trained over 10,000 young people, with more than 7,000 of them placed in various jobs or entrepreneurial ventures.

The YEP and other projects such as Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Youth Strategy, and the Global Youth Employment Forum emphasized the importance of collaborative project management with a focus on strengthening the capacity of project implementers to design, and monitor youth employment projects effectively (Rianawaty, Dwiningrum & Yanto, 2021). The programs and projects have provided technical assistance and capacity-building support to governments, NGOs, and other stakeholders, and promoted knowledge sharing and collaboration among stakeholders through various platforms,

including workshops, seminars, and online communities of practice (Bloomfield, Bucht, Martínez-Hernández, et al., 2018). The projects have performed well with a track progress record towards achieving project goals and objectives. Their performance achievement was a result of planned performance indicators and targets, monitoring, and evaluation, and using the results to inform project decision-making and course corrections as per Rianawaty, Dwiningrum, and Yanto. These global programs and projects have emphasized the importance of collaboration in achieving sustainable and inclusive youth employment outcomes (Geza, Ngidi, Slotow, et al., 2022). The projects have benefited many youths in various countries across the globe through employment creation, skills development, community development, and policy advocacy, which has made various countries on different continents have launched their programs and project to lower the unemployment rate.

Youth Employment Inventory (YEI) China, a government-led initiative was launched in 2013 aimed at addressing the country's growing youth unemployment rate (Robalino, Margolis, Rother, et al., 2013). The program provided job training and employment services to young people, with a particular focus on those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The project has reportedly helped millions of young people find jobs. The Chinese government has also implemented various policies to support the initiative, including tax incentives for companies that hire young people and subsidies for training programs. Additionally, the Canadian government launched the Youth Employment and Skills Program (YESP) in 2017 to help its youth aged between 15 and 30 years to develop their skills and gain the work experience they need to find and maintain employment as revealed by Jansen, White, Dhuey, et al. (2019). Since its launch in 2017, YESP has helped thousands of young Canadians gain valuable work experience and develop various skills set needed in today's job market. According to government data, as of September 2021, over 46,000 youth have participated in the program, with over 37,000 finding employment as a result (Cukier, and Hassannezhad Chavoushi, 2020).

In Africa, some countries have typically collaborated with other government agencies, international organizations, NGOs, private sector partners, and local communities to establish youth employment projects as revealed by Mueller and Thurlow (2019). The projects aimed to address the high rates of unemployment among young people on the continent, which is a major challenge identified hindering economic expansion and development as well.

As depicted by Acheampong (2019), effective project management has been essential for the success of youth employment projects in Africa. Acheampong continued to allude that many of the projects such as the National Youth Employment Program (NYEP) in Ghana (Mukuhani, 2014), and Gweru Young People's Enterprise (GYPE) in Zimbabwe established clear objectives, developed a detailed project plan, defined roles and responsibilities, and implemented appropriate monitoring and evaluation systems. The project team termed collaboration as a critical element, as it enabled different stakeholders to bring their expertise and resources to bear on the project, thereby increasing its effectiveness and

impact (Mhlongo, Gumbo, & Musonda, 2022). NYEP and GYPE youth employment projects in two countries in Africa have performed well due to the inclusivity of the specific context, the high level of collaboration among stakeholders, and the quality of project management as per Larsson and Larsson (2020). Some projects have achieved significant success in terms of creating employment opportunities for young people, improving their skills and productivity, and promoting entrepreneurship. However, some nations in Africa like South Africa, Algeria, and Eswatini (with 32.7%, and 29.95% unemployment rates respectively) have struggled a lot with high unemployment rates due to inadequate funding, limited stakeholder engagement, and insufficient capacity for implementing partners (Oxford Analytica, 2023; Tria, Harun, & Alam, 2020).

Kenya has not been left behind in curbing the youth unemployment nightmare of its people which currently stands at 13.48 % as revealed by Karanja (2022). Many projects such as Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunities Project (KYEOP), Presidential DigiTalent Program (PDTP), Ajira Digital Project, the Kenya Youth Employment and Skills Program (K-YES), and the Youth Empowerment Project (YEP) have been established aiming at creating employment opportunities for young people in Kenya (Omukhango & Etyang, 2022). Despite the effort by the Kenya government and NGOs in implementing projects and programs to increase youth employability, there is still a huge gap as some of the projects such as KYEOP have not fully achieved their KPIs to train 280,000 Kenyan youth, create jobs, and the overall impact on the local economy (Winstead & Wells, 2022). According to Gitau (2022), some of the challenges the project faced included the limited resources available, and the limited access to finance and market opportunities for young entrepreneurs.

However, according to Menya (2020); Omukhango & Etyang (2022), several efforts have been made such as providing financial support and technical assistance to young entrepreneurs, community engagement, while creating entrepreneurship opportunities to Kenyan youth in Kisumu and Nakuru Counties, although little has been achieved in Nairobi City County, Kenya despite being the center for innovation. This reveals the need to research collaborative project management and performance; a case of KYEOP in Nairobi City County to bridge the gap.

a. PROJECT PERFORMANCE

Project performance, according to Cruz, Sastoque, Otegi, et al. (2020), is the capacity of a project to meet its goals and deliverables within scope, cost, time and quality restrictions. Cost performance, time and quality are crucial aspect of project success as it directly impacts the project's profitability and resource utilization (Kerzner, 2022). Project performance is the measurement of how well a project is meeting its objectives and goals as revealed by Kerzner. It involves assessing the project's progress and the quality of its deliverables against the planned schedule, budget, and scope. As per Cruz, Sastoque, Otegi, et al., the scheduled time is one of the project performance indicators which measures how well the project is progressing against the planned schedule.

Actual start and finish dates, anticipated start and finish dates, and the proportion of tasks finished on schedule are the essential metrics (Pellerin & Perrier, 2019). The second key performance indicator is the cost which measures how well the project is progressing against the planned budget with key metrics such as actual costs, planned costs, and the percentage of budget spent. Scope indicator on the other hand measures how well the project is delivered against the planned scope.

Safapour and Kermanshachi's (2019) key metrics for the project scope include the number of scope changes, the percentage of scope completed, and the number of scope items not delivered. Cruz, Sastoque, Otegi, et al., identified quality indicators as how well the project meets the quality requirements with key metrics such as defects log, defects resolved log, and unsolved defects log. Parmenter (2015) noted that well-established project performance indicators help to streamline project processes and reduce waste, leading to greater efficiency, and clarifying roles and duties, increasing individuals' and teams' accountability for their actions and outcomes.

However, Zwikael and Meredith (2019) note that failure to manage key project performance indicators can have significant consequences on the success of the entire project. For instance, if time, scope, cost, and quality is not properly managed result in project completion delay, thus leading to increased costs, scope creep, missed opportunities, and loss of credibility for the project team and stakeholders. According to Fazli, Fathi, Enferadi, et al. (2014) overly rigidity, lack of creativity, focus on process over outcome, and inflexibility leads to a lack of adaptability in response to changing circumstances. Consequently, Bartels and Friedman (2022) depicted that unrealistic expectations around project timelines, budgets, and outcomes can lead to disappointment and frustration.

b. COLLABORATIVE PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Collaboration in all kinds of projects is crucial as it allows all stakeholders, i.e. the project team, both governmental and non-governmental agencies, and private sector actors to effectively have a healthy dialogue to aid project performance (Mutambara & Bodzo, 2020). According to Urbinati, Landoni, Cococcioni, et al. (2021), effective collaboration among these stakeholders is necessary to make sure that the project-set objectives and goals are aligned, and resources are optimized to achieve the desired outcomes. Collaborative project management involves managing projects through cooperation and communication among multiple stakeholders (Sithambaram, Nasir & Ahmad, 2021). Collaborative project management can foster innovation by encouraging creative thinking and the sharing of diverse perspectives which can be revealed by new and novel solutions, greater adaptability to changing circumstances, and improved problem-solving skills (Larsson & Larsson, 2020).

Füller, Hutter, and Kröger (2021) defined collaborative project management as the practice of involvement of multiple stakeholders, including team members, clients, vendors, and other partners in project planning, managing change, communicating, leading and coordinating, and executing project deliverables. According to Füller et al., the purpose of

collaborative project management is to promote open lines of communication and cooperation among all project participants to guarantee a successful outcome that meets or exceeds expectations in terms of time, cost, and quality. Effective communication guarantees timely and accurate sharing of information, active listening, and constructive feedback. Consequently, according to Wiesche (2021) collaborative project management helps the project team to work more efficiently, and productively by reducing redundancies and delays.

According to Kabeyi (2019), collaborative project management typically involves deployment of project management software, techniques, tool and expertise in project planning, scheduling, resource allocation, risk management, and performance monitoring. It requires effective leadership, communication, and collaboration skills to manage a diverse team of stakeholders with varying backgrounds, expertise, and interests. By leveraging the collective knowledge and skills of all project stakeholders, collaborative project management leads to better decision-making, increased efficiency, and improved project outcomes (Yap & Skitmore, 2020). Collaborative project management is particularly well-suited for complex, interdisciplinary projects that require the involvement of multiple stakeholders with different perspectives and skill sets. Collaborative project management can improve engagement and morale by giving team members a sense of ownership and accountability, promoting teamwork, and providing opportunities for professional growth which can be viewed through higher job satisfaction, and greater commitment to organizational goals (Yap, Leong, & Skitmore, 2020).

Fisher, Stutzman, Vedoveto, et al. (2020) refers to collaborative project management as a process of involving others in organizing, planning, making decision, and managing project scarce resources in achieving set goals. However, despite the many benefits, Fisher's research team argued that the lack of clarity in defining key variables in collaborative project management leads to confusion and misalignment of efforts. According to Tiwari (2022), collaborative project management often relies on technology, however, overemphasis on technology leads to a lack of personal interaction, reduced creativity, and innovation. It also requires effective team dynamics to achieve successful outcomes, however, inadequate attention to team dynamics can result in conflicts, lack of motivation, and reduced productivity (Khosravi, Rezvani & Ashkanasy, 2020). More so, failure to recognize and appreciate the diverse culture within which the project is being executed leads to misunderstandings, conflicts, and reduced effectiveness. Lastly, inadequate stakeholder involvement leads to the misalignment of objectives, and reduced support for the project (Shaukat, Latif, Sajjad, et al., 2022).

As was revealed earlier, project variables are important as they highly contribute to either project failure or success (Tam, da Costa Moura, Oliveira, 2020). These variables help the project manager to set realistic goals and objectives, develop a project plan, allocate resources, facilitate monitoring and control, identify potential risks and uncertainties, and estimate the project's cost and duration.

According to Maican, Cazan, Lixandroui, et al. (2019), one of the collaborative project management variables is communication. Communication is a fundamental process that enables individuals to connect, exchange information, and create shared meanings (Atlam & Wills, 2020). The quality and frequency of communication among team members can impact project success. Indicators include the frequency of meetings held and messages sent, and the timeliness of responses. However, Reyna (2021) argued that communication can be often subjective, meaning that different people can interpret the same message in different ways. This makes it difficult to measure communication as a variable.

Another collaborative project management variable is leadership according to Ali, Li, Khan, et al. (2021). Leadership refers to the individual or group ability to influence, communicate, and guide others toward a common goal or objective (Ibrahim & Daniel, 2019). Effective leadership helps to ensure that team members are aligned around project goals and objectives. Ali, Li, Khan, et al. revealed key measures as the degree of engagement and motivation, the ability to inspire and guide the team, a set of clear vision, timely and effective decisions, openness to new ideas and approaches, and the level of trust established.

As highlighted by Urbański, Haque, and Oino (2019), project planning is a key predictor variable of collaborative project management. According to Urbański et al. reveal project planning as a discipline of creating a detailed map or blueprint for achieving set project goal by the project team in a collaborative manner. It involves identifying the desired outcome, evaluating the resources and constraints that may affect the attainment of the goal, and developing a set of actions or strategies that can be implemented to accomplish the objective. Planning is an essential aspect of management and is used in many different contexts, from personal goal-setting to large-scale organizational planning. Effective planning requires careful analysis, clear communication, and ongoing monitoring and adjustment to ensure that the plan remains relevant and effective over time (Tam et al., 2020). Key project planning indicators include the level of detail and specificity in the project plan, set priorities, planning team, collaborative resource allocation, task scheduling, and the alignment of project objectives with broader organizational goals. However, Urbański et al., argued that over-reliance on planning sometimes stifles creativity and innovation by limiting the exploration of new ideas and alternatives.

Change management is also a key collaborative project management variable according to Arefazar, Nazari, Hafezi, et al. (2020). Change management is an important project management aspect that requires planning, controlling, and monitoring changes to project scope, schedule, budget, and other elements (Ansari, 2019). Change management refers to the structured process of managing any changes or modifications to a project's scope, timeline, budget, resources, or any other constraint that affects the project's performance. Well organized change management reduces the change negative on project success, ensuring that any alterations to the project's plan are properly communicated, evaluated, and implemented. Mutambara and Bodzo (2020) noted that if project stakeholders are not fully on board with changes in processes or project structure, it leads to decreased

productivity, budget overrun, and low quality. Change management indicators include change management plan, change documentation, change impact analysis, the number of change requests received and processed, change acceptance rate, and the level of stakeholder engagement in the change management process (Gräßler, Oleff & Preuß, 2022).

c. *KENYA YOUTH EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY PROJECT*

The Kenya Youth Employment Opportunities Project (KYEOP) has been started by the Kenyan government and the World Bank, aimed at addressing the issue of youth unemployment in Kenya (Gitau, 2022). The project was launched in 2016 with an approved budget of Kshs 2.58 Billion and is set to run until 2021, however, it was later extended to 2023. The objective of KYEOP was to promote job and income prospects for young people in the targeted counties between the ages of 18 and 29. The project seeks to achieve this by providing them with relevant skills training and internships, as well as supporting the creation of self-employment opportunities through grants and mentorship programs.

According to Menya (2020), the KYEOP was implemented in four key stages: identification of beneficiaries, training and internship, self-employment grants, and monitoring and evaluation. The training component involves providing youth with vocational and technical skills that are relevant to the current labor market needs, while the self-employment component aims at providing financial support to enable them to start their businesses. KYEOP targets 15 counties across Kenya, which have been identified as having high levels of youth unemployment. These counties include Bungoma, Busia, Homabay, Kakamega, Kilifi, Kisii, Kisumu, Kwale, Mombasa, Nairobi, Nakuru, Siaya, Taita Taveta, Trans Nzoia, and Uasin Gishu.

KYEOP has provided young people with the skills and resources to establish their businesses or find employment opportunities. By 2020, over 68,991 young people had benefited from the project, with over 32,124 of them receiving training and internships, and over 7,000 receiving self-employment grants as per Bariu (2019). Despite the effort by the KYEOP project management team to provide youth employability opportunities, the project has not fully achieved its KPIs to benefit 280,000 Kenyan youth, create jobs, and have an overall impact on the local economy (Winstead & Wells, 2022).

However, counties like Kisumu and Nakuru have put efforts to address these challenges by providing targeted financing and technical assistance to young entrepreneurs, community engagement, and enhancing the conditions that encourage youth employment and entrepreneurship according to Menya (2020); Omukhango & Etyang (2022). Researchers finding revealed Nairobi City County has the highest rate of unemployment, thus, the need to research the effectiveness of collaborative project management in communication, planning, leadership and change management to aid project performance; a case of Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunity Project in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

B. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Project performance is a critical focus for any project team to benefit all stakeholders. In this case, several kinds of projects have been established globally to curb the high unemployment rate in various countries. In Africa, Kenya has been on the front line to create job opportunities and training youths on employability skills through Kenya Youth Employment Opportunities Project (KYEOP), however, unemployment among the youth in Kenya especially in Nairobi City County remains high which is an indication that project has not achieved their intended objectives (Winstead & Wells, 2022).

Many young people in Nairobi City County, Kenya are still struggling to find employment opportunities and earn a decent livelihood. The lack of employment opportunities not only has affected the financial well-being of young people but also limited their potential to contribute to the country's economic growth and development. Additionally, unemployment often leads to social and psychological problems such as depression, anxiety, and substance abuse. KYEOP has performed poorly as it has extended its period to 2023 from 2021, training quality is very low as the unemployment rate stands at 12.1% in Nairobi City County, and the project was added Kshs. 1.5 billion after restructuring dated August 9, 2021.

Besides, extensive research studies have been conducted to identify the challenges hindering KYEOP's success, as well as to evaluate the effectiveness of its strategies and interventions. For instance, Ruto (2021) did a research to examine the determinants of youth unemployment in Kenya, Kiiru and Barasa (2020) securing youth mentorship, employment and inclusivity in Kenya, and (Winstead and Wells, 2022) youth emergency growth on digital venture in Africa. All looked at KYEOP as a case of the study in different counties such as Kisumu and Nakuru. Additionally, Yakubu et al. (2019) did a study to explore communications problems on project performance but did not explore the potential factors that contribute to communication breakdowns. Unegbu, Yawas, and Dan-Asabe (2022) researched on practices of project management and performance relationship of Nigerian construction industry projects. Murithi and Muchelule (2023) did a researched to explore project planning effect on Kenyan NGO projects performance but did not explore the potential impact of external factors that influences project planning.

Overall, despite the effort to see various project success by various researchers, there still inadequate literature addressing the importance of collaboration in project management in Kenya, impact of external factors on independent variables, and potential factors that contribute to communication breakdowns. Due to these gaps, there is a need to conduct this study to determine the effectiveness of collaborative project management on project performance; a case of Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunity Project in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

C. GENERAL OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This study purposes to determine the effect of collaborative project management on project performance; a case of the Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunity Project in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

a. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- ✓ To determine the influence of communication on project performance; a case of the Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunity Project in Nairobi City County, Kenya.
- ✓ To establish the effect of project planning on project performance; a case of the Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunity Project in Nairobi City County, Kenya.
- ✓ To examine the influence of leadership on project performance; a case of Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunity Project in Nairobi City County, Kenya.
- ✓ To evaluate the effect of change management on project performance; a case of the Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunity Project in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

D. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- ✓ What effect does the communication have on project performance; a case of the Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunity Project in Nairobi City County, Kenya?
- ✓ What impact does project planning have on project performance; a case of the Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunity Project in Nairobi City County, Kenya?
- ✓ How does leadership influence project performance; a case of Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunity Project in Nairobi City County, Kenya?
- ✓ What impacts does change management have on project performance; a case of Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunity Project in Nairobi City County, Kenya?

E. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study aims at providing insights into the effectiveness of collaborative project management in achieving project objectives. The study will examine how collaboration in communication, project planning, change management, and leadership among project team members, stakeholders, and clients contribute to the success of the project. This information can help project managers to identify best practices for collaboration and improve project outcomes. The study will also help to identify potential challenges and obstacles to effective collaborative project management. The research will add to the body of information on project management. Lastly, the research will provide empirical evidence to support the importance of collaboration in project management and help to establish best practices in this area.

F. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study is a case study of the Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunity Project in Nairobi City County, Kenya, to ascertain the impacts of project design, leadership, communication, and change management on project

performance. The study concentrates on five variables only which are project planning, leadership, communication, change management, and project performance. The study will be conducted in Nairobi City County. The study target respondent will include the project manager, project operation team and the stakeholders. The study time scope is between April to November, 2023.

G. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

It may take several months for the benefits of these practices to be fully realized, however, the researcher will emphasize more on the immediate adoption of collaborative project management. Secondly, the study may not have the sufficient resources necessary to conduct a rigorous analysis of the relationship between collaborative project management and project performance broadly, which could impact the validity of the results globally but at least the research will act as a baseline study for future researchers. Last but not least, the study might only relate to a certain kind of project or industry, and the findings might not generalize to other kinds of projects or industries. For this reason, the researcher suggests conducting comparable studies in other industries.

H. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The first chapter serves as an introduction, detailing the study's background, problem statement, research questions and objectives, significance, and limits and potential remedies. The conceptual framework and a review of the relevant literature are presented in chapter two, together with a discussion of the gaps in the existing research. The research methodology is provided in the third chapter, which details the research design, the target population and respondents, the sampling method, the data collection procedure, the data analysis steps, and the ethical issues that were taken into account.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. INTRODUCTION

This second chapter provides a summative review of existing research and scholarly works in line with the research topic. It provides also a theoretical review of the study and reveals current knowledge state in the area under study. Moreover, a summary of the gaps or inconsistencies is provided in this chapter in the existing research. Lastly, it presents a conceptual framework showing how to study variables that are related.

B. THEORETICAL REVIEW

This section provides a theoretical review which is a critical analysis of existing theories and concepts related to the research topic and questions at hand. This involves reviewing and exploring the assumptions, concepts, and ideas of theories such as the Theory of Constraints, Contingency Theory, and

System Theory to provide a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.

a. SYSTEM THEORY

In the year 1940, Hungarian Ludwig developed a System Theory which is a multidisciplinary framework that aimed to understand complex systems, their behavior, and the interrelationships between components within the system. The theory views a system as a cluster of interdependent constituents that collaborate to achieve a common goal or function. The fundamental concept of system theory postulates that the conduct of a system is governed by the interplays among its constituents, rather than merely the features of the individual constituents. It seeks to explain how changes in one system component can affect the functionality of the entire system.

The theory is widely applicable in many different areas, like engineering, biology, psychology, economics, project management, and sociology (Kline, 2020). The theory is used to analyze and design complex systems, identify patterns of behavior in these systems, and develop strategies for improving their performance. The theory is useful for learning how several systems influences are affected by one another. The main theory concepts include feedback loops, which describe how information is passed between components of a system to regulate its behavior, and emergence, which refers to the phenomenon of complex behaviors and patterns that arise from the interactions between simple components (Badcock, Friston, Ramstead, et al., 2019).

In project management field, system theory helps the project team to understand how the different variables or components of a project fit together as a whole, and how changes in one part of the project can impact the other parts (Kline, 2020). It provides a way to analyze and manage complex systems by breaking them down into smaller, more manageable parts. The theory applicability involves viewing a project as a system with inputs, processes, outputs, and feedback loops. This approach enables project managers to better understand how the various variables of the project interact, and how they complement each other.

According to Sanders, Schubert, Goodrich, et al. (2020) bringing all variables together improves communication and collaboration among team members, making more informed decisions that take into account the potential impact on the entire project by the project team, enhances better risk management strategies, and increased overall efficiency. However, Sanders' team argued that system theory focuses on what influences internal working of a project, and overlook external forces such as political or economic factors that can affect the project's success. Additionally, the theory does not adequately account for the role of human behavior and decision-making which significantly influences project outcomes.

Camboim, Zawislak, and Pufal (2019) note that project accomplishment depends on the integration of various project components. The system theory provides a theoretical model that explains how to predict, and control phenomena, and its essential applicability to managing projects appropriately to avoid failure. Therefore, in this study, the system theory will

guide the understanding of how communication, project planning, change management, and leadership interrelate with one another and how they influence the performance of the Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunity Project in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

b. THE THEORY OF CONSTRAINTS (TOC)

Eliyahu Goldratt (1984) came up with the Theory of Constraints (TOC) applicable to various disciplines such as project management, psychology, and sociology, among others. The theory proposes that every system, whether it be a manufacturing plant, a hospital, or a service organization, has a constraint that limits its ability to achieve its goal. The goal of any system is to increase efficiency while lowering operating cost. The constraints in any system are the limiting factor that prevents the system from achieving its goal (Dugdale, 2013). The goal of any system is to identify and exploit the constraint to increase its performance. TOC proposes that a system should be in a position to identify constraints, exploit them well by making sure that they are worked on to their maximum capacity, subordinate everything else to the constraints, elevate the constraints by investing in resources to increase their capacity and repeat the process to continually improve the system's performance.

The theory of constraints has been used successfully in several areas including project performance management, however, according to Balakrishnan and Cheng (2019) the theory may oversimplify complex projects. Balakrishnan and Cheng continued to argue that in complex projects is difficult to identify a single constraint because the project is exposed to multiple constraints that limit a project's performance, thus, making it difficult to identify the primary constraint and develop a plan to address it.

Ikeziri, Souza, Gupta, et al., (2019) revealed that TOC is too focused on short-term gains. TOC emphasizes maximizing throughput, which may lead to a focus on completing tasks quickly rather than ensuring that they are done correctly or that they contribute to the project's overall goals; Where the problems with quality, additional work, and delays may result.

While despite the critics the Theory of Constraints is highly relevant to project performance management. In a project, the constraint is often the bottleneck that limits the project's ability to achieve its objectives. By identifying and addressing the constraint, the project team can maximize the project's throughput (i.e., completion of the project) while minimizing the inventory (i.e., work in progress) and operating expenses (i.e., costs of the project). The rationale behind the TOC in project management is that a project is a system, and it is essential to identify the constraint that limits the project's ability to achieve its objectives as per Kabeyi (2019). Once the constraint is identified, the project team can focus its efforts on exploiting, subordinating, and elevating the constraint to maximize the project's throughput.

Referring to project management, the constraint may be the availability of resources, skills, or time, or it may be a specific task or process that is delaying the project's completion (Kabeyi, 2019). The theory emphasizes the importance of managing and controlling workflow by using techniques such as buffer management, drum-buffer-rop

scheduling, and throughput accounting. The techniques will help the project team to ensure that the constraints are being utilized efficiently and that the entire project is working in harmony to achieve its objectives.

The theory provides a structured approach to project performance by identifying the constraints (time, cost, quality, etc.) in this study. By following the TOC's principles, the project team can maximize the project's throughput, minimize inventory and operating expenses, and achieve the project's objectives.

c. CONTINGENCY THEORY

Fred Fiedler established the theory in 1964. The theory is a leadership oriented that proposed leader's effectiveness as a contingent upon the fit between their leadership style and the situation at hand. In other words, leader's success depends on their ability to adapt their leadership style to specific circumstances. As revealed by Amanchukwu, Stanley, and Ololube (2015) diverse circumstances necessitate distinct leadership approaches. For instance, during a crisis, a directive leadership approach proved to be more efficient, whereas in a relatively steady environment, a more participatory leadership approach is approved to be fitting. The theory supports that effective leaders can identify the needs of a given situation and adjust their leadership style accordingly.

According to Vasilescu (2019), contingency theory has been influential in the field of management and leadership, as it emphasizes the importance of situational factors in determining effective leadership. However, it has received criticism for being excessively uncomplicated and neglecting to factor in the intricacy of leadership and organizational dynamics. Contingency theory is a management approach that emphasizes the need for flexibility in the organizational structure, and decision-making in specific context or situation. In project management, contingency theory is relevant because projects often face unique challenges and require customized solutions to meet their objectives.

The rationale behind using contingency theory in project management is that there is no better approach at all time to managing projects effectively (Joslin, 2019). Factors such as project size, complexity, technology, team members' expertise, resources, and stakeholders' involvement may vary from one project to another. Therefore, project managers need to adopt a contingency approach to adapt their management strategies to the specific project situation. For example, a small project with a limited budget and few team members may require a more flexible and decentralized organizational structure, where team members have more autonomy to make decisions (Moe, Šmite, Paasivaara, et al., 2021). On the other hand, a large and complex project may require a more centralized and hierarchical structure, where the project manager has more control over decision-making.

Situational leadership is important, where project management needs to adapt their leadership style to the needs and characteristics of their team members. For instance, some team members may require more guidance and direction, while others may be more independent and require less supervision. In line with this study, contingency theory guides how Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunity Project

leaders need to guide others to set personal goals collaboratively and share to empower other members to achieve the main project goals and objectives.

C. EMPIRICAL REVIEW

This section provides a systematic evaluation of previous research studies and publications in a specific field of study based on empirical data and evidence. The review involves examining and synthesizing the findings, methodologies, and conclusions of previous studies to identify gaps, inconsistencies, and areas for further research.

a. COMMUNICATION AND PROJECT PERFORMANCE

The journal article on communication problems and project performance in Nigeria by Yakubu et al. (2019) adds to the increasing collection of written works on project management in Nigeria. The study particularly centered on the repercussions of communication problems on project performance and furnished valuable perspectives into the predicaments encountered by project teams in Nigeria. The authors used a structured question to collect data from supervisors, field workers, project managers, consultants, contractors, governments, and clients. The study targeted 100 construction companies in Nigeria. The study found that communication problems such as poor coordination, inadequate feedback, and ineffective communication channels were the major causes of project failure. The study also revealed that project teams in Nigeria tend to rely heavily on informal communication channels, which often leads to misunderstandings and misinterpretations. The authors concluded that effective communication is crucial for project success and recommended that project managers in Nigeria should prioritize communication planning and ensure that communication channels are established and maintained throughout the project life cycle. However, the study focused on the impact of communication problems on project performance, it did not explore the potential factors that contribute to communication breakdowns.

Researchers Unegbu, Yawas, and Dan-Asabe (2022) looked into the relationship between project management methods and performance indicators in the Nigerian building sector. The study's authors set out to investigate the relationship between project management techniques and output indicators in the Nigerian building sector. Researchers in this study surveyed 250 Nigerian professionals and clients involved in the construction industry through a questionnaire. To investigate the connection between project management approaches and project performance indicators, the researchers employed statistical analysis techniques like correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis. The findings of this study suggest a causal link between project management practices and project performance metrics. This suggests that, in the Nigerian construction business, competent project management practices lead to better project performance. The research found that better project performance in Nigeria may be achieved if construction project experts embraced best practices in project management such better communication

and risk management. The research is limited to one building project in Nigeria, thus its results may not apply elsewhere.

Research by Majeed, Kayani, and Haider (2021) examined the moderating effect of genuine leadership on the connection between project communication and trust in project success. The authors argue that trustworthy communication within a project team is a key success factor, and that genuine leadership moderates the connection between these two factors. The research method was cross-sectional. Data was collected from 245 different construction firms in Pakistan using an online survey administered to project managers, leaders, and site supervisors. The findings demonstrate that authentic leadership moderates the favorable association between project communication and trust and project success. The findings of the study provide new insight into the relationship between successful project completion and factors such as open lines of communication, mutual trust, and genuine leadership. The cross-sectional form of the study makes it difficult to infer causation or determine when certain events occurred.

Project management relies heavily on effective communication, which is why Shad, Shah, Jan, et al. (2019) conducted a case study of the communication and works department in Peshawar, Pakistan. The study utilized a case study approach and collected data through interviews with the 10 project managers and employees of the C&W Department. The study found that communication is critical to project management, and ineffective communication can lead to project delays, increased costs, and reduced project quality. The research identified various communication challenges, such as communication breakdowns, inadequate communication channels, and communication gaps between different stakeholders. The study recommended that project managers should prioritize effective communication in project management and adopt various communication strategies to address communication challenges. Overall, the study highlights the significance of communication in project management and emphasizes the need to improve communication practices in project management. However, the study only relied on interviews with project managers and employees of the C&W Department to collect data. The study could have benefited from including other stakeholders, such as project sponsors or clients, to provide a more complete picture of communication challenges in project management.

b. PROJECT PLANNING AND PROJECT PERFORMANCE

In order to better understand the effects of effective construction planning on project performance, Majumder, Majumder, and Biswas (2022) conducted research. Data on construction planning and project performance were gathered from a survey of 250 construction experts and examined using descriptive statistics and regression analysis. The study found that effective project planning positively affects project performance improvement, with planning in the pre-construction phase having a greater impact than planning in the construction phase. The study also identified resource allocation, risk management, and communication as critical factors for effective project planning. The findings emphasize

the importance of proper planning in the pre-construction phase for enhancing project performance and can be useful for construction professionals and stakeholders. However, the study did not explore in-depth the specific strategies or tools that could be used for effective project planning.

Murithi and Muchelule (2023) investigated the impact of project planning on NGO project performance. A survey of 60 NGOs working in Meru County was used to gather data for the study, which was carried out using a descriptive research approach. The study found that project planning significantly influences the performance of NGOs projects within Meru County. Effective project planning was found to result in better project performance, including successful completion of projects, achievement of project objectives, and meeting stakeholders' expectations. On the other hand, poor project planning led to delays, cost overruns, and failure to achieve project goals. The study recommends that NGOs should prioritize effective project planning to improve their project performance. This includes conducting thorough needs assessments, developing realistic project plans, involving stakeholders in project planning, and ensuring adequate resources are available for project implementation. The study also suggested that NGOs should regularly monitor and evaluate their projects to identify and address any project planning issues that may arise. The study, however, did not explore the potential impact of external factors, such as government policies or economic conditions, on project planning and project performance.

Yang, Yu, and Zhu made the decision to conduct research in 2020 to determine the connection between project planning and knowledge integration in the construction sector. The study's objectives were to determine how project planning affects knowledge integration and to offer suggestions for enhancing project planning in construction projects. The researchers collected data through a survey from 301 project members who had experience in Chinese construction projects. They used structural equation modeling to analyze the data and determine the relationship between project planning and knowledge integration. The results showed that project planning has a positive impact on knowledge integration in construction projects. The study recommends that project managers should focus on developing effective project planning processes to improve knowledge integration. This can be achieved by establishing effective communication channels and knowledge-sharing practices throughout the project lifecycle. Additionally, the study suggests that project managers should pay more attention to project planning at the early stages of the project, to ensure that knowledge integration is effectively incorporated into the project plan. However, there is a gap in how project planning can be used to facilitate project performance.

c. LEADERSHIP AND PROJECT PERFORMANCE

Theophanias (2020) discovered that project leadership significantly impacted both project management and performance. The purpose of this research was to examine the relationship between leadership experience, skill, and style and construction project management and performance. The study took a quantitative approach and used a questionnaire to

gather information from experts in the building trade. The study's results showed that the management of projects and their outcomes were significantly influenced by the level of leadership present. Research shows that a transformational leader's influence improves project management and productivity, while an autocratic leader's influence has the opposite effect. Transformational leadership was found to be the most effective for improving project management and performance, therefore the findings of this study have important implications for the success of any project you may be working on. The study's reliance on a quantitative approach to research, however, prevents us from learning too much about the participants' actual experiences and perspectives on project leadership.

Mazzetto's (2019) research suggested a realistic, interdisciplinary strategy for evaluating leadership potential in the context of project management coursework. The aim of this study was to identify critical leadership abilities for project managers and create a workable instrument for measuring them in academic settings. The research comprised a literature analysis, in-depth interviews with project management specialists, and a poll of professors who teach courses in the subject. The research confirmed that the proposed multidisciplinary strategy for evaluating prospective leaders' competence in project management is feasible and fruitful. The research also recommended that educators in the field of project management include leadership development in their curricula after emphasizing its significance. The study lacked, however, data crucial to establishing the credibility and accuracy of the proposed tool: the reliability and validity of the self- and peer-assessment questionnaires.

Capaldo, Capone, Babiak, et al.'s (2021) research in public research centers in Italy and Poland looked at the connection between efficacy beliefs, empowering leadership, and project performance. Sixty-seven public researchers from public universities were surveyed using a self-report questionnaire to compile the study's findings. Empowering leadership and confidence in one's own abilities were found to have a favorable effect on projects. Furthermore, it was found that empowering leadership moderated the connection between self-efficacy and project success. This research shows that public research institutions can improve their project success rates by encouraging optimistic attitudes and providing their executives with more authority. However, there were gaps in the study's understanding of leadership and its role in public research centers' ability to complete projects successfully.

d. CHANGE MANAGEMENT AND PROJECT PERFORMANCE

In their 2019 study, Efe and Demirors presented a model for change management and how it may be used in software development projects. The model is divided into four phases: (1) change identification, (2) change assessment, (3) change planning, and (4) change implementation. The authors contend that successful change management is essential for software development projects because it may reduce the negative effects of change while maximizing its positive effects. The article provides a detailed description of each phase of the

model and includes a case study to illustrate its application in a software development project. The authors conclude that the model can help project managers to manage change effectively, and suggest that further research is needed to validate the model's effectiveness in other contexts. The study, however, lacked a comprehensive and practical change management model that is not tailored to the software development context.

Ulukan's study (2020) provides a framework for coordinating a workplace transformation and refurbishment plan with a cultural change management initiative. The research highlights the importance of considering cultural factors when implementing workplace transformation projects and proposes a systematic approach for managing cultural change within project management. The framework is based on four key components, including organizational culture analysis, stakeholder engagement, communication planning, and training and development. The study showed that cultural change management had a significant impact on scheduling workplace transformation projects. The study also provided insights into the importance of cultural change management in workplace transformation projects and offers practical guidance for project managers in managing cultural change, however, failed to highlight KPI set for change management.

Ansari's (2019) study employs an engineering project case study to investigate the creation of a dynamic simulation model for project change-management policies. The purpose of this research is to illuminate how cost, time, and quality are affected by different policies for handling project changes. The research proposes a simulation-based approach for evaluating different change-management policies and their potential impact on project outcomes. The study uses a case study of an engineering project to demonstrate the application of the simulation model and evaluate the impact of different change-management policies on project outcomes. The findings of the study suggest that the proposed simulation model can be an effective tool for evaluating change-management policies and making informed decisions about project change management. The study provided insights into the importance of change management in project management and offers practical guidance for project managers in implementing effective change-management policies. The study, however, lacked a comprehensive review of change management.

D. SUMMARY OF THE KNOWLEDGE GAPS

| Author | Study Topic | Study Variables | Finding | Research Gap |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|--|---|
| Murithi and Muchelule (2023) | Project execution and planning for NGOs in Kenya | Project planning and project performance | Project planning significantly influences the performance of NGOs projects within Meru County. | The study did not explore the potential impact of external factors that influences project planning which this study aims to address. |
| Unegbu, Yawas, and Dan-Asabe (2022) | examined the connection between project management | Communication, risk management and performance | Using project management techniques like communicatio | However, the study only focuses on a construction project in |

| | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|---|--|
| | techniques used in the Nigerian construction industry and the success of those projects. | | n and risk management by construction project professionals improves project performance in Nigeria. | Nigeria, and the findings may not be generalizable to other countries unlike this research that will focus on Kenyan education sector. |
| Majumder, Majumder, and Biswas (2022) | The effect of thorough construction planning on the success of a project. | Project planning and project performance | Effective project planning positively affects project performance improvement. | The study did not explore in-depth the specific strategies or tools that could be used for effective project planning which this study aims to look at. |
| Theophanias (2020) | the effect of project leadership on performance and management. | leadership experience, skills, styles, project management and performance. | Leadership experience and skills had a significant impact on project management and performance. | However, the study only used a quantitative research design, which limits the depth of understanding of the participants' experiences and perceptions of project leadership unlike this study. |
| Yakubu et al. (2019) | Communication problems and project performance in Nigeria | Communication problems and project performance | Communication problems such as poor coordination, inadequate feedback, and ineffective communication channels were the major causes of project failure. | The study did not explore the potential factors that contribute to communication breakdowns which this research aims to address. |
| Ansari (2019) | Developing a dynamic simulation model for project change-management policies using an engineering project case as an example. | Change management policies and project outcomes. | Well stipulated change management policies effectively influences project outcome. | The study, however, lacked a comprehensive review of change management unlike this study. |

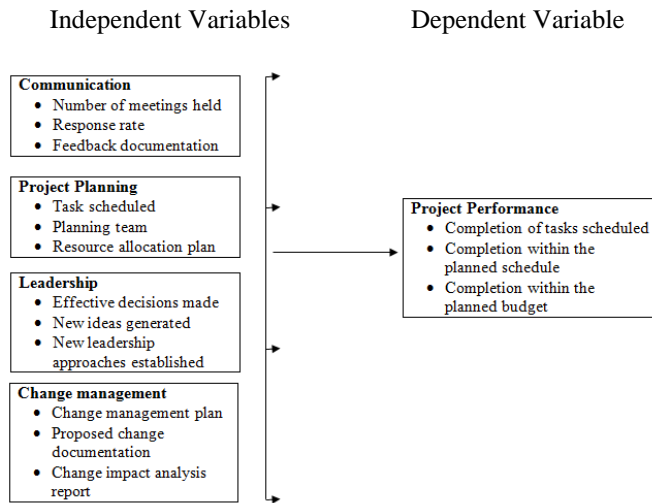
Source: Researcher (2023)

Table 2.1: Knowledge Gap

E. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

It is a visual interrelation representation of study variables underlying a research study. It provides a way of organizing and understanding complex relationships and serves as a guide for the researcher or project team in defining the research problem and formulating research objectives and questions. The diagrammatical representation shows how collaboration

in communication, project planning, leadership and change management relate with the project performance.



Source: Researcher (2023)

Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we introduce the research strategy that will support the rest of the study. This document details the study's methodology from start to finish, including the research's design, the study's units of observation and analysis, the sample criteria, the data collection methods, the data analysis techniques, and the data's presentation. The introduction explains also the key ethical considerations appropriate for addressing the research concerns by research respondents.

B. 3.2 Research Design

The overall approach or plan for carrying out a research study is referred to as the research design (Ahuja, 2011). In order to answer research questions, it is required to make decisions on data collecting and analysis. For the purposes of this study, a descriptive research design will be used to describe and sum up at one time the traits and viewpoints of young people on employability projects. The embarked use of descriptive research is that it provides an accurate and comprehensive portrayal of the subject being studied.

C. TARGET POPULATION

According to Ahuja (2011), target population refers to the group of individuals, objects, or events that a researcher is interested in studying. In this study, Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunity Project which is ongoing is considered as the unit of analysis while the unit of observation will include 30 project managers, 200 project operation staff and 50 stakeholders as per Gitau (2022) World Bank report. Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunity Project is selected as the case study because the project attracted attention of both the government and private sector will a lot of effort in

funding, planning, and organizing but in the process failed to achieve the intended purpose fully.

| Unit of Analysis | Unit of Observation | Frequency |
|--|-------------------------|-----------|
| Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunity Project | Project managers | 30 |
| | Project operation staff | 200 |
| | Stakeholders | 50 |
| Total | | 280 |

Source: Gitau (2022)

Table 3.1: Unit of Analysis and the Observation

D. SAMPLING TECHNIQUE AND SAMPLE SIZE

According to Ritchie, Lewis, and Elam (2003), sampling design is the method of choosing a portion of people or things from a broader population in order to collect information and draw statistical conclusions about the population. In connection, this study will employ stratified sampling to group the target respondents into strata based on the study respondent job category. Using basic random sampling, which ensures that every member of the target respondents has an equal chance of being chosen, the results from the sample can be extrapolated to the entire set of target respondents.

Before then, Yamane formula will be used due to its accuracy on helping to calculate a sample size for a given target respondents size with a specified level of precision. The formula is:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

where:

n = sample size

N = target respondent size

e = margin of error (as a decimal)

To calculate the sample size using the Yamane formula for a target respondent size of 280 with a margin of error of 5%, the researcher substitutes the values into the formula as follows:

$$n = 280 / (1 + 280(0.05^2))$$

$$n = 164.7 \sim 165$$

| Unit of Analysis | Unit of Observation | Frequency | Sample size |
|--|-------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunity Project | Project managers | 30 | 18 |
| | Project operation staff | 200 | 117 |
| | Project stakeholders | 50 | 30 |
| Total | | 280 | 165 |

Source: Researcher (2023)

Table 3.2: Sample Size

E. RESEARCH INSTRUMENT AND COLLECTION PROCEDURE

A structured questionnaire will be used to collect data from a sample of respondents in a systematic and efficient manner. The questionnaire contains a set of pre-determined open and closed questions that are asked of all respondents in the same order and format. The closed questions will have multiple choice and Likert scale statement. The questions will be designed to elicit specific information from the respondents

on the topic of interest. The structured questionnaire will be distributed to the key respondents through online. The respondents will be allowed one week to fill and submit their responses.

a. CONTENT VALIDITY OF THE INSTRUMENT

According to Ahuja (2011), an instrument's validity refers to how well it measures the things it is supposed to measure. It is an important aspect of research as it ensures that the data collected is accurate and reliable. In this study, the researcher intends to conduct content validity of the instrument which measures the extent to which an instrument covers all the relevant aspects of the construct being covered. This will involve researcher's supervisor and fellow colleagues in the area of specialization.

b. INTERNAL CONSISTENCY RELIABILITY OF THE INSTRUMENT

This study will employ internal consistency reliability which involves analyzing the items in the instrument to see if they are consistently measuring the same construct. This will be done by use of Cronbach's alpha techniques, which measures the degree to which the items in the instrument are related to each other. In this case, a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.70 or higher will be considered acceptable.

c. PILOTING STUDY

A small-scale research study will be conducted at Nakuru County prior to the main study to test and refine the research instrument and procedures. The purpose of a piloting study will be to identify potential problems or challenges in the research design and to make necessary adjustments before the main study begins.

F. DIAGNOSTIC TEST

The variance inflation factor (VIF) will be used to measure the extent to which the variance of an estimated regression coefficient is inflated due to multi-collinearity. The researcher will conduct a multi-collinearity test to determine the degree of correlation between two or more independent variables in a regression model. A VIF value of 1-10 indicates no multi-collinearity, greater than 10 suggests the presence of problematic multi-collinearity. Second, the researcher will perform heteroscedasticity tests using the White test, which posits that the variance of the mistakes in a regression model is not constant over the range of values for the independent variables, to see if the errors variance occurs. Lastly, the researcher will conduct a normality test to determine whether a dataset follows a normal distribution. Through a normal probability plot, if the data is normally distributed, the points on the plot should fall approximately along a straight line.

G. DATA ANALYSIS

Immediately after data collection and entry on SPSS software, data cleaning will be done first to check for errors

and inconsistencies in the data, and transforming the data into a format that is suitable for analysis. Later, both descriptive and inferential analysis will be conducted. Descriptive statistics will be used to summarize and characterize the data, including measures of central tendency (such as mean) and variability (such as standard deviation, variance). However, in order to extrapolate findings from the sample to the population as a whole, inferential statistical methods will be employed. These include Pearson correlation matrix, ANOVA and regression model analysis to establish the strength of the relationship among variables. The regression model will be as follows.

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \beta_4X_4 + \mu$$

Where,

Y = Project Performance

β_0 = Constant of Coefficient

X_1 = Communication

X_2 = Project planning

X_3 = Leadership

X_4 = change management

$\beta_1 \dots \beta_4$ = Coefficients of independent variables $X_1 \dots X_4$.

μ = error term

Thereafter, results of the analysis will be reported in a clear and concise manner, with appropriate figures and tables with the interpretation of the findings.

H. ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Ethical considerations are an important aspect of research, as they ensure that the research is conducted in a responsible and respectful manner, and that the rights and welfare of the research participants are protected. The researcher therefore, will first seek authorization letter from Kenyatta University and NACOSTI to conduct research to the public. Secondly, the researcher will fully inform the respondents about the nature and purpose of the research, and their voluntary and informed consent to participate. The researcher will also inform the respondent that their data will be kept confidential and private, no harm, and will be used for the purposes of the research. The researcher will also swear to respect the diversity and cultural differences of the participants, and should avoid any discriminatory practices or attitudes.

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