



PROJECT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND PERFORMANCE OF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS AT KAKUMA REFUGEE CAMP, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The objective of the study was to examine the impact of project management practices on performance of development programs at Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya.

Methodology This study adopted a descriptive research design. The study focused on 20 development programmes organisations spread on 8 categories of Education, Health, Livelihood and Vocational Training, Protection, Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene, Food and Nutrition, Energy and Environment and finally the Community Development and Capacity Building programs at Kakuma refugee Camp. Given a population of 1550 employees study sample size 318 was obtained using Yamane's formula. The primary data collection instrument used in this study was structured questionnaires. Both descriptive and inferential analyses were conducted.

Findings: The optimal regression model, which integrated project planning, risk management, stakeholder engagement, and monitoring processes, demonstrated strong explanatory power, accounting for 69.2% of the variance in the performance of development programs. Among the predictors, the monitoring process emerged as the most influential factor, followed by risk management and project planning

Recommendations: The study generally recommends that humanitarian and development actors in Kakuma should include integrated project management principles into their organizational policy, including planning, risk management, stakeholder involvement, and monitoring process. Donors and implementing partners can also align their financial mechanisms to complement these principles, making programs more sustainable, efficient, and responsive to community needs.

Keywords: Project management practices, project planning, risk management, stakeholder engagement, monitoring process, performance of development programs

Background of the study

Project management practices encompass a structured approach to planning, executing, and overseeing projects to achieve specific objectives within a set timeframe and budget. These practices involve coordinated processes that include project planning, risk management, stakeholder engagement, and monitoring and evaluation. Effective project management ensures that resources are utilised efficiently and that project goals align with broader organisational strategies. The application of these practices is essential for maintaining consistency, fostering collaboration, and mitigating challenges that may arise during the project lifecycle (PMI, 2023; Turner, 2022; Kerzner, 2023).

The performance of development programs refers to the measurable impact and success of initiatives aimed at improving conditions within target communities or groups. This performance is evaluated based on criteria such as the relevance of the program's goals, the efficiency of resource usage, sustainability, and the long-term benefits delivered to stakeholders. In the context of development programs at Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya, performance is a critical indicator of how well project management practices contribute to achieving positive social, economic, and infrastructural outcomes. Effective performance highlights the alignment between strategic project inputs and successful, tangible outputs that address community needs (UNDP, 2023; Lock, 2022; World Bank, 2023).

Globally, Project management practices are recognized for making development programs more efficient and successful. These practices offer a clear approach to planning, using resources, managing risks, involving stakeholders, and tracking progress, helping ensure programs are completed on time, within budget, and meet their goals (PMI, 2023). However, many development programs still fail to reach their objectives because of poor project management practices. For instance, a report by the Project Management Institute (PMI) found that 60% of development projects globally do not meet their intended objectives due to inadequate planning, insufficient stakeholder involvement, and poor monitoring and evaluation mechanisms (Crawford, 2021).

The East African region, including countries like Kenya, Uganda, and Ethiopia, hosts a significant number of refugees due to ongoing conflicts and political instability in neighboring countries such as South Sudan, Somalia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. East Africa is home to over 4.4 million refugees and asylum seekers, with major camps such as Dadaab and Kakuma in Kenya, as well as Bidibidi in Uganda (UNHCR, 2023). A study by Otieno and Mbogo (2023) found that development programs in East Africa often suffer from resource wastage and limited impact due to fragmented project management approaches. Addressing these issues requires a coordinated effort that includes comprehensive planning, stakeholder involvement, and robust monitoring and evaluation systems.

Kakuma Refugee Camp is a center for different development programs designed to improve the living conditions and resilience of its residents. These programs are run by a mix of international NGOs, local NGOs, and UN agencies, working together with the Kenyan government. The main areas of focus for these programs include education, healthcare, livelihoods, and protection and security (UNHCR, 2023; Wamalwa, 2022; Otieno & Mbogo, 2023). Education initiatives at Kakuma seek to bridge gaps in access to quality education by constructing schools, training educators, and providing scholastic materials to refugee children and youth. Such programs have shown progress but continue to be affected by issues such as limited resources, overcrowded classrooms, and inadequate teacher-to-student ratios, which hinder their effectiveness (UNHCR, 2023).

In the healthcare sector, development programs include maternal health services, immunization drives, and nutrition support to combat malnutrition. However, logistical challenges and resource shortages have posed significant barriers to the consistent delivery of these services

(Wamalwa, 2022). Livelihood programs at Kakuma are designed to enhance self-reliance by offering vocational training and supporting small business development among refugees. These programs aim to equip individuals with skills that foster income generation and reduce dependency on humanitarian aid. Nonetheless, the success of these programs often depends on effective project planning, comprehensive stakeholder engagement, and robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks (Otieno & Mbogo, 2023)

Statement of the Problem

Development programs at Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya are either multi-faceted or project-based, focusing on critical areas such as education, healthcare, livelihoods, and protection. These initiatives are led by a combination of international NGOs, local organizations, and UN agencies, all working in partnership with the Kenyan government. Many of these programs involve multiple projects targeting specific community needs, such as improving access to education, providing healthcare services, and promoting economic self-sufficiency. Education projects, for instance, aim to improve school enrollment, teacher training, and provision of educational materials, while healthcare initiatives focus on maternal health, immunization, and nutrition support.

Several development programs at Kakuma Refugee Camp have demonstrated notable success in achieving their objectives. For instance, educational initiatives led by international NGOs have significantly improved school enrollment and literacy rates among refugee children, contributing to better long-term prospects for the community (UNHCR, 2023; Save the Children, 2022; UNICEF, 2023). Healthcare projects supported by organizations like Médecins Sans Frontières have also enhanced access to essential medical services, reducing mortality rates and improving overall public health within the camp (MSF, 2023; WHO, 2023; IRC, 2023).

Conversely, other programs have struggled to meet their targets due to challenges such as inadequate funding, poor stakeholder coordination, and limited risk management strategies. Livelihood projects aimed at enhancing economic self-sufficiency have, in some cases, failed to yield sustainable outcomes, leaving participants without long-term support or viable income opportunities (Oxfam, 2023; World Vision, 2023; NRC, 2022). Similarly, infrastructure development efforts have occasionally been hindered by logistical issues and delays, undermining the timely delivery of essential services (IFRC, 2022; Care International, 2023; UNDP, 2023). This disparity underscores the need to examine how comprehensive project management practices can enhance the overall performance of development programs at Kakuma Refugee Camp.

Objective of the study

The study objective was to examine the impact of project management practices on performance of development programs at Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

The study was anchored on several theories namely project planning theory, risk management theory, stakeholder theory, and program theory

Project Planning Theory emphasizes a systematic approach to defining project goals, objectives, and the necessary resources to achieve desired outcomes. This theory underscores the significance of thorough planning in guiding project execution and resource allocation (Hwang & Ng, 2019; Papke-Shields et al., 2020). Effective planning is particularly crucial in

environments such as Kakuma Refugee Camp, where uncertainties are prevalent, and timely interventions are necessary. Research by Turner et al. (2022) illustrates that well-defined project plans are strongly correlated with higher success rates in project implementation.

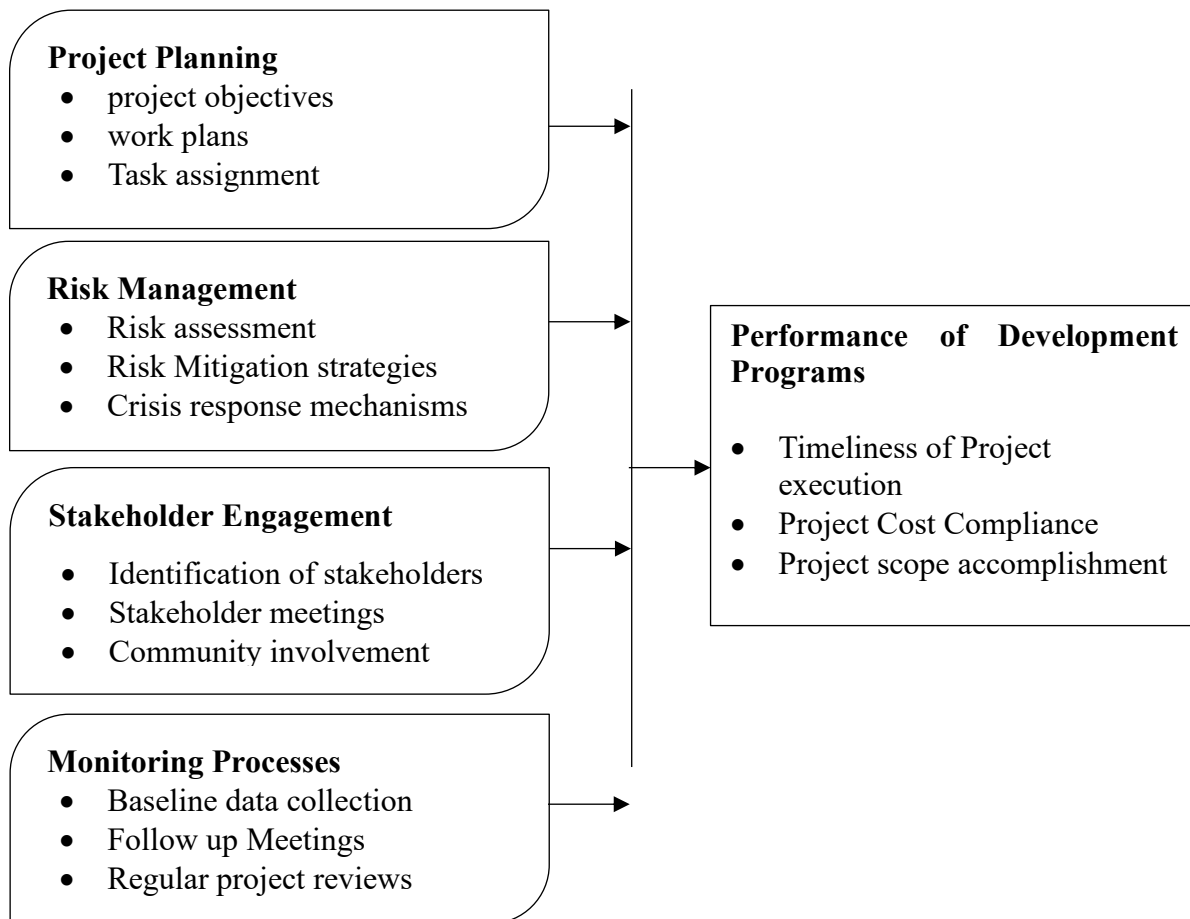
Risk Management Theory focuses on identifying, assessing, and mitigating risks that can adversely affect project outcomes. This theory is especially relevant in humanitarian contexts where external factors may significantly disrupt project activities (Dey et al., 2021; Vandenabeele et al., 2021). Studies indicate that effective risk management practices lead to increased project success, particularly in environments characterized by high levels of uncertainty. For example, Otieno and Mbogo (2023) demonstrated that development projects employing robust risk management strategies are more likely to achieve their objectives and deliver impactful results.

Stakeholder Theory, originally formulated by Freeman (1984), posits that successful project outcomes depend significantly on managing relationships with stakeholders. This theory highlights the importance of understanding and addressing the diverse needs and interests of all stakeholders involved in a project (Saeed et al., 2022). In refugee camp settings, effective stakeholder engagement fosters community ownership and enhances program effectiveness. Research by Omondi and Njiru (2022) indicated that development programs in Kakuma that prioritize stakeholder engagement are more successful in meeting their objectives and ensuring community participation.

Program Theory, also known as the Theory of Change, elucidates the connections between program activities and their intended outcomes. This theoretical framework stresses the importance of establishing clear goals and measurable indicators to track progress (Weiss, 1995; Turner & Ager, 2020). A robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework is essential for assessing the performance of development programs and ensuring accountability (Patton, 2008). In Kakuma Refugee Camp, effective M&E practices are critical for making data-driven decisions and adapting interventions as needed. Greene et al. (2020) illustrated that programs with well-defined M&E systems achieve better results and can respond to changing circumstances more effectively.

Conceptual Framework

In this study, the conceptual framework mapped out the relationships between the independent variables, project management practices, such as Project planning, risk management, stakeholder engagement, and monitoring and evaluation, and the dependent variable, which is the performance of development programs in Kakuma refugee camps. Figure 1 below shows the conceptual framework.

Independent Variables**Dependent Variable****Figure 1: Conceptual Framework****Project Management Practices and Performance of Development Programs**

Project planning is foundational to the success of development programs. Various studies emphasize that well-structured planning processes lead to more effective program implementation and outcomes. For instance, a study by Gido and Clements (2020) utilized a quantitative approach, surveying project managers in non-profit organizations to examine the relationship between project planning and project success. Their findings indicated that projects with comprehensive planning phases are more likely to meet their objectives on time and within budget. Similarly, Wamalwa (2022) conducted a mixed-methods study involving interviews and surveys with stakeholders engaged in development projects in Kakuma Refugee Camp. The research revealed that inadequate planning often leads to project delays and resource wastage. Additionally, Otieno et al. (2021) employed case studies to assess the impact of planning tools, such as Gantt charts and project timelines, on project success rates in various humanitarian initiatives. While existing studies highlight the importance of project planning, there is a notable lack of research focusing specifically on how planning practices are adapted to the unique challenges of refugee camps. This presents an opportunity for further investigation.

Effective risk management is vital for navigating the uncertainties inherent in development projects, particularly in crises. A quantitative study by Kivung'a et al. (2021) examined the risk management practices of NGOs operating in refugee camps. Utilizing a survey design, the study found a strong correlation between systematic risk management and project success, emphasizing the need for proactive risk assessment methods. In another study, Mwaura and

Muchiri (2022) applied a qualitative approach, conducting focus group discussions with project managers to explore how risk management strategies are implemented in real-time during project execution. Their findings indicated that organizations with established risk management frameworks could adapt more quickly to unforeseen challenges. Despite the acknowledgment of risk management's importance, there is limited empirical evidence on the effectiveness of specific risk mitigation strategies in refugee contexts. This gap suggests a need for targeted studies focusing on practical risk management implementations in similar settings.

Stakeholder engagement is crucial for ensuring that development programs address the needs and preferences of affected populations. In their research, Fagbohun et al. (2021) conducted a systematic review of literature examining stakeholder engagement practices across various sectors, identifying best practices and common pitfalls. Their findings emphasize that effective engagement leads to better project outcomes and higher community satisfaction. A case study by Omondi and Njiru (2022) specifically focused on Kakuma Refugee Camp, utilizing interviews and participant observations to understand how stakeholder engagement influenced program implementation. The study concluded that projects that prioritized community involvement saw significantly better outcomes compared to those that did not. While stakeholder engagement is well-documented, further research is needed to explore the long-term impacts of community involvement on project sustainability in refugee camps. There is also a lack of studies focusing on the dynamics between different stakeholder groups and their collective influence on project success.

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) practices are essential for assessing project effectiveness and ensuring accountability. A comprehensive evaluation by Turner and Ager (2020) investigated the M&E frameworks of multiple development programs in sub-Saharan Africa, utilizing a mixed-methods approach. Their findings highlighted that robust M&E systems lead to improved project outcomes and informed decision-making. In another study, McGhee and Smith (2021) focused on M&E challenges within humanitarian organizations, employing qualitative interviews to uncover barriers to effective monitoring. The research indicated that limited resources and lack of training hindered the implementation of effective M&E practices. Although there is substantial literature on M&E, studies specifically examining how these practices are tailored for refugee contexts remain scarce. Future research should aim to investigate the contextual factors that influence M&E effectiveness in humanitarian settings.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive research design, which is appropriate for systematically describing characteristics of a particular phenomenon or population rather than investigating causal relationships (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The choice of a descriptive design aligned well with the study's objective of exploring project management practices such as project planning, risk management, stakeholder engagement, and monitoring & evaluation and their effectiveness on development programs in the humanitarian context of Kakuma Refugee Camp. The study focused on 20 development programmes organisations spread on 8 categories of Education, Health, Livelihood and Vocational Training, Protection, Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene, Food and Nutrition, Energy and Environment and finally the Community Development and Capacity Building programs at Kakuma refugee Camp as per the UNHCR, 2021; IFC, 2022 reports. The 20 programmes had a total of 1550 Officers working on the development programmes. The sampling frame for this study comprised a list of all identifiable individuals and groups within the target population who are directly involved in the development programs in Kakuma refugee camps. Program staff, community leaders, and other key stakeholders.

For this study, a stratified random sampling technique was employed. In the context of Kakuma refugee camps, where development programs are categorized into various sectors,

such as education, health, livelihoods, and others, this technique helped minimize sampling bias by capturing the unique attributes of each sector. Yamane's sampling formula was used, Yamane's (1967). The Yamane formula is a widely used method for determining sample size in research. . Given a population of 1550 employees and a precision level of 0.05 the sample size was calculated as:

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

$n \approx 318$

Table 1: Sample Size Distribution

Projects Strata	Population	Sample
1. Education Programs	335	69
2. Health Programs	225	46
3. Livelihood and Vocational Training Programs	195	40
4. Protection Programs	180	37
5. Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) Programs	170	35
6. Food and Nutrition Programs	150	31
7. Energy and Environment Programs	200	41
8. Community Development and Capacity Building	95	19
Total	1550	318

The primary data collection instrument used in this study was structured questionnaires. Structured questionnaires were distributed to a randomly selected sample of respondents across all program categories. . Descriptive analyses measured the weighted means and descriptive statistics. Inferential Analyses measured the Pearson Correlation, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), Model of Fitness, and Coefficients. Descriptive and Inferential analyses examined relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variables. The Multiple regression analysis model was used to reveal linear relationships between the independent and the dependent variable.

RESEARCH FINDINGS, ANALYSIS & DISCUSSION

Response Rate

The study distributed 318 questionnaires, where 264 were returned with a response rate of 83%, which indicates a high level of participation and data quality in the survey or data collection process.

Descriptive Analysis

Respondents were requested to give their opinion on how they agreed with statements that measure the study variables. A 5-point Likert scale was used where 1= Strongly Disagreed, 2 =Disagreed, 3 =Neutral, 4= Agreed, 5= strongly agreed. The study used measure of central tendency i.e. frequency, mean and standard deviation to describe the patterns of responses. The descriptive are as follows based on the study variables.

The study objective was to examine the impact of project management practices on performance of development programs at Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya. The findings from Table 6 reveal that project management practices (planning, risk management, stakeholder engagement, and monitoring) have a moderately strong positive influence on program performance. The overall average mean score of 3.54 (SD = 1.14) suggests that respondents generally agree that the four project management dimensions (planning, risk management, stakeholder engagement, and monitoring) contribute positively to the performance of Kakuma development programs. The response distribution shows that about 57.6% (30.3% agree, 27.3% strongly agree) supported this view, while 22.8% (8.6% strongly disagree, 14.2%

disagree) expressed skepticism, and 19.6% were neutral. This points to broad recognition of the role of project management practices in driving performance, although with varied intensity across items.

The descriptive results reinforce that planning, monitoring, and stakeholder engagement are consistently seen as enhancing performance in Kakuma programs, in line with PMBOK, program theory, and Stakeholder Theory. Risk management shows mixed perceptions, suggesting that while cost compliance is supported, scope accomplishment remains less assured in practice, perhaps due to limited resources and unpredictable humanitarian challenges. According to Vandenabeele *et al* (2021), effective risk management practices lead to increased project success, particularly in environments characterized by high levels of uncertainty. Monitoring processes (especially baseline data and reviews) and stakeholder engagement emerged as the strongest drivers of success, while project planning and risk management also play significant roles in cost and scope compliance. However, mixed responses in some items suggest gaps in implementation, limiting full realization of program performance potential.

According to PMI (2021), planning is a cornerstone of project success, influencing time, cost, and scope. Kerzner (2022) further emphasizes that effective planning reduces delays and budget overruns as reflected in development programs in Kakuma where planning is strongly linked to timeliness and cost compliance. Risk management contributes to cost control more than to scope achievement, particularly in resource-constrained environments like humanitarian setting as stressed by Hilson (2009) in the risk management theory that with proactive identification and mitigation most projects remain within their budgeted cost and scope. Freeman (1984) emphasized that stakeholder engagement promotes scope attainment is consistent with stakeholder theory, which views program success as dependent on balancing and aligning stakeholder interests.

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics for Management Practices on Performance of Development Programs

Performance of programs Items	SD %	D %	N %	A %	SA %	MN	SDV
Project Planning contributes to timelines of Kakuma project execution	10.6	18.2	18.9	16.3	36	3.49	1.206
Risk management helps to ensure Kakuma programs' compliance on project cost	2.3	19.3	27.7	36	14.8	3.42	1.032
Stakeholders' engagement contributes on Kakuma programs scope accomplishment	1.9	4.2	21.2	36.7	36	4.01	.955
Monitoring processes are very key on the timelines of Kakuma projects execution	16.7	9.5	12.5	30.3	31.1	3.50	1.238
Project planning is key to project cost compliance	0.8	10.6	18.9	37.9	31.8	3.89	.996
Risk management ensures project scope accomplishment	8.7	26.1	19.7	24.2	21.2	3.23	1.286
Project management practices contribute to the performance of Kakuma development programs	18.9	11.4	18.6	30.7	20.5	3.22	1.298
Average Performance of Programs	8.6	14.2	19.6	30.3	27.3		

The weighted means results on Table 6 show the highest mean as 4.01 with standard deviation of 0.955 and the lowest mean as 3.22 with standard deviation of 1.298 indicates uniform curves between the lowest and the highest mean implying there was a significant correlation between project management practices and performance of development programs at Kakuma refugee camp, Kenya. The contrast between the highest mean (Stakeholder engagement, Mn = 4.01) and the lowest means (Project management practices, Mn = 3.22) suggests that respondents view specific, targeted practices such as stakeholder engagement, as more impactful for achieving performance outcomes than broad or less visible practices like risk management or general project management processes.

Inferential Analysis

The findings provide deeper insights into how specific project management practices contribute to or hinder program outcomes, beyond the descriptive statistics and correlation results presented earlier. This analysis therefore complements the previous sections by quantifying the predictive power of each construct and highlighting which practices are most critical for ensuring effective program performance in the Kakuma context.

Model Summary

The integrated regression analysis examined the combined effect of project planning, risk management, stakeholder engagement, and monitoring processes on the performance of development programs at Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya. As shown in the model summary in Table 7, the predictors jointly demonstrate a very strong positive relationship with program performance, with a correlation coefficient of $R = 0.832$. The R-Square value of 0.692 indicates that the four predictors collectively explain 69.2% of the variance in performance outcomes, while the adjusted R-Square of 0.687 confirms the model's robustness after adjusting for sample size and the number of predictors. The standard error of estimate (0.41392) suggests a high level of accuracy in predicting performance. These findings suggest that the integrated model (project management practices) is highly effective in explaining performance outcomes.

Table 7: Model Summary for Independent and Dependent Variables

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate
1	.832 ^a	.692	.687	.41392

a. Predictors: (Constant), Project planning, Risk management, Stakeholder Engagement Monitoring Process

b. Dependent Variable: Performance of Dev Program

ANOVA for Integrated Independent and Dependent Variables

The ANOVA results in Table 8 further confirm the statistical significance of the integrated model. The regression sum of squares (99.473) is much larger than the residual sum of squares (44.374), indicating that the model accounts for the majority of variation in performance. The F-statistic of 145.149 with a significance level of $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$) validates the model, showing that the combined predictors significantly influence development program performance.

Table 8: ANOVA for Integrated Independent and Dependent Variables

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	99.473	4	24.868	145.149	.000 ^b
	Residual	44.374	259	.171		
	Total	143.847	263			

a. Dependent variable: Performance of Dev Program

b. Predictors: (Constant), Planning, Risk, Stakeholders, Monitoring Process

Coefficients for Integrated Independent and Dependent Variables

The coefficients in Table 9 provide insights into the relative contributions of each predictor. Monitoring processes emerged as the strongest and most significant determinant of program performance ($B = 0.499$, $Beta = 0.588$, $t = 11.422$, $p = 0.000$). Monitoring process significant influence performance of development programs at Kakuma refugee camp by 58.8% thus being the highest influential practices of the predictors. Risk management also showed a significant positive effect ($B = 0.170$, $Beta = 0.218$, $t = 6.120$, $p = 0.000$), the predictor was the second most influential practice on performance of development programs at Kakuma refugee camp as it influences 21.8%. Project planning, which had a smaller but significant influence ($B = 0.119$, $Beta = 0.173$, $t = 2.913$, $p = 0.004$). The predictor influences performance of development projects at Kakuma refugee camp by 17.3%. In contrast, stakeholder engagement, although positive, did not demonstrate a statistically significant contribution in the integrated model ($B = 0.074$, $Beta = 0.097$, $t = 1.480$, $p = 0.140$). However, stakeholder engagement influences performance of development programs by 9.7% making it the least influential practice.

The integrated model highlights that monitoring processes are the optimal predictor of development program performance, followed by risk management and project planning, with stakeholder engagement playing a supportive but statistically non-significant role when all variables are considered together. These findings suggest that while all four factors are important in project management, strengthening monitoring systems offers the greatest impact on program outcomes. Robust monitoring processes including baseline data collection, follow up meetings, and regular project reviews are the most critical drivers of program success.

Table 10: Coefficients for Integrated Independent and Dependent Variables

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.568	.142		4.001	.000
	Project Planning	.119	.041	.173	2.913	.004
	Risk Management	.170	.028	.218	6.120	.000
	Stakeholder Engagement	.074	.050	.097	1.480	.140
	Monitoring Process	.499	.044	.588	11.422	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Performance of Dev Program

Based on the data in Table 10, a linear regression model of the form $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \epsilon$ can be fitted, as demonstrated below.

$$Y = 0.568 + 0.119X_1 + 0.170X_2 + 0.074X_3 + 0.499X_4$$

Where: Y= Performance of the Program

β_0 = Constant

β_1 - β_4 =Beta coefficient

X_1 = Project Planning

X_2 = Risk Management

X_3 = Stakeholder Engagement

X_4 = Monitoring Processes

ϵ =Error Term

In conclusion, the general study objective was to examine the impact of project management practices on performance of development programs at Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya. At a 95% significance level, the findings indicate that project management practices have a significant positive effect on the performance of development programs. The results indicate that the monitoring processes are pivotal in shaping the effectiveness of development

initiatives. This supports the studies done by Kusek & Rist (2020), Turner and Ager (2020), and Koima and Mukulu (2020), which highlighted that ongoing monitoring fosters accountability, facilitates prompt modifications, and enhances decision-making, all contributing to improved project results. The significant importance of risk management supports previous research conducted by Niragire and Kwenya (2024), Mutisya (2020), Goswami and Clark (2024), and Mwaura and Muchiri (2022) which emphasize that proactive strategies for identifying and mitigating risks protect development efforts from disruptions and inefficiencies. In environments such as Kenya, where development initiatives frequently encounter uncertainties like political instability or variations in resources, effective risk management is crucial.

Project planning, though significant, showed a relatively lower influence in the integrated model. This suggests that while initial planning is essential, performance outcomes are more strongly shaped by adaptive mechanisms like monitoring and risk management as projects unfold. This resonates with Parker (2024), who argued that static plans are less impactful without dynamic oversight mechanisms in project management. Interestingly, stakeholder engagement lost its significance within the integrated model, even though it remained significant in isolated analyses. This might suggest that although involvement from the community and stakeholders' increases legitimacy and support, its direct impact on performance is less noticeable when assessed alongside technical and managerial practices. This aligns with the findings of Inisha and Elly (2022), who point out that stakeholder engagement is most effective when woven into robust planning and monitoring systems. Incorporating stakeholder involvement into planning, monitoring, and evaluation systems increases effectiveness by offering important insights, promoting transparency, and allowing for data-informed changes to boost results, which in turn strengthens accountability. The optimal model highlights that while all four factors are relevant, monitoring processes and risk management are the key drivers of development program success, with planning playing a supportive role and stakeholder engagement acting more indirectly through other processes.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The multilinear regression model, which integrated project planning, risk management, stakeholder engagement, and monitoring processes, demonstrated strong explanatory power, accounting for 69.2% of the variance in the performance of development programs. Among the predictors, the monitoring process emerged as the most influential factor, followed by risk management and project planning. Stakeholder engagement, while significant in the individual regression analysis, lost significance in the integrated model, suggesting that its effect overlaps with other variables. These results indicate that development program performance is primarily driven by strong monitoring systems and effective risk management, with project planning providing additional support, while stakeholder engagement contributes more indirectly when other managerial controls are present.

In conclusion, project management practices; Monitoring processes, Risk management, Stakeholder engagement, and Project planning, collectively, influence performance of development programs. The study shows that, the influence of project planning, risk management, stakeholder engagement, and monitoring processes accounts for, at least, 70% of the changes observed in development program performance.

The study generally recommends that humanitarian and development actors in Kakuma should include integrated project management principles into their organizational policy, including planning, risk management, stakeholder involvement, and monitoring process. Donors and implementing partners can also align their financial mechanisms to complement these principles, making programs more sustainable, efficient, and responsive to community needs.

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