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INFLUENCE OF INTER-GROUP CONFLICT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF COUNTY GOVERNMENT PROJECTS IN BUSIA COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Management of organizational conflicts has become essential in the implementation of projects in both National and County Governments in Kenya. It is therefore important for continuous research studies in this area given its' importance to national development. The purpose of the study was to establish the influence of inter-group conflict on implementation of County Government projects in Busia County. The study adopted Descriptive design with a target population of 127 employees of Busia County. The sample size of 127 was selected using census technique. Questionnaires were the main data collection instrument. The raw data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentages while inferential statistics such as regression and correlation analyses were used to determine the relationship between the study variables.



The findings were presented in tabular form. The findings of the study showed that inter-group conflicts had positive, linear and significant (p-value of less than 0.05) influence on the project implementation of County Government of Busia. The conclusions of the study indicated that inter-group conflicts explained 12.1% of variance in the project implementation of County Government of Busia. That is explained by inter-group conflict that accounted for 13.4% variations in the project implementation of County Government of Busia. The study recommends to the management of the County Government of Busia to invest more and train its staff on influence of inter-group conflicts and how these affect implementations of the projects. Organizations should come up with strategies on handling inter-group conflicts since it has adverse influence on the implementation of projects in the County Governments in Kenya

Key Words: *Project, Implementation, Conflict, Inter-group*

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

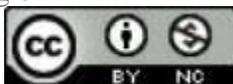
Relational conflict can be seen as a debate that happens when interests, values or objectives of different individuals or groups are conflicting with one another (Cheston and Phillips, 2018). These outcomes into a situation whereby they perplex each other attempting to achieve their objectives. Conflict arises in groups as a result of the lack of freedom, assets and positions. Those who favor freedom will in general oppose the requirement for relationship and, somewhat, congruity inside a group. People who search for power in this manner fight with others for position or status within the group. Conflict is a piece of organizational life and may occur between individuals, between a person and the group, and between groups (Cheston and Phillips, 2018).

County governments in their own privilege have CEOs who are charged with the obligation of keeping up their solidness so as to accomplish performance of the organization (Albert, 2001). In executing both operational and administrative functions, directors experience increasingly unpretentious and peaceful kinds of opposition, for example, contentions, reactions and contradictions. Unsolved conflicts lead to high non-appearance, high work turnover, lengthy disturbance of exercises and a marked absence of backing by partners (Muigai, 2017).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

As indicated by the Auditor General report (2018), county governments in Kenya have got a major challenge when it comes to the completion of their projects in time. A number of the projects were found to be white elephants; in fact, some of them abandoned due to various issues among them, failure to effectively manage the human resources conflict. For instance, in Busia County, the number of projects left incomplete since 2013 have increased from 6 to 12 by 2019 (BC, 2019 Annual Report). This has been attributed to the failure in the county government to define tasks of employees (Auditor General Report, 2018), inability to effectively handle intragroup conflicts, intergroup conflicts and the failure to institute proper organizational set up in the county government.

According to Busia County (2019) annual report, the county government should strive to resolve the conflicting issues amongst its workforce, eliminate the corruption practices bedeviling them in order to channel resources towards the full implementation of their own projects. Many research has been carried out linking organizational conflict practices and implementation of projects (Mguigua, 2017). However, there is inadequate literature concerning the relationship between the two variables in Busia County. Therefore, there is a significant gap between organizational conflict and its influence in projects implementation in County Government of Busia, Kenya.



OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The study sought to establish the influence of inter-group conflict on implementation of projects in the County Government of Busia.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

The study tested the following null hypothesis:

H₀₁: Inter-group conflict has no significant influence on the implementation of projects in the County Government of Busia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Inter-Group Conflict and Implementation of Projects

A study by William (2018) in France examined the relationship of inter-group conflict to project execution with 2995 workers of a hospital as a sample. The output of the exploration, which utilized correlation analysis, uncovered that role conflict was contrarily identified with job fulfillment ($r=-0.54$). Furthermore, the study additionally inferred that job struggle was contrarily identified with performance on the job ($- .43$). In view of these outcomes, one might say that conflict organizational role influences the fulfillment and execution of workers adversely. Besides, Deutsch (2015), utilizing factor analysis and correlation in his investigation, researched the idea of the connection between the performance of project and satisfaction of employee conflict within intergroup. Subjects utilized in the exploration were sales representatives of a huge industrial chemical organization. The study found that role conflict affected the fulfillment of the worker negatively. This was because of the negative correlation ($- .58$) observed between the two factors. In any case, no relationship was seen between role conflict and the actual performance of the project.

A study by Fenn and Gameson (2017) in South Africa, examined inter-group conflict on work fulfillment and execution of 142 managers of a huge modern association. The relationship between inter-group struggle of directors was estimated with the between inter group conflicts scale. Job fulfillment, then again, was surveyed with the Job fulfillment scale. The performance of the directors was assessed through execution rating by their subordinates. The researchers inferred that between inter group conflict did not have any negative effect job fulfillment of the administrators. This was because of the correlation that was insignificant coefficient ($r.13$) found between the two variables, correspondingly, between inter group conflict did not likewise influence the appraised subject's performance. Then again, Cooke, (2019) researched the relatedness of between inter group conflict to worker fulfillment and execution, utilizing nursing aids and partners of a university hospital a sampling test. The study found those representatives who were increasingly fulfilled in their employments were the individuals who were being under less conflicting circumstances. Additionally, as far as general execution, it was discovered that the individuals who were under less degrees of conflict performed better than different workers who were under high inter group conflict.

In Kenya, a study by Muigai (2014) on members of county assembly and their employments inspected the connection between the inter-group clashes encountered by them and their fulfillment with the members of county assembly's job. The research presumed that because the members of county assembly job encompassing the carrying out of instructions from the county government on single hand and the public on the other, that the incompatibility of these directives would



affect the satisfaction of the members of county get together during the time of undertaking their obligations. In any case, the consequence of the investigation was conflicting to the recommendation of. Inter-group conflict neglected to show any genuine connection with work fulfillment. The individuals from county assembly detailed liking, to a degree, circumstances of contention since it bears them the chance to "conspire" starting with one position then onto the next. In spite of the above finding, contrary to the findings, William, (2018) did an investigation on the idea of role conflict and its relatedness to worker's activities fulfillment, utilizing Secondary Grammar School Teachers as test. After the data analysis he found that the role conflicts of teachers were fundamentally contrarily identified with their different degrees of job fulfillment. Consequently, teachers who were in less conflicting conditions found their positions more fulfilling than teachers presented to high level of conflicting directives.

The above-mentioned studies on inter-group conflict showed a great correlation between inter-group conflicts and satisfaction of employees. This study was done in more developed countries and did not focus on the relationship of inter-group conflict and implementing of projects in Kenyan county government and especially in Busia County, which forms the basis for the current study. Effective project manager leadership is an important success factor on projects. The capabilities of the people involved in resolving extraordinary situations and unforeseen problems are an important key for project success (Pinto 1986; Pinto and Slevin, 1988a; Zielasek, 1995). Human beings are complex entities and to generate uniform solutions, that apply to all the projects, irrespective of culture, geography, age, sex, religion, and personality factors, is a very difficult job, if not impossible. Good leaders do inspire confidence in themselves, but a truly great leader inspires confidence within the people they lead to exceed their normal performance level. Bass and Avolio's (1994) definition of leadership is centred on the action of transformation. Seeks to determine the influence of leadership style on implementation of projects in Busia County; Kenya.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

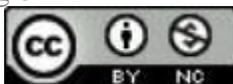
Research design is the arrangement of strategies and processes utilized in gathering and analyzing proportions of the variables determined in the problem being researched (Orodho, 2002). The research design utilized was descriptive survey. Descriptive research plans are utilized in exploratory and preliminary investigations to permit researchers to collect data, make a summary, introduce and infer with the end goal of explanation (Orodho, 2003). Target population alludes to the all-out number of subjects or the environment important to the researcher (Oso & Onen, 2005). Therefore, the target consisted of 127 respondents: Seven (7) Sub-County Project Managers and 120 project supervisors (Busia County, 2020).

Primary data was collected using the questionnaires. Data refers to the various types of information that is collected for research or assessment (Fraenkel et al., 2012). A questionnaire is a tool used in data gathering and which permits estimation possibly in support of a specific perspective (Orodho, 2018). Analysis was carried out on the collected data using the descriptive (frequency, means, standard deviations, Skewness and Kurtosis) and inferential statistics (correlation and regression) to seriously portray the dissemination of measurements of the marvels under investigation.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Inter-Group Conflict and Project Implementation

This study did seek to determine the influence of intergroup conflict on the implementation of projects in the county government of Busia, Kenya. Intergroup conflict as a construct was measured by eleven (11) questionnaire items on a 5-point likert scale ranging from 5= strongly agree to 1= strongly disagree. The results of the descriptive analysis conducted



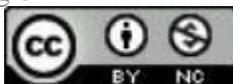
were presented in Table 1. However, from the findings in table 4.5, the study revealed that a majority of the respondents were of the view that there was lack of mutual assistance between my group and other groups, which gave a mean of 2.6560, standard deviation of 1.36845, with skewness of 0.165 and kurtosis of -1.463.

On whether there is so much friction among members different groups had the mean of 2.3760 with standard deviation of 1.09739 with skewness of 0.955 and kurtosis of -1.022. On the question whether there are personality clashes between the group and other groups had the mean of 2.0880 with standard deviation of 1.27010 with skewness of 1.008 and kurtosis of -0.202; on whether other groups create problems for my group had a mean of 3.8607 with standard deviation of 1.36252 with skewness of -0.720 and kurtosis of -0.969; on whether there is much personal friction among members in groups had a mean of 2.2764 with standard deviation of 1.23674 with skewness of 1.095 and kurtosis of 0.203; on the question whether groups have differing goals to achieve had the mean of 2.5242 with standard deviation of 1.57967 with skewness of 1.615 and kurtosis of 5.181; on whether there is much friction among groups in the department had a mean of 2.6260 with standard deviation of 1.28929 with skewness of 0.661 and kurtosis of -0.827; on the question whether there are conflicts about ideas in the groups had a mean of 2.5000 with standard deviation of 1.35250 with skewness of 0.571 and kurtosis of -1.022.

On the question of whether there are conflicts about the work among groups had a mean of 2.4919 with standard deviation of 1.35848 with skewness of 0.551 and kurtosis of -1.092; on whether members don't absolutely respect each other's competence had a mean of 3.8160 with standard deviation of 4.40012 with skewness of 10.070 and kurtosis of 108.871 and on the last question on whether members raise voices at each other had a mean of 2.7040 with standard deviation of 1.25739. Generally, the views from the respondents did not vary significantly on the variables of inter-group conflict on project implementation of County Government of Busia.

Table 1: Description of Inter-Group Conflict

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
There is lack of mutual assistance between groups	125	2.6560	1.36845	.165	.217	-1.463	.430
There is friction among members different groups	125	2.3760	1.09739	.955	.217	.068	.430
There are personality clashes between my group and other.	125	2.0880	1.27010	1.008	.217	-.202	.430
Other groups create problems for my group.	122	3.8607	1.36252	-.720	.219	-.969	.435
There is much friction among members in groups	123	2.2764	1.23674	1.095	.218	.203	.433
Groups have differing goals to achieve	124	2.5242	1.57967	1.615	.217	5.181	.431
There is friction among groups in the department	123	2.6260	1.28929	.661	.218	-.827	.433



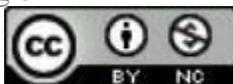
Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
There are conflicts about ideas in the groups	124	2.5000	1.35250	.571	.217	-1.022	.431
There are conflicts about the work among groups	124	2.4919	1.35848	.551	.217	-1.092	.431
Members don't respect each other's competence	125	3.8160	4.40012	10.070	.217	108.871	.430
Members raise voices at each other	125	2.7040	1.25739	.579	.217	-1.025	.430

The findings of table 4.5 seems to suggest and conclude that majority of respondents think that inter group conflicts are experienced quite a lot during the implementation of projects in the county government of Busia. These responses were also supported by Wang and Wu (2020) who suggested that internal conflicts within any organization tend to affects the implementation of any project. Therefore, skills related to the management of conflicts have currently become very key competences for any project manager (Wang, Jiang, & Pretorius,2016).

Relationship between Inter Group Conflict and Project Implementation

The correlation results indicated a positive and significant relationship between inter group conflict and project implementation does exist ($r=-0.841^{**}$, $p<0.01$). The study was supported by other research findings. For instance, Deutsch (2015), utilizing factor analysis and correlation in his investigation, researched the idea of the connection between the performance of project and satisfaction of employees' conflict within intergroup. Subjects utilized in the exploration were sales representatives of a huge industrial chemical organization. The researcher found that intergroup conflict affected the fulfillment of the worker negatively. This was because of the negative correlation ($- .58$) observed between the two factors. In any case, no relationship was seen between role conflict and the actual performance of the project. A study by Fenn (2017) in South Africa, examined inter-group conflict on work fulfillment and execution of 142 managers of a huge modern association. The between inter-group struggle of directors was estimated with the between inter group conflicts scale. Job fulfillment, then again, was surveyed with the Job fulfillment scale. The performance of the directors was assessed through execution rating by their subordinates. The researchers inferred that between inter group conflict did not have any negative effect job fulfillment of the administrators. A study by William (2018) in France examined the relationship of inter-group conflict to project execution with 2995 workers of a hospital as a sample. The output of the exploration, which utilized correlation analysis, uncovered that role conflict was contrarily identified with job fulfillment ($r=-.54$).

Cooke (2019) researched on the relatedness of inter group conflict and worker fulfillment and execution, utilizing nursing aids and partners of a university hospital a sampling test. The study found that representative who was increasingly fulfilled in their employments were the individuals who were being under less conflicting circumstances. Additionally, as far as general execution, it was discovered that the individuals who were under less degrees of conflict performed better than different workers who were under high inter group conflict.



To test for the amount of variance of intergroup conflict (independent variable) on project implementation (dependent variable), a linear regression was carried out and the results showed that inter group conflict has a strongly negative and significant influence on implementation of projects in Busia county government ($r=-0.841^{**}$, $p < 0.01$). However, to establish the specific nature of influence, inter group conflict was regressed against project implementation. The linear regression conducted yielded a coefficient of correlation (R) value of -0.841 and a determination of coefficient (R^2) = 0.707. This means that 70.7 per cent of the corresponding variation in project implementation could be explained by intergroup conflict. An F statistic value of 251.094 significant at 1% (< 0.01) was obtained to demonstrate the goodness of fit of the model which explains the variation in project implementation. It also confirms the usefulness of intergroup conflict on project implementation.

A study by Muigai, (2014) in Kenya, utilizing examination of fluctuation and different relapse procedure, researched the impact of job struggle on fulfillment and execution among 161 emergency hospital proficient workforces. The outcome demonstrated that the conflict influenced the fulfillment of workers adversely. Similarly, the unstandardized regression coefficients β value of the computed (composite index) score of intergroup conflict was 0.948 with a t-value of -15.846 and at a significance level of $p < 0.01$. Since the t-value is less than -1.96, the regression model obtained in was confirmed to be significant and feasible to conclude that indeed, intergroup Conflict has a significant influence on Project Implementation in Busia county government, Kenya thus rejecting the null hypothesis.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on this study's findings, it was a concluded that the influence of intergroup conflict on project implementation was the highest, strongly negative and statistically significant. This implies that an increase in intergroup conflict among the project workforce would cause a corresponding decrease in project implementation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

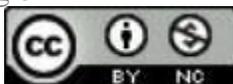
To boost the level and quality of project implementation within the county government of Busia, this study recommended that the management should provide employees with appropriate conflict management skill through proper human relations in order to minimize on the high levels of intergroup conflicts which seem to have a very negative effect on the implementation of projects. Both individual performances, team performance, should be encouraged among the individuals who work on particular projects.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION

The authors declared no conflict of interest, financially or otherwise.

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