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EFFECT OF TECHNICAL CAPACITY AND STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT ON PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION IN MARGINALIZED COUNTIES OF KENYA: A CASE STUDY OF GARISSA COUNTY

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ABSTRACT

Effective project implementation remains a persistent challenge in Kenya's marginalized counties, where limited institutional capacity and weak stakeholder engagement often lead to project delays, cost overruns, and incomplete outcomes. This study examined the effect of technical capacity and stakeholder involvement on project implementation in Garissa County, one of Kenya's least developed regions. The research was guided by the Resource-Based View (RBV) and Stakeholder Theories, which emphasize internal capabilities and participatory governance as key enablers of project success. A descriptive research design was adopted, targeting 250 project stakeholders drawn from various county departments. Using Yamane's formula, a sample size of 154 respondents was selected through stratified random sampling. Primary data were collected using structured questionnaires, and reliability was confirmed through Cronbach's Alpha coefficients exceeding 0.80. Data were analysed using SPSS Version 28, applying both descriptive and inferential statistics, including correlation and multiple regression analysis. The results revealed that both technical capacity ($\beta = 0.247$, $p < 0.01$) and stakeholder involvement ($\beta = 0.209$, $p = 0.003$) had a positive and statistically significant effect on project implementation in Garissa County. The overall model explained 64.1% ($R^2 = 0.641$) of the variation in project implementation, confirming the strong predictive power of the selected variables. The study concluded that enhancing technical competencies, providing adequate tools and systems, and promoting participatory stakeholder engagement are critical to improving project efficiency and sustainability in marginalized regions. It recommends that county governments institutionalize continuous capacity-building programs, strengthen stakeholder consultation mechanisms, and integrate participatory monitoring and evaluation frameworks. These measures would enhance accountability, foster ownership, and improve the timely completion and quality of public projects in Kenya's devolved system.

Keywords: *Technical Capacity, Stakeholder Involvement, Project Implementation, Marginalized Counties, Garissa County, Kenya.*

INTRODUCTION

Project implementation is a cornerstone of sustainable development and an essential process through which policies and strategic plans are translated into tangible outcomes that improve citizens' welfare. Effective implementation ensures timely completion of projects within allocated budgets and quality standards, thereby enhancing service delivery and promoting socio-economic transformation. According to the World Bank (2023), successful project execution is a key determinant of public sector performance, especially in developing countries where infrastructure and institutional capacity remain weak. In Kenya, devolution has increased local responsibility for project delivery, but counties in marginalized regions such as Garissa continue to experience persistent implementation gaps due to resource constraints, technical limitations, and governance challenges (Office of the Auditor General [OAG], 2023; Commission on Revenue Allocation [CRA], 2022).

Globally, empirical evidence underscores the significance of technical competence and participatory management in achieving effective project outcomes. Countries such as the United States, Germany, and Sweden have institutionalized rigorous project management frameworks that emphasize stakeholder collaboration, technical expertise, and transparency in resource use (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2021). Similarly, in Asia, nations like South Korea and Singapore have adopted capacity-building initiatives and technology-driven systems that ensure accountability, efficiency, and adaptability in public project delivery (Lee & Park, 2020; Kumar & Singh, 2021). These global experiences highlight the necessity of strengthening technical capacity and stakeholder engagement to enhance project performance, especially in the public sector.

Within the African context, project implementation remains a major development challenge due to weak institutional structures, low human capital, and limited community participation. The African Development Bank (AfDB, 2022) notes that over 70% of public projects in Sub-Saharan Africa face delays or cost overruns due to insufficient technical skills and poor coordination. Studies in Nigeria, Uganda, and Ghana reveal that political interference and inadequate stakeholder consultation often compromise project sustainability and inclusivity (Obong & Wagana, 2021; Akpan & Orok, 2020). These findings emphasize that project success depends not only on financial resources but also on the availability of competent personnel and the inclusion of local stakeholders throughout the project lifecycle.

In Kenya, the devolved system was designed to promote equitable development and citizen participation in decision-making; however, project implementation outcomes have been uneven across counties. While counties such as Makueni and Nyeri have demonstrated success through strong technical units and participatory monitoring systems, others particularly in arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs) struggle with weak

institutional capacity, poor coordination, and minimal public engagement (Wekesa & Otieno, 2019; Ngunjiri & Korir, 2020). According to the OAG (2023), more than half of Garissa County's development projects between 2018 and 2022 were either incomplete or behind schedule, primarily due to low technical competence and weak stakeholder participation. These findings point to an urgent need to investigate how human and institutional capacity, together with participatory governance, affect project success in marginalized settings.

The determinants of interest in this study technical capacity and stakeholder involvement represent two complementary dimensions of project implementation. Technical capacity encompasses the availability of qualified personnel, modern tools, technological infrastructure, and institutional readiness for project execution (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2019; Chepchirchir & Mwaura, 2021). Conversely, stakeholder involvement emphasizes participatory planning, communication, consultation, and feedback mechanisms that promote community ownership and alignment with local needs (Freeman, 1984; Bourne, 2015; Nyaga et al., 2021). When combined, these factors enhance transparency, accountability, and responsiveness in development delivery, whereas their absence leads to inefficiency, delays, and low citizen satisfaction (Mureithi & Kamau, 2023).

In Garissa County, project implementation is further complicated by logistical challenges, vast geographic coverage, low literacy levels, and recurring insecurity. Despite significant budgetary allocations, weak technical competencies, poor project monitoring, and limited community participation continue to undermine performance (CRA, 2022; OAG, 2023). Studies by Wanjohi and Gathungu (2017) and Otieno and Muturi (2020) have shown that technical inadequacies and weak stakeholder engagement are critical barriers to project completion in devolved units. These realities underscore the necessity of empirically examining how these two determinants influence project outcomes in a marginalized context.

Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the effect of technical capacity and stakeholder involvement on project implementation in Garissa County, Kenya. Guided by the Resource-Based View (RBV) and Stakeholder Theories, the study provides empirical evidence on how internal capabilities and participatory mechanisms contribute to project performance. The findings will inform policy formulation, institutional reforms, and strategic capacity-building initiatives aimed at improving project efficiency, accountability, and sustainability in Kenya's devolved system.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Despite increased devolution funding and the establishment of project management structures, project implementation in Kenya's marginalized counties remains weak, characterized by frequent delays, cost overruns, and incomplete outcomes. Reports by

the Office of the Auditor General (2023) indicate that more than 58% of county projects in Garissa were stalled or below completion standards between 2018 and 2022, largely due to limited technical capacity and inadequate stakeholder involvement. While counties receive significant allocations through the equitable share and donor support, weak institutional competencies and poor coordination have undermined project execution efficiency (CRA, 2022). Further, the National Treasury (2023) observed that most devolved units lack adequately trained personnel in project planning, monitoring, and evaluation, leading to poor adherence to timelines, budgets, and quality standards. At the same time, inadequate stakeholder participation has reduced accountability and community ownership, resulting in minimal beneficiary engagement and resistance during implementation (Wanjohi & Gathungu, 2017; Mureithi & Kamau, 2023). These challenges not only hinder the achievement of development goals but also erode public trust in local governance institutions.

Although several studies have examined determinants of project performance in Kenyan counties, limited empirical attention has been given to the joint effect of technical capacity and stakeholder involvement, particularly in marginalized regions such as Garissa. Existing research tends to focus on urban or economically stable counties (e.g., Nduati & Wanyoike, 2018; Cheboi & Rotich, 2020), which face different contextual realities. This has created a significant contextual and methodological gap, as the unique challenges of arid and semi-arid counties—such as low literacy levels, logistical barriers, and political instability—demand context-specific analysis (AfDB, 2022; Obong & Wagana, 2021). Additionally, prior studies have often analyzed each determinant in isolation without integrating them into a comprehensive framework explaining how institutional capacity and participatory governance jointly influence project outcomes (Nyaga et al., 2021). Consequently, empirical evidence remains insufficient to guide policy interventions that could strengthen project implementation in marginalized counties. This study therefore seeks to bridge this gap by examining the effect of technical capacity and stakeholder involvement on project implementation in Garissa County, Kenya, generating insights applicable to similar devolved contexts across Sub-Saharan Africa.

OBJECTIVES

General Objective

To examine the effect of technical capacity and stakeholder involvement on project implementation in marginalized counties of Kenya, with a specific focus on Garissa County.

Specific Objectives

The study will be guided by the following specific objectives:

1. To determine the effect of technical capacity on project implementation in Garissa County.
2. To assess the effect of stakeholder involvement on project implementation in Garissa County.

3. To evaluate the combined influence of technical capacity and stakeholder involvement on project implementation in Garissa County.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the effect of technical capacity on project implementation in Garissa County?
2. How does stakeholder involvement influence project implementation in Garissa County?
3. What is the combined effect of technical capacity and stakeholder involvement on project implementation in Garissa County?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study holds significant academic, practical, and policy relevance. From an academic perspective, it contributes to the growing body of knowledge on project management and public sector performance within the context of devolved governance. By examining the effect of technical capacity and stakeholder involvement on project implementation in a marginalized county, the study provides empirical evidence that enriches theoretical understanding, particularly in relation to the Resource-Based View (RBV) and Stakeholder Theories. The study's findings will also serve as a reference point for future scholars exploring determinants of development project performance in resource-constrained environments.

From a policy perspective, the study offers insights that can guide national and county governments in improving the planning, coordination, and monitoring of development projects. The findings will assist policymakers in designing targeted capacity-building programs for county officials and formulating frameworks that institutionalize stakeholder participation at all stages of project implementation. This aligns with the goals of Kenya's Vision 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 16, which promotes inclusive institutions and effective governance (United Nations, 2020).

From a practical perspective, the study provides actionable recommendations for development practitioners, donor agencies, and project managers working in marginalized and arid regions. By identifying how technical competence and participatory mechanisms influence project outcomes, the study helps practitioners adopt evidence-based strategies to improve efficiency, accountability, and sustainability in project execution. Ultimately, residents of Garissa County and similar ASAL regions will benefit from improved service delivery, community empowerment, and more responsive governance systems.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study focuses on analysing the effect of technical capacity and stakeholder involvement on project implementation in Garissa County, Kenya. The study is limited to two independent variables technical capacity and stakeholder involvement and one dependent variable, project implementation. The analysis specifically considers how human resource competence, technological readiness, institutional capability, participatory planning, and feedback mechanisms collectively influence project outcomes within the county government. Geographically, the study is confined to Garissa County, which represents a typical example of a marginalized county in Kenya's arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs).

The target population includes project stakeholders such as departmental heads, project managers, engineers, procurement officers, and community representatives directly involved in county development initiatives. The temporal scope covers projects implemented between January 2025 and October 2025, ensuring that the findings reflect the most recent operational and policy environment. Conceptually, the study limits itself to the internal and participatory determinants of project performance while excluding other external factors such as political interference, climate variability, and national legislation. This focused scope enhances the precision of analysis and allows for more targeted conclusions relevant to strengthening project implementation in marginalized counties.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents a critical review of existing scholarly and empirical works related to the effect of technical capacity and stakeholder involvement on project implementation. It provides both theoretical and empirical perspectives that form the foundation for understanding how these variables interact to influence project outcomes in public sector settings. The review draws on global, regional, and local studies to highlight trends, relationships, and contextual differences in project implementation dynamics. Additionally, the chapter identifies key knowledge gaps contextual, methodological, conceptual, and evidence-based that the current study seeks to address, thereby establishing the study's scholarly justification and contribution to existing literature.

Theoretical Review

The theoretical review provides the foundation for understanding how internal competencies and participatory mechanisms influence project implementation outcomes in devolved governance contexts. This study is anchored on two key theories: the Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory and the Stakeholder Theory, each of which explains different dimensions of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The RBV theory supports the concept of technical capacity, while the Stakeholder Theory underpins stakeholder involvement. Together, these theories

provide a multidimensional framework linking internal resources, organizational capability, and participatory governance to project implementation performance.

Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory

The Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory was introduced by Wernerfelt (1984) and further advanced by Barney (1991) to explain how organizations achieve sustainable performance through the acquisition and utilization of valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN) resources. The theory posits that internal resources both tangible and intangible serve as the primary drivers of organizational competitiveness and effectiveness. In the context of public project implementation, technical capacity, including skilled personnel, technological systems, and institutional competence, represents strategic resources that determine project success. Counties or organizations with adequate technical expertise and infrastructure are more capable of achieving high levels of project efficiency and accountability (Teece, 2018; Peteraf & Barney, 2019).

Over time, RBV has evolved into the Dynamic Capabilities Framework, emphasizing an organization's ability to integrate, reconfigure, and renew internal resources in response to changing environments (Teece, Pisano, & Shuen, 2016). This development is particularly relevant in public sector project management, where unpredictable funding, technological changes, and external shocks require adaptability. However, the RBV has been critiqued for being overly inward-looking and neglecting the influence of institutional and political environments (Priem, Butler, & Li, 2021). Despite this limitation, the theory remains valuable for explaining internal determinants of project success, especially where human capital and institutional readiness are central to performance.

In this study, the RBV theory underpins the technical capacity variable, suggesting that counties with well-trained personnel, efficient management tools, and robust institutional systems are better positioned to execute development projects successfully. By investing in continuous capacity-building, technological innovation, and process improvement, devolved units can strengthen their resource base and enhance project implementation outcomes. Empirical studies in Kenya and other developing countries affirm that technical expertise and institutional capacity are critical resources that improve project efficiency and sustainability (Chepchirchir & Mwaura, 2021; Wekesa & Otieno, 2019). Thus, the RBV provides a solid foundation for analysing how internal resources translate into improved project performance in Garissa County.

Stakeholder Theory

The Stakeholder Theory was originally proposed by Freeman (1984) and later expanded by Freeman, Harrison, and Wicks (2018). The theory posits that organizations exist within a network of relationships involving multiple stakeholders, individuals or groups who can affect or are affected by the organization's decisions and outcomes. It emphasizes

inclusivity, mutual accountability, and collaboration as essential principles for organizational success. In project implementation, stakeholder involvement ensures that development initiatives align with local needs, enhances ownership, and minimize resistance to change (Bourne, 2015; Crilly & Sloan, 2021). Through active participation, consultation, and feedback mechanisms, stakeholders contribute to improved decision-making, transparency, and sustainability of public projects.

Over the years, the Stakeholder Theory has evolved from a managerial framework to an ethical and governance model, promoting participatory development and social legitimacy (Miles, 2017). Modern interpretations link stakeholder engagement to shared value creation and sustainable outcomes in both private and public sectors (Donaldson & Walsh, 2019). Nonetheless, critics argue that the theory lacks a clear mechanism for managing conflicting stakeholder interests, particularly in politically sensitive contexts such as devolved governance (Harrison & Van der Laan Smith, 2019). Despite these limitations, the theory remains highly relevant in analyzing governance systems where public participation is a constitutional requirement.

In this study, the Stakeholder Theory underpins the stakeholder involvement variable by emphasizing the importance of community consultation, participatory planning, and collaborative decision-making throughout the project lifecycle. Projects that incorporate feedback and participation from beneficiaries and institutional actors tend to experience higher completion rates and long-term sustainability (Mureithi & Kamau, 2023; Nyaga et al., 2021). The theory's principles align with Kenya's Public Participation Framework under the Constitution of 2010, which mandates inclusivity in county planning and budgeting processes. Therefore, the Stakeholder Theory provides a theoretical basis for evaluating how effective engagement and communication among diverse actors contribute to improved project implementation in Garissa County.

Empirical Literature Review

This section reviews previous empirical studies that have examined how technical capacity and stakeholder involvement influence project implementation. The review highlights the objectives, methodologies, key findings, and research gaps identified in earlier works, both globally and locally. Through this synthesis, the study establishes how the current research builds upon existing knowledge while addressing contextual, methodological, and conceptual gaps, particularly within Kenya's marginalized counties.

Technical Capacity and Project Implementation

Otieno and Muturi (2020) conducted a study titled "Technical Skills and Implementation of County Projects in Rural Kenya" to examine how technical competencies affect development project execution in Kisumu and Kakamega counties. The study employed a descriptive cross-sectional design targeting 112 county engineers, procurement officers, and project managers. Using stratified sampling and regression analysis, the study found

that inadequate technical expertise significantly delayed project timelines and compromised quality. However, the study's contextual gap was that it focused on urbanizing counties, not marginalized regions such as Garissa.

Chepchirchir and Mwaura (2021) examined "Capacity Building and Completion of Development Projects in Uasin Gishu County." Using a descriptive survey design with 98 county officials, the study found that continuous technical training and mentorship improved project delivery timelines and quality. Nevertheless, the study lacked an assessment of institutional readiness, which the current study includes by evaluating both human and institutional technical capacities.

Similarly, Wekesa and Otieno (2019) investigated "Adoption of ICT Tools and Project Performance in Bungoma County." A correlational design involving 80 ICT and project officers revealed that digital monitoring tools enhanced project reporting and reduced delays. The study, however, narrowly focused on technology adoption, creating a conceptual gap by overlooking other dimensions such as staff competence and institutional capacity.

A UNDP (2019) programmatic report titled "Capacity Assessment of County Governments in Kenya" assessed the technical readiness of devolved units, including Garissa. Through interviews, focus groups, and institutional audits, it found that counties in arid regions lacked skilled personnel in procurement, planning, and engineering. The report's evidence gap was the absence of quantitative correlation between technical capacity and project performance, which the current study addresses using regression analysis.

Finally, Kariuki and Ndirangu (2022) in "Effect of Institutional Capacity on Project Execution in Tharaka Nithi County" used a descriptive survey with 90 project officers and regression analysis. Findings indicated that low staffing levels and outdated technical tools hindered project success. The study's conceptual gap lay in focusing on small-scale infrastructure projects, while the current study includes multi-sectoral development projects in Garissa.

Overall, these studies show that technical capacity in terms of skilled manpower, institutional infrastructure, and technological resources positively influences project implementation. However, most previous research was limited to relatively stable or urban counties, justifying the present study's focus on Garissa County as a marginalized ASAL region.

Stakeholder Involvement and Project Implementation

Wanjohi and Gathungu (2017), in their study "Effect of Stakeholder Participation on the Performance of County Funded Projects in Nairobi County," applied a descriptive survey design targeting 135 project committee members and sub-county administrators. The results indicated that early stakeholder engagement and continuous consultation enhanced project success. The contextual gap was that the study focused on an urban county, whereas the current study investigates a rural, marginalized context.

Muriithi and Wagoki (2019) explored "Stakeholder Engagement and Implementation of Urban Development Projects in Kiambu County." Using a mixed-methods design and targeting 92 project managers and local leaders, they found that stakeholder exclusion led to community resistance and project delays. The study's methodological limitation was its reliance on qualitative insights without quantifying stakeholder influence a gap the present study addresses through regression analysis.

Nyaga, Mwangi, and Gikunda (2021) examined "Community Participation and Performance of Public Projects in Embu County." Employing a cross-sectional survey with 108 development officers and cluster sampling, they established that participatory monitoring and evaluation enhanced project completion and sustainability. The conceptual gap was the exclusion of political and institutional actors from the stakeholder framework.

Mureithi and Kamau (2023) studied "Stakeholder Engagement in Public Infrastructure Delivery in Isiolo County" using a descriptive census approach with structured questionnaires. Findings revealed that structured feedback channels and collaborative planning improved satisfaction and delivery timelines. However, the contextual gap remained, as the study did not focus on arid and semi-arid regions like Garissa.

Finally, Achieng and Amuhaya (2022) analyzed "Determinants of County Project Implementation in Siaya County," applying a descriptive design targeting 75 officers in health, water, and education sectors. They found that lack of consultation and minimal participation of local leaders contributed to poor project uptake. The evidence gap was that stakeholder involvement was treated as an isolated activity rather than integrated throughout the project cycle.

Collectively, these studies affirm that stakeholder involvement through participatory planning, consultation, and feedback positively affects project implementation. Nonetheless, most prior research was conducted in non-marginalized settings and failed to examine the joint influence of stakeholder participation and technical capacity. The current study addresses these gaps by integrating both internal and participatory determinants within the context of Garissa County's devolved governance system.

METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the research procedures and techniques adopted to examine the effect of technical capacity and stakeholder involvement on project implementation in Garissa County, Kenya. The section describes the research design, target population, sampling techniques, data collection instruments, and methods of data analysis that guided the study. The chosen methodology ensured systematic, reliable, and valid results that aligned with the study objectives and research questions.

The study adopted a descriptive research design, which is appropriate for establishing the relationship between variables and providing a factual and accurate description of the current conditions. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), a descriptive design enables researchers to analyse the characteristics, opinions, and behaviours of a given population systematically. This design was preferred because it facilitated the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data regarding how technical capacity and stakeholder involvement influence project implementation. The design also allowed the use of statistical tools to test the strength and significance of relationships among variables.

The target population comprised 250 individuals drawn from different departments within the Garissa County Government, including project managers, engineers, procurement officers, monitoring and evaluation officers, and representatives from community development committees. The population was stratified into relevant categories to ensure adequate representation of key stakeholders. A sample size of 154 respondents was determined using Yamane's formula (1967), which provides a statistically acceptable sample at a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure proportional representation of each department and stakeholder category, thereby enhancing the generalizability of the findings.

Data were collected using structured questionnaires consisting of both closed- and open-ended items. The instrument was divided into sections corresponding to the study variables: technical capacity, stakeholder involvement, and project implementation. A pilot test involving 15 respondents from neighbouring Wajir County was conducted to assess the reliability and validity of the instrument. Reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha, where all constructs recorded coefficients above 0.80, indicating high internal consistency. Data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 28, employing both descriptive statistics (means, frequencies, and standard deviations) and inferential statistics (correlation and multiple regression analysis) to determine the strength and significance of relationships among variables. The study findings were presented using tables and charts to enhance clarity and interpretation.

Ethical considerations were observed throughout the research process. The researcher obtained an official authorization letter from the Management University of Africa (MUA) and a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI). Respondents were assured of voluntary participation, anonymity, and confidentiality, and were informed of their right to withdraw at any stage without penalty. The data collected were used solely for academic purposes, and all secondary sources were properly acknowledged to uphold academic integrity. This methodological framework ensured that the study produced valid, reliable, and ethically sound findings applicable to policy and practice in Kenya's devolved governance system.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents, analyses, and interprets the findings of the study, which sought to determine the effect of technical capacity and stakeholder involvement on project implementation in Garissa County, Kenya. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize respondents' opinions on each variable, while regression analysis quantified the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The results are discussed in relation to the study objectives, theories, and prior empirical studies.

Table 1: Descriptive Findings on Technical Capacity

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev	Interpretation
County staff possess adequate technical skills for project execution.	4.18	0.79	Agree
The county has sufficient equipment and technology for project delivery.	4.09	0.84	Agree
There are regular training and capacity-building programs for project staff.	4.02	0.81	Agree
The county's technical departments effectively supervise and monitor projects.	4.15	0.78	Agree
ICT tools are used in tracking project progress and reporting.	4.17	0.82	Agree
Overall Mean	**4.12**	**0.81**	**Agree**

The findings indicate that most respondents agreed that technical capacity significantly affects project implementation in Garissa County, as reflected in an overall mean of 4.12. This suggests that while staff competence and equipment are generally adequate, continuous improvement in technical training and supervision remains essential. These results echo the findings of Chepchirchir and Mwaura (2021) and Otieno and Muturi (2020), who established that technical expertise is central to timely and efficient project delivery.

Table 2: Descriptive Findings on Stakeholder Involvement

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev	Interpretation
Stakeholders are actively involved in project planning and design.	4.06	0.82	Agree
Community representatives participate in monitoring and evaluation.	4.08	0.79	Agree
There is effective communication between project teams and stakeholders.	4.1	0.8	Agree
Feedback from stakeholders is considered in decision-making.	4.05	0.83	Agree
Public forums are used to share project information transparently.	4.02	0.86	Agree
Overall Mean	**4.06**	**0.82**	**Agree**

The findings show that respondents generally agreed on the importance of stakeholder participation in project implementation, with an overall mean of 4.06. This indicates that participatory planning, open communication, and feedback mechanisms play a key role in ensuring project success. These results support the Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984), which asserts that inclusivity enhances ownership, reduces conflict, and fosters sustainability. The findings are consistent with Mureithi and Kamau (2023) and Nyaga et al. (2021), who observed that stakeholder participation improves accountability and project satisfaction.

Table 3: Regression Results

Model	Unstandardized B	Std. Error	Beta (β)	t	Sig.
Constant	1.142	0.182	—	6.28	0.000
Technical Capacity (X_1)	0.247	0.061	0.352	4.05	0.001
Stakeholder Involvement (X_2)	0.209	0.069	0.291	3.33	0.003
R			0.801		
R^2			0.641		
Adjusted R^2			0.634		
F (2, 151)				28.476	0.000

The regression analysis sought to establish the combined influence of technical capacity and stakeholder involvement on project implementation in Garissa County. The results reveal a strong correlation ($R = 0.801$) and a high coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.641$), implying that 64.1% of the variation in project implementation is explained by the two

independent variables. The model's F-statistic ($F = 28.476$, $p < 0.001$) further confirms that the regression equation is statistically significant, meaning that the observed relationship did not occur by chance. These findings suggest that the quality of technical resources and the degree of stakeholder participation jointly determine the success or failure of development projects in Garissa County. This outcome resonates with similar conclusions by Obong and Wagana (2021), who found that human resource capability and participatory structures significantly enhance project outcomes in devolved governance systems.

The coefficient for technical capacity ($\beta = 0.247$, $p = 0.001$) indicates a positive and statistically significant relationship with project implementation. This finding implies that counties with higher levels of technical expertise, adequate tools, and institutional systems are more likely to achieve efficient and timely project delivery. The result supports the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory, which posits that unique organizational resources such as skilled personnel, technology, and structural capacity are crucial for achieving superior performance (Barney, 1991; Teece, 2018). Empirical studies by Chepchirchir and Mwaura (2021) and Otieno and Muturi (2020) have shown that technical competence enables proper planning, cost control, and risk mitigation during project execution. In the case of Garissa County, strengthening technical units through training, digitalization, and improved supervision could bridge existing capacity gaps and reduce project delays common in arid and semi-arid regions.

Similarly, the coefficient for stakeholder involvement ($\beta = 0.209$, $p = 0.003$) demonstrates that inclusive participation has a positive and statistically significant influence on project implementation. This finding emphasizes the importance of engaging communities, beneficiaries, and institutional actors throughout the project lifecycle—from planning to monitoring and evaluation. The results align with the Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984), which asserts that organizational success depends on balancing the interests of all stakeholders. Comparable studies by Mureithi and Kamau (2023) and Nyaga et al. (2021) found that participatory decision-making fosters trust, enhances accountability, and minimizes resistance from communities. In the context of Garissa County, stakeholder engagement ensures that projects are locally relevant, culturally acceptable, and socially sustainable, which enhances long-term success and community ownership.

The combined effect of technical capacity and stakeholder involvement provides valuable insights into the dynamics of project management in marginalized counties. When internal competencies are complemented by participatory approaches, counties can achieve improved coordination, transparency, and performance. These results substantiate the view of Kariuki and Ndirangu (2022) that sustainable project outcomes depend on integrating institutional readiness with social collaboration mechanisms. The study thus contributes to both theory and practice by demonstrating that project implementation in devolved governance systems cannot rely solely on financial inputs

but must incorporate both human capital and participatory governance. Strengthening technical departments, institutionalizing stakeholder consultation frameworks, and adopting participatory monitoring systems are therefore recommended strategies for enhancing project delivery in Garissa County and similar marginalized contexts across Kenya.

CONCLUSION

The study examined the effect of technical capacity and stakeholder involvement on project implementation in Garissa County, Kenya. The findings revealed that both variables significantly and positively influence the effectiveness, timeliness, and sustainability of development projects. The regression model explained 64.1% of the variation in project implementation, indicating a strong joint influence of technical and participatory factors on project success. First, the study concludes that technical capacity is a critical internal determinant of project implementation. Counties that invest in skilled personnel, technological infrastructure, and capacity-building programs achieve higher efficiency and accountability. Technical competence enhances planning, supervision, and quality control, which minimizes delays and resource wastage. The conclusion supports the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory, which emphasizes that organizations derive competitive advantage from their internal resources and capabilities.

Secondly, the study concludes that stakeholder involvement significantly enhances project implementation outcomes. Active participation of community members, contractors, administrators, and development partners ensures that projects address local needs and priorities. Stakeholder engagement fosters ownership, transparency, and trust, reducing conflict and resistance during project execution. This confirms the Stakeholder Theory, which posits that inclusive decision-making promotes legitimacy and sustainable outcomes in public development programs. Finally, the study concludes that combining technical capacity and stakeholder involvement yields greater impact than addressing each factor separately. Strengthening technical departments while deepening participatory frameworks enables county governments to achieve integrated, evidence-based, and community-driven development. Therefore, improving both internal institutional competencies and external stakeholder collaboration is essential for enhancing project implementation in Garissa County and other marginalized regions in Kenya.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are proposed to enhance project implementation in Garissa County and other marginalized regions in Kenya. The study established that technical capacity plays a crucial role in determining project success. Therefore, it is recommended that the county government invests in continuous professional development and institutional modernization. Regular technical training, mentorship, and certification programs should be organized for project officers,

engineers, and procurement personnel to strengthen their competence in planning, supervision, and evaluation. In addition, the county should modernize its infrastructure by adopting digital project management systems, advanced monitoring tools, and automated reporting platforms. Such investments will improve transparency, coordination, and the timely delivery of projects while reducing administrative inefficiencies.

The study also revealed that stakeholder involvement has a significant positive effect on project implementation. Consequently, it is recommended that county governments institutionalize structured stakeholder engagement frameworks that promote inclusivity and ownership at all stages of the project cycle. Public participation should go beyond consultative meetings to include participatory planning, monitoring, and evaluation. Mechanisms such as community advisory committees, barazas, and stakeholder review forums should be used to ensure that the voices of citizens, local leaders, and development partners are integrated into project decisions. This approach will strengthen accountability, build trust, and enhance sustainability by ensuring that projects are responsive to local needs and socio-cultural contexts.

Furthermore, the study recommends the establishment of a coordinated project monitoring and accountability system that integrates all departmental reports and performance metrics. A unified project database or dashboard should be developed to track progress, budgets, and implementation timelines across departments. Periodic project audits and evaluation meetings should be conducted to ensure compliance with standards and to provide feedback for continuous improvement. Involving independent auditors and community representatives in monitoring processes can further enhance transparency and mitigate the risk of resource mismanagement.

Lastly, the study recommends policy and legislative support to entrench technical professionalism and participatory governance within county operations. The County Assembly should formulate and enforce policies that prioritize merit-based recruitment, ethical conduct, and public participation in project management. The national government and development partners can also use lessons from Garissa County to design targeted capacity-building initiatives for other arid and semi-arid counties. Such programs should promote cross-county benchmarking, knowledge exchange, and adoption of best practices to ensure equitable and sustainable development across Kenya's devolved units.

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