

# Stakeholder Management and Project Performance of Open Air Market Projects in Nyeri County, Kenya

Susan Mumbi Maina<sup>1</sup> And Ms Gladys Kimutai<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Post Graduate Student, Kenyatta University

<sup>2</sup> Lecturer Department of Management Science, Kenyatta University

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**Abstract:** Project performance is evaluated differently by various stakeholders of the project based on their expectations in relation to the actual quality, cost and time. The aim of this study was to investigate the influence of stakeholder management on project performance with the specific objectives being: to determine the influence of stakeholder need and expectation identification; communication; conflict management and stakeholder participation on project performance. The research adopted both descriptive and explanatory research design. The target population was all the six Open air upgrading projects in Nyeri County funded under Economic Stimulus Programme. The target population was appropriate as it represented all the constituencies in Nyeri County. The study targeted 255 respondents out of which 213 successfully filled the questionnaire. The respondents comprised of project managers, vendors, general public, project staffs and the local authorities. The researcher used questionnaires to collect primary data. Descriptive data analysis was employed in the study where the researcher ran the data through the SPSS to obtain the descriptive statistics such as: the mean, mode, frequencies and percentages. The findings of the study were presented using charts, graphs and tables. The results of the study established that the coefficients of independent variables were positive and significant and thus these factors determine project performance. It was recommended that: the government must ensure the aspect of stakeholder involvement is adequately covered during the feasibility study of the intervention; that the channels, format, frequency and responsibility of sharing of the progress report to the stakeholders be well defined during the conception stages of the intervention; that project management must change their reactive approach on occurrence of conflict but rather adopt a proactive approach in determining the highly susceptible issues and identify possible solution.

**Keywords:** Stakeholder Management, Project Performance, Open Air Market projects

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## I Introduction

### 1.1 Background of the study

Project management discipline focuses on managing the various activities in a project intended to deliver the objectives of the intervention. A number of different project management approaches such as iterative, lean, phased and incremental approaches may be used. Effective methodology employed must put into considerations the overall objectives of the project, cost, time in addition to roles and responsibilities of all the stakeholders of the project. The project goals and objectives are set on the onset of the project.

Whilst some goals can be defined in quantifiable terms others are difficult to define in quantifiable parameter such as quality and soft project goals such as project reputation (Ahmed & Fazel, 2009). Project management main challenge is to achieve all its set project goals within its given constraints in terms of time, quality, budget and scope. A project attracts different stakeholders with varying expectations of the outcome from the project. The level of urgency and priorities by the stakeholders has a tendency to change during the lifecycle increasing the project management challenge.

#### 1.1.1 Project performance

Project performance metrics focuses on the impact of the project at a point in time or over a fixed timeframe (Njogu, 2016). The value of the impact of the project should supersede the cost of the intervention. Project performance is directly related to the project potential success. A project is considered to be successfully implemented if it is carried on schedule; realizes the purpose the project was designed through achieving the goals and objectives identified; the project is completed within the budgets commonly known as the project Triangle (Hammad, 2013). Despite the many literatures educating the project managers on the various tools and techniques aimed at increasing the likelihood of the success of a project, 7 out of 10 projects are considered unsuccessful (Kelbessa, 2016). These projects are considered unsuccessful either because they

were not completed or they are not seen as successful even though they were rolled-out as planned (Ayatah, 2012).

Project performance is evaluated differently by various stakeholders of the project based on their expectations in relation to the actual quality, cost and time. Project performance can be measured in terms of the qualitative value the project has to the implementing organization or quantitative in terms of the earned value systems for utility and large government projects (Kelbessa, 2016). For any of the approach used small elements of the project to indicate progress are identified and monitored throughout the project life cycle. The key project indicators should be pre-established. Involvement of the key project stakeholders in the identification and selection of the indicators to monitor increases the likelihood of smooth running and implementation of the project and hence success.

### **1.1.2 Stakeholder management**

Projects are very sensitive to decision and actions taken by any stakeholder (Aaltonen, 2010). Almost all the projects operate in a context where its respective stakeholders play a primary role in the accomplishments of tasks (Hammad, 2013). According to PMI, 'Project stakeholders is any individual, organization or group who may affect, be affected by or perceive to be affected by a decision, activity, or outcome of a project' (Project Management Institute, 2014). Project stakeholders may be within or outside the organization. Stakeholders of a particular project will vary during the life cycle of the project in terms of needs, numbers and influence. The interests, perception as well as the motivation of all the project stakeholders that have an influence on the success of the project should not be ignored. Stakeholder review and identification should be conducted throughout the project life cycle (Njogu, 2016).

### **1.1.3 Open air market in Nyeri County**

Open air markets are very popular in developing countries selling a variety of fresh produce, dry commodities and products among others. Great cities are made by existing great markets in the world (Tangires, 2005). Despite the importance of this markets most open air market in developing countries are characterized by deplorable working conditions, poor drainage, poor storage of fresh produce (Nedic, 2012). Poor performance and stakeholder dissatisfaction has been flagged to be the order of the day in public projects in Nyeri County. Nyeri County is located in the central part of Kenya; it has a population of about 661,156 and occupies an area of 3356 Km<sup>2</sup>. Nyeri county has six constituencies namely Tetu, Kieni, Mathira, Othaya, Mukurweini and Nyeri town. Mathira constituency houses Karatina Open air market which is the largest in Kenya and in East Africa and the second largest in Africa.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

Nyeri County has 208 trading centers with 14,010 registered retail traders and 274 wholesalers. Majority of these traders are small scale dealing with locally produced merchandise for households' consumption. About 53% of Nyeri resident are involved in farming hence Open Air Markets in Nyeri County plays a fundamental role in ensuring food availability and accessibility both in the rural and urban areas. Despite many interventions directed towards the upgrading of these Open air markets, deplorable working condition coupled with poor sanitation and drainage have persisted in Nyeri County. According to the auditor general reports, the Nyeri County government would not realize value for the money invested on some of Open Air market upgrading projects' contracts it had entered (Auditor General, 2013). The Auditor general further flagged one of the Open Air market projects where 66% payments of the project cost had been made yet major works had not been undertaken. Non-consultation of traders in the design and running of the projects of Open-air markets has contributed by 90% to Open air markets congestion, inadequate drainage, inadequate space and sanitation, insecurity, and lack of modernized storage facilities (Cherono & Otieno, 2016). Several researches have been conducted on Stakeholder Participation influence on project success both internationally and locally (Kelbessa, 2016; Hammad, 2013; Olander, 2006; Aaltonen, 2010; Agyei, 2009; Njogu, 2016); however their project environments differ in terms of the governance, social and cultural settings to the local context. In this regard, this study aimed at determining the influence of stakeholder Participation on project performance of Open-air market projects in Nyeri County, Kenya.

## **1.3 Objectives of the study**

To determine the influence of stakeholder management on the project performance of Open Air market projects in Nyeri County, Kenya.

### **Research Question**

- i. How does stakeholder need and expectation identification influence the project performance of Open air Market projects in Nyeri County, Kenya?

- ii. Does communication influence the project performance of Open air Market projects in Nyeri County, Kenya?
- iii. What is the role of conflict management on project performance of Open air Market projects in Nyeri County, Kenya?
- iv. To what extent does stakeholder participation influence the project performance of Open air Market projects in Nyeri County, Kenya?

## **II Theoretical Literature Review**

The management theories that guided this study are: the Theory of Performance, Expectancy Theory, System Theory and Stakeholder Theory. According to Don Elger, the proponent of the Theory of Performance (Top), Performance is a journey while as location in the journey is the level of performance. The Theory of Performance (Top) further asserts that some factors influencing performance of an intervention are immutable while others can be influenced to produce favorable results. This theory of performance informs the project performance indicators which include scope, quality, time and cost. According to expectancy theory performance is affected by the expectations of future outcomes of events (Elger, 2011). This theory of motivation explains that people can be motivated to choose one behavioral option if they believe the outcome of the intervention is worth the effort and the resource dedicated. A system according to the system theory is a group of interrelated distinct parts forming and influencing the functioning of a unified whole. A project can be considered as a system as it involves an interaction of interdependent parts that form a whole to achieve a specific objective. (Sankaran, 2010) works advocates for the application of system thinking approach by the project managers in managing complex projects. Project stakeholders are parts forming the unified whole of a system. These project stakeholders must work together to ensure success of the project. According to the stakeholder theory the stakeholders of a project perceive that they have a stake in the project or the task and as a result of the perceived stake in the project they have certain expectations and hence they adopt a certain type of behavior which is sometimes constructive or destructive.

### **2.1 Empirical Review**

Project Management literatures have discussed widely the subject of project success and no consensus has been reached on the project success criteria. According to PMI, the project success indicators include time, scope, cost and quality (Institute, 2008). These parameters relate such that if scope, time or cost changes then at least one of the other parameter will be also be affected. The Iron triangle in project management has been criticized by researchers (Sundarasan, 2013; Shenhar & Dvir, 2007) citing insufficiency in defining project success. The iron triangle also referred to as project management triangle or the triple constrain omits the key dimension of success such as user satisfaction, impact of intervention to stakeholders as well as the learning. The project management diamond framework has recently overtaken the iron triangle. The project management diamond has four vertices (time, cost, quality and scope) and customer expectations at the central focus of the intervention. According to (Shenhar & Dvir, 2007) meeting the customers' needs and expectation is more important than mere meeting the project deadlines or budget.

According to (Olander, 2006) any intervention attracts a vast number of interested parties. These interested parties in a project have different needs, expectations, motivation, power, influence, behaviors, traits, literacy levels etc. (Sankaran, Haslett, & Sheffield, 2010). Projects are all about communication (Alatalo, 2012). According to (Alatalo, 2012) Communication should be enough but not too much nor too little. Communication can either ruin or save a project according to (Wang & Qiang, 2012). Conflicts in projects are normally inevitable. Traditionally, conflict has a negative connotation but Conflict can as well be constructive. According to (Kinnander, 2011) performance normally increases with conflict up to a certain level then declines if conflict remains unresolved or if it increases further. Researchers have acknowledged stakeholder participation in any intervention as important to achieve sustainable developments, project success, and or positive impact (Agyei, 2009; Chambers, 1983; Donaldson, 199; Emilie, 2014; Komalawati, 2008).

### **2.2 Research Gaps**

Researchers have analyzed the influence of stakeholder management on project performance (Ayatah, 2012; Hammad, 2013; Kelbessa, 2016; Zakharova & Jäger, 2013). Stakeholder management has been agreed to be very key in project performance (Ayatah, 2012; Mahmoud R., 2014). In the research of stakeholder participation to improve societal acceptance for mega projects (Zakharova & Jäger, 2013) noted that stakeholder participation influence the acceptance of project. In his study he focused on mega projects but this study relates to relatively smaller projects with different societal structure of management and variance in stakeholders specific situations. It is worth noting that projects are faced with different challenges in their implementation environment. A similar study was conducted in Karatina Open air market project by (Mwakio, 2009). His study focused on only project staff failing to assess the impact of all the project stakeholders on the

performance of a project. This study on stakeholder management and project performance of Open Air Market in Nyeri County assessed the impact of project stakeholders generally.

Njogu (2016) study of influence of stakeholder involvement on project performance in Nema Automobile Emission control project analyzed the involvement of the stakeholders in the various stages of the project lifecycle. His study failed to adequately cover other critical stakeholder management issues of the different stakeholders such as conflict, communication and identification of needs which are covered in this study.

### III Research Methodology

The researcher adopted a mixed research design where both the descriptive and exploratory research design was used. Data was gathered then organized; frequencies were then tabulated on the research variables. The target population of the research is the Open air Market upgrading projects in Nyeri County and the unit of observation includes the project stakeholders: project staffs, vendors, suppliers, and contractors, general public and local authorities. To achieve the representation of all the subgroups the researcher used cluster sampling. The researcher divided the target population according to the 6 constituencies and then randomly selected a sample of 20 vendors, 20 general public in each of the open air market. The researcher questioned 5 project officers, 5 local authority and 5 project staffs of the open air upgrading projects in Nyeri County. The researcher used questionnaires to collect primary data. Open ended and close ended questions were used in the questionnaire.

During the construction of the questionnaires for this research the content validity was established through seeking the opinion of my supervisor. Additionally the validity of the instrument was enhanced by pretesting on 8 randomly selected respondents from the target respondent. Cronbach’s alpha was adopted to test internal consistency of the variables used in the study with a 0.7 acceptable threshold. The study achieved an alpha of 0.902 implying that the research instrument was reliable.

Qualitative and quantitative data analysis was used to analyze the research data. Inferential analysis, correlation analysis and multiple regression models were used to establish the extent and the nature of the relationship between the dependent and the independent variables.

$$\text{Performance (Y)} = \alpha_i + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \mu_i$$

Where:  $X_1$ =Stakeholder Need and Expectation;  $X_2$ = Communication;  $X_3$ =Conflict Management.  $X_4$ =Stakeholder Participation.;  $\alpha_i$  =Constant;  $\beta_n$ =Coefficient of determination explaining the change in performance as a result of a unit change in the respective independent variable.

### IV Research Findings and discussion

#### 2.3 ResponseRate

The research achieved a response rate of 83.5%. This response rate was deemed to be sufficient and well representative for data analysis, conclusions and making recommendation (Cherono & Otieno, 2016).

#### 2.4 Descriptive statistic

##### 2.4.1 Stakeholder’s needs and expectations identification

The respondents were requested to indicate their level of agreement with some statements to measure the extent to which stakeholder need and expectations influence project performance of open air upgrading projects in Nyeri County. The averages and the standard deviation of responses are presented in the table below.

**Table 1 Stakeholder needs and expectations identification**

	N	Mean	Std.Dev
Stakeholder Recognition.	213	2.93	1.041
Needs and expectations identification	213	3.24	1.180
Research was conducted	213	3.92	0.900

Majority of the respondents were not satisfied with the level of recognition accorded to them by the project management (mean 2.93). These findings are in agreement with findings made by (Alsulamy, 2015; Njogu, 2016) that construction projects strongly focused only on the internal stakeholders’ relations such as the procurement issues and the construction site management while external stakeholder management was taken as public officials’ task.

The respondents agreed to some extent that the needs and the expectations of the stakeholders were identified before the project was commissioned (mean 3.242). This implies that the definition of the project needs in the project charter was acceptable. In their studies (Agyei, 2009; Ayatah, 2012) observed that the divergent needs and expectations of project, stakeholders could increase the complexity of managing the

project as well as the uncertainties of the projectsituation.

Most of the respondents agreed that research was conducted before the project begun (mean 3.92). This findings concurs with (Elger, 2011; Kelbessa, 2016; Olander, 2006) which indicate that normally in most projects preliminary stages of project initiation were satisfactorily conducted before the project begun. Low standard deviation (1.041; 1.180 and 0.900 respectively) indicates convergence in respondents' views.

**2.4.2 Communication**

The respondents were requested to indicate their level of agreement with various statements on communication. The averages and the standard deviation of responses are presented in the table below.

**Table 2 Communication**

	N	Mean	Std.Dev
Project reports are available	213	3.13	1.060
Meetings are held frequently	213	2.93	1.172
Feedback Mechanism	213	3.65	0.997
Awareness on project progress	213	4.31	0.914

Source Research Data (2018)

Majority of the respondents agreed to a large extent that they were aware of the progress of the project (mean score 4.31). The finding affirms the findings that awareness of the construction progress is enhanced by the tangibility of the project output (Olander, 2006) and existence of informal channels of communication in the community (Alatalo, 2012).

Feedback mechanisms was deemed to be relatively adequate considering the vast number of stakeholders with their different needs and expectations (mean score 3.65). This finding is in an agreement with (Affare, 2012) findings who noted that representative of the communities, the media played a key role in monitoring the progress of the projects and pointing out any project issue.

Inasmuch as the progress reports were available; they were not readily accessible to all project stakeholders (mean score3.13). This finding agrees with an observation made by (Zakharova & Jäger, 2013); that project reports are necessary part of project milestones and hence they are always prepared.

Majority of the stakeholders were not satisfied with the number and the frequency of the meetings held to update them on the progress of the project (mean score of 2.93). Meetings and project discussions forums are important avenues of passing information about the project to a big group of stakeholders (Neu, 2013).

The low standard deviation (1.060; 1.172; 0.997 and 0.914 respectively) means that the views of the respondents were narrowly dispersed around the mean.

**2.4.3 Conflict Management**

The averages and the standard deviation of responses of the extent to which conflict management affects project performance are presented in the table below

**Table 3 Conflict Management**

	N	Mean	Std.Dev
Disagreements are normal.	213	4.47	0.804
Conflict are solved amicably	213	2.87	1.050
Conflicts have affected the Performance.	213	4.28	0.902

Source: Research Data (2018)

Most of the respondents (mean 4.47) agreed that disagreements are normal in a project with a low standard deviation of 0.804. This finding is in agreement with (Kinnander, 2011) that conflicts in projects are normal and inevitable.

On occurrence of conflicts and disagreement in a project, majority of the respondents (mean =2.87) felt that conflicts and disagreements were not solved amicably. This implies that while as disagreements and conflicts are inevitable in these projects (Sundarasan, 2013), most of the techniques employed to resolve them were deemed ineffective.

Majority of the respondents agreed to a large extent that conflicts and disagreement had affected project performance (mean=4.28; standard deviation=0.902). The low standard deviation indicated homogeneity of the responses. The finding concurs with (Uju, 2010; Kinnander, 2011; Wang Y., 2015) that performance normally increases with conflict up to a certain level then declines if conflict remains unresolved.

**2.4.4 Stakeholders Participation**

The responses on the influence of stakeholder participation on project performance of open air upgrading projects in Nyeri County are presented in the table below.

**Table 4 Stakeholders Participation**

	N	Mean	Std.Dev
Involvement in choosing the Project.	213	3.80	1.063
Provision of labor	213	4.33	0.878
Involvement in project maintenance	213	3.67	1.284
Benefits are enjoyed by all	213	4.69	0.657

Source: Research Data (2018)

Majority of the respondents agreed to a large extent that the benefits from the projects were enjoyed by all the residents’ (Mean=4.69; Standard deviation=0.657). Open air markets are accessible by all an observation that concurs with findings made by (Mwenda, 2012; Nedic, 2012; Tangires, 2005).

The respondents were further probed to establish whether their community provided labor during the implementation of the projects. Majority of the respondents agreed with the statement (Mean= 4.33 and standard deviation=0.878). (Mwenda, 2012; Samuel, 2012) studies about Karatina Market made a similar observation that the project labor was sourced from the community. Participation creates the sense of self-reliance in the community thereby inculcating the aspect of ownership of the intervention (Oduor, Macharia, & Mbassana, 2015

When asked whether they were involved in the maintenance of the projects; majority of the respondents agreed (mean=3.67 and standard deviation=1.284). Maintenance of the project was either directly or indirectly. The direct maintenance of the project means that the respondents were actually involved in the hands-on activities of maintenance of the project. Indirect maintenance of the project means that the respondents participated in the maintenance by default through paying of fees to the local government which was in turn used to maintain the markets. This finding agrees with findings of (Komalawati, 2008; Emilie, 2014) on stakeholder participation in maintenance of the project. A low standard deviation of 1.284 indicates a narrow distribution of the responses.

Responding to the question on the involvement of community in choosing the projects; majority agreed with the statement (mean=3.80 and standard deviation=1.063). This finding affirms prior findings on stakeholder needs and identification that research was conducted before the project was commissioned. Involvement of the community in choosing the project inculcates the sense of ownership which in turn improves stakeholder management (Aaltonen, 2010).

**2.5 Project performance**

The averages and the standard deviation of rating of the performance of Open air Market projects in Nyeri County at the time of the study are presented in the table 5 below.

**Table 5 Project performance**

	N	Mean	Std.Dev
The project has or will be completed on schedule	213	3.01	1.118
The project has or will be completed within budget	213	3.01	1.066
The project scope has been met	213	2.85	1.053
Quality of the project output is acceptable	213	3.08	1.096
Stakeholder Participation affects project Performance	213	3.54	1.034

**2.6 Inferential Statistics**

To determine whether the independent variable in the study were correlated, both tolerance and variance inflation factors were used. The results of the multi-collinearity test are presented in the table below.

**Table 6 Multi-Collinearity Test Results**

	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
Stakeholders Need and Expectation	0.632	1.582
Communication	0.556	1.797
Conflict Management	0.343	2.915
Stakeholder Participation	0.378	2.647

Source: Research Data (2018)

The finding above (tolerance factor 0.632, 0.556, 0.343, and 0.378 respectively) indicates an absence of collinearity between the variables. The VIF for the variables falls within the acceptable levels of less than 5(1.582, 1.797, 2.915 and 2.647 respectively). The strength of association between the study variables was assessed using Karl Pearson’s Coefficient of correlation. It was established all the variables had a significant a positive association (p<0.05) at 95% confidence level.

**2.7 Regression Model**

**Model summary**

The regression model summary results are presented in the table below.

**Table 7 Model summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.939 <sup>a</sup>	.881	.879	.22957

a. Predictors: (Constant), Stakeholder participation, Stakeholders need and expect, communication, conflict management

Source: Research Data (2018)

Table 7 indicates that the adjusted R squared was 0.879 meaning that about 87.9% of the change in Open air project performance in Nyeri County could be explained by stakeholder management. The remaining 12.1% variation in project performance could be explained by other factors not included in the model.

**Table 8 Regression Model Results**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-0.914	0.117		-7.798	.000
Stakeholders Need and Expectation	0.120	0.035	0.103	3.432	.001
Communication	0.056	0.036	0.049	1.525	.029
Conflict Management	0.098	0.045	0.088	2.161	.032
Stakeholder Participation	0.784	0.039	0.777	20.007	.000

Source: Research Data (2018)

According to regression coefficient Table 8, stakeholder need and expectation identification with a coefficient of 0.120(p-value=0.001); communication with a coefficient of 0.056 (p-value=0.029; conflict management with a coefficient of 0.098(p-value=0.032) and stakeholder participation with a coefficient of 0.784(p-value=0.000) were found to have a positive statistical significance on open air market project performance in Nyeri County. This can be summarized by the regression equation given below.

**Performance (Y) = -0.914 +0.120X<sub>1</sub>+0.056 X<sub>2</sub>+0.098 X<sub>3</sub>+0.784X<sub>4</sub>**

From the regression results, it was concluded that there exists a statistically significant positive effect of stakeholder need and expectation identification, communication, conflict management and stakeholder participation on open air market project performance. Specifically it was concluded that a unit increase in stakeholders need and expectation identification leads to a 0.12 units increase in project performance of open air market in Nyeri County. This result affirms that stakeholder need and expectation identification influence project performance of Open air Marketprojects in Nyeri County, Kenya. These findings are consistent with those made by (Karanja, 2012) who asserted that stakeholder need and expectation identification affects

project performance of Kinango district in Kwale County, Kenya.

The coefficient of communication (0.056) was found to be positive and significant. The result indicates that a unit improvement on communication to stakeholders improves the project performance by 0.056 units. The result asserts that communication influence project performance of Open air Market projects in Nyeri County, Kenya. The findings of this study are consistent with findings of other studies. Affare (2012) established effective project communication improved project performance of construction projects in Ghana. In their studies (Wang & Qiang, 2012) found that there existed a positive relationship between project communication and project performance.

The coefficient of conflict management (0.098) is positive and significant. This implies that a unit improvement in strategies employed to resolve conflict amongst stakeholders, increase project performance by 0.098 units. This finding confirms that the conflict management process employed in a project affects the performance of Open air Market projects in Nyeri County, Kenya. This finding concurs with the observation made by (Verma, 2014) that conflicts and disagreement if not solved amicably affects performance of the project. Additionally, the findings is consistent with (Kinnander, 2011; Uju, 2010) whose findings indicated an existence of a positive relationship between conflict management and project performance in their studies based in Sweden and Nigeria respectively.

Similarly the coefficient of stakeholder participation (0.784) was found to be positive and significant indicating that unit increase in stakeholder participation in the running of the project increases project performance by 0.784 units. Based on the results of the study, it can be inferred that stakeholder participation influences the project performance Open air Market projects in Nyeri County, Kenya. This finding is consistent with the findings made by (Sang, 2015) that stakeholder participation affects sustainability and project performance. Further, studies by (Nduta, 2011; Njogu, 2016) found out that there is a positive relationship between project performance and stakeholder participation.

## **V Conclusions and recommendations**

### **2.8 Summary**

The study established that stakeholders' recognition was important for stakeholders to be satisfied. An improvement on the number and the frequency of stakeholders' meetings would improve the stakeholders perspective of adequacy of communication strategy employed. Disagreements are normal and that disagreements and conflicts affects project performance. The study further established that stakeholder participation is important to achieve sustainable developments, project success, and or positive impact.

### **2.9 Conclusions**

It was observed that all the independent variables were positive and significant. Stakeholder participation positively enhances project performance of Open air Market project to a great extent. The study further concludes that stakeholder need and expectation identification should be an integral part of the preliminary stages of Open air market project. To ensure that the performance of the projects is not affected; the project management should focus on the needs and expectation of each category of stakeholders then adopt an appropriate conflict management strategy to avoid destructive effect of negative conflict and disagreement.

Communication plays a vital role towards the success of any project. An improvement on the number and the frequency of stakeholders' meetings would improve the stakeholders perspective of adequacy of communication strategy employed.

### **2.10 Recommendations**

From the findings of the study stakeholder participation is key and hence the government must ensure the aspect of stakeholder involvement is covered during the feasibility study of the intervention. Relevant project stakeholders, their needs and their roles must be well defined in the project documentation before the project begins.

According to the findings of this study; the importance of effective communication cannot be ignored. The channels, format, frequency and responsibility of sharing of the progress report to the stakeholders should be well defined during the conception stages of the intervention. This will boost transparency and accountability of the project management. Measures must be put in place to ensure that the reports shared are in agreement with the status of the project. This will ensure that the community gains value for the resources utilized.

Conflicts and disagreement cannot be avoided entirely. In light of this fact the project management of this Open Air Market upgrading projects must change their reactive approach on occurrence of conflict but rather adopt a proactive approach in determining the highly susceptible issues and identify possible solution.

## 2.11 Recommendations of further research

The researcher recommends that more assessment of influence of stakeholder management on performance of Open Air upgrading projects in other counties in Kenya. This will provide baseline data in providing a clear picture of performance of Open air upgrading projects in the country.

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