

Influence of Intra-Group Conflict on Implementation of Projects in the County Government of Busia

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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 intra-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 instruments. The raw data was analyzed using descriptive statistics of the frequencies and percentages while Correlation and regression analyses were used to determine the relationship between the study variables. The findings were presented in tabular form. The findings of the study were: Results show that intra-group conflicts had significant influence on project implementation in the County Government of Busia. The study recommendations were: the management of the County Government of Busia should invest more and train its staff on influence of organizational conflicts and how these affect implementations of the projects. Organizations should come up with strategies on handling intra-group conflicts and since it has adverse influence on the implementation of projects in the County Governments in Kenya. The County Government of Busia should make certain that policies and communication that are clear and consistent, and make the rationale for decisions transparent. It is hoped that the study findings would assist managers and stakeholders in the county government in ensuring that projects within their jurisdiction are properly implemented to enhance service delivery to its' citizens.

Keywords: Intra-Group, Conflict, Implementation, Project.

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BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The idea of organizational struggle, due to its inescapability and inevitable nature, has procured a large number of suggestions and implications, giving us nothing short but semantic jungle (Adomie and Anie, 2005). Like different terms, conflict produces impressive irresoluteness furthermore, leaves various researchers and administrators uncertain about its significance and significance; and also, how best to adjust to it, how best to adapt to it. Conflict situations are unavoidable in someone's very own life, in organizations or even amongst countries. Conflict is a process whereby an individual's thinks that their interests are opposed by another party. Generally, a person just sees the perceptible portion of contention – angry words, exercises of opposition, etc. Regardless, this is only a little bit of the conflict procedure (Bannon and Collier, 2017).

Studies on organizational conflict and implementation of organizational projects have as of late increased an extensive prevalence for the most part in the European Union (EU) and Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries (Binder *et al.*, 2013). Huge scope reviews, for example, the European Working Conditions Surveys, (Bannon, 2010), and a recent comparative analysis by Borgo (2011) affirm the rising ubiquity of organizational conflict in both profoundly developed (for example Netherlands, Italy, UK and less developed EU nations (for example Romania, Greece, Portugal). Different investigations have additionally affirmed expanding proportions of organizational conflict and implementation of projects in numerous nations around the globe, for example, Canada, Australia, Japan and USA (International Labor Organization, 2011; OECD, 2012). The increasing popularity of organizational

conflict practices is a consequence of both the organizations' desire to implement its' projects to completions.

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).

A recent worldwide perspective on conflict is the integrationist point of view, which acknowledges that dispute is a positive force and fundamental for successful performance. This approach energizes a base level of dispute inside the group so as to empower self-criticism, change and innovation, and to help forestall lack of concern or too extraordinary a resistance for congruity and the norm. A study by Binder (2007) considers conflict to be an indication of a sound organization – to a certain degree. Conflict, as such, isn't really positive or negative yet an inevitable component of organizational life and should be decided regarding its consequences for performance. As indicated by Chuach and Cheung, (2018), this is a sensible perspective on hospitality associations on the grounds that an interdepartmental clash is a typical event, especially at the kitchen/eatery interface. In any case, instead of being ruinous, the contention may really be utilized to upgrade progressively powerful and effective creation and administration frameworks. Nonetheless, most assessments propose that negative impacts are the more pervasive, and this clarifies why most organizations find a way to lessen inward conflict which is the basis for the current study.

A study by William *et al.*, (2018) in Austria, states the organizations experience intra-group conflicts. The study identifies two fundamental types of intra-group conflict that organizations faces as relationship conflict and undertaking conflict. In relationship strife, individuals in the groups conflict with relational associations paying little regard to the assignment or objective of the group. On the off chance that a group is facing errand strife, people from the group have a contrast about the acknowledged techniques for achieving an objective or fight to agree on an appropriate target. In either sort of intra-group conflict, individuals are in risk of hurting individual relationships and forgetting to achieve the goals or objectives. Intra-group conflict in organizations can divert members of the group from creating important outcomes. Further, significant

levels of relationship conflicts increase group individuals' desire to find employment elsewhere or organization while elevated levels of task conflict improve the probability that a group would encounter relationship conflict too. Relationship conflicts likewise add to negative full of feeling responses that can cause enthusiastic pain in the group members.

Studies in countries in Africa; South Sudan, Central African Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, Burundi, Guinea, Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Mali have been developed (Munduate, Ganaza and Peiro, 2018) shows that there is necessity to improve performance of workers through organizational conflict management practices. So as to accomplish performance there is need to adjust the organizational focuses on the workers' agreed measures, capacities, competency prerequisites, improvement plans and the results conveyance. In spite of the fact that performance has been customarily conceptualized as far as monetary terms, a few researchers have proposed more extensive execution develop that fuse non-finance related measures including obligation, integration, among others.

The Kenya Government has figured different Acts, (for example, Labor, Employment, Educational, University, Heads Manual, Code of Regulation for Teachers, Accounting Instructions for Secondary Schools and Prevailing Education Policies produced from different Commissions and Task Committees and others) as sources for rules to control individual different instructive establishments CEOs in overseeing and directing. Most of the county government CEOs has failed to oversee conflicts in their different their institutions (CoG, 2019 Annual Report). The report further uncovers that notwithstanding the policies that the administration has set up concerning the management of county governments, our county governments have been confronted with expanded instances of all nature of conflicts since the inception of devolved governments in Kenya (CoG, 2019, annual report).

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 (Muigua, 2017).

Performance of organization hinge on performance of individuals and or group (Muigua, 2017). There are no stipulated criteria or measure; enough reflects performance at any degree of the county government Munduate *et al.*, (2018). Performance of organizational must be well-thought-out in several

measures with a time period. Ineffectual performance at any degree of the organization is a sign to the board to make a restorative move. The entirety of the management's remedial activities center around components of organizational conduct, structure, or process.

Busia County is a key player in the project utility and it manages many devolved functions as part of it is core mandate and therefore the implementation of all these functions provides the grounds for conflicts among employees (Busia County Annual Report, 2019). Therefore, with the lasting idea of conflict in work-relations, the elite organizations will be those that may continually build up the fitting techniques for overseeing conflict to accomplish set-norms and objectives. As is presently settled, the Busia County has for quite a while been worried about the impact of practices of conflict management on the region performed in the nation. However, empirical validation of discoveries across regions in Kenya is extremely restricted the best-case scenario. The accessible scarcely literature within the nation have focused primarily on administration and construction businesses. Empirical research endeavors are as yet latent in concentrating on the county governments in Kenya. In that capacity, this current examination is an endeavor to review the circumstance by giving important insight into the management in the county governments in Kenya about the effect of conflict management practices on enactment of projects in county governments with special interest to Busia County Government; Kenya.

According to (Busia County Annual Report, 2019), actual application of conflict management practices is attributed to increased productivity and more positive working relationships. This shows that once conflicts have been resolved in the project environment, they result to acquisition of the project's goals. Despite this some projects have been unable to effectively apply conflict resolution strategies resulting to low productivity, lack of trust, tension and stress in the project environment (Busia County Annual Report, 2019). It is contrary to this background that the current study sought to determine the influence of organizational conflict on implementation of county projects in Busia County.

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 researches have 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.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Intra-Group Conflict and Implementation of Projects

A study by Meley (2018) on the relationship of intra-group conflict to satisfaction of job and performance of project further, attempted a meta-investigation of forty-three past examinations with an end goal to make legitimate inferences about the size and direction of the connections. They presumed that the difference between studies was non-critical and that the conflicting outcomes could be credited to absence of control of variables to moderate, for example, categories of organization, tenure and education. In this respect, the study observed a specific kind of intra-group conflict identified as inter-sender role conflict. Subjects in the exploration were full-time lectures, put in to category regarding three profession stages, viz – maintenance, advancement and establishment. The executions of the different subjects were resolved through evaluations by colleagues. The variance analysis (ANOVA) was utilized by the researchers in their examination. Aftereffects of the investigation demonstrated that those in the maintenance and advancement experienced more between inter sender conflict their employments than those in the establishment stage. Also, they similarly felt happier with their employments than those in the establishment stage. The study in this manner reasoned that inter sender conflict doesn't influence employee fulfillment and implementation of the project. No distinctions were seen between the methods for ratings of project performance of people who experienced more between sender conflicts on their occupations than the others.

Another study by Rahim (2018) studied the point to which intra-group conflict and overload role affected the implementation of projects in West Africa. Subjects utilized in the examination were 210 workers drawn from research development association. Utilizing examination of variance (ANOVA) in the investigation, the analyst found that subjects had different degrees of employment fulfillment. The individuals who were

profoundly fulfilled, however, did not demonstrate encountering more intra-group conflict, role over-burden conflict than representatives lowly satisfied with their employments. Because of this, he reasoned that the different intra-group conflict types didn't have any impact on project implementation. Also, Harrison (2018) examined the relatedness of individual role conflict and intra-group conflict to project implementation utilizing 92 military officials as test. The outcome demonstrated that the connection between intra-group conflict and project implementation was inconsequential ($r=.03$). Similar, the relationship of individual role conflict to a worker fulfillment was similarly low and inconsequential. The study, therefore, recommended a great level of intra-group conflict and personal role conflict is not really connected with diminished project implementation.

A study in Kenya by Karuiki, (2014) analyzed the connection between the different kinds of intra-group conflict and project implementation while controlling the directing impact of an organizational level. The subjects were associates and full professors. The outcome demonstrated that intra-group conflict, job over-burden, and an individual role conflict all associated emphatically with project implementation. They in this way concluded since increment in the estimations of the conflict's types are related to increment in job fulfillment, at that point, the intra-group conflict types do not have any unfavorable impact on project implementation. Majority of these studies in intra-group conflict were conducted in more developed countries which have different characteristics to Kenya where the current study was under taken. The study is also different since it focused on intra-group conflict on the project implementation in Busia County which is different to the other earlier studies.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

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). Mugenda & Mugenda (2008) then again give the motivation behind descriptive research as deciding and report the status quo. The design was adopted because it is proposed to create factual data about aspects on organizational conflict practices on implementation of projects in Busia County. The study would fit within the arrangements of descriptive research plan on the grounds that the investigation would gather data and report the manner in which things would be without variables manipulation.

Target Population

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), See Table 3.1. The unit of analysis was the individual informant defined project managers and project supervisors. The project managers were selected because they as are in charge of county project management team. The project supervisors were selected because they are responsible for the implementation and completion of the projects.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Sample Size

A sample refers to a piece of the objective populace that has been procedurally chosen to represent to it (Oso and Onen, 2005). The sample consisted of seven (7) Sub County Project Managers and 120 project supervisors' who were selected using census technique as postulated by Mugenda and Mugenda (2008) since the study population is small. Therefore seven (7) Sub County Project Managers and 120 project supervisors were selected totaling to 127 respondents. The respondents were categorized into Sub County Project Managers and project supervisors' who were purposively chosen based on their responsibilities.

Table 1: Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Category	Target Population	Sample Size
Project Managers	07	07
Project Supervisors	120	120
Total	127	127

Data Collection Instruments

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). The questionnaire was utilized for the collection of data since it offers significant focal points in the organization. It

likewise presents an even improvement possibly too huge quantities of individuals, while it furnishes the examination with a simple gathering of data. Gay (2017) keeps up that questionnaires give respondents opportunity to communicate their perspectives or opinions and furthermore to make recommendations. It is likewise unknown. Anonymity assists with creating more open answers than is conceivable interview.

The questionnaire contained two parts. Part I, had the information about the background of heads of sections. Part II had five sections which collected information related to task role conflict (Section A), inter-group conflict (Section B), intra-group (Section C), organizational set up (Section D) and implementation of Projects (Section E). The questionnaire had only close-ended items. The questionnaire was self-administered by the researcher on planned days.

Data Collection Procedure

A research permit was acquired from the National Council for Science, Technology and Innovation after obtaining a letter of introduction from the School of Graduate Studies from Kibabii University and thereafter the Office of the Governor Busia was reached before the beginning of the data collection exercise. The researcher personally administered the questionnaires to the respondents. The selected project managers and members of the project implementation team were visited in their county offices and the questionnaires administered to them. The respondents were guaranteed that strict confidentiality would be adhered to in managing their responses. The respondents were given two (2) weeks to fill in the questionnaires after which the questionnaires were collected.

Pilot Study

A pilot study is defined as a small study conducted prior to a large piece of research to determine whether the methodology, sampling, instruments and analysis are adequate and appropriate. According to Kothari and Garg (2014). The pilot study was conducted in Bungoma County government involving one (1) project manager and 12 project supervisors. It involved conducting an initial test, the pretest sample was 10 % relying on the size of the sample. The pre-trial questionnaires were disseminated fairly to the designated respondents in order to collect a cross-sectional feeling of respondents. This helped in establishing the toughness of the instrument.

Validity of Research Instruments

Validity is characterized as the precision and seriousness of deductions, which depend on the results of research. Particularly, validity is how much outcome is gained from the analysis of data that represents to the paradox under examination. Validity, according to Borg and Gall (1989) is how much a test estimates what it implies to gauge. All appraisals of validity are subjective suppositions dependent on the judgment of the researcher (Wiersma, 20175). As indicated by Borg and Gall (1989) content and construct validity of an instrument is improved through master judgment. All things considered, the researcher sought for help from the supervisors, who were specialists in research, to improve on content which is how well a test instrument measures what it claims to measure and construct validity which entails the coverage that it must measure.

Adjustment on the instruments was made accordingly as per the advice based on the research study objectives.

Reliability of Research Instruments

Reliability is defined as a proportion of how considerable an instrument of research yields reliable output after repeated trials (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2008). The study took into consideration the pre-testing of research instruments, especially the questionnaire in order to decide if it was reliable and valid. Thus, the respondents were the six (6) project managers the motivation behind the pilot study will be to empower the researcher to discover the validity and instrument's reliability. In this study, Cronbach alpha method was adopted to analyze the reliability of the research tools. The results were utilized to compute the relationship coefficient. The correlation co-efficient ranged from $0.7 \leq \alpha < 0.8$. See results in Table 4.2. Reliability analysis yielded Cronbach alpha value of 0.830.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Intra-Group Conflict and Project Implementation

The third objective of the study was to examine the influence of intra-group conflict on project implementation of projects in the County Government of Busia. Intra group conflict was measured by nine (9) questionnaire items on a five-point likert scale. The results were presented in table 2. from the findings as shown in table 2, it was found that on the first questions which asked whether there are lots of bickering over who should do what job in the group, a mean of 2.2320, standard deviation of 1.28976, skewness of 0.955 and kurtosis of -0.290 were obtained. Furthermore, the question requiring to know whether there are differences in opinions among the members of the groups, a mean of 2.4560, with standard deviation of 1.73904 with skewness of 2.609 and kurtosis of 14.123 were obtained.

On whether there is disagreement in my group had a mean of 2.7398 with standard deviation of 4.02826 with skewness of 9.618 and kurtosis of 101.236; on the question whether members will usually overlook individual differences in an effort to unite against the other side had a mean of 2.3280 with standard deviation of 1.24936 with skewness of 0.665 and kurtosis of -0.763; on the question whether there is much friction among members in my group had a mean of 2.1048 with standard deviation of 1.41317 with skewness of 0.848 and kurtosis of -0.863 and on whether there are personality conflicts evident in the group had a mean of 4.2846 with standard deviation of 1.15187 with skewness of 7.888 and kurtosis of 71.903; Similarly, on the question whether there are conflicts about ideas in the department had a mean of 2.4919 with standard deviation of 1.45108 with skewness of 0.389 and kurtosis of -1.399; on whether there are conflicts about the work done in the department had a mean of 3.9516 with standard deviation of 1.38432 with skewness of -1.033 and kurtosis of -0.396 and on whether there are grudges evident among members of the group had a mean of

2.8800 with standard deviation of 3.76015 with skewness of 9.228 and kurtosis of 96.122. It should be noted that the reviews from the respondents varied

significantly on the influence of intra-group conflict on project implementation of County Government of Busia.

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis for Intra group Conflict

Descriptive Statistics							
Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
There are lots of bickering over who should do what job in our group	125	2.2320	1.28976	.955	.217	-.290	.430
There is difference of opinion among the members of our group.	125	2.4560	1.73904	2.609	.217	14.123	.430
There is disagreement in my group.	123	2.7398	4.02826	9.618	.218	101.236	.433
Members will usually overlook individual differences to unite against the other side	125	2.3280	1.24936	.665	.217	-.763	.430
There is much friction among members in my group	124	2.1048	1.41317	.848	.217	-.863	.431
There are personality conflicts evident in my group	123	4.2846	1.15187	7.888	.218	71.903	.433
There are conflicts about ideas in the department	124	2.4919	1.45108	.389	.217	-1.399	.431
There are conflicts about the work we do in the department	124	3.9516	1.38432	-1.033	.217	-.396	.431
There are grudges evident among members of the group	125	2.8800	3.76015	9.228	.217	96.122	.430

Source: Field data (2019)

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Intragroup Conflict on Project Implementation

The objective of the study sought to determine the influence of intragroup conflict on project implementation in Busia county government in Kenya. This predictor variable was measured by nine questionnaire items. Findings from both correlation and linear regression statistics indicated that intragroup conflict has a positive and significant influence on project implementation ($R = 0.627$, $p < .01$). The predictive power which is calculated by R^2 show that intragroup conflict could explain 39.3 per cent of variance in project implementation. Hence, the null hypothesis in line with this objective was also rejected.

The results reached the conclusion that intragroup conflict (predictor variable) has a positive and significant influence on project implementation (predicted variable). Thus, the higher the intergroup conflicts the greater the implementation of projects within Busia county government.

Based on study findings, intragroup conflict was found to have a positive and significant influence on project implementation in Busia county government. This implies that project implementation increases with an increase in intragroup conflicts. It is therefore the

observation of this study, that intragroup conflict is helpful to the organizational implementation of its projects. Hence, this study recommends that as the much as the management should ensure that too much conflicts is management, it should allow a certain level of conflict to play out amongst the employees. Probably, this would keep some of them on toes.

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