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EFFECTS OF GOVERNMENT POLICY ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PROJECT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND SUSTAINABILITY OF AGRIBUSINESS PROJECTS IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Government policy as expressed in laws, rules, regulations and guidelines pervades all spheres of human life. The underlying conviction is that government policy promotes the best interest of society and provides an orderly way for attainment of a predetermined end. In Kenya, many agribusiness projects are designed and implemented within the purview of existing government policies to address the challenges affecting the farming enterprise. The effects of government policies on predetermined project objectives in agribusiness projects including sustainability remains largely unknown. The study sought to establish the effects of government policy on the relationship between known project management practices and sustainability of Kenya Agricultural Productivity and Agribusiness Projects (KAPAP) in selected Counties in Kenya. The project management practices which were considered as independent variables were; capacity building practices, stakeholder's management practices, project design practices and monitoring and evaluation practices. The population comprised of 6401 KAPAP projects implemented between years 2012 to 2015. A sample of 376 was selected through multistage random sampling methods. Data was collected using a semi structured questionnaire. Multiple linear regression models were applied in data analysis. From the findings, it was established that each of the four project management practices statistically significantly had an influence on the sustainability of KAPAP projects. The proportion of joint explanation of dependent variable (PS) by the independent variables (PMPs) improved on inclusion of government policy as a moderating variable. This confirmed that government policy statistically significantly moderated the relationship between the project management practices and project sustainability. From these findings, the project management practices can be used to reliably predict project sustainability and this prediction is enhanced by implementation of government policies. The study recommends for consideration of government policy for attainment of project objectives including sustainability. **x**

Key Words: Project Sustainability, Capacity Building Practices, Stakeholder Management Practices, Project Design Practices, Monitoring and Evaluation Practices, Government Policy

INTRODUCTION

The desire to have continuity in the flow of project benefits has led to the growing recognition of project sustainability among the key project success parameters in addition to cost, time and scope. In support of this view, Ika, Diallo, and Thuillier (2012) identified sustainability as one of the success criteria in development of international projects in addition to relevance, effectiveness and impact. Similarly, Olawale (2014) observed that there has been a growing focus on sustainability as a project success measure in the construction area. A project will thus be considered as successful or otherwise depending on the ability to continue offering the envisaged benefits into the future. The European Commission (2006) equally indicated that a project is successful when it continues to deliver benefits to the project beneficiaries and other constituencies for an extended period after the donor's financial assistance has been terminated.

Project sustainability has been expressed in different yet comparable ways. AusAID (2000) defined sustainability as the continuation of benefits after major assistance from a donor has been completed. This is in line with the views of **Joshi (2007), who noted that from** the perspective of donors and NGOs, sustainability of a project implies the continuation of project activities and sustenance of project outcomes after the initial grant expires. Mulwa (2010) posited that project sustainability concerns itself with the continuity of a project until it attains its set objectives. Similar views were expressed by Khan (2010), who alluded that, in general project sustainability can be defined as the percentage of project initiated goods and services that are still being delivered and maintained after five years of termination of project implementation. Project sustainability can thus be said to be the ability of a project to continue to perform until it attains its set objectives.

Project Management Practices and Project Sustainability

As observed by Ilies, Crisan and Muresan (2010) the evolution of project management has been accompanied by development of practices that optimise project activity. Such practices have been adopted by various organizations and even project management associations. Advocating for adoption of known project management practices, PMI (2013) observed that the application of such practices has been shown to promote the possibilities of success in many areas.

There is a growing discussion on project management practices and project sustainability. Onkoba (2016), identified project design as one of the issues influencing continuity of Carolina for Kibera society projects in Kenya. Ndayizeye (2018) established that capacity building had a notable role towards sustainability of agribusiness programs in Burundi. Capacity building and training was also singled out by Yaseen, et al., (2015) among factors that contributed to sustainable livelihood projects in Pakistan. Martens and Carvalho (2016) further identified stakeholder's management as a main factor of sustainability in project management. Biwott, Egesah and Ngeyo (2017) equally established that Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) had a great contribution on utility and sustainability of projects implemented through constituency development fund in Kenya. Similarly, Umugwaneza and Kule (2016) reported that M&E practices strongly correlated with continuity of projects in Rwanda. Despite the lack of unanimity on the key project management practices by different authors, some popular practices in project management can be singled out to include; capacity building practices, stakeholders management practices, project design practices as well as M&E practices.

Government Policy as a Moderating Factor

Cochran and Malone, (2014) described Government or public policy as the overall framework within which government actions are undertaken to achieve public goals. In this sense, government policy is a deliberate guideline on how various activities are to be carried out in the society. Government policy comprises of laws, regulations, procedures, administrative action, incentives, or voluntary practice that prescribes how government carries out its activities in a consistent and predictable way (Egberi and Monye, 2015). Emphasising on the pervasiveness of public policy, Torjman (2005) exclaimed that, "we literally eat, drink and breathe public policy". This is evident from the myriad of laws and regulations providing guidelines in every sector of the society.

The purpose of government policy is to shape the way various activities are carried out in the society. Skopje (2007) elucidated that government policy influences the society or economy. As pointed by Torjman (2005), government policy seeks to achieve a predetermined end for the best interest of all members of society. Petri and Jari (2017) further noted that government policies are developed through a given process and enforced by a public agency. This way government policy moderates the way various activities are carried out in the society. The moderating role of government policy has been identified in various studies. In Nigeria, Oyelakin and Kandi (2017) established that government policies fully moderated the association between innovation technologies and entrepreneurship development. Si-jeoung, Eun-mi, Yoonkyo & ZeKun (2016) equally established that government policy had positive

moderating effects on the development of small enterprises in Korea. Ojiambo (2018) also found that government policy had a notable moderating effect on the connection between success factors and actualisation of construction work projects in Kenya.

Agribusiness Projects in Kenya

Improvements in smallholder farming through agribusiness projects has been identified as an important approach in addressing the challenges facing humanity in many parts of the world. As noted by EBRD (2008), smallholder agribusiness projects have a large potential for widespread development impacts, particularly in promoting rural development. Advocating for support of agribusiness projects in the agricultural sector, the World Bank (2013), observed that, transforming smallholder agriculture from a largely subsistence enterprise to a profitable commercial venture is the prerequisite and driving force for accelerated development and sustainable economic growth in Sub-Saharan Africa. Similarly, AGRA (2017) posited that turning smallholder farmers into profitable rural businesses that generate surpluses is not only the best way to achieve global food security but rather it also offers a path out of poverty and hunger.

The same is given prominence in 'Kenya Vision 2030' which aims at transformation of smallholder agriculture from subsistence activities, marked by low productivity and low value addition, to 'an innovative, commercially-oriented, internationally competitive and modern agricultural sector' (GoK, 2007). The desire to improve smallholder farming has led to the design and implementation of various agribusiness projects in the country. Such projects are undertaken in a regime that has many government policies. Alila and Atieno (2006) observed that in Kenya government policy in agriculture is focussed on increasing productivity and incomes, enhanced food security, commercialisation and promotion of farm production.

Agriculture has been identified as one of the most important economic sectors in many countries of the world. Kibaara, Ariga, Olwande & Jayne, (2009), alluded that agriculture is a fundamental instrument for sustainable development, poverty reduction and enhanced food security in developing countries. GoK (2012) indicated that agriculture is the backbone of Kenya's economy and the means of livelihood for most of the rural population where 75% of the national labour force is employed. World Bank (2018) observed that despite the significance of the agricultural sector in the country, productivity remains disappointingly low. The low productivity can be associated with the challenges affecting smallholder farmers who are the majority in the sector. Additionally, as noted by IFAD (2018) the sustainability of benefits and efficiency is a major longstanding bottleneck for performance of agribusiness projects in the country.

Regardless of these and other challenges, GoK (2010) noted that better performance is possible in smallholder farming, but it will require concerted efforts to encourage farmers to adopt modern farming practices. In this spirit, various agribusiness projects have been designed and implemented in the country by the government, external donors, NGOs and even community members. Under the guidance, control and support of relevant government policies, the agribusiness projects are expected to achieve the envisaged objectives including sustainability.

Specific policies in the agriculture sector have been enacted as Acts of Parliament, sector specific guidelines and regulations in the country. Among them, there is the Crop Production and Livestock Act of 1963 with various subsequent amendments. Under this Act, the minister in charge of agriculture is empowered to develop and enforce rules controlling the production, transportation, grading, preparation for market and marketing of any crop or agricultural produce (both crops and livestock) in the country. There also exist specific policies dedicated to a given agricultural practice such as the Potato Production and Marketing Standards Rules 2005. These rules provide for guidelines on recommended potato production practices, harvesting, storage, transportation and processing among other things (GoK 2005). In the dairy sector, we have the Dairy Industry Regulations, 2021 that touch on various aspects on dairy industry including the recommendation for a minimum farm gate price for milk.

The effects of these and other policies in the agricultural sector on the operations of agribusiness projects in the country remains largely unknown. The study endeavoured to establish the effects of government policies on the relationship between the identified project management practices and sustainability of Kenya Agricultural Productivity and Agribusiness Projects (KAPAP) in selected counties in Kenya.

The objective of the study was to assess the effects of government policy on the relationship between project management practices and sustainability of KAPAP projects in selected Counties in Kenya.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was guided by a pragmatism research paradigm in line with Creswell (2012). Descriptive and explanatory designs were used in the analysis, presentation, and interpretation of the findings.

The population of the study comprised of 6,401 agribusiness projects implemented through Kenya Agricultural Productivity and Agribusiness Project (KAPAP) between years 2010 to 2015. A sample of 376 respondents was selected through multistage random sampling techniques.

A questionnaire with both open and close ended questions was applied in data collection. The closed ended questions had possible answers presented in a 5 points Likert Scale. Piloting was done in Embu County where KAPAP projects were also implemented. The appropriateness of the research tool was confirmed through face, content as well as internal validity. The questionnaire was further tested for reliability through the Cronbach alpha coefficient where a threshold of at least 0.7 was considered as acceptable. The questionnaire was later administered to the respondents in conformity with relevant research ethics.

Data Analysis and Presentation

As recommended by Saunders et al., (2007), the data was checked for accuracy, consistency and completeness before being captured through SPSS software. The qualitative data was examined through content analysis while the quantitative data was analysed through descriptive and inferential statistics. Multiple linear regression models (1.1&1.2) were applied to test relationship between the variables. The findings were presented in tables and charts in line with the study objectives with relevant explanations.

Model 1.1 was applied to check for moderation effect

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_5X + \beta_6E. E + \varepsilon \dots \dots \dots 1.1$$

After confirmation of moderation, model 1.2 was used to establish the direction and effect of the moderation.

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_7X + \beta_8E. E + \beta_9X * EE + \varepsilon \dots \dots \dots 1.2$$

Where:

- Y = Project sustainability
- X = Composite index for project management practices
- β₀ = Constant
- E, E = Government policy
- β₅- β₉ = Beta coefficients
- ε = Error term
- X*EE = Product of project management practices and moderator (government policy)

FINDINGS

A total of 272 questionnaires were received back which is equivalent to 72.34% overall response rate. As shown in Table 1.1, the respondents were fairly distributed across the four counties selected for the study.

Table 1.1: Questionnaire Response Rate

County	No of Questionnaires issued	No. of Questionnaires returned	Response rate (%)	No. of Questionnaires not returned	Non-response rate (%)
Nyeri	117	85	72.65	32	27.35
Meru	109	80	73.39	29	26.61
Busia	125	90	72.00	35	28.00
Siaya	25	17	68.00	8	32.00
Total	376	272	72.34	104	27.66

Source; Survey Data (2021)

At 72.34% the response rate was considered as appropriate for the study.

Reliability Test

As shown in Table 1.2, the computed Cronbach’s Alpha values for various study variables were above 0.7. The tool was confirmed as reliable.

Table 1.2: Reliability of Research Instrument

Variable	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha	Conclusions
Capacity building practices	3	0.89	Reliable
Stakeholders management practices	5	0.91	Reliable
Project design practices	7	0.72	Reliable
Monitoring and evaluation practices	5	0.84	Reliable
Government policies	5	0.75	Reliable
Project sustainability	9	0.78	Reliable
Overall reliability	34	0.81	Reliable

Source; Survey Data (2021)

Moderation Effect Results and Test for study Hypothesis

The data was checked for normality, linearity, multicollinearity and sampling adequacy as a precondition for running the regression. In line with the recommendations of Fairchild and Mackinnon (2009), it is necessary to confirm that the hypothesised moderating variable has a significant relationship with the predicted variable as a precondition for testing for moderation. The moderating role of government policy on the association between PMPs [capacity building practices (CBP), stakeholder management practices (SMP), project design practices (PDP), monitoring and evaluation practices (MEP)] and project sustainability (PS) was tested by checking the statistical significance of the value of coefficient of determination (r) in each model. The output is presented in Table 1.3 containing three models from hierarchical linear regression. The reliability was also confirmed through ANOVA test as shown in Table 1.4.

Table 1.3: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.847 ^a	.718	.714	.14858	.718	170.024	4	267	.000
2	.887 ^b	.787	.783	.12933	.069	86.373	1	266	.000
3	.889 ^c	.790	.783	.12952	.003	.243	1	265	.023

a. Predictors: (Constant), MEP, CBP, SMP, PDP

b. Predictors: (Constant), MEP, CBP, SMP, PDP, GP

c. Predictors: (Constant), MEP, CBP, SMP, PDP, GP, IT

Source; Survey

Data 2021 Table

1.4: ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	15.013	4	3.753	170.024	.000 ^a
1 Residual	5.894	267	.022		
Total	20.908	271			
Regression	16.458	5	3.292	193.647	.000 ^b
2 Residual	4.449	266	.017		
Total	20.908	271			
Regression	16.517	6	2.753	161.941	.000 ^c
3 Residual	4.391	265	.017		
Total	20.908	271			

a. Dependent Variable: PS

b. Predictors: (Constant), MEP, CBP, SMP, PDP

c. Predictors: (Constant), MEP, CBP, SMP, PDP, GP

d. Predictors: (Constant), MEP, CBP, SMP, PDP, GP, IT

e. IT = MEP*CBP* SMP* PDP*GP

Source; Survey Data 2021

The first model in Table 1.3 (Model 1) indicates the direct effect of project management practices (PMPs) on project sustainability before the moderator is added. The output indicates a positive effect of PMPs on project sustainability,

accounting for 71.8% variation in the value of project sustainability which was statistically significant ($F_{4,267} = 170.024, p < 0.05$). After the inclusion of government policy as shown in the second model (Model 2), the coefficient of determination increases from 0.718 to 0.787, demonstrating that the projects become more sustainable. The government policy increased project sustainability score by 0.069 confirming that government policy moderates the effect of project management practices on project sustainability. The statistical significance of the moderation effect is confirmed in the third model (Model 3) where the interaction term (IT) is introduced. The coefficient of determination improved from 0.787 to 0.790 which is statistically significant ($F_{1,265} = 0.243, p < 0.05$). The government policy is thus a statistically significant moderator in the association between project management practices and project sustainability.

The government policy having been found to statistically significantly moderate the effect of the PMPs on project sustainability, it was possible to present the relationship in equations 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3. However, it was necessary to test for reliability of such models using ANOVA as shown in table 1.4

The output in Table 1.4 showed that the models in Equations 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3 were statistically significant at 95% confidence level, that is for Model 1 ($F_{4,267} = 170.024, p < 0.05$), Model 2 ($F_{5,266} = 193.647, p < 0.05$), and Model 3 ($F_{6,265} = 161.941, p < 0.05$). This output showed that PMPs can be used to reliably predict project sustainability, and this prediction is enhanced by implementation of government policies.

The modelling of the relationship between project management practices {(capacity building practices (CBP), stakeholder management practices (SMP), project design practices (PDP), monitoring and evaluation practices (MEP))} and project sustainability (PS) as moderated by government policies (GP) was done using a hierarchical regression whose model coefficients are presented in Table 1.5.

Table 1.5: Regression Coefficients with Moderating Variable

Model	Unstandardize		Standardize	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence	
	d	d	d			Interval	Interval
	Coefficients		Coefficient			for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	1.329	.117		11.358	.000	1.098	1.559
1 CBP	.331	.072	.334	4.597	.000	.190	.472
1 SMP	.171	.069	.217	2.478	.014	.036	.306
1 PDP	.533	.114	.685	4.675	.000	.251	.815
1 MEP	.124	.036	.128	3.444	.000	.005	.195
(Constant)	1.148	.104		11.062	.000	.944	1.353
2 CBP	.334	.068	.347	4.912	.000	.201	.467
2 SMP	.188	.060	.238	3.133	.002	.070	.306
2 PDP	.478	.099	.614	4.826	.000	.283	.673
2 MEP	.206	.037	.365	5.532	.000	.133	.279
2 GP	.297	.032	.475	9.294	.000	.234	.360
(Constant)	1.151	.104		11.057	.000	.946	1.356
3 CBP	.341	.085	.351	4.012	.000	.174	.508
3 SMP	.191	.061	.242	3.147	.002	.071	.310
3 PDP	.475	.099	.610	4.798	.000	.280	.670
3 MEP	.206	.037	.367	5.538	.000	.133	.279
3 GP	.296	.032	.474	9.240	.000	.233	.359
3 IT	.394	.071	.306	5.549	.000	.255	.533

Dependent Variable: PS,
IT = MEP*CBP* SMP*
PDP*GP

Source; Survey Data 2021

The output in Table 1.5 produced the following model equations:

$$PS = 1.329 + 0.331CBP + 0.171SMP + 0.533PDP + 0.124MEP \dots\dots\dots \text{Equation 1.1}$$

$$PS = 1.148 + 0.334CBP + 0.188SMP + 0.478PDP + 0.206MEP + 0.297GP \quad \text{Equation 1.2}$$

$$PS = 1.151 + 0.341CBP + 0.191SMP + 0.475PDP + 0.206MEP + 0.296GP + 0.394IT \quad \text{Equation 1.3}$$

1.2
1.3

Where: CBP= Capacity Building Practices,
 SMP = Stakeholder Management
 Practices, PDP = Project Design
 Practices,
 MEP = Monitoring and Evaluation Practices
 PS = Project
 Sustainability GP
 = Government
 Policy
 IT = MEP*CBP* SMP* PDP*GP

All the regression coefficients in Table 1.5 have the probability values below 0.05 at 5% level of significance indicating that the coefficients are significantly different from zero. This implies that PMPs {(capacity building practices (CBP), stakeholder management practices (SMP), project design practices (PDP), as well as project monitoring and evaluation practices (MEP)} positively predict project sustainability (PS). The models in the equations 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3 shows increasing values of regression coefficients which further confirm the significant moderation of the government policies on the effect of PMPs on project sustainability. The null hypothesis as postulated in the study was thus rejected.

The findings are in agreement with past studies (Ojiambo, 2018; Oyelakin and Kandi, 2017; Si-jeoung et al., 2016), which established that government policies had a positive moderating effect on project success. However, these results contradict the finding by Ndachi and Kimutai (2018) who had concluded that Government policies had negative influence on execution of health projects in Nyeri County. Ochenge (2018) also reported that government policy had no significant influence on success of road projects.

CONCLUSIONS

The study set out to investigate the effects of government policy on the relationship between project management practices and the sustainability of KAPAP projects in selected counties in Kenya. Specifically, the investigation looked at the moderating effect of government policy on the relationship between capacity building practices, stakeholder's management practices, project design practices as well as M&E practices on one side and sustainability of KAPAP projects in selected counties in Kenya. From the findings, it was established that each of the four project management practices statistically significantly had an influence on the sustainability of KAPAP projects. The proportion of joint explanation of dependent variable (PS) by the independent variables (PMPs) improved on inclusion of government policy as a moderating variable. This confirmed that government policy statistically significantly moderated the relationship between the project management practices and project sustainability. From these findings, the project management practices can be used to reliably predict project sustainability and this prediction is enhanced by implementation of government policies. The study recommends for consideration of government policy for attainment of project objectives including sustainability.

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