



**SCOPE MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE OF DONOR FUNDED HEALTH  
PROJECTS IN KENYA**

**<sup>1</sup> Okumu Silas Otieno, <sup>2</sup> Dr. Senelwa Anayo & <sup>3</sup> Dr. Lango Benard**

<sup>1</sup> Doctorate Student, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology

<sup>2</sup> Lecturer, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology

<sup>3</sup> Lecturer, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology

**ABSTRACT**

Donor funded projects are of great interest to the government, civil society organizations and the beneficiaries. Health projects are among the highly funded projects by both the government and donors. The general objective of the study was to examine the effect of scope management on performance of donor funded health projects in Kenya. The study was based on Theory of Triple Constraints. The study employed correlational research design. The target population of the study involved 44 project managers, 115 project officers, 81 project monitoring & evaluation officers, and 68 project finance managers. Census method was used to enumerate the entire population. Data was then collected using questionnaires. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for data analysis using SPSS. The data was then presented in statistical tables. All ethical considerations were strictly adhered to. The findings show that project scope management has significant effect on performance of donor funded health projects in Kenya ( $\beta_1=0.580$ ,  $p$  value= 0.000). The study recommends that project managers should have flexible project designs. This will enable them to incorporate changes that may be suggested by the project stakeholders. The project staff should also clearly define the roles of every project team members.

**Key Words:** Project Management Practices, Donor funded projects, scope management, performance, donor funded health projects

## Background of the Study

Project managers engage in activities known as project management practices, to guarantee the success of their projects. Such practices comprise stakeholder management, scope management, risk management, and quality management (Kerzner, 2017). Joslin and Müller (2016) argue that poor project management practices frequently lead to projects being finished late; overspending; expected outcomes, or even dropped preceding the fruition after the consumption of extensive amounts of resources. Badewi (2016) opines that in the United Kingdom, the main purpose of using project management (PM) practices is to increase organizational value. The organization can benefit from using PM practices by increasing the effectiveness of human effort in the organization while increasing the efficiency of these efforts. Chen, Nakayama, Shou and Charoen (2018) contend that as China is extending its project management concepts from mainstream infrastructural projects, project managers in those new industries rely on the use of PM practices as tools and methodologies. However, it remains unclear to what extent the use of these PM practices can increase project success. Besides lack of organizational support, using project risk management tools and methodology effectively has been one major challenge to project success. Further, projects do not meet their desired strategic objectives and fail most of the time. In Saudi Arabia, one of the fundamental concerns in project management regards the extent to which Project Managers use and implement project management practices, and the implications for project success. In addition, a mismatch between the promises offered by project management practices and the project outcomes have equally been recognized (Aloitabi, 2019).

In Nigeria, Daniel (2018) states that PM practices adoption in the management of the donor funded health projects integrates the project management process of initiation, planning, executing, monitoring, controlling and closing; progressively through the project life cycle with the aim of satisfying the stakeholders and constituents according to the project's established requirements. Stakeholders are those who have a direct stake in the project while the project's constituents are those who may be affected by the consequences of the project. Project success is typically created when the stakeholders and constituents show their collective fulfillment according to the extent of their involvement. Abera (2018) considers the limited studies in the specific context covering project management in developing countries, especially adoption of project management practices in Ethiopia, the challenges the country has faced and how it has responded to these challenges when appraising projects and making optimal decisions for better impact. Murwanashyaka and Shukla (2017) views project management practices especially stakeholder's management practices on performance of projects in Rwanda to have been highly regarded because many international investment and delivery projects still have strikingly poor performance records in terms of economy, environment and public support due to poor stakeholders' relationship management. The effective adoptions of stakeholders' communication and conflict management practices have been established to improve performance of the projects.

According to Kiprop, Nzulwa, and Kwena (2017), little development has taken place in Sub-Saharan Africa despite donor funding for over a half a century. Well performing donor funded health projects start with organizations which have a mission that is clearly defined and have created a vision of what they want their impact to be and in their activities and plans they aim to follow (Kraeger, 2018). Other optimum performance enabling factors include adoption of project management practices, aligning activities with institutional strengths and capabilities and strategically building collaborative linkages with other players working in the sector. Strategic stakeholder partnerships, risk management and quality management with other players in the sector are also critical for health funded projects that aim to impact health outcome (Kaleeba, 2016).

## **Statement of the Problem**

According to the World Bank (2017), donor funded health projects are of great interests to the government, civil society organizations and the beneficiaries. Health projects are among the highly funded projects by governments and donors. NGO Coordination Board 2020 Report shows that the 1,026 Kenyan NGOs contributed a sum of 34.9 billion Kenyan Shillings in the financial year 2018/2019 as they helped in adopting health projects associated with the Kenyan government's "Big Four" agenda. Specifically, NGOs registered in Kenya spent a sum of 30.8 billion Kenyan Shillings on healthcare and related projects and 3.8 billion Kenyan Shillings on nutrition and food security. Despite the guidelines set out by donors on the implementation of various health projects in Kenya, the performance of such projects is still below expectation (Osedo, 2015; Sikudi & Otieno, 2017; Mwangi, 2018). Despite the continued funding and other attention given to the healthcare projects by international NGOs and the Kenyan government at large, most of these projects have remained a pipe dream with minimal completion rates while others are not meeting the expected goals (WHO, 2021). According to WHO (2021), 21% of health projects are subject to cost manipulation at the design stage and 15% are subject to distorted procurement plans. The NGO Council (2021) reported that more than half of all projects carried out by non-governmental organizations are not sustainable and collapse in less than one year after the exit of the donors. According to the report, 40% of the projects implemented by NGOs were facing time overrun due to poor management and lack of timely allocation of resources. According to Osedo (2015), donor funded health projects have been underperforming as more than 60% of donor funded health projects in Kenya have either failed or have been completely abandoned. This implies that the projects delayed and the budgets were higher than the initially planned. According to Muchungu (2018), 58% of donor funded projects in Kenya show poor performance as measured by time, budget, scope and client satisfaction. Gitonga and Keiyoro (2017) found out that health grants were not utilized well in the implementation of health care projects due to corruption resulting in high failure of projects funded by NGOs. Additionally, according to Nyanje and Wanyoike (2016), poor project performance and low sustainability of NGO projects can be explained by lack of focus on key project management practices. They aver that 40% of projects implemented by NGOs were facing time overrun due to lack of timely allocation of resources. Various studies related to project management practices and performance of projects have been conducted locally in different sectors. No study has focused on performance of donor funded health projects in Kenya. The studies were also collected in single counties in Kenya and not the national perspective. The studies focused on projects in other sectors other than health sector. The application of the project leadership, project management practices and performance of projects cannot be assumed to be similar with health projects. There is hence contextual and scope gaps that this study sought to fill. It is on this premise that this study, therefore, investigated the effect of project management practices (stakeholder, and quality management) and performance of donor funded health projects in Kenya

## **Research Objective**

The objective of the study was to examine the effect of scope management on performance of donor funded health projects in Kenya

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Theoretical Review**

#### **Theory of Constraints**

The theory of constraints is derived from the very definition of a project which states that a project is a temporary group of activity which is designed to produce a desired result or service or a unique product (PMI, 2015). The theory of e constraint posits that the project triple

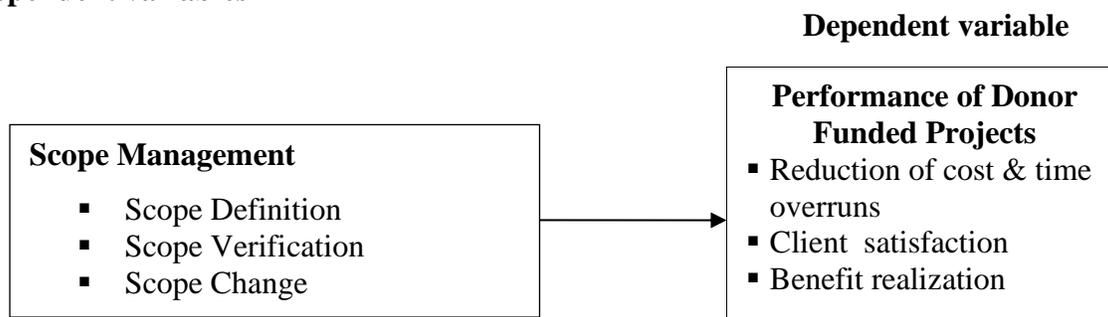
constraint management is an iron triangle of cost, scope, quality and time which bounds the project universe and which must be achieved. Donor funded projects brings complications in project management, needs and constraints and therefore, for effective project management, constraints have to be managed. Projects take place inside organizations where, there is a finite amount of resources with which to accomplish infinite tasks. This results in scarcity and the triple constraints; a deadline, a budget, and a minimum acceptable level of performance (Dobson, 2004). The theory of the triple constraints is anchored on the project management with an understanding that a project should be a balance of the three interdependent project constraints (time, scope and cost) to achieve the desirable results. The cause and effect of new or changing triple constraint requirements are constantly negotiated during all project processes, and the three key triple constraint relationships signify that at least one of the triple constraint variables must be constrained (Wayngaad, Pretorius & Pretorius, 2012).

Most of adopted project management strategies aim to enhance project performance like planning process, scheduling process, a methodology for introducing work that actually leads to increased capacity, execution processes that provide excellent project control, visibility and decision support and work behaviors that are more conducive to good project performance (Jacob & McClelland, Jr, 2001). The theory enhances the understanding of the project manager towards contribution of deliverables as per the clients' satisfaction requirements. Further, the theory requires continuous improvement to sustain quality in the project dimensions (Nyakundi, 2015). While triple constraints criteria in project management have been accepted as a measure of project success, uncertainty and involvement of three different and opposing factors of time, cost, and quality, most projects are difficult to manage (Jacob & McClelland, Jr, 2001). Scope management of the three limitations have their individual impacts on project execution yet since these components have some relationship, one imperative bear an impact on the other two; which in the long run influences ventures expectations (Hamid, *et al.*, 2012). This theory from project perspectives may work well or fail depending on the level of embrace. For the donor funded health projects, the scope overrun delays are a common problem not only with an immeasurable cost to donors and other stakeholders, but also with debilitating effects on the contracting parties (Ondari & Gekara, 2013). The current study seeks to adopt theory of constraints to establish the relationship between project scope management and performance of donor funded health projects in Kenya.

### Conceptual Framework

Conceptual Framework represents the researcher's synthesis of literature on how to explain phenomena (Trochi & Arora, 2016). It is a diagrammatic, flow chart or figurative illustration, explaining the relationships between factors and variables identified, relevant to the study (Muchemwa, Padia & Callaghan, 2016). It is a set of broad ideas and principles taken from relevant fields of enquiry and used to structure a subsequent presentation.

### Independent variables



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

## Scope Management

Project scope arranging is emblematic of the undertaking limits and the normal expectations from the venture (Adek, 2016). The essential framework that is utilized for scope arranging examination includes the commencement, arranging and definition. This can call for check and change control when blended (Band & Pretorius, 2016). Inception inputs require the portrayal of program deliverable, determination of program measures; arranging decisively and verifiable data. Instruments and strategies included are techniques for program choice and master judgment of the equivalent. The inception stage yield includes the recognizable proof of program contract, project director task, and the limitations and suspicions ID (Baymount, 2015). The project scope planning additionally incorporates the expectations portrayals, suspicions and requirements, as well as program contract. The project apparatuses and strategies included comprises of advantage/cost, recognizable proof of choices and deliverable investigation (Apiyo & Mburu, 2014). Omondi (2017) posits that uncontrolled variations in a project's scope (scope creep) represents propensity of a programme or project to incorporate a larger number of tasks or duties as compared to the initial planned tasks and duties which were specified, and this can frequently lead to higher than arranged project costs and addition of the project duration. Conceptually, scope creep is actually additional tasks and duties which were never planned for in the project thus likely to have an effect on the cost and time of the project (Osedo, 2015). As the project progresses, project team gains more knowledge, and this leads to scope changes. Jones, Snyder, Stackpole and Lambert (2011) add that scope change is common on projects, meaning that it is not a harm to make changes during the lifecycle of the project (Rugenyi, 2015).

## Empirical Studies

Mathias (2018) studied managerial perceptions of scope management in projects in Norway. A qualitative research method was utilized. The study targeted five project managers who were purposively sampled. Interview guides were used for data collection. Findings revealed that awareness of scope creep assists project team members to discover unauthorized changes, resulting in proper communication within the project management team on successful projects. Nibyiza (2015) analyzed the scope change management as a tool for project success in Rwanda. The study covered projects that were implemented in Akazi Kanoze. The purpose of this study was to find out if the changes in project scope would lead to success of the project in terms of delivering quality results. A descriptive research was used. The target population of this study was 30 staff in Akazi kanoze projects. Census technique was used in sampling the entire target population. Questionnaires and interview guides were used for collecting primary data while secondary data was collected from books, journals, reports, internal policy and procedure manuals and other documents through libraries and internet based research. Results revealed that changes in project activities provoke the changes in project cost, time and quality of the product/service of the project. The study indicated that when activities are changed without changing project cost or time; it increases the risk of not completing the project on time as well as risk of not having enough resources.

Ogolla and Njau (2017) investigated factors influencing project scope performance at Kenya National Youth Service. The study adopted a descriptive research design to collect quantitative data. The target population was drawn from a population frame provided by the National Youth Service and consisted of project supervisors; project managers; staff and project beneficiaries. The target population for the study was 200; from where a sample of 60 respondents was picked for the study through stratified random sampling. A questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. Hypothesis test confirmed that scope change had significant influence on project scope performance. Odhiambo (2014) studied influence of skills and knowledge on the relationship between project scope management and implementation of economic stimulus

projects in public secondary schools in Kisumu County, Kenya. The study targeted Boards of Management and Project management Committees of 7 secondary schools that benefited from the government initiative of Elimu Scholarship program projects in Kisumu County. This gave a target population of 189 respondents from which a sample size of 128 respondents was drawn. In this study, descriptive survey research design was used. Both qualitative and quantitative research approaches were also deployed. Significant relationship was established between project initiation, scope planning, scope definition, scope verification and project change control and implementation of Economic Stimulus Projects. Ngunjiri (2018) investigated the influence of initialization requirements on project performance based on Financial IT projects in Fintech Limited in Kenya. The target population was staff members. With the total number of staff at the company being 130; the targeted projects were the last five (5) Financial Systems from each team lead based on IT projects implemented within years: 2014, 2015 and 2016. The study adopted Krecjie and Morgan formulae to obtain the sample size of 97. From the results; scope management and change management plan were the most influential variables on project performance of Financial IT projects in Fintech International Limited, Kenya.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study used a correlational research design. Correlation design describes in quantitative terms the degree to which variables are related. Correlational research designs are used to explore causal relationships between variables and to predict scores on one variable from research participants' scores on other variables. The study targeted 44 donor funded NGOs in health sector in Kenya. The unit of observation was staff employed by NGO's to implement the donor funded health projects Kenya. These included 44 project managers, 115 project officers, 81 M&E officers, and 68 project finance officers. These are the key stakeholders of these projects constituted the population of respondents from whom data was collected. Given the number of completed donor funded health projects for the period under study as described, a census survey was found to be appropriate. Primary data was collected from the respective respondents using self-administered structured questionnaire. The quantitative data collected was analyzed by use of both descriptive and inferential statistics.

### **RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The study population comprised of 44 project managers, 115 project officers, 81 M&E officers, and 68 finance officers. The total target population was 308 and 10% (30) of this population was used during pilot study. Questionnaires were hence distributed to 278 respondents and 211 were answered successfully.

#### **Descriptive Statistics**

The study aimed at establishing the effect of scope management on performance of donor funded health projects in Kenya. Respondents were also requested to tick on the extent to which they agreed/disagreed with statements related to effect of scope management on project performance. Findings are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Effect of Scope Management on Project Performance**Key: **SD**-Strongly disagree, **D**-Disagree, **N**-Neutral, **A**-Agree, **SA**-Strongly agree.

<b>Statement</b>	<b>SD%</b>	<b>D%</b>	<b>N%</b>	<b>A%</b>	<b>SA%</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev</b>
The project scope is well defined to team members	5.2	4.7	4.7	48.3	37.0	4.07	1.038
Project managers approve the scope change as requested by donors	0	0.9	2.4	72.5	24.2	4.20	0.515
Scope helps to adjust project activities	0.5	1.4	0	74.4	22.7	4.20	0.494
Change in project activities results to change in project schedule/time	4.3	14.2	2.4	47.4	31.8	3.88	1.134
Change in project activities results to change in project cost	1.4	22.3	4.3	55.5	16.6	3.64	1.049
Change in project activities results to change in client satisfaction	4.3	1.4	1.9	26.5	65.9	4.48	0.943
Change in project activities results to change in benefit realization	1.9	4.7	3.8	68.2	21.3	4.02	0.783
Scope definition has implications on the overall projects time and cost	8.1	12.8	4.3	55.5	19.4	3.65	1.166
The project design is flexible to achieve better project results.	2.8	8.5	6.2	52.1	30.3	3.99	0.983

**N=211**

Findings show that the respondents strongly agreed that; change in project activities results in change in client satisfaction (m=4.48), and project managers approve the scope change as requested by donors (m=4.20). Respondents also agreed that; scope helps to adjust project activities (m=4.20), the project scope is well defined to team members (m=4.07), change in project activities results in change in benefit realization (m=4.02), the project design is flexible to achieve better project results (m=3.99), change in project activities results to change in project schedule/time (m=3.88), scope definition has implications on the overall projects time and cost (m=3.65), and change in project activities results in change in project cost (m=3.64). Findings imply that the project scope play an essential role in project performance. Scope allows for an estimation of how much time, labor, and finances will be necessary for accomplishing the project. When changes occur, for whatever reason, a tight change control process can help the project manager to keep the project on track. Changing project activities improves beneficiaries' satisfaction which could be due to the fact that the changes are mainly suggested by the stakeholders and are contented when they are listened to and actions taken. Change requests from the project financiers are evaluated and considered during project implementation. The scope helps to change project activities to accommodate the proposed changes which may also affect project delivery timelines and budget too. The project managers ensure that the scope of the project is clearly defined and team members are sensitized on the proposed changes and how to incorporate them in the projects. During project designing, project managers make efforts to ensure that the designs are flexible to accommodate changes that may help to improve the quality of the health projects. Findings are in agreement with Nibyiza (2015) that changes in project activities provoke the changes in project cost, time and quality of the product/service of the project. The study also showed that when activities are changed without changing project cost or

time; it increases the risk of not completing the project on time as well as the risk of not having enough resources is also enhanced.

### Inferential Statistics

#### Regression Model for Project Scope

**Table 2: Model Summary for Project Scope**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.686	.470	.462	.518

a. Predictors: (Constant), project scope

The r-squared for the relationship between the project scope and the project performance was 0.470. This implied that 47% of the variation in the dependent variable (performance of donor funded health projects) could be explained by independent variable (project scope).

**Table 3: ANOVA for Project Scope**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	14.778	1	14.778	55.007	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	16.659	209	.269		
	Total	31.438	210			

a. Dependent Variable: project performance  
b. Predictors: (Constant), project scope

Results show that the **F** value was 55.007 and **p** value was 0.000. Since the **F** value was greater than 1 and the **p** value 0.000 was less than 0.05, the model was considered as a good fit for the data. Hence, it can be used to predict the influence of project scope on performance of donor funded health projects in Kenya.

**Table 4: Regression Coefficients for Project Scope**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error			
1	(Constant)	.580	.151		3.830	.00
	Project scope	.580	.078	.686	7.416	.000

a. Dependent Variable: project performance

The equation

$$y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \varepsilon$$

Becomes

$$\text{Project Performance} = 0.580 + 0.580 (\text{project scope management})$$

According to the results, project scope management has significant effect on performance of donor funded health projects in Kenya ( $\beta_1=0.580$ ,  $p$  value= 0.000). The relationship was

considered significant since the p value 0.000 was less than the significant level of 0.05. The study hence rejects the null hypothesis since there is statistical evidence to prove that project scope management affects performance of donor funded health projects. Findings concur with Ogolla and Njau (2017) that scope change had significant influence on project performance.

## Conclusions

Defining project scope is a vital task that needs to be adequately carried out at the initial phase of a project. This ensures that project resources are well allocated. The work plan for the project should also be well laid out including clearly defining the roles of project team members. The purpose of project scope definition is to provide adequate information that is needed to identify the work to be performed in order to avoid major changes that may negatively affect project performance. A flexible project design accommodates changes that may be requested as a result of the different perspectives that each stakeholder has on the project. Therefore, having a well-defined project during the pre-project planning stage is crucial for successful project execution and for achieving a satisfactory project outcome.

## Recommendations of the Study

The project managers should have flexible project designs. This will enable them to incorporate changes that may be suggested by the project stakeholders. The project staff should also clearly define the roles of every project team member. This will help to prevent role duplication which may lead to conflicts and eventual project delays. The project managers should also ensure that the project resources are well budgeted to prevent budget overruns and project desertion as a result of funds shortage. The health project managers should reconsider instituting risk management processes that must be followed before project execution to see how it will affect the performance of their projects.

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