



**PROJECT MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES AND PROJECTS PERFORMANCE IN
CHILD PROTECTION IN NAIROBI CITY COUNTY, KENYA**

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ABSTRACT

This research project aimed to investigate the relationship between project management principles and projects performance in child protection in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The research's specific objective aimed to explore the effect of project stewardship and project tailoring on projects performance in child protection in Nairobi City County. The researcher drew insights from stewardship theory and theory of change to guide its analysis. Employing a descriptive research design, the study focused on 15 completed child protection projects in Nairobi City County. The unit of observation was the 160 social workers. The study used census which is recommended for a population that is less than 200. Therefore, all the social workers in the 15 completed child protection projects in Nairobi City County were selected for the study. This study collected primary data using questionnaire. Questionnaires were sent to the respondent's email. The sample size for piloting was 16 social workers of the Child Protection Organizations, representing 10% of study sample. The research adopted content, face and construct validity to ensure the accuracy and relevance of the data collected. Particularly, data reliability was assessed using the Cronbach Alpha coefficient. The data analysis process using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 28) encompassed the generation of descriptive statistics, such as frequency, percentage, and mean, as well as inferential statistics, including correlation and regression analysis. The validity analysis confirmed the accuracy of the questionnaire, with face and content validity established through expert review and construct validity demonstrated by factor loadings exceeding 0.4 for all variables. Specifically, Project Stewardship demonstrates an average variance extracted of 0.606, and Project Tailoring at 0.569, and Projects Performance in Child Protection in Nairobi City County, Kenya at 0.574. Reliability analysis revealed high internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values consistently above 0.7 for all constructs, indicating reliable measurement tools. The regression analysis revealed significant positive effects of all principles on projects performance, with beta coefficients of 0.320 ($p=0.029$) for project stewardship, and 0.335 ($p=0.002$) for project tailoring. These findings underscore the importance of effective project management principles in enhancing child protection projects outcomes. The study concludes that strong project stewardship tailored project approaches, are crucial for successful child protection projects. It is recommended that organizations enhance governance structures customize project plans to meet specific needs. Future research should explore the impact of technology, stakeholder engagement, and change management on project success in different contexts.

Key Words: Project Management Principles, Projects Performance, Project Stewardship, Project Tailoring, Child Protection

Background of the Study

Project management principles are the rules and protocols that should be followed for project success. The project management principles include stewardship, collaboration, active stakeholder engagement, value generation, systems thinking, and effective leadership (Cobb, 2023). Additionally, Iqbal (2023) issue supplementary principles that involve customized approaches, emphasis on quality, adeptly handling project complexities, risk management, fostering adaptability and resilience, as well as skillful change management. Project stewards are expected to conduct themselves properly, adhere to both internal and external policies, and show an exhaustive involvement in the economic, social, and environmental effects of the projects they promote. According to Walker and Lloyd-Walker (2019), they must also be honest, reliable, and compliant. It includes obligations both inside and outside the company. In addition, a comprehensive approach of stewardship takes into account financial, social, technological, and adaptive environmental awareness.

As systems are constantly evolving, it becomes crucial to consistently examine both internal and external factors. According to Thompson and Williams (2018), project teams can attain favorable outcomes by being attuned to these system interactions. Given the uniqueness of each project, optimizing results necessitates adaptability to the specific project environment. As a result, tailoring the approach is a constant process that is iterative throughout the project. According to Gerdali and Söderlund (2018), a project should be structured with "just enough" process to accomplish the intended result while optimizing value, controlling cost, and boosting performance. This process should take into account the project's deliverables, goals and objectives, stakeholders management, and environment. Timely adjustments to changing environments are made possible by adaptability, while rapid recovery from adversities is made possible by resilience. An emphasis on results rather than outputs is advised in order to accomplish this. This strategy aids in maintaining adaptability and concentration on the project's aims and objectives. Silvius and Schipper (2020) generally describe that involving adaptation and resilience into a team's and organization's approaches may support achieving a project's objectives, even in the midst of challenges and setbacks.

Statement of the Problem

Nearly 1 in 10 children worldwide are subjected to child labor, with some being forced into hazardous work through trafficking and various forms of violence, including physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. These practices significantly undermine the social and economic development of communities and nations. The global economic costs resulting from implementation of child protection projects aimed at mitigating physical, emotional and sexual violence against children is estimated to be as high as 7 trillion dollars – 8 per cent of global GDP annually (UNICEF, 2020).

In Nairobi City County, Kenya, the completion and effectiveness of numerous child protection projects are hindered by persistent challenges such as schedule overruns, resource constraints, inadequate capacity building, normalization of violence, and incomplete implementation. For instance, statistics from the Nairobi City County Department of Children Services reveal alarming figures regarding child abuse cases. In 2023 alone, there were 1,500 reported cases of child abuse, including physical, sexual, and emotional abuse. Additionally, neglect remains a prevalent issue, with over 2,000 children reported as victims of neglect in the past year, further highlighting the vulnerability of children in the county (UNICEF, 2023).

Budgetary limitations further exacerbate the challenges faced by child protection projects in Nairobi City County. For example, despite the initial plan of a 36-month duration, the "APRIRE: Tuwarudishe Watoto Nyumbani" project led by Tree of Life experienced a schedule overrun, extending to 41 months. This delay indicates a common trend in project management issues that affect timely completion and could potentially impact project outcomes. Moreover, inadequate resource allocation poses a challenge to the effective implementation of child

protection initiatives, as evidenced by the premature end of the "NILINDE project" by PLAN in June 2019 due to budget constraints. In addition, despite efforts such as the "VuruguMapper" project aimed at facilitating community-level child protection reporting, delays in the final rollout and deployment of the application indicate ongoing challenges in changing social norms and promoting the reporting of abuse cases. Additionally underscoring the urgency of addressing violence against children through ensuring the effectiveness of child protection projects in the county.

Available statistics highlight the urgency of addressing child protection issues in Nairobi City County. With children constituting 43% of the county's demographics in 2019 (Nairobi County Administrative and Demographic Profile, 2020), and violence against them, including physical, psychological and sexual abuse, comprising nearly 80% of reported cases, there is a pressing need for effective intervention (KIPPRA, 2020). Performance evaluations reveal that only 13% of child protection initiatives were completed within the deadline and budget, with a majority (73%) experiencing schedule overruns (Ahsan, 2020). Given these challenges, understanding the impact of project management principles on child protection projects is crucial.

Recent research underscores the pivotal role of project management principles in determining the success of child protection initiatives. Studies on related projects, such as research on the influence of project management principles on the accomplishment of Constituency Development Fund (CDF) projects in Kenya was undertaken by Ngeno (2013). According to the study, project assessment and ownership have a big impact on how well a project performs. Similarly, Oluwafemi (2023) found out that technical management methods for monitoring and evaluating projects affected the effectiveness of child protection projects. According to the study, M&E technical management systems improve how well child safety initiatives operate. Similarly, staff motivation and leadership were found to have a significant impact on the implementation of Orphan and Vulnerable Children (OVC) funded projects in Kenya from a study by Maore and Kidombo (2019). The researchers focused on the factors impacting the execution of projects for orphans and vulnerable children in Igembe North sub-county, Meru County. There fails to be much recently published material on project management principles. Therefore, this study sought to establish how project management principles affect the successful implementation of child protection programs in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

General Objective

To establish the relationship between project management principles and projects performance in child protection in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

Specific Objectives

- i. To determine the effect of project stewardship on projects performance in child protection in Nairobi City County, Kenya.
- ii. To determine the effect of project tailoring on projects performance in child protection in Nairobi City County, Kenya

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

Stewardship theory

Introduced by Donaldson and Davis (1997), the stewardship theory presents a framework contending that individuals are internally driven to work under individuals or organizations, fulfilling entrusted duties. The principle of stewardship entails the safeguarding of an organization for the future. It covers traditional concepts such as fiduciary loyalty, transparency in corporate governance policies, and sound processes for shareholder voting rights. The theory asserts that people possess a collective mindset and prioritize organizational, group, or societal goals, resulting to a higher level of satisfaction. Additionally, stewardship theory implies that when people adopt these behaviors, they put corporate goals ahead of personal interests.

Thirdly, official measures like supervision and incentive pay systems are regarded as superfluous and perhaps ineffective since the theory assumes that people's aims are already in line with those of stakeholders or the business.

Stewardship theory does not take into account pre-employment factors or assumptions about people's capacity to receive and process information, as opposed to agency theory. These ideas are addressed in agency theory and have an impact on how much people act as organizational stewards. As a result, good stewards collaborate rather than act individually and are not motivated instrumentally, in contrast to agents following agency theory. Davis, Schoorman, and Donaldson (1997) support the stewardship theory stating that it serves as one framework for understanding the motivations behind managerial behavior in different organizational contexts. First, the theory is based on an ideology that shows people as self-actualizing in assisting others as opposed to being self-interested and serving themselves. Stewardship theory supports the objective on project stewardship since it advocates for managers to have the freedom to pursue their objectives, assuming that they prioritized the firm's interests naturally.

Theory of Change

Carol Weiss (1995) popularized the theory of change, which serves as a foundational framework for defining the mechanisms behind the success of a program or intervention. Theory of change (ToC) is a project level statement of the high-level links between project activities, market actor behaviour changes, market system changes and impacts on target groups. A theory of change captures the team's current thinking and assumptions on how change will happen so that they can be explored and rebutted if, and where, necessary. It changes the way of thinking about initiatives from 'what you are doing' to 'what do you want to achieve?' The theory of change is based on seven principles; repeat doing it until you get it right, links are as important as expected changes, risk and assumptions are key, it must be scalable, it is not a results chain, organizations often already have flexible project designs, and it has to be simple (Winderl, 2020)

According to Ruesga (2010), it represents a theory-based approach to planning, enacting, or assessing change at the personal, corporate, or societal scales. The theory of change therefore provides a framework that describes how an intervention is anticipated to result in the planned or observed impacts and value. It is a vital tool for policymakers to utilize to avoid making decisions without a thorough knowledge of the implications and underlying presumptions of the actions necessary to accomplish the policy goals. Without attentive thinking and thorough planning, actions could be taken having the undesired effect. Organizations may create milestones and objectives while illustrating the logical flow from actions to impacts by utilizing the theory of change. Additionally, this entails showing a number of presumptions and connections, locating the presumptive links, and confirming their applicability to planning and coordination.

Apart from being an evaluation tool, the theory of change also enables organizations to ask critical questions about their work. By understanding the pathways of change leading to long-term goals and the connections between activities, outputs, and outcomes at each step, the theory strengthens partnerships, supports organizational development, and facilitates communication. One distinctive aspect of the theory of change is its innovative nature in distinguishing between the expected and actual outcomes before deciding on the ideal interventions necessary to achieve the expected output (Taplin et al., 2013). As pointed out by Muchelule (2018), the theory of change useful for measuring outcomes and also helps in understanding the project's role and the influence of other factors contributing to those outcomes. Expanding on this topic, research has shown that a clear and well-structured theory of change can significantly improve project outcomes and effectiveness. A study by Jones and Johnson (2020) explored the use of theory of change in a community development project aimed at reducing unemployment and poverty rates. The findings revealed that organizations that implemented a well-defined theory of change approach saw greater success in achieving

their intended impacts compared to those that did not utilize this framework. The theory of change provided a comprehensive roadmap, guiding the organizations through the logical steps and necessary actions to produce meaningful and sustainable outcomes.

Moreover, the theory of change is increasingly being integrated into impact evaluation methodologies. Researchers like Smith et al. (2021) have demonstrated how incorporating the theory of change into evaluation designs can enhance the understanding of causality and attribution in complex intervention programs. By clearly defining the pathways of change and establishing a clear chain of cause-and-effect relationships, evaluators can more accurately determine the project's contribution to observed outcomes. Therefore, the theory of change is applicable to the variable on project tailoring. Organizations utilize the theory to enhance their project design, implementation, and evaluation, leading to more successful and impactful interventions. Through change implementation, projects can be tailored to meet the stakeholders needs. Changes also enable organizations to adopt to environmental, institutional, and regulations changes that may affect project performance.

Conceptual Framework

Mugenda and Mugenda (2015) describe conceptual framework as a hypothesized model that shows the topic being studied and the connections between the dependent and independent variables. It demonstrates the link between the dependent variable Projects Performance in child protection in Nairobi City County, Kenya and how other variables affect it in regard to the current research.

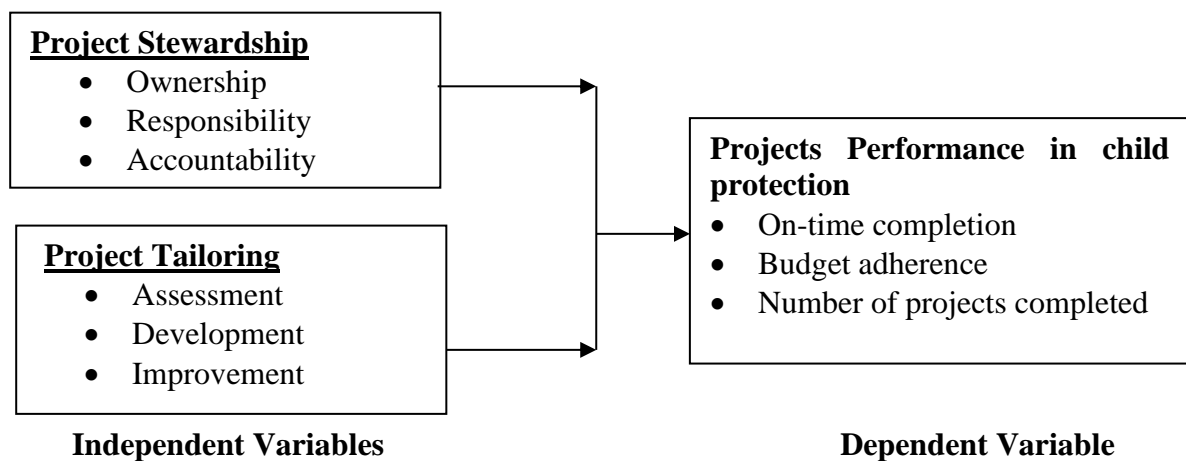


Figure 2. 1: Conceptual Framework

Project Stewardship

Among the most fundamental and crucial elements in project management is the principle of stewardship. As the project's custodian, the project manager is ultimately responsible for determining whether it was successful or not. Cunha et al. (2021) regard stewardship as a strategy to favorably impact not just an organization but also the welfare of society. Therefore, project managers are the primary "stewards" of the project and should bring value to it using key stewardship pillars like ownership, responsibility, and accountability. Ownership is a crucial factor within the project stewardship dimension and plays a significant role in the success of child protection projects.

Olsson and Berg-Johansen (2016) define ownership as the sense of commitment, investment, and responsibility demonstrated by project stakeholders towards the program. It encompasses their understanding of the program's objectives, goals, and long-term vision. Stakeholders who have a sense of ownership are more likely to be invested in the program's success and work collaboratively towards achieving its goals. This commitment leads to improved program implementation, lower projects costs, and increased effectiveness in addressing child protection issues. Also, ownership fosters active stakeholder engagement and participation in

project performance. Stakeholders with a sense of ownership are more likely to contribute their knowledge, skills, and expertise to the program, resulting in a better project quality (Winch & Leiringer, 2016). This active engagement promotes better coordination, and synergy among stakeholders, leading to improved program outcomes like beneficiary satisfaction.

Harrison and Lock (2017) define responsibility as the acknowledgment and acceptance of roles and tasks assigned to different stakeholders within the project. It encompasses the willingness and ability of stakeholders to deliver on their commitments and meet project requirements. Responsible stakeholders adhere to project timelines, proactively manage their workloads, communicate effectively, and address any potential bottlenecks promptly. Their commitment to timely delivery ensures that project milestones are achieved within the planned timeframe. Also, responsible stakeholders exercise prudent financial management practices, such as accurately estimating costs, monitoring expenses, and identifying cost-saving opportunities (Harrison & Lock, 2017). As a result, stakeholders contribute to the project's financial success and prevent budget overruns by fulfilling their responsibility to manage project costs.

Nasiri et al. (2019) used the limited perspective of Alvarez-Rosete et al. (2013) on stewardship to identify accountability as the key stewardship concept. Mac Donald et al. (2020) referred accountability as the answerability and liability of stakeholders for the outcomes of any project. It involves taking responsibility for one's actions and decisions, being transparent, and ensuring that obligations and commitments are fulfilled. Accountable stakeholders monitor progress, identify potential risks or delays, and take necessary measures to mitigate them. Also, according to Rezanian et al. (2019), they actively engage with the beneficiaries, seeking their feedback and involving them in decision-making processes. They address any concerns or issues raised by the beneficiaries promptly and transparently. Through their accountability, stakeholders contribute to high levels of beneficiary satisfaction and the overall success of the project.

Project Tailoring

According to Zheng et al. (2019), a project analysis must properly define the procedures, data, and context of the project in order to tailor the parameters of a group of metrics from a set of potentially key variables to the project context. As a result, a subset of the most important indicators for a particular project will be obtained through this approach. Zheng et al. (2019) suggest five phases to explore the detailed incorporation of one key indicator to the knowledge area of a project including selection, specification, identification, tailoring and application. Therefore, project tailoring focuses on customizing project approaches, methods, and processes to suit the specific context, requirements, and challenges of a project. It recognizes that a one-size-fits-all approach may not be optimal for all projects, and adapting the project to its unique circumstances can positively impact project performance (Ng, 2018).

Similarly, Anderson and Lannon (2018) define project assessment as the process of conducting a thorough analysis of project needs, objectives, and constraints. Stakeholders gain insights into the project's unique requirements, stakeholders' expectations, and the context in which the project will be implemented. Consequently, a thorough assessment enables stakeholders to tailor the project processes and activities to meet these quality requirements, ensuring that project outcomes meet or exceed expectations. Also, by assessing the project needs and constraints, stakeholders can tailor resource allocation strategies, identify cost-saving opportunities, and manage project costs effectively (Anderson & Lannon, 2018). Similarly, stakeholders can tailor the project design, interventions, and outcomes to ensure they align with beneficiary requirements, leading to higher levels of beneficiary satisfaction.

Development involves the design and implementation of tailored project strategies, processes, and interventions based on the assessment findings. According to Gonzalez Aleu and Van Aken (2016), project continuous development aims to align project approaches with the unique requirements and characteristics identified during the assessment phase. Through the

development phase, stakeholders can design project plans, schedules, and workflows that consider the specific project context enhancing project coordination, leading to timely delivery. Also, development enables stakeholders to design project processes, methodologies, and quality assurance mechanisms that align with the specific quality requirements identified during the assessment phase (Moradi et al., 2020). Similarly, the process involves tailoring project interventions, services, and outcomes to meet the specific needs and preferences of the beneficiaries. Stakeholders can ensure that the project design, activities, and deliverables are tailored to enhance beneficiary satisfaction by incorporating beneficiary input during the development phase. Improvement refers to the continuous assessment and adjustment of the project based on feedback, lessons learned, and emerging challenges (Moradi et al., 2020).

It involves monitoring project performance, identifying areas for improvement, and implementing changes to enhance project outcomes. Improvement focuses on refining project processes, addressing bottlenecks, and incorporating best practices throughout the project lifecycle. Tailoring projects based on thorough assessment and continuous improvement efforts has been associated with improved project scheduling, risk management, and adaptation, resulting in enhanced timely delivery. Customizing project approaches and processes based on project-specific requirements and continuous improvement initiatives contributes to higher project quality outcomes (Gonzalez Aleu & Van Aken, 2016). Also, projects designed to meet beneficiary needs and preferences and incorporating continuous improvement efforts has a positive impact on beneficiary satisfaction, leading to greater stakeholder engagement and support.

Empirical Literature

Project Stewardship and Project Performance

Cunha et al. (2021) present a case study on the development of stewardship in a multi-business family group by adopting a process approach. The research project took into account the situation of Familia, a diverse family business enterprise in a southern European Union nation. The team interviewed 16 members of the owning family through semi-structured interviews. The findings revealed that time is a crucial structuring factor from the process perspective, and Familia's temporal orientation refers to the family members' preferred time measuring techniques. Willging et al. (2018) investigated the implementation and maintenance of evidence-based programs in child welfare from the perspectives of community-based organizational managers in California. This study used qualitative interviews to collect managers' perspectives and implementation experiences of Safe Care, an evidence-based intervention to minimize child abuse. The semi structured interview and small-group discussion guidelines for the research were composed of open-ended questions. The results showed that policy and philosophical trends, leadership qualities in organizational structures, cooperation and competition, and support for staff members influencing managers' capacity to support child care programs.

Ekung, Agu, and Iheama (2017) assessed project governance in two mega projects in Nigeria and identified how associated behaviors affected the outcomes. Through preliminary research, a sample of 116 respondents was obtained. Data on respondents' opinions on the project governance structure were gathered using a structured questionnaire. The findings showed that project governance structures needed to be enhanced and that accepting ownership would boost megaproject performance. In their research, Njeri and Were (2017) sought to assess the impact of project team dedication and top management support on project performance within NGOs in Kenya. The research utilized a descriptive research approach and involved 304 participants, including executives, branch managers, field agents, and accountants. The researchers employed a stratified random sampling process, obtaining 105 participants from each strata of the target population. The study gathered primary data using semi-structured questionnaires. The research findings indicated that top management support plays a significant role in influencing project success in Kenyan non-governmental organizations. Based on these results,

the researchers recommended that executives should recognize the merits of assigning responsibility to the project manager and team members while enhancing project outcomes.

Wanyonyi and James (2019) examined into how project management techniques affected the success of community development programs in Bungoma County, Kenya. The researchers used a descriptive research design in their study, 160 current programs for community development since 2015 were the intended target group. The study selected 48 projects from a variety of County sectors using stratified sampling method. The researchers gathered primary data via questionnaires, while they sourced secondary data from earlier research and publications. The results showed that project planning, monitoring, and evaluation, interactions, and stakeholder engagement significantly improved the performance of projects, as evidenced by better results, more accountability, and enhanced control.

Project Tailoring and Project Performance

Kanyamuna (2021) examined the discrepancies that distinguished the public sector M&E projects in Zambia's government M&E system. Data for the research was gathered from primary and secondary sources. The tools used to gather information include questionnaires and interviewing protocols. The study discovered that the demand side of Zambia's projects was quite weak and needed major improvements since they faced inconsistent planning. Muchelule (2018) aimed to look at how Kenya State Corporations' project performance was impacted by their monitoring techniques. The study used a descriptive research design approach using 187 state firms as its target population. The sample size of 65 state companies was chosen using simple random sampling. Primary data from the sample size was obtained using surveys while examinations of empirical and theoretical work were used for secondary data. Data was examined through qualitative and quantitative analysis. According to the findings, monitoring planning and resources, along with monitoring methodologies and their implementation, both significantly contribute to project performance.

Phiri (2015) conducted research to determine how African Virtual University's (AVU) evaluation and monitoring practices affected project performance in Kenya. A survey of AVU and 15 beneficiary organizations was used to collect primary data, which was then combined with secondary data from project evaluation reports, databases, and end-of-project reports. The data was analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Results showed that evaluation and monitoring, as an oversight role, affect project performance. This was evident during operations like M&E planning, with defined performance indicators and a data collecting schedule is created before the project is implemented.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A descriptive research design was used. This study targeted completed child protection projects in Nairobi city county. According to the State Department for Social Protection, there are 15 completed child protection projects in Nairobi city county with a total of 160 social workers. The target population for this study is the 160 social workers from 15 completed child protection projects in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The study used census which is recommended for a population that is less than 200 (Kothari and Garg, 2014). Therefore, all the 160 social workers drawn from 15 child protection projects in Nairobi City County, Kenya were selected for the study. This current research collected primary data via questionnaire. The SPSS Version 28 software was used to code and input survey responses. Data coding entails allocating numerals or related symbols to help organize data into manageable groupings. Data input allows the data provided to be modified for different interpretations. Both descriptive (frequency, percentage, mean) and inferential (correlation, and regression) statistics were generated through the analysis of data. Significance was tested at 0.05.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study used 144 social workers, 137 completed and returned the questionnaires, resulting in a response rate of 95.1%. This high response rate can be attributed to the effective follow-up and commitment of the respondents, ensuring that the data collected is representative of the population. The returned questionnaires formed a response rate of 95.1% as indicated in Table 4.2. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2013), a response rate of 50% and above is good for analysis and reporting, that of 60% is sufficient while 70% and above is excellent. Therefore, since our response rate was above 70% it was considered to be excellent and was used for further analysis and reporting.

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics provide an overview of the respondents' perceptions of various aspects of project stewardship and project tailoring. These are presented using means and standard deviations to summarize the data. In this section the study presents findings on likert scale questions where respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with various statements that relate with the relationship between project management principles and projects performance in child protection in Nairobi City County, Kenya. They used a 5-point Likert scale where 1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-moderate, 4-agree, 5-strongly agree. The means and standard deviations were used to interpret the findings where a mean value of 1-1.4 was strongly disagree, 1.5-2.4 disagree, 2.5-3.4 neutral, 3.5-4.4 agree and 4.5-5 strongly agree. On the other hand, a standard deviation greater than 0.5, suggests that the responses were more diverse, with a wider range of scores across the participants.

Project Stewardship

The first objective of the study was to determine the effect of project stewardship on projects performance in child protection in Nairobi City County, Kenya. Respondents were therefore asked to give the extent to which they agreed with various statements on project stewardship. Table 1 presents summary of the findings obtained.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Project Stewardship

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.
Ownership of a child protection project determines its performance	3.887	0.652
The project leaders are very responsible in overseeing project performance	3.965	0.617
The project leaders ensure that all funds received and expenses are well accounted for	3.823	0.674
There is regular auditing of project financial resources to enhance accountability	3.762	0.689
The leaders involve stakeholders to enhance project ownership	3.875	0.659
Leaders have good leadership skills and support the staff	3.912	0.643
Aggregate Score	3.871	0.656

The findings showed that the respondents agreed on average that ownership of a child protection project determines its performance (M= 3.887, SD= 0.652); that the project leaders are very responsible in overseeing project performance (M= 3.965, SD= 0.617); and that the project leaders ensure that all funds received and expenses are well accounted for (M= 3.823, SD= 0.674). They further agreed that there is regular auditing of project financial resources to enhance accountability (M= 3.762, SD= 0.689); that the leaders involve stakeholders to enhance project ownership (M= 3.875, SD= 0.659); and that leaders have good leadership skills and support the staff (M= 3.912, SD= 0.643).

The findings, supported by an aggregate mean of 3.871 (SD= 0.656), show that the respondents agreed that project stewardship affects the performance of child protection projects in Nairobi City County, Kenya. This is consistent with the study by Ekung, Agu, and Iheama (2017), which found that enhanced project governance structures and accepting ownership significantly boosted megaproject performance in Nigeria. Similarly, Njeri and Were (2017) demonstrated that top management support and project team dedication significantly influenced project success within NGOs in Kenya. Both studies underscore the importance of leadership and governance in project performance, aligning with the current findings that effective project stewardship is crucial for the success of child protection projects.

Project Tailoring

The second objective of the study is to determine the effect of project tailoring on projects performance in child protection in Nairobi City County, Kenya. Respondents were requested to give the extent to which they agreed with the statements on project tailoring. Table 2 presents summary of the findings obtained.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Project Tailoring

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev
Project plan is tailored to meet the specific requirements of the organization	3.852	0.679
The organization has a consistent plan to accommodate any unique challenges or constraints	3.865	0.657
The project plan accounts for any external factors or stakeholders that may impact success	3.901	0.673
Project tailoring enhances project improvement	3.923	0.646
The project plan considers the unique skill sets and resources available within the organization	3.972	0.620
The project plan has been adjusted to reflect lessons learned from previous projects	3.865	0.657
Aggregate Score	3.896	0.655

The findings showed that the respondents agreed on average that project plan is tailored to meet the specific requirements of the organization (M= 3.852, SD= 0.679); that the organization has a consistent plan to accommodate any unique challenges or constraints (M= 3.865, SD= 0.657); and that the project plan accounts for any external factors or stakeholders that may impact success (M= 3.901, SD= 0.673). They further agreed that project tailoring enhances project improvement (M= 3.923, SD= 0.646); that the project plan considers the unique skill sets and resources available within the organization (M= 3.972, SD= 0.620); and that the project plan has been adjusted to reflect lessons learned from previous projects (M= 3.865, SD= 0.657).

The findings, supported by an aggregate mean score of 3.896 (SD= 0.655), indicate that respondents agreed that project tailoring impacts the performance of child protection projects in Nairobi City County, Kenya. This is consistent with Muchelule (2018), who found that monitoring planning and resources, along with tailored monitoring methodologies, significantly contributed to project performance in Kenyan state corporations. Similarly, Phiri (2015) demonstrated that tailored evaluation and monitoring practices in the African Virtual University's projects enhanced project performance by establishing defined performance indicators and schedules before project implementation. Both studies underscore the importance of customizing project plans to specific needs and conditions, aligning with the current findings that project tailoring is crucial for the success of child protection projects by addressing unique challenges and leveraging available resources effectively.

Project Performance

The general objective of the study was to establish the relationship between project management principles and projects performance in child protection in Nairobi City County, Kenya. Respondents were therefore requested to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with various statements on performance of child protection projects in Nairobi City County, Kenya. Table 3 presents the findings obtained.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Project Performance

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.
Child protection projects are delivered within set timelines	3.912	0.675
Projects meet quality standards	3.967	0.679
Projects are completed within set budget	3.792	0.713
Implemented projects achieve the set objectives	3.923	0.643
Am satisfied with the performance level of the implemented child protection project	4.012	0.620
Aggregate Score	3.921	0.666

The findings show that the respondents agreed on average that child protection projects are delivered within set timelines (M= 3.912, SD= 0.675); that projects meet quality standards (M= 3.967, SD= 0.679); that projects are completed within set budget (M= 3.792, SD= 0.713); that implemented projects achieve the set objectives (M= 3.923, SD= 0.643); and that they are satisfied with the performance level of the implemented child protection project (M= 4.012, SD= 0.620). These results are consistent with Wanyonyi and James (2019), who found that effective project management techniques significantly improved community development programs' performance in Bungoma County, Kenya, leading to better results, more accountability, and enhanced control. Similarly, Ocharo and Kimutai (2018) observed that proactive project planning, monitoring, and comprehensive stakeholder involvement were critical to the successful execution of power sector projects in Kenya, resulting in improved project outcomes. Both studies underscore the importance of adhering to project timelines, quality standards, budget constraints, and achieving project set objectives, aligning with the current findings that these factors are crucial for the effective performance of child protection projects.

Pearson Correlation Analysis

Pearson R correlation was used to measure strength and the direction of linear relationship between variables. The association was considered to be: small if $\pm 0.1 < r < \pm 0.29$; medium if $\pm 0.3 < r < \pm 0.49$; and strong if $r > \pm 0.5$. Table 4 presents summary of the findings obtained.

Table 4: Correlations Analysis

		Project Performance	Project Stewardship	Project Tailoring
Project Performance	Pearson Correlation	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
Project Stewardship	N	137		
	Pearson Correlation	.582**	1	
Project Tailoring	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
	N	137	137	
Project Tailoring	Pearson Correlation	.595**	.269	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	137	137	137

The correlation between project performance and project stewardship is .582, with a p-value of .000, indicating a strong and significant positive relationship. This means that as project stewardship improves, the performance of child protection project in Nairobi City County also tends to improve. This finding is supported by Ekung, Agu, and Iheama (2017), who found that enhanced project governance structures and accepting ownership significantly boosted megaproject performance in Nigeria. Similarly, Njeri and Were (2017) demonstrated that top management support and project team dedication significantly influenced project success within NGOs in Kenya. Both studies underscore the importance of leadership and governance in project performance, aligning with the current findings that effective project stewardship is crucial for the success of child protection project.

The correlation between project performance and project tailoring is .595, with a p-value of .000, indicating a strong and significant positive relationship. This implies that tailoring project plans to specific needs and conditions is associated with better performance of child protection projects. This is consistent with Muchelule (2018), who found that tailored monitoring methodologies significantly contributed to project performance in Kenyan state corporations. Phiri (2015) also demonstrated that tailored evaluation and monitoring practices in the African Virtual University's projects enhanced project performance by establishing defined performance indicators and schedules before project implementation. Both studies underscore the importance of customizing project plans to specific needs and conditions, aligning with the current findings that project tailoring is crucial for the success of child protection projects.

Multiple Regression Analysis

The beta coefficients were developed to fit the regression equation and to answer the study research questions.

Table 5: Beta Coefficients of Study Variables

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.187	.181		6.558	.000
1 Project Stewardship	.320	.084	.313	3.810	.029
Project Tailoring	.335	.073	.398	4.589	.002

a. Dependent Variable: Projects Performance in child protection

From the findings, the following regression equation was fitted:

$$Y = 1.187 + 0.320 X_1 + 0.335 X_2$$

The beta coefficient for project stewardship is 0.320, with a p-value of 0.029. This indicates that project stewardship has a significant positive effect on the performance of child protection projects. Specifically, a one-unit increase in project stewardship results in a 0.320 increase in the performance of these projects, holding all other variables constant. This finding is consistent with Ekung, Agu, and Iheama (2017), who demonstrated that enhanced project governance and ownership acceptance significantly boost project performance. Additionally, Njeri and Were (2017) found that top management support and team dedication significantly influence project success within NGOs in Kenya. These studies reinforce the current finding that effective project stewardship is crucial for the success of child protection projects.

The beta coefficient for project tailoring is 0.335, with a p-value of 0.002. This indicates that project tailoring has a significant positive effect on the performance of child protection projects. Specifically, a one-unit increase in project tailoring results in a 0.335 increase in performance, holding other variables constant. This is consistent with Muchelule (2018), who found that tailored monitoring methodologies significantly contributed to project performance in Kenyan state corporations. Similarly, Phiri (2015) demonstrated that tailored evaluation and monitoring practices in the African Virtual University's projects enhanced project performance

by establishing defined performance indicators and schedules before project implementation. Both studies underscore the importance of customizing project plans to specific needs and conditions, aligning with the current findings that project tailoring is crucial for the success of child protection projects.

Conclusions

The study concluded that project stewardship has a positive and significant effect on the projects performance in child protection in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The findings demonstrated that elements such as ownership of projects, responsible leadership, accountability of funds, regular auditing, stakeholder involvement, and leadership skills significantly enhance project performance. Therefore, it is evident that effective project stewardship is crucial for the success of child protection projects.

The study concluded that project tailoring has a significant positive impact on the projects performance in child protection in Nairobi City County, Kenya. Customizing project plans to meet specific requirements, accommodating unique challenges, considering external factors, and reflecting lessons learned from previous projects were found to contribute significantly to better project performance outcomes. Thus, project tailoring is essential for addressing unique challenges and leveraging available resources effectively towards child protection projects.

Recommendations

Project Stewardship

Based on the findings that project stewardship significantly impacts the performance of child protection projects, it is recommended that organizations enhance their project governance structures. Project leaders should be trained to take full ownership of projects, ensuring accountability and responsibility. Regular auditing and transparent financial management should be emphasized to maintain trust and integrity. Additionally, involving stakeholders throughout the project lifecycle can enhance ownership and commitment to project success. Organizations should invest in leadership development programs to equip project managers with the necessary skills to support and motivate their teams effectively.

Project Tailoring

The study highlights the importance of tailoring project plans to the specific needs and conditions of each project. Organizations should adopt a flexible approach to project management, allowing for customization based on unique project requirements and constraints. This includes developing consistent plans that can accommodate challenges and external factors that may impact project success. Project managers should be encouraged to leverage the unique skill sets and resources available within the organization. Additionally, lessons learned from previous projects should be systematically captured and incorporated into future project plans to continuously improve project performance.

Suggestions for Further Studies

Future research could explore the impact of additional project management principles, such as stakeholder engagement and change management, on projects performance in child protection. Investigating the role of technology and digital tools in enhancing project management practices within this context could provide valuable insights. Additionally, comparative studies between different counties or regions could highlight contextual factors that influence project success. Finally, qualitative studies focusing on the lived experiences and perspectives of project managers and beneficiaries could offer a deeper understanding of the challenges and best practices in managing child protection projects.

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