

**STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT IN PROJECT LIFE CYCLE AND PERFORMANCE
OF FREE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROJECT IN NAIROBI COUNTY**

BY

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**A research project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the
degree of Master of Arts in Project Planning and Management of the
University of Nairobi**

NOVEMBER 2023

DECLARATION

This research project proposal is my original work and has not been submitted to any other university or institution of higher learning for examination.

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Date 24th November 2023

This research report has been submitted for examination with my approval as the university Supervisor.

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Date25th November 2024

DEDICATION

This project work is dedicated to my lovely children Maxwell Kariti and Sophie Mweru for their love and great support during my academic endeavors. Both of you have been my best cheerleaders.

God bless you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would want to begin by giving thanks to God for his constant guidance and care while I worked for this degree.

In addition, I'd want to offer my deepest appreciation to Professor Raphael Nyonje, my advisor, for his invaluable assistance while I worked on my research project.

As an added note, I appreciate the chance to further my education that the University of Nairobi has provided me with. I'd also want to thank the professors and staff in the Extra Mural Studies department, who guided me through my Project Planning and Management coursework and provided invaluable assistance for my study project.

My parents, Samuel Waweru and Faith Wanjiru, have always been there to cheer me on and push me to be persistent, and I am grateful beyond words for their support and encouragement. I'd also want to thank my brother, sister, parents, and friends for being there for me. I will never forget what they have done for me,

Finally, I'd want to express my gratitude to my coworkers, who were an inspiration and helped me succeed in this program.

God bless you all.

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ABSTRACT

The Nairobi Early Childhood Development Education Project was launched in 2018. The project provides free Early Childhood Education by scrapping levies in 229 public centers with each child receiving a capitation of ksh3, 815. The aim of the project was to ensure access to good elementary education by the children targeting more than 17,000 children. Currently, the project is characterized by congestions in classes, shortage of facilitators, and limited teaching and learning resources. Based on this background, this study sought to understand the influence of stakeholder involvement in the project life cycle. The study focused on involvement of stakeholders in project identification, planning, implementation and evaluation phases and its influence on the performance of the free early childhood education development project in Nairobi County. The study was guided by stakeholder theory. A descriptive survey research design was employed targeting 229 facilitators working at the 229 public ECD centers, 458 Centre managers, 458 parents and 17 Sub county ECD coordinators. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select respondent's representative. A sample of between 10-30% was used to sample 15 facilitators, 138 Centre manager, 69 parents and 17 Sub-county ECD coordinators. The primary data for the study was collected using center managers and facilitators questionnaires and complemented with the interviews for parents and Sub-county ECD coordinators to get information on the influence of stakeholder involvement in the project performance in Nairobi County. The research instruments were piloted in a randomly selected public ECD centre, which was not included in the main study. The pilot study was used to ensure validity and reliability of the instruments were met. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics, correlations and a multiple regression model with the aid of SPSS V.25 while qualitative data was analysed using thematic discussions. Tables, figures and prose discussion was used to display the findings. All ethical issues were ensured by seeking permission from the university and NACOST as well as obtaining informed consent from the participants. The research revealed that stakeholder involvement in project identification significantly influences the performance of free early childhood education projects in Nairobi County. Active participation in project planning and implementation also led to improved outcomes, including higher teaching staff retention and increased learner enrolment. The study concluded that stakeholder engagement is crucial for the success of free early childhood education projects. The rejection of null hypotheses underscored the significant impact of stakeholders at various project phases, aligning with previous research supporting collaborative decision-making for successful implementation. To enhance project performance, it is recommended to prioritize stakeholder involvement throughout the project life cycle. Providing capacity-building initiatives to stakeholders will empower them for effective contributions. Establishing sustainable engagement strategies with regular feedback mechanisms will enable continuous assessment and improvements.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Stakeholder involvement is crucial for the accomplishment of projects in any organization. Projects have numerous stakeholders who have varying degrees of interests and influences. According to Freedman (1984; 1166) a stakeholder is any group of individuals who can affect the achievement of the organizational objective. Further, Eden and Ackerman (1998; 117) explain that stakeholders are people or minor groups of people who have the power to answer to, discuss with and alter the strategic future of an organization. Therefore, the legitimacy and insistence are key features of the stakeholders where the nature of stakeholders varies with the project's life. Therefore, it is essential to identify the stakeholders in every aspect of the project life to ensure that stakeholder's involvement takes place effectively during the different parts of the project cycle. Stakeholder engrossment is a means and an end serving as a process that help the community and people collaborate and corporate to make the project a success. It involves a continuum of inputs, information sharing, decision-making, partnerships, empowerment and consultation.

This study was be directed by the stakeholder theory by Freedman (1984) which identifies model stakeholder groups within an organization who are interested in a project. These include the customers, employees, supplies, financier, communities, governmental bodies, political groups, trade associations and unions and even competitors (Reed, Challies, & Vente, 2017). The stakeholder theory further posits that an organization is successful when value is delivered to all its stakeholders. There are many benefits of involving all the relevant stakeholders including greater retention of talented individuals, greater productivity, and increased financial investment from financiers (Freedman, Kujala, Sachs & Stutz 2017). According to Freedman, Kujala, Sachs

& Stutz (2017) stakeholder theory is an important approach in conceptualizing and comprehending business organization. The purpose of a project is to bring together the different stakeholders to create new jobs, products and services needed and wanted by the various stakeholders (Reed, Challies, & Vente, 2017). Business is more concerned with creating value for all stakeholders. Therefore, exploring important stakeholders who can impact or be impacted by an organization is important. Moreover, it is important to understand stakeholder dialogue and engagement to help create as much value as possible.

A project may be described as a temporary undertaking that is performed with the purpose of creating new services, products, or outcomes. Any project manager and project team have one purpose which is to undertake the required activities for the purpose of meeting the objectives of a project (Biggins, Lene, & Trollund, 2017). According to the systems theory, a project follows the systems view where they can be broken down into phases that can further be broken down into specific objectives. Each project has a beginning, middle and ending phase. Alison (2016) asserts that standard projects have four typical phases which have its own agendas, tasks and issues. These phases include; the initiation phase, the planning phase, the execution and the closure phase.

The initiation phase refers to the process of identifying the objective or the need for the project which can be based on a problem or a business opportunity (Nene, 2017). The phase also entails a feasibility study to determine whether the identified solution options defined address the problem and a solution is provided (Biggins, Lene, & Trollund, 2017). Once approved, the project is referenced by its objectives, scope and structure. The phase is also characterized by the recruitment of a project team and an office environment. Towards the end of the initiation phase a review should be done to ensure that all the objectives are planned.

The subsequent stage encompasses the project planning phase, which is distinguished by the development of a comprehensive framework outlining the many activities, tasks, dependencies, and timeframes involved. The authors Biggins, Lene, and Trollsund (2017) propose the use of resource plans, which outline the necessary personnel, equipment, and supplies. In addition, a comprehensive plan is formulated to encompass quality targets, control measures, and assurance. Communications plans are developed to outline the necessary information for stakeholders. An acceptance plan is established, which outlines the criteria necessary to obtain customer acceptance. Furthermore, a procurement plan is devised to identify the products that need to be sourced (Kerzner, 2018). The project implementation plan developed in the project planning phase is a key part of the project execution phase (Biggins, Lene, & Trollsund, 2017). Each plan's implementation calls for a chain of management procedures to track and regulate the project's output. Change, risks, and problems are tracked throughout execution, as are the quality of deliverables and how they compare to acceptance criteria (Kerzner, 2018). This phase is essential in satisfying the client's wants and needs. Therefore, the actions, resources, and costs associated with creating each deliverable must be tracked and managed. Time, money, quality, change, risk, problem, procurement, acceptance, and communication management are just few of the facets of management that need to be tracked and managed (Kerzner, 2016).

The project evaluation involves examining whether the project has met the set criteria. The outstanding project activities, risks or issues are identified (Kerzner, 2018). Project review also looks at how well the project is doing in relation to its stated goals and how closely it follows the management practices established during the planning phase (Biggins, Lene, & Trollsund, 2017). This entails a review of whether the results are beneficial to the target individuals, whether the objectives were met, whether it operated with the scope of terms of references, the inquiry pertains

to the adherence of the project's timeline as stipulated in the proposed schedule, as well as its alignment with the allocated financial resources as specified in the budgetary plan.

Many different parties have a stake in the project's success or failure, and their actions may affect how quickly or slowly it progresses, as well as whether or not it succeeds in its intended purpose. Furthermore, many types of stakeholder participation are necessary throughout the various stages of project management, including scoping, planning, implementation, and closing. For instance, in the United States, a study by Champion (2019) reiterate that the first step in a successful project is identifying the stakeholders whom the change will impact including the learners, teachers, community members, the staff, county leaders, parents and the school leaders. Campion (2019) claims that a project's success stems from sustainable funding which was possible through collaborative effort and empowerment of the stakeholders throughout the project planning facilitating problem analysis on the feasibility of the projects. Collaborative efforts further see specification and allocation of resources through prioritized decision-making approach. Similarly, Paine and McCann (2016) revealed that engaging stakeholders with an interest in the long-term success of the school and students leads to a positive sustainable change in the projects. They cited that on-going collaborations results in continued efforts to improve infrastructure and increase the capacity of the staff through ongoing training programs. Moreover, stakeholder involvement was found to promote positive change though accountability measures on the use of resources.

In the UK a survey by Hamilton (2016) argues that education is more than the physical structure that facilitates learning. Rather, it goes beyond the teacher/learner dynamics by nurturing innovation, contributing to the regional achievement and in influencing the economic prospects of the country. Therefore, with this arises the issue of vested attention from a wider pool of people on the issue of education. In this sense, Hamilton (2016) asserts that the success of educational

projects requires proper identification of the stakeholders even beyond the obvious user groups. Stakeholders vary from the faculty, administrators, alumni's, local and national governments, communities, local businesses and committees and elected officials. In the Faithful + Gould project, a structured and custom-made tactic to stakeholder engagement was adopted in its different educational projects where engagement of stakeholders from the planning stages was created (Hamilton, 2016). Structures sessions facilitated full consultation with the project team allowing for the design of the project that was cognizant with the issues raised by the stakeholders (Paine & McCann, 2016). Overall, the projects' success in fostering capacity building, expanding the physical facilities and teaching and learning assets was due to the acknowledgement of the multiple stakeholders, ensuing inclusivity, bargaining and connecting with them which fostered positive relationships and opinions.

In South Africa, Mashau, Kone and Mutshaeni (2014) conducted a study to examine participation improvement for quality education. The researchers aimed to identify the stakeholders. They found that poor education in the country characterized by schools with poorly staffed and trained teachers, unsustainable funding, congestions and limited provision of teaching and learning resources stemmed from the poor involvement of the stakeholders including the community leaders, members, educators, parents and other stakeholders in the project cycles.

In Kenya, early childhood education is critical for the continuity of education later in life and forms the foundation of one's education. Therefore, its access, equitability and quality are crucial for the betterment of the society and the country's economy. It is on this note that several early childhood educational projects have been implemented. In this context, projects are temporary endeavors in which people work together to design, develop, and produce something new that meets the needs of its intended consumers within a predetermined time frame and financial constraint. Bungoma

and Nairobi, for instance, enacted the Early Childhood Development and Education strategy to expand educational opportunities for young children. Muyoka (2017) found that the project's success has been hindered by a number of factors, such as a lack of adequate teaching and learning resources, a lack of funding, a lack of government support, a shortage of adequately trained ECDE teachers, inadequate pay for teachers, and overcrowded classrooms as a result of insufficient stakeholder participation. Similarly, Biggins, Lene, & Trollund (2017) found that stakeholder involvement influences the implementation of the ECDE project in schools where the achievement of staff retention, learner enrollment is correlated to stakeholder's participation in the program.

The Nairobi Early Childhood Development Education Project was launched by Nairobi Governor Mike Sonko in 2018. The project provides free Early Childhood Education by scrapping levies in 229 public centers with each child receiving a capitation of ksh3, 815. The aim of the project was to ensure access to good elementary education by the children targeting more than 17,000 children. Currently, the project is characterized by congestions in classes, shortage of facilitators, and limited teaching and learning resources. Thereby, this study sought to understand the influence of stakeholder's involvement in the project life cycle.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The effectiveness, efficiency and the suitability of projects is driven by the successful engagement of all the stakeholders. This should start right from the inception phases of the project, during the planning for effective and efficient allocation and specification of resources and other inputs, risk reporting and control, feedback provisions, correction of mistakes and identifying new directions where needed (Muyoka, 2017). Ultimately, these would lead to the project outcomes meeting its intended deliverables. In the case of the Nairobi County Early Childhood Education Development Project, these deliverables included increased access of children to pre-primary education by

bridging the gap between the socio-economic classes, improved quality of education, increased teacher recruitment and expanded teaching and learning facilities to promote equitable learning. Involving the stakeholders in each phase according to Paine and McCann (2016) is critical for the eventual success of a project. In the ECDE project, involving the stakeholders is critical for the smooth transition of projects from one phase to the other.

However, this has not been achieved as the project is characterized by congestion in the classes, poor infrastructure, and shortage of teachers and poor accountability due to the lack of properly trained center managers in charge of the projects. Moreover, the project comes at a time when the Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) is being implemented and this requires immense parental engagement, involvement and capacity building for the teachers and the center managers. Therefore, it is critical to examine the extent to which the stakeholders have been involved throughout the project life cycle in the project.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine stakeholder involvement in project life cycle and performance of free early childhood education project in Nairobi County.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

This study was be guided by the following objectives:

- i. To examine the influence of stakeholder involvement in the project identification phase on the performance of the free early childhood education development project in Nairobi County
- ii. To examine the influence of stakeholder involvement in the planning phase on the performance of the free early childhood education development project in Nairobi County

- iii. To examine the influence of stakeholder involvement in the project implementation phase on the performance of the free early childhood education development project in Nairobi County
- iv. To examine the influence of stakeholder involvement in the evaluation phase on the performance of the free early childhood education development project in Nairobi County

1.5 Research Questions

- i. What is the influence of stakeholder involvement in the project identification phase on the performance of the free early childhood education development project in Nairobi County?
- ii. What is the influence of stakeholder involvement in the planning phase on the performance of the free early childhood education development project in Nairobi County?
- iii. What is the influence of stakeholder involvement in the project implementation phase on the performance of the free early childhood education development project in Nairobi County?
- iv. What is the influence of stakeholder involvement in the evaluation phase on the performance of the free early childhood education development project in Nairobi County?

1.6 Hypothesis

H₀: Stakeholder involvement in the project identification phase does not have a statistically significant influence on the performance of the free early childhood education development project in Nairobi County.

H0₂: There is no significant association between stakeholder involvements in the planning phase on the performance of the free early childhood education development project in Nairobi County

H0₃: There is no significant association between stakeholder involvement in the project implementation phase and the performance of the free early childhood education development project in Nairobi County

H0₄: There is no significant association between stakeholder involvement in the evaluation phase and the performance of the free early childhood education development project in Nairobi County

1.7 Value of the Study

The value of a project can only be optimized when it starts progresses and ends as planned. However, if certain important steps are not taken care of at any point of the project lifecycle, chances are, the project may be delayed, it may cost more, it may stall altogether or may end up being unsustainable. As such, the proposed study intended to provide beneficial findings that may enable the County government of Nairobi to ventilate more on the life cycle of the Free Pre-Primary Education Project. Through assessing the expected role of various stakeholders and cross-examining the same with their actual involvement in different levels of the project lifecycle, the findings may help the management of the Free Pre-primary Education project in Nairobi City County to rectify any weak link that may be associated with the challenges faced in implementation of the project.

Since the Nairobi City County is the first county to implement the project in Kenya, the findings of the study will be useful to other counties intending implement the same project. The findings

may help the management of the counties and the Free Pre-primary Education to avoid similar mistakes and probably achieve the outcomes envisaged in such projects. The implication is that through the findings of the proposed study, the projects implemented in other counties may register better success. The findings of the study may also be useful to other scholars seeking to advance knowledge in the area of stakeholder involvement and project lifecycle. Various scholars in similar backgrounds can use the findings of the proposed study to support their literature, research gaps and justify the need for further advancement of knowledge

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a comprehensive examination of prior scholarly works pertaining to the subject matter under investigation. The chapter will be structured around the research goals, which aimed to investigate the impact of stakeholder engagement throughout the project identification, planning, implementation, and assessment phases.

2.2 Stakeholder Involvement in the Project Identification Phase

Gregory, Atkins, Midgley, & Hodgson (2020) reiterate that designing and reporting is critical in any project identification phase. The research primarily examined the matter of stakeholder identification and engagement within problem structuring interventions conducted in Nepal. The study drew upon the social identity theory as a theoretical framework. The researchers aimed to investigate the influence of stakeholder involvement during the issue structuring phase of a green innovation project on its overall success. The study found that upon involving the stakeholders, it was established that there was a need for the project to focus on the community-based events by looking at how steelworks sites could be redeveloped for new purposes.

The researchers found that evaluating the problem in restructuring the intervention showed the importance of involving the stakeholders in learning about the issued that need to be accounted for and the range of possible options that can be explored when identifying the project need. Overall, the study contributes to the existing literature by demonstrating the importance of stakeholder involvement in the initial phase of a project to capture the real problem that needs intervention

rather than working with outsiders to solve a possibly non-existent challenge facing the local communities.

The findings from this study support those by Mandala (2018) who found that involving the community in the initial project planning phase has a significant influence on its eventual performance. The study, was however, limited in that it focused on a community project in Nepal, where the political, economic and social factors are different from the local ones. Therefore, this study will conduct the study locally to determine whether the findings from this study will be replicable in the local context.

Nene (2017) reiterates that the involvement of stakeholders in programme managements is critical for its performance. To yield its maximum achievement, there is a need for its quality implementation. The objective of Nene's (2017) study was to examine the impact of stakeholder participation on project selection and the subsequent performance of Early Childhood Programmes in Kibera and Mukuru Bridge International Schools. Nene (2017) adopted a descriptive survey research design to enable her collect data that would answer the research questions. The target population was the staff working in the early childhood programmes in the schools in Nairobi County. A total of 211 respondents including the ministry of education officers, parents, donors, staff and the directors of the schools were sampled using stratified sampling. Data was collected using open and close ended questionnaires as well as secondary sources from the organizational reports on the stakeholder's involvement in the programmes. Content analysis, descriptive and inferential analysis was done for the qualitative and quantitative data respectively. The findings revealed that there was a positively strong and statistically significance between the stakeholder's project identification involvement and the performance of the ECD programme. Overall, the involvement of the stakeholders led to higher teaching staff retention, increased enrolment of

learners, higher effectiveness in programme execution and high retention rates. Similar claims were made by Mandala (2018) who also found that involvement of the stakeholders in the project commencement phase had a noteworthy effect on the presentation of the road construction projects. The study is however limited in its scope as it focused on two schools targeted in the ECD project which limits the generalizability of the findings to the wider Nairobi County. This gap will be filled by targeting more than two ECD centres.

2.3 Stakeholder involvement in the project planning phase

Wakeinda (2019) purposed to evaluate the influence of inclusiveness of stakeholders' participation in the county government's performance in Kenya. The researcher adopted a descriptive and explanatory cross-sectional survey method and a sample of 354 executive committee members, country secretaries, deputy secretaries and MCAs was selected. Questionnaires were used to gather data. It was established that stakeholder's contribution was significant and positive for the performance of the county governments. So, this study was crucial for the current study as it showed the association between stakeholder participation and project participation. In another study, Wamugu and Ogollah (2017) investigated the part of stakeholder's play in the performance of CDF schemes in Kenya using Mathira East Constituency as its case. The researchers established that engrossment of stakeholders in the project planning phase for the identification, screening and selection are critical for the success of the CDF projects. These projects, albeit crucial in explaining the importance of stakeholders' involvement were not focused on the education sector; hence the findings may not be generalizable to the current study. This gap will be filled by focusing on the education project in Nairobi County.

Mandala (2018) endeavored to define the effect of the stakeholder's involvement on the administration of project performance of road building project in Bondo Kenya. Under the study,

the researcher was interested in examining how the involvement of the stakeholders during the project identification, putting it into effect and monitoring and evaluating it affects the performance. The researcher used a descriptive investigation approach and utilized a cross-sectional review study design. The target demographic included the citizens of Bondo Sub County as well as project managers. A total of 396 participants participated in the research after the use of a stratified random sampling procedure. The main instruments used for data gathering were semi-structured surveys and interviews conducted with key informants. Quantitative data was collected via the use of close-ended questionnaires, and afterwards analyzed using SPSS version 22. The research revealed that the engagement of stakeholders across all stages of project execution, including project planning, had a significant influence on the outcomes of road building initiatives in Bondo Sub-County. The present study's results corroborate those of Nene (2017), which demonstrated a statistically significant and robust correlation between stakeholder involvement in project planning and the regularity of early childhood development (ECD) programs in Nairobi County. The study, is however, limited as the researchers focused on a road construction project in Bondo Sub County where only two stakeholders were involved in the process. The current study is focused on an early childhood education programme where there are more than two key stakeholders involved. Therefore, the study will endeavor to establish whether the findings by Mandala (2018) are replicable in educational projects.

2.4 Stakeholder involvement in the project execution phase.

Nguyen, Aguilera and Remington (2010) reiterate that implementation of projects are characterized by a wide range of complex networks of stakeholders who lead to complicated relationships between the different parties. Consequently, different stakeholders exert different influences over the implementation of the project both in a constructive and counter-productive

manner. The researchers contend that the execution phase is deliberated as the most significant stage to the project life cycle as all the plans and activities materialize and influences the performance of a project (Nguyen, & Mohamed, 2018). Therefore, the researchers felt that understanding the intricacies of the stakeholder's impact on the execution phase is critical in facilitating the end results. To complete their study, the researchers focused on a multiple case study of ID project implementation in Vietnam with the purpose of investigating the impact of the major stakeholders on the projects past its early phases.

Usadolo and Cadwel (2016) investigated the rural Nguni Cattle Project in South Africa using the Participatory Rural Appraisal tool as its operational focus. The major objective of the researcher was to identify how the stakeholders reflect the participatory appraisal goal of the project on the overall project performance. The major points of intersections were the meeting of the stakeholders to make sure that the beneficiaries of the project are well-informed of the project. To collect data, interviews, organizational documents and observation of meeting was done. Data analysis showed that the promotion of mutual understanding through sustainable collaborative relationship between the stakeholders had significantly positive relations with the overall performance of the project. Encouraging stakeholder participation in rural project was found to be critical in its successful implementation. The study is however, limited in its scope as the researchers focused on a rural project on cattle dips whereas the current study purposes to define the effectiveness of stakeholder involvement in an educational programme in the urban areas of Nairobi County.

In a research conducted by Njogu (2016), the impact of stakeholder engagement in project management on project performance within the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) was investigated. The study conducted by Njogu (2016) sought to assess the influence of stakeholder engagement throughout the implementation phase of the Automobile Emission

Control Project. The researcher used a descriptive survey study methodology, in which a total of 121 respondents were selected via the utilization of a stratified sampling approach. The collection of primary and secondary data was conducted via the use of questionnaires and examination of reports. The study revealed a substantial correlation between stakeholder participation and project success in the NEMA project throughout several stages of the project life cycle, including project execution. The results presented in this study align with the findings of Nene (2017), which demonstrated a significant correlation between stakeholder engagement in project implementation and the performance of early childhood development (ECD) projects. However, the previous research conducted by NEMA specifically examined the reduction of carbon emissions by vehicles, whereas the present study will concentrate on the early childhood education project in Nairobi County. Therefore, it is important to note that the conclusions of the previous study may not be applicable or reproducible in the context of the current study.

2.5 Stakeholder involvement in the project evaluation phase

Magassouba, Tambi, Alkhlaifat, and Abdullah Bin (2019) emphasize the significance and delicate nature of the stakeholder's involvement in project performance. According to the researchers, the Administration and Control of Major Projects and Public Procurement (ACMPPP) implemented several significant reorganizations and restructurings of expansion projects in New Guinea. The study conducted an analysis of current literature on stakeholder participation across all stages of stakeholder involvement in project phases, including project monitoring and assessment, due to the involvement of several stakeholders in the process. The researcher has determined that the inclusion of stakeholders in project monitoring activities not only improves the overall effectiveness of the project, but also serves as a significant means of attaining organizational objectives. The researchers reiterate that collecting information on the project by engaging

different stakeholders is an effective way of extending the project success. This is associated with the fact that stakeholders are a prevailing means of consideration of the project and its environment.

Locally, Hassan (2016) argue that since the CDF funds were introduced there have been many great impacts due to the numerous CDF projects that have been put in place. The researcher, however, cautions that if the CDF money is not managed transparently and societies are not actively and adequately partake in the management of the local projects leading to a potential loss of funds and in some cases resulting in incomplete and projects that do not meet the standards and qualities. The initiatives may also lack national relevance. Hence, the researcher sought to investigate the impact of stakeholder engagement on project performance within the Isiolo North Constituency. The researcher used a descriptive survey study methodology in order to evaluate the involvement of stakeholders in the execution of projects supported by the Constituency Development Fund (CDF). The study focused on a sample of 155 individuals, including representatives from the CDF projects, CDF committee members, and five government representatives. The participants were selected using a stratified proportional sampling approach. A sample size of 160 participants was selected, and data was collected via the use of semi-structured questionnaires and interview schedules. The analysis included both descriptive and inferential approaches. The results indicate that the active participation of many stakeholders in the monitoring and assessment of the project had a positive impact on its overall performance. Based on the results of the study, the researchers suggest that the stakeholders should be actively involved in the decision-making process of the project due to their comprehensive understanding of the project. Therefore, it is crucial to engage them in order to guarantee that the project outcomes are advantageous to their interests. The study findings are however, limited as the researcher

targeted community projects in Isiolo County, whereas the current study will target Early Childhood Education Projects in Nairobi County.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

The study employed the stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984) and developed by Donaldson and Preston (1995) and Evans and Freeman (1998). Stakeholder's theory seeks to address the principles of whom and what in projects (Harrison and Wicks, 2013).

2.6.1 Stakeholder Theory

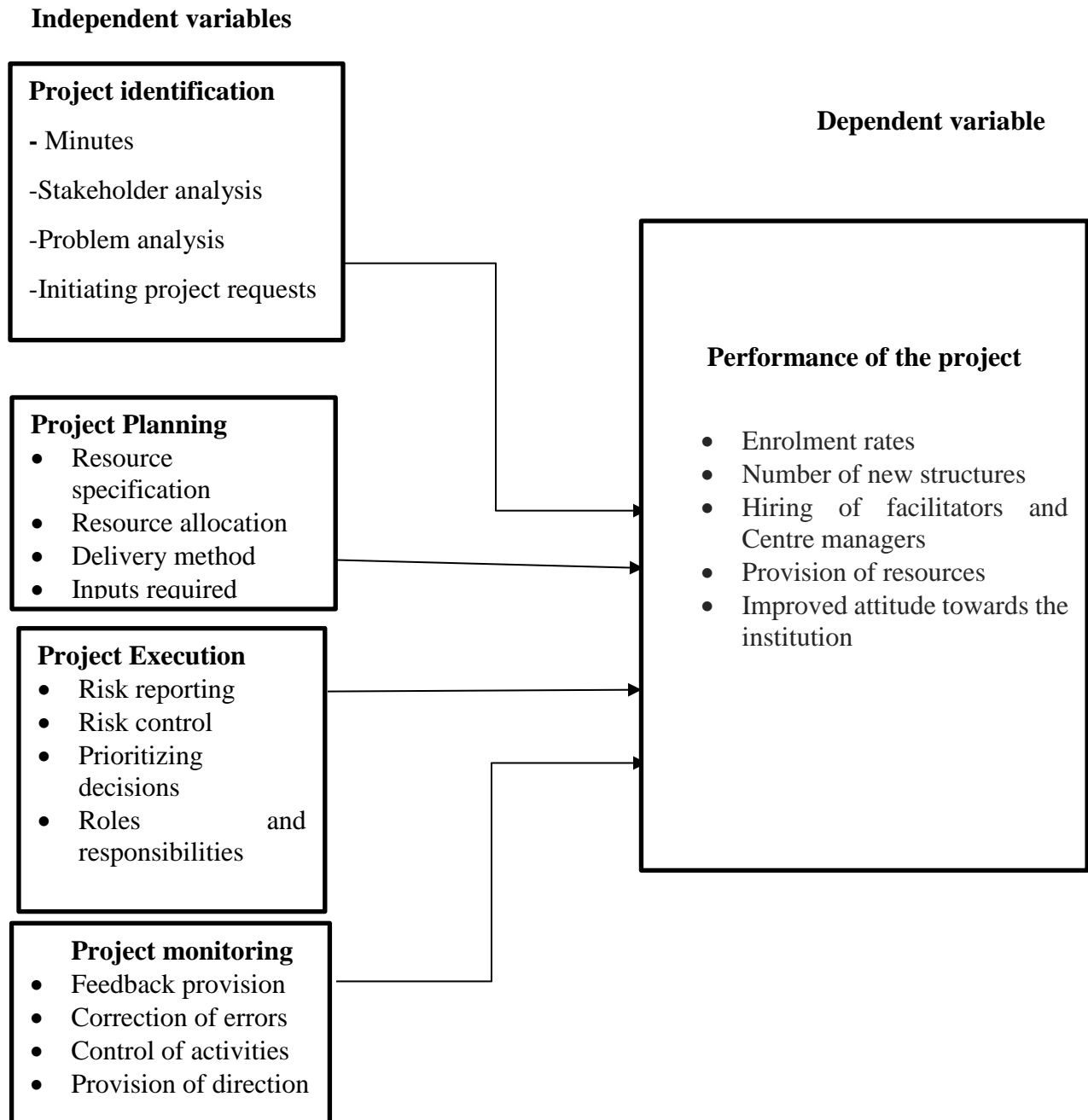
The stakeholder theory is often designated as a powerful tool for understanding the firm and its setting. It is critical in broadening the vision and roles and responsibilities of the management past its main function as a profit maximization entity. Its extents to the stakeholder's input –output identification as well as the interests and claims of the non-stockholding parties (Mandala 2018). According to Patton (2008) the stakeholder model proposes that all the groups or persons that have a legitimate interest in an enterprise should engage in it to obtain benefits.

The stakeholder theory was first formulated by Freeman (1984) and subsequently expanded upon by Donaldson and Preston (1995) as well as Evans and Freeman (1998). These scholars delineate the many stakeholders involved and provided insights into the appropriate management of their interests. According to Harrison and Wicks (2013), the stakeholder theory aims to address the fundamental aspects of who and what in the context of projects. The stakeholder theory is a departure from the conventional perspective that prioritized the interests of owners as the central focus. This statement underscores the significance of several stakeholders, including suppliers, financiers, political entities, governmental organizations, consumers, workers, and communities.

Overall, the objective of the theory is to offer an understanding of stakeholders and managing them effectively. Several fields have adopted this theory, despite it having a strategic management

origin. Its wide use is attributed to its emphasis on the significant relationships between the staff and the stakeholders. Specifically, the managers need to understand the stakeholder's effect on the success of projects (Mologaziev & Resh 2016). This relationship is outlined by Bridoux and Stoelhorst (2014) who provide the grounds of the stakeholder theory. The underlying assumption is that the project maintains relationships with its stakeholders, who are influenced by the choices it takes. The second assumption pertains to the inherent characteristics of the association in respect to the processes and results involving its stakeholders. Thirdly, the primacy is given to the intrinsic worth of its shareholders above the interests of any particular group. Fourthly, the idea places significant emphasis on the priority given by the management. The active participation of stakeholders is crucial throughout the many stages of the early childhood education project, including identification, planning, implementation, and assessment.

2.7 Conceptual framework



2.8 Summary of the literature review

This chapter presents a comprehensive analysis of the current literature, which has yielded substantial findings on the impact of stakeholder involvement on project performance. The results indicate that the engagement of stakeholders throughout the project lifecycle, including project identification, planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation, has a statistically significant effect on overall project outcomes (Nene, 2017; Nguyen et al., 2010; Mandala, 2018, Njogu, 2016; Hassan, 2016; Usadalo & Cadwell, 2016). However, there were several gaps in the current literature including the lack of sufficient studies on the early childhood education programme rolled out in Nairobi County by its Governor Mike Sonko and several studies whose scope was on other projects such as Hassan's (2016) study which focused on CDF project's; Mandala's (2018) study which focused on road development projects in Bondo and Nguyen and colleagues (2010); Usadallo and Cadwell (2016) whose studies were conducted outside Kenya where the political, social, and economic factors differ from the local ones. Therefore, there current literature does not meet the scope, target population in this study; hence this gap will be filled by the current study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The methodology used in research encompassed the many methods, processes, and strategies utilized for the purpose of data gathering and analysis. This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the research processes used, including the research design, study population, and the tools employed for data processing.

3.2 Research Design

A research design is postulated by Kothari (2014) as the technique used to collect data, sampling tools and strategies or the structure that is conceptual for the research. This process involves the acquisition, quantification, and examination of data. This study used descriptive survey research methodology since it allows for the creation of an accurate depiction of the characteristics, events, or circumstances that contributed to the collection of a substantial amount of quantitative data from a wide population in a cost-effective way.

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, (2019) define a descriptive design as the approach that involves preparation, establishing, collecting and scrutinizing data to gain the required information. In this study, the research involved garnering data and describing events and then organizing, tabulating, the purpose of this study was to use data visualization and descriptive analysis techniques in order to address the research inquiries and examine the hypothesis about the impact of stakeholders on the performance of the Nairobi County Early Childhood Education Development Project.

3.3 Target Population

The term "target population" denotes the specific group for whom there is a need for obtaining information. For this study, the target population included the Sub County ECD coordinators, Centre managers, parents and facilitators working at the 239 public ECD centers with 229 Centre managers and 458 facilitators.

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Procedures

Stratified random sampling technique was used to choose respondent's illustrative of the target population. Stratified sampling involves the division of the target populace into different components on unifying features and samples drawn from each group. The technique is important because a sample will not be drawn if it does not constitute the identical group hence it warrants a comparison between different groups. In this case, the respondents were stratified based on the management levels.

Table 3.4 Sample size

Centers	Respondents	Sample Size	
Centre Managers	239	15	
Facilitators	229	138	
Parents	458	69	
Sub county ECD coordinators	17	17	
Total	1162	1	239

3.5 Data collection Instruments

The primary data for the study were obtained by means of questionnaires and accompanied with the interviews to get information on the impact of stakeholder involvement in the project performance in Nairobi County. Questionnaires had both close-ended and open-ended questions

as Kothari (2014) asserts that using questions facilitates intensity and richness of the perceptions of respondents.

The questionnaires were structured into five sections. The first section focused on demographic and general information labelled Section A. Section B covered the first objective of project identification phase, Section C focused on the second objective on project planning phase, the third section (Section D) was on project execution while Section E was on project evaluation and monitoring. Section F covered the dependent variable, the Project Performance.

Questionnaires were flexible to allow the researcher to capture in-depth knowledge of the respondents while promoting cooperation. Questionnaires were also easy to analyze; hence they were cost effective. The questionnaires were self-administered to the parents and the facilitators.

Interviews were also used to collect data from the center managers and the Sub county ECD coordinators. Interview methods for data collection include the use of oral-verbal stimuli and reply of oral-verbal responses.

3.5.1 Pilot Testing

Pilot testing are crucial for making corrective revisions to the data collection tools and procedures with the purpose of making the data gathered reliable and valid. Pre-testing in this case sought to identify errors in the instruments and data before the actual data collection process commences. For piloting, 2 centers were used within Nairobi County, but not in the centers that partook the main study. The center managers, two parents and one sub-county coordinator were interviewed in the pilot study while the facilitators were issued with the questionnaires.

3.5.2 Validity of the research instruments

Validity refers to the extent to which a device effectively collects the intended data and the subsequent analysis of that data accurately reflects the phenomena being studied. Additionally, it signifies the use, significance, and suitability of the conclusions made by researchers based on the results of the study. For this study, data validity was ensured through content-validity where the research instruments were reviewed to ensure they adequately address the research objectives through expert opinions.

Collection of data from the relevant respondents helped validate the instruments with the help of the university experts and the supervisors.

3.5.3 Reliability of Research instruments

Reliability pertains to the degree to which research instruments yield consistent and dependable data across multiple iterations. It encompasses the consistency of the results obtained from a particular device. In this study, the reliability of the data was assessed using the Cronbach's alpha formula, which established a connection between the scores of each item in the questionnaire. The Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was tested the reliability at least 0.7 indicating the consistence in responses.

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

Primarily, it was important to get a letter from the esteemed University of Nairobi as well as the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). In order to receive permission to collect data, it was necessary to acquire a letter from the county education office. Subsequently, arrangements were scheduled with the management of the Centre to determine the most suitable day for data collection.

The administration of the instruments ensured that the study sample get enough time to go through and respond to the questions through the drop and pick later approach. This at least provided some assurance that the respondents do got sufficient time to respond to the questions.

3.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data was inspected for correctness and extensiveness upon collection of the instruments. Qualitative and quantitative analysis techniques was be adopted. Qualitative analysis involved content analysis and presentation was done in prose form. Quantitative analysis was done using table. Qualitative analysis was done using SPSS v.22 to get the descriptive and inferential analysis done. Descriptive analysis encompassed means and standard deviations to determine the range to which stakeholder engrossment impacted the performance of the project. Inferential statistics included correlations and regression analysis.

3.8 Operationalization of Variables

Objectives	Variables	Measurements	Data analysis technique
To examine the influence of stakeholder involvement in the project identification phase on the performance of the free early childhood education development project in Nairobi County	<u>Independent variable</u> stakeholder involvement in the project identification phase	How does stakeholder involvement in the project identification phase influence the performance of the free early childhood education development project in Nairobi County	Means, Standard deviation, regression

<p>To examine the influence of stakeholder involvement in the project planning phase on the performance of the free early childhood education development project in Nairobi County</p>	<p><u>Independent variable</u> Stakeholder involvement in project planning phase</p>	<p>How does stakeholder involvement in the project planning phase influence the performance of the free early childhood education development project in Nairobi County</p>	<p>Means, Standard deviation, regression</p>
<p>To examine the influence of stakeholder involvement in the project implementation phase on the performance of the free early childhood education development project in Nairobi County</p>	<p><u>Independent variable</u> Stakeholder involvement in project implementation phase</p>	<p>How does stakeholder involvement in the project implementation phase influence the performance of the free early childhood education development project in Nairobi County</p>	<p>Means, Standard deviation, regression</p>
<p>To examine the influence of stakeholder involvement in the project evaluation phase on the performance of the free early childhood education development project in Nairobi County</p>		<p>How does stakeholder involvement in the project evaluation phase influence the performance of the free early childhood education development</p>	<p>Means, Standard deviation, regression</p>

		project in Nairobi County	
Performance of the free early childhood education development project in Nairobi County	<u>Dependent variable</u> Project performance	How is project performance influenced by stakeholder involvement?	Means, Standard deviation,

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations play a crucial role in all research endeavors, permeating every stage of the study process. This research addressed many ethical considerations, including the participants' access, confidentiality, anonymity, informed permission, privacy, access, acceptance, and deceit. Therefore, the study involved a sensitive issue on stakeholder involvement, confidentiality and anonymity will be paramount.

An informed consent was also obtained and the respondent's names were not included in the study instruments to avoid any incidences where the identities leak out. Privacy protection was also ensured in their entirety of the process of garnering, investigating and dispersing data by adhering to anonymity in reporting.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

The outcomes of this research were presented in this chapter by the use of tables and figures, which have been assessed in terms of percentages and frequencies. Additionally, regression analysis was performed to examine the hypothesis of the research. The chapter is structured on the study goals outlined below: Firstly, examine the influence of stakeholder involvement in the project identification phase on the performance of the free early childhood education development project in Nairobi County. Secondly, examine the influence of stakeholder involvement in the planning phase on the performance of the free early childhood education development project in Nairobi County. Thirdly, examine the influence of stakeholder involvement in the project implementation phase on the performance of the free early childhood education development project in Nairobi County. Lastly, examine the influence of stakeholder involvement in the evaluation phase on the performance of the free early childhood education development project in Nairobi County.

4.2 Response Rate

The study focused on four distinct categories of participants as the designated population of interest. The initial target population included the administrators of the centers where a total of 15 managers were targeted and all of them were able to participate in the interview schedule thereby giving a response rate of 100%. The other target population targeted for the interview schedules were the parents and sub-county ECD coordinators. Additionally, out of the target sample size for teachers which was 69, only 52 managed to take part in the study giving a response rate of 75.4%.

All the 17 targeted sub-county coordinators managed to take part in the study thereby giving a 100% rate for this study population. Lastly, out of the sample size of 138 facilitators, 135 were able to successfully fill and return the questionnaires thereby giving a response rate of 97.54 for this population. The response rate was generally higher than 75% which was deemed as sufficient for the study to make conclusive results.

4.3 Demographic and General Characteristics

Table 4.1 presents an overview of the demographic and general characteristics of the participants. As the table shows, the majority of facilitators 113(83.7%) were female while only 22(16.3%) were male. The findings imply that the majority of ECDE facilitators were females. The findings conflict with those of Nene (2017) who discovered that majority of the quality assurance and teaching staff and directors were male (57%) while the minority were female (43%) in bridge international schools in Mukuru and Kibera. The differences gender composition of the respondents between the two studies may be due to the gender requirements between the private and public sector in Kenya.

In regards to age, the majority of respondent were below 40 years where 36(26.7%) of the facilitators were between 20-30 years and 47(34.8%) were between ages 31-40.

Demographic	N=135	F	%
Gender	Male	22	16.3
	Female	113	83.7
Age	20-30	36	26.7
	31-40	47	34.8
	41-50	41	30.4

	Above 51	11	8.1
Education Level	Secondary	42	31.1
	College	80	59.3
	University	13	9.6
Time served as a facilitator	Less than 3	35	25.9
	3-5 years	48	35.6
	6-10 years	29	21.5
	More than 10 years	23	17

Table 4.1: *Demographic Characteristics of the facilitators*

The table further shows that most of the facilitators were between 41(30.4%) were between 41-50 years and only 11(8.1%) were above 51 years of age. Generally, the findings show that most of the facilitators were below the age of 40. Similarly, majority of the respondents who were quality assurance and teaching staff and directors in the study by Nene (2017) were between the ages of 31-41 years. The similarities may be due to the alignment in job education job profession requirements in the country. However, these results do not align with the findings by Hassan (2012) which revealed that the majority of the CDF project committee members in Isiolo North constituency that more than a quarter of the project committee members were above 56 years. These differences may be due to the differences in job requirements since experienced individuals may be needed in the CDF committees.

The majority of facilitators were 80(59.2%) reported to having college education whereas 42(31.1%) indicated they had secondary level education with a minority 13(9.6%) having

university level education. The findings suggest that the majority of the ECDE facilitators were well-educated with the majority having gone to college to study for early childhood education. The level of education composition is similar to those of project managers in the construction projects in Bondo Sub County in the study by Mandala (2018) where the majority (40%) reported that they had a college education while the minority reported that they had a secondary education certificates (16.6%). However, these results conflict those of Nene (2017) since all the participants had at least college education whereas the majority of the participants had university degree (41%). The differences in the level of education may be attributed to the educational requirements in the private sector. The results demonstrate that the individuals involved in project management in different sectors are well educated and have at least a secondary school certificate.

Lastly, the tab also shows that the majority of facilitators had served for less than 5 years where 35(25.9%) had been facilitators or less than three years while 48(35.6%) had served for between 3-5 years. Only 29(21.5%) had served for between 6-10 years and 23(17%) had served for more than ten years. Generally, these findings imply that the majority of facilitator had extensive experience in their roles. However, the results are not similar to those of Njogu (2016) conducted in a case project of automobile emission control projects in Nairobi where majority of the emission control project managers and supervisors had been working in the profession for above 12 years (41%). Additionally the participants in the study by Nene (2017) revealed that the majority (59%) of the directors and quality assurance staff had been involved in the profession in 9 to 12 years.

4.4 Stakeholder Involvement in the Project Identification Phase

The primary aim of this research was to investigate the impact of stakeholder engagement during the project identification phase on the effectiveness of the free early childhood education development project in Nairobi County. The respondents were first asked whether they are

involved in analyzing the challenges facing the ECDE. Their responses are as provided in table 4.2

Response	Number of respondents	%
Yes	34	25.19
No	101	74.81

Table 4.2: *Engagement in identifying the challenges facing the ECDE program*

Table 4.2 shows, the majority of respondents 101(74.8%) indicated that they were not engaged in analyzing the challenges facing the ECDE programs in Nairobi County. The results demonstrates that it is only a few stakeholders are involved in the analysis of the problems affecting ECDE in Nairobi County. However, these results conflict those of Nene (2017) that demonstrated that a majority (90%) of stakeholders in Bridge International schools in Mukuru were involved in the process of analyzing problems that were facing early childhood programs in the schools.

The center managers had been asked to indicate the stakeholders involved in the Nairobi Early Childhood Development Education project. The center managers claimed that there were a wide range of stakeholders including the parents, the learners, the center managers themselves, the TSC officials as well as the ministry of education officials on both the national and county government levels that should have been ideally involved in the different phases of the project development and execution. One of them argued,

‘Well, as in any other project, the ECDE program rolled out in Nairobi County has a number of stakeholders were involved; though in my opinion, not all the relevant stakeholders were included. Those included were the ministry of education officials, the teacher’s employer, the TCS, a few

other county government officials. However, the parents, the teachers as well as the other members of the community were not involved in the project.’

The participants were also administered a series of inquiries using a Likert scale. The facilitators were also asked to provide their opinions on a range of statements on their involvement in the project identification phase. In the five-point Likert scale (1 =Not at all, 2=to a less extent, 3=to a moderate extent, 4=to a great extent, 5=to a very great extent).

Statement	N=135	1	2	3	4	5
Minutes of meetings for developing the problems were issued and my input was considered	F	32	64	19	13	7
	%	23.7	47.4	14.1	9.6	5.2
Facilitators took part in the analysis of the problem which showed my support for the project	F	33	62	18	16	6
	%	24.4	45.9	13.3	11.9	4.4
I took part in identifying the project stakeholders	F	16	69	28	19	3
	%	11.9	51.1	20.7	14.4	2.2
I was involved in initiating the Nairobi Early Childhood Development Education Project	F	22	69	23	12	9
	%	16.3	51.1	17.0	8.9	6.7

Table 4.3: Stakeholder involvement in project identification phase

As table 4.2 shows, the majority of the respondents 32(23.7%) indicated that based on the dispersed minutes, their inputs were not considered at all, 64(47.4%) indicated their inputs were considered to a little extent and only 19(14.1%) to a moderate extent in regards to the identification of the project whereas only a minority 13(9.6%) and 7(5.2%) indicated that they got the minutes on developing the problems and that their input were considered to a great extent and to a very great extent respectively. These statistics demonstrate that despite their involvement in the project identification face, the input provided by a large percentage of the stakeholders is not considered. Therefore, it is likely that although all the stakeholders are involved in the project identification phase, it is only the input of a few that counts.

Similarly, the statistics obtained from the facilitators regarding their involvement in the project identification phase align with the answers provided by the center managers during the interview. The Centre managers were asked whether they were involved in the identification of the Nairobi Early Childhood Development Education project and the majority asserted that they had not been consulted before the program begun. They mostly hear about it later on when it was due to be implemented. One of the center managers argued;

'no, I was not involved in the process of identifying the ECDE project in the county. I am not sure why we were not involved, but my best guess is that the initiators of the project do not think that the center managers can provide any meaningful inputs to the project, which is a wrong assumption as we are the ones who know the challenges facing our ECDE centers.'

These statistics demonstrate that despite their involvement in the project identification phase, the input provided by a large percentage of the stakeholders is not considered. Therefore, it is likely that although all the stakeholders are involved in the project identification phase, it is only the input of a few that counts. Based on the answers provided by the project manager, the initiators may fail to consider the input of some stakeholders based on the perception that they cannot provide valuable inputs to the project. However, the assumptions are wrong because every stakeholder is engaged in one way or the other with ECDE centers and may have their individual experiences and perceptions which might be valuable to the project.

The table also shows that most of the respondents 62(45.9%) and 33(24.4%) indicated that the facilitators took part in analyzing the problems to show their support for the project to a little extent and to not extent respectively. Only a minority 18(13.3%) indicated that they took part in analyzing the problem to a moderate extent while 16(11.9%) indicated that they analyzed the problem to a

great extent and 6(4.4%) claimed that they had analyzed the problem and were a part of the project identification to a very great extent. These statistics demonstrate that only a small proportion of the facilitators are involved in the process of analyzing potential problems that may affect the implementation of free early childhood education projects despite their involvement in the project identification process. These statistics demonstrates that the project identification process may have a biased view of the potential problems since only a few members are considered in the process.

The table also shows that the majority of respondent 16(11.9%) and 69(51.1%) indicated they had taken part in identifying the project stakeholders to no extent and to only a little extent respectively. the remaining 28(20.7%), 19(14.4%) and 3(2.2%) claimed they had taken part in identifying the project stakeholders to a moderate, great and very great extent respectively. Similarly, these statistics the respondents were not involved in the process of designing and identification of free ECDE projects in Nairobi County and thereby their concerns and needs were not taken into consideration during this phase of the project. However, these results conflict those of Nene (2017) who demonstrated that facilitators in Bridge International schools were sufficiently involved in the process of project identification and design.

Lastly, the table also shows that the majority of respondents 69(51.1%) and 22(16.3%) claimed that they had been involved in initiating the Nairobi Early Childhood Development Education Project to a little and to no extent at all respectively. Only 9(6.7%) indicated that they had been involved in the project initiation to a very great extent, 12(8.9%) to a great extent and 23(17%) to a moderate extent. Similarly, the statics highlight that only a small percentage of the facilitators are involved in the process of project initiation and therefore their expectation are not included in the process. Thereby, the projects implemented initiated in free ECDE projects in Nairobi maybe

based on the views of a few facilitators. This is opposite to the observation made in ECDE projects in the private sector where a majority reported being involved in the initiation activities relating to the projects early childhood education program.

4.5 Stakeholder Involvement in the Planning Phase

The primary aim of the research was to investigate the impact of stakeholder engagement during the planning stage on the effectiveness of the free early childhood education development initiative in Nairobi County. So, the facilitators were first asked to provide their opinions to a range of opinions on a five-point Likert scale. Table 4.4 shows their responses.

Statement	N=135	1	2	3	4	5
I was involved in the specification of resources for the project	F	23	49	41	18	4
	%	17.0	36.3	30.4	13.3	3.0
I was involved to the resource allocation for the project	F	58	40	24	9	4
	%	43.0	29.6	17.8	6.7	3.0
I participated in identifying the methods of delivering resources	F	49	53	25	8	0
	%	36.3	39.3	18.5	5.9	0
I identified the inputs needed for the ECD project	F	25	59	43	8	0
	%	18.5	43.7	31.9	5.9	0
I participated in the planning of Nairobi Early Childhood Development Education Project	F	22	49	50	10	4
	%	16.3	36.3	37.0	7.4	3.0

Table 4.4: *Facilitators' opinions on their involvement in the project planning phase*

It can also be seen that the majority of the respondents 49(36.3%) claimed they did not participate in identifying the methods of delivering the resources at all, 53(39.3%) claimed that they identified the methods of delivering the resources to a little extent, 25(18.5%) to a moderate extent and 8(5.9%) to a great extent. This implies that only a minority of the respondents are involved in the process of identifying the process of selecting or providing insights on the methods that will be

used in delivering the resources. However, these findings conflict those of Mandala (2018) where majority of the stakeholders are involved in this phase.

The table also shows that the majority of the facilitators 25(18.5%) claimed that they did not identify the input needed to the ECD project at all while 59(43.7%) claimed they had identified the resources to a little extent, 43(31.9%) to a moderate extent and 8(5.9%) to a great extent. This implies only a small proportion of the stakeholders were able to identify the resources required for the project implementation.

According to the data presented in Table 4.4, a significant proportion of the participants reported limited involvement in the planning of the Nairobi Early Childhood Development education project. Specifically, 22 respondents (16.3%) indicated no participation, 49 respondents (36.3%) reported minimal involvement, 50 respondents (37%) claimed moderate engagement, 10 respondents (7.4%) expressed significant participation, and only 4 respondents (3%) reported a high level of involvement. Similar to other factors, the statistical data indicates that a majority of the stakeholders were mostly engaged in minor components of the project planning process for the Nairobi ECDE project.

The majority of the facilitators were also asked to indicate their opinion on whether they were involved in the allocation of resources for the project and the majority 58(43%) indicated they were not involved, 40(29.6%) claimed they were involved to a little extent, 24 (17.8%) to a great extent and 9(6.7%) to a great extent4 (3%) claimed they were involved to a very great extent. This implies that the allocation process of resources in the free ECDE projects in Nairobi only involve some few stakeholders while majority are not involved at all.

The data presented in the table indicates that a significant proportion of the participants, specifically 49 individuals (36.3%), reported being minimally involved in specifying the resources for the project. On the other hand, 23 facilitators (17%) stated that they had no involvement in this aspect. A moderate level of involvement was reported by 41 respondents (30.4%), while 18 individuals (13.3%) claimed to have a high level of involvement. Only a small proportion of participants, specifically 4 individuals (3%), reported being highly involved in specifying the resources for the project. In a similar vein, a significant part of the stakeholders exhibited little or moderate engagement in the definition of resource allocation, but only a minority of stakeholders shown complete involvement in the process.

The center managers were also asked if they had been involved in the Nairobi Early Childhood Development Education planning. Just like the facilitators, the majority of the center managers argued that they had been largely left out in the planning of the project. The majority quoted a lack of understanding of the critical role that some stakeholder such as the center managers play in the overall success of the program. One argued

'I don't understand why the center managers and other key stakeholders such as the facilitators and parents who will be directly involved in the execution of the program are left out in these initial phases of program planning. I need to give in my ideas on the resources needed and how best they can be tailored to suit the needs of my students.'

Similar assertions were also raised by the parents who argued that they were not involved in the planning of the ECDE project. However, the claims by the parents and the center managers were refuted by the sub-county coordinators of the ECDE program who argued that

'There has been adequate involvement of all the stakeholders in all the project phases. We ensured that there were at least some representatives of all the major stakeholders in the project.'

However, another sub-county coordinator agreed with the parents and the center managers. He argued;

The rollout of the project was done without adequately involving some key stakeholders. Often, a few parents, facilitators and center managers are involved in the different project planning exercises, but I will content that most of these are not representative of the wider population of these key stakeholders. This may explain some of the challenge we experience in the roll out of the project as there is lack of adequate involvement and understanding of the nature and goals of the project arising from inadequate involvement of the stakeholders.'

Nevertheless, the process of selecting stakeholders to advocate for the interests of other stakeholders across various project stages, such as project planning, may have lacked enough.

In the context of early childhood development and education (ECDE), Mandala (2018) emphasizes the significance of engaging stakeholders in the problem identification phase. While facilitators may contribute a limited amount of input during the implementation phase, involving stakeholders in the initial stages of the project is crucial for ensuring that project initiators have ownership over their decisions and for mitigating potential unforeseen technical issues that could impact the project during its development phase. Moreover, the presence of a clear vision about the successful completion of the project is beneficial for both stakeholders and project managers. In a similar vein, the engagement of stakeholders at this phase serves to strengthen the elucidation of roles and duties, while also serving as a complementary tool to verbal communication that may be used by

other stakeholders. Despite the highlighted benefits of involving the key stakeholders in the ECDE planning phase, the statistics and the responses demonstrated that some of the key stakeholders are not sufficiently involved in this phase.

4.6 Stakeholder Involvement in the Project Execution Phase

The primary aim of the research was to investigate the impact of stakeholder engagement throughout the project implementation stage on the effectiveness of the free early childhood education development initiative in Nairobi County. The facilitators were supplied with Likert scale statements and their replies are shown in Table 4.4.

Statement	N=135	1	2	3	4	5
I identify and report of risks	F	25	69	33	8	0
	%	18.5	51.1	24.4	5.9	0
I identified measures for controlling risks	F	49	53	25	8	0
	%	36.3	39.3	18.5	5.9	0
Identifying the roles and responsibilities you take	F	25	59	43	8	0
	%	18.5	43.7	31.9	5.9	0
I am involved in budget allocation execution	F	27	56	35	11	6
	%	20.0	41.5	25.9	8.1	4.4
I am involved in the work plan of the Nairobi Early Childhood Development Education Project	F	43	55	25	10	2
	%	31.9	40.7	18.5	7.4	1.5

Table 4.5: *Facilitators' responses on the project execution phase*

The table 4.4 shows that the majority of facilitators 25(18.5%) and 69(51.1%) claimed that they had been involved in identifying and reporting risks to no and to little extent respectively while 33(24.4%) claimed that they had been involved in risk identification to a moderate extent. Only a minority 8(5.9%) had be involved in identifying the risks to a great extent.

These sentiments were also expressed by the parents who were interviewed for the study. The parents argued that they had not been involved in the execution of the project. One asserted that;

‘I feel that the project is not involving the parents to the extent one would expect of a project that affects the lives of our children. There is a lot that is being done without the parents knowing and by excluding them in the identification of some major pitfalls in the project, then there is likely to be inadequate performance in the project.’

This suggests that the participation of stakeholders in the risk identification and reporting process of free ECDE projects in Nairobi County is limited to a minority. Parents play a crucial role as key stakeholders in Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) initiatives. Consequently, the exclusion of parents from these programs has the potential to impede their overall effectiveness and achievement of desired outcomes.

Further, the table also shows that the bulk of the facilitators, 49(36.3%) and 53(39.3%) had been involved in identifying the measures for controlling risks to no extent and to a little extent respectively. A mere 25 individuals, or 18.5% of the total, exhibited a moderate level of involvement, while a just 8 individuals, accounting for 5.9%, displayed a substantial level of involvement. This data suggests that a significant majority of stakeholders are not actively engaged in the activities pertaining to risk management and identification.

The chart further indicates that a significant proportion of the facilitators, namely 25 (18.5%), did not participate in the process of establishing their duties and responsibilities. Furthermore, 59 (43.7%) were little engaged, 43 (31.9%) were moderately active, and just 8 (5.9%) were very involved in this aspect. A significant proportion of the participants, namely 56 individuals (41.5%), reported their involvement in the process of budget allocation to be little. Additionally, 35 respondents (25.9%) indicated a moderate level of involvement, while 11 individuals (8.1%) reported a substantial level of engagement. Furthermore, 6 participants (4.4%) claimed a high degree of involvement in budget distribution. The findings suggest that a significant number of stakeholders are excluded from the budget allocation process, with decision-making authority concentrated within a limited subset of stakeholders.

Finally, the table illustrates that a significant proportion of the facilitators, specifically 43 (31.9%), reported no involvement in the work plan of the Nairobi ECDE project. Additionally, 55 (40.7%) facilitators claimed to have had minimal involvement, while 25 (18.5%) reported moderate involvement. Furthermore, 10 (7.4%) facilitators claimed to have had substantial involvement, and only 2 (1.5%) reported a high level of involvement in the project's work plan. Additionally, the findings suggest that the work plan pertaining to the execution of complimentary Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) initiatives in Nairobi encompasses just a limited proportion of the involved parties.

The findings also reflect the assertions made by the center managers who argued that in general, they have only been involved in the execution of the project to some extent. They were not consulted, but are rather given orders on what to do and how to do it. The center managers had little to no involvement in the identification of risks, their different roles and responsibilities as well as limited control over the budgets. Despite the results demonstrating that only a few stakeholders

are involved in the various aspects of project management, Mandala (2018) provides the benefits of involving all the stakeholders in the execution phase of the project which involves: helps project managers to effectively work together with the stakeholders as part of the resources for achieving the set objectives, ensures accountability of all stakeholders and enhance the budgetary and resource allocation of the stakeholders.

4.7 Stakeholder Involvement in the Evaluation Phase

The primary aim of this research was to analyze the impact of stakeholder engagement throughout the assessment phase on the efficacy of the free early childhood education development project in Nairobi County. In order to address the study aim, the facilitators were presented with a variety of viewpoints using a Likert scale. The replies of the facilitators are shown in table 4.5.

Statement	N=13 5	1	2	3	4	5
I am involved in project budget utilization and relevance assessment	F	44	67	16	8	0
	%	32.6	49.6	11.9	5.9	0
I can control the direction of the project to prevent deviation from the project targets	F	65	51	12	7	0
	%	48.1	37.8	8.9	5.2	0
There are feedback provisions for facilitators	F	16	51	44	24	0
	%	11.9	37.8	32.6	17.8	0
I am involved in taking measures to correct errors in the project	F	21	57	32	18	7
	%	15.6	42.2	23.7	13.3	5.2
I am involved in the evaluation of the Nairobi Early Childhood Development Education Project	F	15	52	54	10	4
	%	11.1	38.5	40.0	7.4	3.0

Table 4.6: *Facilitators' responses to their involvement in the project evaluation phase*

Table 4.6 shows that the majority of the facilitators, 44(32.6%) claimed they had not been involved at all, 67(49.6%) claimed they had been involved to a little extent 16(11.9%) to a moderate extent and only 8(5.9%) to a great extent respectively in the project budget utilization and relevance

assessment. This implies that it is only a minority of stakeholders who are involved in the process of budget utilization and relevance assessment.

The table also shows that the majority of the respondents 65(48.1%) and 51(37.8%) claimed that they had control over the direction of the project to prevent deviation from the target to no extent and to a little extent respectively. Contrary, only a minority 12(8.9%) and 7(5.2%) indicated that they could ensure the project was implemented in the directions set to a moderate extent and to a great extent respectively. This implies that majority of the stakeholders have no control over the direction taken by the free ECDE projects in Nairobi County and that the prevention of deviation from the planned path is only controlled by a small part of the stakeholders. The assertions made by the facilitators were contradicted by the sub-county coordinators who generally argued that they had control over the direction of the projects. These findings imply that the stakeholders at the heart of the project were not adequately in control of the direction of the project. They could not modify the project to meet the needs of their centers whereas the sub-county coordinators had such control.

Further, it can also be observed that the majority of the respondents 51(37.8%) and 44(32.6%) claimed that there are feedback provisions for facilitators to a little and to a moderate extent while only 24(17.8%) claimed there were feedback provisions for the facilitators to a great extent though 16(11.9%) claimed that there were no provisions at all. This highlights that a large portion of the stakeholder population have no means to express their thoughts or perspectives since there are no feedback provisions for them.

The data shown in the table indicates that a significant proportion of the facilitators, namely 57 individuals (42.2%), reported being minimally engaged in addressing project faults. Additionally, 21 facilitators (15.6%) claimed to be active to a limited degree, while 32 facilitators (23.7%)

reported moderate involvement. Furthermore, 18 facilitators (13.3%) indicated a high level of engagement, and 7 facilitators (5.2%) reported being extensively involved in rectifying project problems. The statistical data indicates that more than 50% of the facilitators did not participate in any capacity in the formulation of corrections pertaining to probable mistakes.

Lastly, the facilitators have expressed their level of involvement in the assessment of the Nairobi ECDE project. A moderate amount of involvement was reported by 54 individuals, accounting for 40% of the participants. Additionally, 52 individuals (38.5%) indicated their involvement to a lesser extent, while a minority of 10 individuals (7.4%) claimed a high level of involvement. Furthermore, a very large extent of involvement was reported by 4 individuals (3%). The statistical data indicates that a limited number of facilitators expressed satisfaction with their level of involvement in the evaluation of Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) initiatives in Nairobi.

The center manager in their interview argued that their involvement in the project evaluation was moderate. One of the argued;

'Well, when it comes to evaluating the project, I am involved to some extent. I am required to submit reports on the progress of the project which I feel is critical for the success of the project.'

The findings indicate that a significant number of facilitators exhibit little engagement in the assessment stage of the complimentary Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) initiatives across Nairobi County, Mandala (2018) demonstrates that it is crucial to involve all the stakeholders in this phase. Involving stakeholders in this phase facilitates the effective monitoring of the project's success, the design and execution of sustainable projects, provision of feedback to

assess whether the project has attained the anticipated results and also enhances reporting of the project success to the project manager by linking the project activities to the prerequisite resources.

4.8 Project Performance

The success of the Nairobi County Early Childhood Development Education programme served as the dependent variable in the research. The facilitators were requested to express their perspectives on several dimensions of project performance with the purpose of assessing the extent of project performance throughout the county. The replies are shown in Table 4.7.

Table 4.6: Project performance

Statement	N=135	1	2	3	4	5
Capitation payment has been met	F	30	49	48	8	0
	%	22.2	36.3	35.6	5.9	0
Centre managers have been employed	F	18	25	44	42	6
	%	13.3	18.5	32.6	31.1	4.4
There are enough facilitators in the centers	F	33	70	21	5	6
	%	24.4	51.9	15.6	3.7	4.4
There provision of teaching and learning resources	F	26	66	31	12	0
	%	19.3	48.9	23.0	8.9	0
Classes have been constructed under the project	F	31	60	34	7	3
	%	23.0	44.4	25.2	5.2	2.2
There is high learner enrolment and retention	F	13	15	29	59	19
	%	9.6	11.1	21.5	43.7	14.1
Attitude towards the institution has change	F	10	48	38	26	13
	%	7.4	35.6	28.1	19.3	9.6

Table 4.6: Project performance

Table 4.6 shows that the majority of the facilitators, 48(35.6%) claimed that the capitation payment had been met to a moderate extent while 49(36.3%) claimed that he capitation payment had been met to a little extent and 30(22.2%) felt that the capitation payment had not been met at all with 8(5.8%) claiming that capitation payment had been met to a great extent. This implies that a large

portion of the facilitators felt that the ECDE projects were not provided with sufficient capitation payment.

The table also shows that the majority of the center managers had been exploited to a moderate and great extent 44(32.6%) and 42(31.1%) respectively. however, some of the facilitators, 18(13.3%) and 25(18.5%) respectively claimed that the managers had not been employed and that they had been employed to only a little extent. This implies that over three quarters believed that the center managers of the ECDE projects in Nairobi County were being exploited.

Further, the facilitators also generally argued that facilitators were not enough in the centers 33(24.4%) to no extent and 70(51.9%) to a little extent. The minority 21(15.6%), 5(3.7%) and 6(4.4%) claimed that facilitators had been hired to fill the need of the centers to a moderate, great and very great extent respectively. Additionally, the statistics demonstrate that ECDE projects in Nairobi do not have a sufficient number of facilitators who are required for optimum project outcomes.

Furthermore, the table also shows that the provision of teaching and learning resources had been met to a moderate and little extent as 31(23%) and 66(44.4%) of the respondents indicated that it had been met respectively. However, 26(19.3%) of the facilitators indicated that teaching and learning resources had not been provided at all while 12(8.9%) indicated they had been provided to a great extent. This implies that teaching and learning resources in ECDE projects in Nairobi County was average which implies that there still requires efforts to ensure that they are at the optimum level.

The table also shows that classes had not been constructed to meet the demands of the ECDE as the majority of the facilitators 60(44.4%), 31(23%) claimed that classes had not been constructed

at all and to a little extent respectively. This implies that Nairobi County does not have sufficient classes to meet its ECDE requirements and that there requires interventions and resources to improve this state.

The table also shows that the majority of the facilitators believed that there had been higher learner enrollment and retention as 59(43.7%) claimed that was learner enrolment and retention to a great extent and 19(14.1%) to a very great extent. Contrary, 29(21.5%), 15(11.1%) and 13(9.6%) indicate that learner enrollment and retention had increased to a moderate extent, little extent and to no extent at all. The results demonstrated that the learner enrollment and retention in Nairobi ECDE was on an upper trend.

Lastly, the table shows that the majority of the facilitators believed that the attitude towards the institution had changed to a little 48(35.6%) and to a moderate extent 38(28.1%). Some of the facilitators, 26(19.3%) claimed that the reputation and attitude of the institution had changed to a great extent and 13(9.6%) indicated it had changed to a very great extent. This reveals that the reputation and the attitude towards ECDE institutions in Nairobi County had improved to a great extent.

4.9 Hypothesis Testing

Aside from the study objectives, the study also aimed to test the hypothesis of the study which included;

H₀1: Stakeholder involvement in the project identification phase does not have a statistically significant influence on the performance of the free early childhood education development project in Nairobi County.

HO₂: There is no significant association between stakeholder involvements in the planning phase on the performance of the free early childhood education development project in Nairobi County

HO₃: There is no significant association between stakeholder involvement in the project implementation phase and the performance of the free early childhood education development project in Nairobi County

HO₄: There is no significant association between stakeholder involvement in the evaluation phase and the performance of the free early childhood education development project in Nairobi County

In order to test the hypothesis, a multiple linear regression analysis was done and the tables 4.7, 4.8 and 4.9 presents the findings. The following table presents the impact of the independent factors in the research. The results are shown in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.986 ^a	.843	.829	1.06278

a. Predictors: (Constant), MONITORING_EVALUATION, DEVELOPMENT, PLANNING, EXECUTION

Table 4.7 presents the findings on the collective impact of the independent variables, namely stakeholder engagement in project identification, project planning, project execution, and project monitoring and assessment. The analysis reveals that these factors account for a R square value of 0.843. The R-squared result indicates that the independent factors examined in the research had an effect of 84.3% on the performance of the Nairobi Project ECDE.

Table 4.4: ANOVA

The following table presents the impact of the independent factors on the dependent variable within the scope of the research. The findings are shown in Table 4.8.

ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	187.052	4	46.763	6.872	.000 ^b
Residual	877.881	129	6.805		
Total	1064.933	133			

a. Dependent Variable: PERFORMANCE

b. Predictors: (Constant), MONITORING_EVALUATION, DEVELOPMENT, PLANNING, EXECUTION

The data shown in Table 4.8 demonstrates that the independent factors have a statistically significant impact on project success, as indicated by the p-value of 0.000, which is less than the conventional threshold of 0.5. Hence, the research variables accounted for 84.3% of the factors influencing project success, leaving just 15.7% unexplained.

Coefficients

The table 4.9 shows the study's coefficient results.

Table 4.9 Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	11.386	2.529		4.502	.000
IDENTIFICATION	.192	.117	.142	1.643	.013
PLANNING	.044	.112	.134	.388	.038
EXECUTION	.185	.139	.116	1.330	.018
MONITORING_EVALUATION	.614	.120	.421	5.113	.000

a. Dependent Variable: PERFORMANCE

The data shown in Table 4.9 demonstrates that a higher level of stakeholder participation in the creation of the project has a positive impact on the performance of the Nairobi ECDE project, resulting in a 14.2% increase. The p-value of 0.013, which is less than 0.05, indicates that the level of stakeholder participation throughout the project identification and development phase had a statistically significant impact on the performance of the Nairobi ECDE project. The null hypothesis, which posits that there is no statistically significant relationship between stakeholder involvement in the project identification phase and the performance of the free early childhood education development project in Nairobi County, was rejected in light of the statistical association observed.

Moreover, the data shown in the table indicates that an incremental rise in stakeholder engagement during project planning will result in a 13.4% enhancement in the performance of the Nairobi ECDE project. The obtained p-value of 0.038, which is less than the conventional significance level of 0.05, indicates that there is statistical evidence to support the notion that the participation of stakeholders in project planning is a significant predictor of project performance. The researcher's findings indicate a notable correlation between stakeholder engagement during project planning, leading to the rejection of the second null hypothesis. This implies that there is indeed a significant relationship between stakeholder involvement during the planning phase and the performance of the free early childhood education development project in Nairobi County.

Table 4.9 further demonstrates that an increase of one unit in stakeholder participation throughout project execution is associated with an 11.6% improvement in project performance. The obtained p-value of 0.018, which is less than the conventional significance level of 0.05, indicates that the inclusion of stakeholders in the execution of the ECDE project was a statistically significant predictor of its success. Hence, the rejection of the third null hypothesis indicates that there exists

a statistically significant relationship between stakeholder engagement throughout the project implementation phase and the performance of the free early childhood education development project in Nairobi County.

Finally, the data shown in the table indicates that the inclusion of stakeholders in the project monitoring and evaluation phase has the potential to result in a significant 42.1% improvement in project performance. The statistical significance of the p-value, which is less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$), indicates that stakeholder engagement in project monitoring and assessment is a significant predictor of project performance. The fourth null hypothesis, which posited that there is no statistically significant relationship between stakeholder engagement in the assessment phase and the performance of the free early childhood education development project in Nairobi County, was found to be rejected.

CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND
RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine stakeholder involvement in project life cycle and performance of free early childhood education project in Nairobi County. This chapter provides the summary of the findings, discussion and recommendations as guided by the study's objectives.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The objective of this research was to investigate the extent of stakeholder engagement throughout the project life cycle and its impact on the performance of a free early childhood education initiative in Nairobi County. In order to fulfill the objectives of the study, the researcher used a descriptive survey research design. Data was obtained from several sources, including Sub County ECD coordinators, Centre managers, parents, and facilitators who are employed at the public ECD centers in Nairobi County. The acquired data consisted of both qualitative and quantitative information. The data collecting process included the use of questionnaires and interviews.

The data analysis revealed that the majority of the facilitators 113(83.7%) were female and the majority were between ages 30-40 years. The majority of the facilitators had college level education who had served as facilitators for served for more than three years in their position as facilitators for ECDE programs.

The primary aim of the research was to investigate the impact of stakeholder participation during the project identification phase. The results indicated that a significant majority of stakeholders had an effect on the project 101(74.8%) were not engaged in analyzing the challenges that face the ECDE programs in the county. It was also found that there were many stakeholders including the

parents, the learners, the center managers, the TSC officials as well as the ministry of education officials on both the national and county government levels.

The descriptive analysis also showed that the majority of the facilitators indicated that their inputs were considered to only a little extent but the majority claimed they did not get minutes of the meetings on project identification. Similarly, the majority of respondents (70.3%) claimed that they took part in analyzing their problems for the project to only a little to no extent while the most of the respondents 35.2% claimed that they took part in the project identification to a moderate extent. Finally, a significant majority of 67.7% of respondents reported little to no involvement in the initiation of the Nairobi ECDE initiative.

The study's second purpose was to investigate the impact of stakeholder engagement throughout the project planning phase on the performance of the Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) project in Nairobi County. The study revealed that a significant proportion of the facilitators (75.6%) had less or no involvement in the identification of ways for distributing resources, (75.6%) argued that they had involved in identifying the resources for the project to some extent. The facilitators also argued that they involved in the allocation of the resources to a little extent. In general, there was a consensus among the Centre managers, parents, and facilitators that their level of involvement in project planning, particularly with respect to resource allocation, distribution, and definition, was limited.

The study's third goal focused on investigating the impact of stakeholder participation throughout the project implementation phase on the performance of the Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) project in Nairobi County. The research findings indicated that a significant proportion of the facilitators had little involvement in the process of risk identification, to a little extent in identification of measures to control risks (39.3%) and the majority (72.7%) indicated

that they were involved in the work planning of the ECDE project. The Centre managers also expressed similar claims in regards to their involvement in the project implementation phase where they indicated that they had generally be involved only marginally with the majority of the decisions being imposed on them rather than through a consultative process.

The primary aim of the fourth goal of this research was to investigate the impact of stakeholder engagement throughout the assessment phase on the effectiveness of the free early childhood education development project in Nairobi County. The majority of the facilitators (61.4%) claimed that they had been involved only marginally in the project utilization relevance assessment, (48.1%) claimed they had no control over the direction of the project to prevent its deviation, (32.6%) claimed they played a little role in providing feedback on the project, (42.2%) claimed they were involved in taking measures to correct project errors to a little extent and the majority 78.5% argued that they were involved only to a small or no extent at all in evaluating the ECDE project. These findings reflect the assertions made by the other stakeholders', especially the Centre mangers and the parents who claimed that they were not involved a satisfactory level in the ECDE project.

5.3 Discussion of the findings

The objective of this research was to investigate the extent of stakeholder engagement throughout the project life cycle and its impact on the performance of the free early childhood education initiative in Nairobi County. The research results yielded many significant conclusions. The study's sample size was reflective of the ECDE facilities in Nairobi County, allowing for the generalization of these findings to other ECDE situations. The study's inferential analysis demonstrated a substantial association between stakeholder engagement in various stages of project planning and project performance.

The evaluation of the impact of stakeholder engagement in the creation of the Early Childhood education program in Nairobi County indicated that a higher level of stakeholder participation in project development resulted in a statistically significant p value of 0.013, which is less than the predetermined significance level of 0.05. The findings indicate that the level of stakeholder engagement during the project identification and development phase had a substantial impact on the success of the Nairobi ECDE project. Based on the statistical correlation seen between stakeholder engagement during the project identification phase and project performance, the first null hypothesis; The hypothesis that stakeholder engagement in the project identification phase has a statistically significant impact on the success of the free early childhood education development project in Nairobi County has been rejected. The present findings align with the research conducted by Gregory, Atkins, Midgley, and Hodgson (2020), which emphasized the significance of engaging stakeholders in comprehending the challenges associated with intervention restructuring. This involvement enables a comprehensive understanding of the issues that must be considered and facilitates the exploration of various potential options when determining the project's requirements. Similarly, Nene (2017) who found that there was a positively strong and statistically significance between the stakeholder's project identification involvement and the performance of the ECD programme. Overall, the involvement of the stakeholders led to higher teaching staff retention, increased enrolment of learners, higher effectiveness in programme execution and high retention rates. Similar claims were made by Mandala (2018) who also found that involvement of the stakeholders in the project commencement phase had a noteworthy effect on the presentation of the road construction projects.

With respect to stakeholder engagement in project planning, the inferential analysis demonstrated that a one-unit increase in stakeholder involvement would result in a 13.4% rise in the performance

of the Nairobi ECDE project. The obtained p value of 0.038, which is less than the predetermined significance level of 0.05, indicates that there is a statistically significant relationship between the engagement of stakeholders in project planning and the subsequent project performance. The researcher's findings indicate a notable correlation between stakeholder involvement in project planning and the performance of the free early childhood education development project in Nairobi County. Consequently, the second null hypothesis, which posited that there is no significant association between stakeholder involvements in the planning phase and project performance, was rejected. These findings are similar to those by Wakeinda (2019) who established that stakeholder's contribution was significant and positive for the performance of the county governments. In another study, Wamugu and Ogollah (2017) investigated the part of stakeholder's play in the performance of CFD schemes in Kenya using Mathira East Constituency as its case. The researchers established that engrossment of stakeholders in the project planning phase for the identification, screening and selection are critical for the success of the CDF projects.

The findings of the inferential analysis indicated that an increase of one unit in stakeholder participation during project execution is associated with an 11.6% improvement in project performance. The obtained p-value of 0.018, which is less than the conventional significance level of 0.05, indicates that the inclusion of stakeholders in the implementation of the ECDE project was a statistically significant predictor of its performance. Hence, the third null hypothesis, which posits that there is no statistically significant relationship between stakeholder engagement throughout the project implementation stage and the effectiveness of the free early childhood education development initiative in Nairobi County, was found to be unsupported. The present results align with the research conducted by Nguyen, Aguilera, and Remington (2010), which underscores that project execution involves intricate networks of stakeholders, resulting in intricate

interrelationships among various parties. As a result, various stakeholders exert distinct impacts on the execution of the project, which may be either constructive or counterproductive in nature. According to Nguyen and Mohamed (2018), the implementation phase is considered the most crucial stage in the project life cycle, since it is during this phase that all the plans and activities are put into action, hence directly impacting the project's performance. In a similar vein, Usadolo and Cadwel (2016) put forth the contention that the enhancement of shared comprehension through a sustainable and cooperative association among the parties involved shown a noteworthy positive correlation with the project's overall effectiveness. The criticality of stakeholder engagement in rural project execution was identified as a key factor in promoting its success. According to Njogu (2016), the project performance of the NEM project was greatly impacted by the active participation of stakeholders across all stages of the project life cycle, including project execution. The results presented in this study align with the findings of Nene (2017), which demonstrated a significant correlation between stakeholder engagement in project implementation and the performance of early childhood development (ECD) projects.

The inclusion of stakeholders in the project monitoring and evaluation phase has the potential to result in a significant improvement of 42.1% in project performance. The obtained p-value of 0.000, which is less than the significance level of 0.05, indicates that stakeholder engagement in project monitoring and assessment is a statistically significant predictor of project performance. The fourth null hypothesis, which posited that there is no statistically significant relationship between stakeholder engagement in the assessment phase and the performance of the free early childhood education development project in Nairobi County, was found to be rejected. Magassouba, Tambi, Alkhlaifat and Abdullah, Bin (2019) reiterate that the stakeholder taking part plays a crucial and precarious role in the project performance. The researcher established that

stakeholder involvement in project monitoring enhances the project's success and is also an important way of achieving the organizational goals. The researchers reiterate that collecting information on the project by engaging different stakeholders is an effective way of extending the project success. This is associated with the fact that stakeholders are a prevailing means of consideration of the project and its environment. Hassan (2016) also recommended that the constituents should play a large role in the decision-making process in the project as they know the project well; hence, it is critical to involve them to ensure that they are beneficial to them.

5.4 Conclusions of the Study

Based on the empirical results of the conducted study and in accordance with the established research goals, the following conclusions may be inferred:

The active participation of stakeholders throughout the project identification phase had a notable impact on the efficacy of the free early childhood education development initiative in Nairobi County. When stakeholders were actively engaged during this phase, it led to higher teaching staff retention, increased enrolment of learners, higher effectiveness in program execution, and high retention rates. This finding supports the importance of involving stakeholders in identifying project needs and exploring possible options.

Subsequently, the study revealed that the active engagement of stakeholders at the initial phase of project design had a substantial impact on the efficacy of the free early childhood education development initiative. Increased stakeholder involvement in planning led to a 13.4% improvement in project performance. This result emphasizes the significance of including stakeholders during the planning process to ensure their contributions positively impact project outcomes.

Moreover, it was discovered that the inclusion of stakeholders throughout the project implementation phase had a notable impact on the project's overall performance. A unit increase in stakeholder involvement in project execution resulted in an 11.6% increase in project performance. This highlights the critical role stakeholders' play during project execution and the need to foster sustainable collaborative relationships for successful implementation.

Additionally, the study revealed that the active participation of stakeholders throughout the project monitoring and assessment stage had a substantial impact on the overall success of the project. When stakeholders actively participated in monitoring and evaluation, there was a substantial 42.1% increase in project performance. This finding underscores the importance of stakeholder participation in assessing project progress and achieving organizational goals.

In summary, the research has successfully shown a robust correlation between the engagement of stakeholders across all stages of the project life cycle and the efficacy of the free early childhood education development initiative in Nairobi County. The active involvement of stakeholders throughout the project identification, planning, execution, and assessment stages had a beneficial influence on the results of the project.

5.5 Recommendations

Based on the results and implications derived from the research, it is strongly recommended that stakeholders be actively engaged in the Nairobi County Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) project. This proactive engagement is deemed essential in order to enhance the overall performance of the project within the county. In order to have effective projects, resources and plans that meet the needs of the learners, there is a need to have well-informed facilitators, parents, constituents and the Centre managers, these stakeholders should be adequately informed.

The specific recommendations include:

To ensure the success of free early childhood education development projects, it is crucial to involve stakeholders from the outset. Regular stakeholder consultations and workshops should be organized during the project identification phase. These platforms will facilitate the participation of many stakeholders, such as parents, teachers, members of the local community, government officials, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), in expressing their views and contributing to the identification of project requirements and priorities. Creating effective communication channels will enable ongoing feedback and open dialogue, fostering a sense of ownership and commitment to the project.

Collaborative planning sessions should be initiated, allowing stakeholders to actively participate in the development of project plans, setting goals, and outlining strategies. Providing stakeholders with relevant project information and data will empower them to make informed decisions during the planning phase. Encouraging constructive discussions and finding mutually beneficial solutions to potential conflicts will help build strong partnerships and a shared vision for the project's success.

During the project implementation phase, clear roles and responsibilities must be established for each stakeholder to ensure efficient coordination and avoid overlaps. Regular engagement and updates should be organized to keep stakeholders informed and involved in project progress. Emphasizing active participation of stakeholders in problem-solving and decision-making will enable timely resolution of challenges and ensure smooth project execution.

Incorporating stakeholders in the design of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms will ensure that these processes align with their interests and concerns. Conducting periodic review meetings with stakeholders will facilitate a comprehensive assessment of project progress, enabling identification

of areas for improvement and necessary adjustments to project strategies. Leveraging stakeholder feedback will inform decision-making and contribute to continuous project improvement.

Investing in capacity-building initiatives for stakeholders is essential to enhance their understanding of their roles and responsibilities in supporting the project. Workshops on project management, community mobilization, and effective communication will empower stakeholders to make meaningful contributions to project success and sustainability. Additionally, developing a long-term stakeholder engagement strategy is crucial for maintaining continuous involvement throughout the project's life cycle and beyond. Transparency in project activities and resource allocation will foster trust and confidence among stakeholders. Recognizing and appreciating their contributions will instil a sense of ownership, dedication, and enthusiasm for the project's objectives.

5.6 Recommendations for Further Studies

The primary objective of this research was to examine the impact of stakeholder engagement on the project performance of the Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) project in Nairobi County. The primary objective of the research was to exclusively ascertain the extent of stakeholder engagement throughout the various stages of project development, including identification, planning, execution, and monitoring and evaluation. Therefore, it is essential to do more research in order to ascertain the many aspects that exert effect on stakeholder engagement in Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) projects, as well as the subsequent impact of such engagement on project performance.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Questionnaire for teachers

SECTION A: GENERAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Please indicate your gender

Male { }

Female { }

2. Indicate your age bracket

20-30 { }

31-40 { }

41-50 { }

51 and above { }

3. What is your highest level of education

Primary { }

Secondary { }

College { }

University { }

Post graduate { }

4. How long have served as an Early Childhood Education Facilitator?

Less than 3 years { }

3-5 years { }

6-10 years { }

More than 10 years { }

SECTION B: Stakeholder Participation in the Development of Nairobi Early Childhood Development Education Project

5. Are you engaged in analyzing the problems and challenges facing the Early Childhood Education in your school?

Yes { }

No { }

6. Please indicate to what extent you have participated in the Nairobi Early Childhood Development Education Project identification in your school (1=Not at all, 2=to a less extent, 3=to a moderate extent, 4=to a great extent, 5=to a very great extent).

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Facilitators received the minutes of meetings for developing the problems and my input was considered					
Facilitators took part in the analysis of the problem which showed my support for the project					
Facilitators take part in identifying the project stakeholders					
Facilitators were involved in initiating the Nairobi Early Childhood Development Education Project					

7. How has stakeholder involvement in project identification influenced the performance of Nairobi Early Childhood Development Education Project?

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SECTION C: Stakeholder Participation in planning of the Nairobi Early Childhood Development Education Project

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Facilitators were involved in the specification of resources for the project					
Facilitator were involved to the resource allocation for the project					
Facilitators participated in identifying the methods of delivering resources					
Facilitators identified the inputs needed for the ECD project					
Facilitators participated in the planning of Nairobi Early Childhood Development Education Project					

8. How has stakeholder involvement in project planning influenced the performance of Nairobi Early Childhood Development Education Project?

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SECTION D: Stakeholder Participation in of the implementation of Nairobi Early Childhood Development Education Project

Statement	1	2	3	4	5

Facilitators play a role in identifying and reporting of risks					
Facilitators identify measures for controlling risks					
Identifying the roles and responsibilities you take					
Facilitators are involved in budget allocation execution					
Facilitators were involved in the work plan of the Nairobi Early Childhood Development Education Project					

9. How has stakeholder involvement in project implementation influenced the performance of Nairobi Early Childhood Development Education Project?

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SECTION E: Stakeholder Participation in of the Monitoring and Evaluation of Nairobi Early Childhood Development Education Project

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Facilitators are involved in project budget utilization and relevance assessment					
Facilitators can control the direction of the project to prevent deviation from the project targets					
There are feedback provisions for facilitators					

Facilitators were involved in taking measures to correct errors in the project					
Facilitators were involved in the evaluation of the Nairobi Early Childhood Development Education Project					

10. How has stakeholder involvement in project monitoring and evaluation influenced the performance of Nairobi Early Childhood Development Education Project?

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SECTION F: Performance of the Nairobi Early Childhood Development Education Project

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Capitation payment has been met					
Centre managers have been employed					
There are enough facilitators in the centers					
There provision of teaching and learning resources					
Classes have been constructed under the project					
There is high learner enrolment and retention					
Attitude towards the institution has change					

Appendix 2: Interview Questions for the Centre Managers

1. Please indicate the stakeholders involved in the Nairobi Early Childhood Development Education project

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2. Were you involved in the Nairobi Early Childhood Development Education identification? If yes please discuss the roles you played
If no, why?

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3. Were you involved in the Nairobi Early Childhood Development Education planning?
If yes please discuss the roles you played
If no, why?

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4. Were you involved in the Nairobi Early Childhood Development Education implementation? If yes please discuss the roles you played

If no, why?

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- 5.** Were you involved in the Nairobi Early Childhood Development Education monitoring and evaluation? If yes please discuss the roles you played

If no, why?

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- 6.** How has your involvement in the project cycle influenced its performance in;

a. Project planning

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b.

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c.

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d.
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Appendix 3: Interview questions for Parents

1. Have you heard of the Nairobi Early Childhood Development Education project?

a. Yes { }

b. No { }

2. Please indicate the stakeholders involved in the Nairobi Early Childhood Development Education project

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3. Were you involved in the Nairobi Early Childhood Development Education identification? If yes please discuss the roles you played

If no, why?

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4. Were you involved in the Nairobi Early Childhood Development Education planning? If yes please discuss the roles you played

If no, why?

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5. Were you involved in the Nairobi Early Childhood Development Education implementation? If yes please discuss the roles you played

If no, why?

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6. Were you involved in the Nairobi Early Childhood Development Education monitoring and evaluation? If yes please discuss the roles you played

If no, why?

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7. How has your involvement in the project cycle influenced its performance in;

a. Project planning

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b. Project identification

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c. Project implementation

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d. Project Evaluation

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Appendix 4: Interview Questions for Sub county ECD coordinators

1. Are you aware of the Nairobi Early Childhood Development Education project?
 - a. Yes { }
 - b. No { }
2. Please indicate the stakeholders involved in the Nairobi Early Childhood Development Education project

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3. Were you involved in the Nairobi Early Childhood Development Education identification? If yes please discuss the roles you played
- If no, why?

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4. Were you involved in the Nairobi Early Childhood Development Education planning?
- If yes please discuss the roles you played
- If no, why?

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5. Were you involved in the Nairobi Early Childhood Development Education implementation? If yes please discuss the roles you played

If no, why?

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6. Were you involved in the Nairobi Early Childhood Development Education monitoring and evaluation? If yes please discuss the roles you played

If no, why?

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7. How has your involvement in the project cycle influenced its performance in;

a. Project planning

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b. Project identification

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c. Project implementation

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d. Project Evaluation

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