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STAKEHOLDERS' INVOLVEMENT PRACTICES AND PERFORMANCE OF ROAD PROJECTS IN KENYAN COUNTIES: A CASE STUDY OF UASIN GISHU COUNTY.

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ABSTRACT
The objective of this study was to investigate how stakeholder involvement practices influence the performance of road projects in Uasin Gishu County, and the specific objective was to determine how baseline information provision influences the performance of road projects in Uasin Gishu County. In this study, Participatory Development theory and Stakeholder Theory were used, with the anchor theory being Stakeholder Theory. The study was conducted using a descriptive research design, with a target population of 152 respondents from Uasin Gishu County and a sample size of 110, where stratified random sampling was adopted. The researcher used a questionnaire as the main research instrument, and data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics with the help of SPSS version 25. Presentation of analysed data was done using percentages, mean and standard deviation by use of frequency tables The study findings showed that baseline information provision significantly affects the performance of road projects in Uasin Gishu County. A positive linear relationship between baseline information provision and project performance suggests that project management teams should ensure adequate provision for baseline data collection. The study recommends that project managers should focus on collecting and sharing baseline information for road projects, involving stakeholders in defining key performance indicators (KPIs), and establishing standardized protocols for data collection and sharing.
Keywords: *Stakeholder involvement practices, performance, road projects, Uasin Gishu County*

INTRODUCTION
Infrastructure development, particularly in transport and road networks, is a critical driver of economic growth and social transformation globally. Across the world, successful road projects are increasingly being linked to the extent of stakeholder involvement throughout the project lifecycle. Effective stakeholder engagement contributes to better project planning, minimizes risks, enhances transparency, and increases the likelihood of project sustainability (Olander & Landin, 2005; PMI, 2017). Globally, institutions such as the World Bank and the OECD emphasize participatory approaches as a best practice in infrastructure governance, noting that inclusive

engagement leads to improved project outcomes and public satisfaction (World Bank, 2020; OECD, 2015).

In the African regional context, many countries continue to grapple with poor infrastructure performance despite increased investment. Delays, budget overruns, and quality concerns are often attributed to weak stakeholder coordination, inadequate consultation, and low community ownership (AfDB, 2018). Studies from countries like Ghana, Nigeria, and Uganda have shown that involving local stakeholders in infrastructure projects not only boosts efficiency but also reduces conflicts and project resistance (Adeleke et al., 2020; Okot-Yego, 2016). However, stakeholder participation remains largely procedural rather than meaningful, often being limited to formal hearings or selective consultations.

In Kenya, the promulgation of the 2010 Constitution and the subsequent devolution of governance gave county governments a greater role in development planning and service delivery. Road construction is one of the major devolved functions, with significant budget allocations being directed toward improving local transport infrastructure (CRA, 2021). Despite this, many county-level road projects continue to face implementation challenges, including project delays, inflated costs, and dissatisfaction among end-users. A recurring issue is the inadequate involvement of key stakeholders—ranging from local communities, contractors, and oversight agencies, to political leaders—throughout the project cycle (Mwangi, 2016).

Locally, in Uasin Gishu County, road infrastructure development is particularly critical due to the county's role as an agricultural and commercial hub in the North Rift region. While the county government has prioritized road projects to improve market access and urban connectivity, several projects have been marred by delays, disputes, and quality concerns. These issues have often been linked to insufficient stakeholder engagement, lack of transparency in project selection, and limited community involvement in decision-making and monitoring (County Government of Uasin Gishu, 2022).

Baseline Information Provision

Baseline information provision is a fundamental aspect of project management, crucial for effective planning and execution (Portny & Portny, 2022). It involves collecting and analyzing initial data about the project's scope, stakeholders, resources, and risks. In Malaysia, the lack of accurate baseline information has been identified as a major contributor to the chronic performance problems in the construction industry. Yap et al. (2021) notes that only 8% of construction projects in Malaysia are completed within the contract schedule, while 92% experience time overruns, often due to inadequate initial data that leads to unrealistic scheduling and budgeting. The failure to accurately forecast project timelines and costs often results in significant delays and budget overruns, undermining project success.

In the African context, Sudan presents a notable example of the consequences of inadequate baseline information provision. Abele (2021) reports that out of 52 construction projects evaluated, only 9.6% were completed within the estimated budget, with a staggering 90% experiencing cost overruns. The primary issues included inaccurate time estimates and a lack of comprehensive initial data, which led to poor planning and resource allocation. These deficiencies highlight the importance of thorough baseline assessments in setting realistic project expectations and ensuring proper resource mobilization. Kenya's road construction sector has similarly faced challenges related to inadequate baseline information provision. According to Njeru and Kirui (2022), the industry is plagued by issues such as unrealistic contract durations and low bid prices, which are often the result of insufficient initial data collection and analysis. This lack of comprehensive baseline information leads to frequent project delays and cost escalations, as unforeseen issues arise during project execution. The misalignment between project plans and actual project conditions exacerbates these problems, resulting in inefficiencies and resource wastage. This study measured the effectiveness of baseline information provision by examining the accuracy and completeness of initial project data, the thoroughness of stakeholder consultations, and the clarity of project scope definitions. The indicators, as highlighted by Yap et al. (2021), guided the assessment of how well initial data supports the planning and execution phases of road projects in Uasin Gishu County. The study aims to identify best practices for collecting and utilizing baseline information to improve project outcomes.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Projects in Uasin Gishu County often do not perform as expected, facing issues such as exceeding budgets, missing deadlines, and failing to meet quality standards (Ondiek, 2020). For example, road construction projects frequently experience significant cost overruns, delays, and quality deficiencies (Kiprop, 2021). The result is that these projects not only consume more resources than initially planned but also deliver substandard infrastructure that hampers economic activities and public trust. According to Charles and Ondara (2023), the persistent issues in these projects include budget overruns and schedule delays, leading to wastage of public funds that could have been allocated to other critical sectors like health and education. Statistics reveal that numerous road projects in the county have been delayed, with some extending beyond their planned completion dates by over a year (Fakunle & Fashina, 2020). Additionally, the quality of completed projects often falls short of the originally set standards, requiring rework and repairs that further inflate costs (Çevikbaş & Işık, 2021). This mismanagement is not only financially burdensome but also delays the economic benefits associated with improved infrastructure, such as enhanced trade and mobility. There is a limited understanding of how specific stakeholder involvement practices influence road project performance outcomes. Most studies focus on general project management principles without addressing the unique dynamics of stakeholder engagement in road construction projects (Lehtinen & Aaltonen, 2020) and thus bringing out the conceptual gap.

Construction price and time surges have been reported in most of the road projects in the county. The result of this is that a lot of taxpayers' money, which would have otherwise been used on other equally demanding sectors like health and education, is diverted to road construction projects due to an increase in construction costs, and more time and costs are wasted on rework and repairs. Time overrun leads to delays in the commencement of economic activities and slow movement of commodities and people from one region to another (Amri & Marey-Pérez, 2020).

The problem with the performance of road projects in Uasin Gishu County is that they often exceed their budgets, miss deadlines, and fail to meet quality standards (Charles & Ondara, 2023). This mismanagement results in financial waste, project delays, and substandard infrastructure, which in turn hinders economic growth and reduces public trust in government projects. The majority of research on road project performance has been conducted in diverse regions or countries with different economic, social, and political contexts and hence a contextual gap. There is a notable lack of studies specific to Uasin Gishu County, which faces its own unique challenges affecting road project performance (Ahmadabadi & Heravi, 2019). However, road construction projects are completed beyond the completion periods, out of quality and with cost overruns (Albtoush & Doh, 2019).

Despite there being state agencies mandated to manage, develop, rehabilitate and maintain roads in the county, road projects in Uasin Gishu underperform with regard to costs, schedule, and quality. There is a limited understanding of how specific stakeholder involvement practices influence the performance outcomes of road projects, hence there is a conceptual gap that needs to be filled (Kerubo, 2023).

Existing literature mainly focuses on general project management principles without delving into the unique dynamics of stakeholder engagement in road construction. Contextually, most studies on road project performance have been conducted in different regions or countries with varying economic, social, and political contexts (Ahmadabadi & Heravi, 2019). There is a lack of research specific to Uasin Gishu County, which has its own unique challenges and circumstances affecting road project performance.

On the other hand, previous research often employs quantitative methods to assess project performance, overlooking qualitative insights that could provide a deeper understanding of stakeholder perspectives and the underlying reasons for project delays and cost overruns. There is a need for a mixed methods approach to capture both statistical data and personal experiences in order to fill the methodological gap. If the situation is not looked into and rectified, it would be easier for the devolved and central governments to make proper capital development budgets and time appropriations for the construction of roads; hence, this might negatively impact both governments with regard to planning for developmental projects. This subsequently affected the national and global performance of the country (Amri & Marey-Pérez, 2020). Due to the waste in terms of money and time and the deteriorating quality of roads in the county, there is a need to research to find out stakeholders' involvement practices on the performance of road projects: A Case Study of Uasin Gishu County.

OBJECTIVE

To determine the influence of baseline information provision on the performance of road projects in Uasin Gishu County.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

Participatory Theory

This study was guided by Participatory Development Theory, developed by Robert Chambers in the 1970s (Cornwall & Scoones, 2022). The theory states that development projects are more effective, sustainable, and relevant when the beneficiaries actively participate in the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages. It asserts that local knowledge and experiences are invaluable in identifying the real needs and priorities of the community, thereby tailoring projects to address these effectively (Chevalier, 2019). The core idea is that empowering communities fosters a sense of ownership and accountability, which enhances the overall success and longevity of development initiatives.

The criticism of the theory is that the participatory process can be time-consuming and resource-intensive, potentially delaying project implementation and increasing costs (Othman et al., 2024). There is also the risk of reinforcing existing power imbalances within communities, where more vocal and influential individuals dominate the participatory process, thereby marginalizing less powerful members (Adugna, 2021).The assumptions of the theory are: that all stakeholders are willing and able to participate equally, that community members possess the necessary skills and knowledge to contribute meaningfully, and that development practitioners can effectively facilitate participatory processes (Marcon Nora et al., 2023). The theory is applicable in this study in that Participatory Development Theory underscores the importance of engaging local communities, government agencies, and other relevant parties in all phases of road projects (Auriacombe & Sithomola, 2020). In applying this theory, the study will bring

out how participatory practices can enhance project performance, increase community satisfaction, and improve project sustainability in Uasin Gishu County.

Stakeholder Theory

The study was also guided by Stakeholder Theory, developed by Edward Freeman in 1984 (Dmytriyev et al., 2023). The theory states that organizations and projects should consider the interests and influences of all stakeholders, not just shareholders or financial backers. According to this theory, stakeholders encompass any individuals or groups who can affect or are affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives. The theory advocates for balancing the needs and interests of all stakeholders, arguing that this approach leads to more ethical, sustainable, and successful outcomes (Goyal, 2022). It suggests that by addressing the concerns of diverse stakeholder groups, organizations can foster goodwill, enhance their reputation, and ultimately achieve better performance.

The criticism of the theory is that it can be overly broad and challenging to implement, as it requires balancing often conflicting interests of diverse stakeholder groups. Some contend that it dilutes accountability and focus, making it difficult for managers to prioritize and make effective decisions (Valentinov & Chia, 2022). Additionally, the theory's broad definition of stakeholders can lead to an overwhelming number of parties to consider, complicating the decision-making process. The Stakeholder Theory assumes that organizations have a moral duty to consider the interests of all stakeholders, that stakeholder engagement leads to better decision-making, and that balancing stakeholder interests is essential for long-term success (Shah & Guild, 2022). The theory is applicable in the current study in that it provides a framework for analyzing how the involvement of various stakeholder groups, such as local communities, government agencies, private sector partners, and non-governmental organizations, impacts the performance of road projects. In applying this theory, it will bring out how inclusive and balanced stakeholder engagement practices contribute to improved project outcomes, reduced conflicts, and enhanced accountability in Uasin Gishu County.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

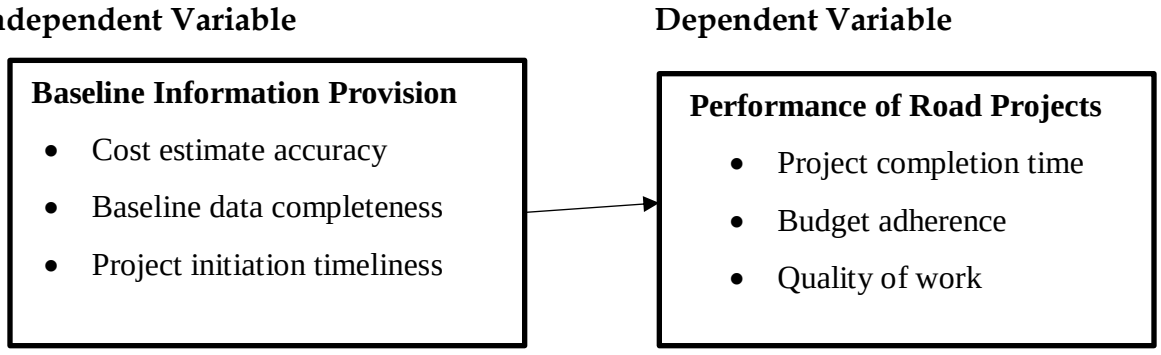

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a descriptive research design. As Cooper and Schindler (2018) explain, research design is an institution of the research aim and technique; as a result, it is the conceptual framework in which the research study is carried out. The study targeted a population of 152 respondents, which includes resident engineers, assistant engineers, material engineers, inspectorate, surveyors, public participation office, and general public representatives of Uasin Gishu county, as distributed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Target population

Categories	Target population	Percentage
Resident engineers	8	5.3%
Assistant engineers	16	10.5%
Materials engineers	8	5.3%
Inspectorate	34	22.4%
Surveyors	54	35.5%
Public participation office	7	4.6%
General public representative	25	16.4%
Total	**152**	**100%**

The study used proportion simple random sampling to distribute sample size for each category as shown in table 2 below with a sample size of 110 derived from Yamane (1973) formula.

Table 2: Sample size

Categories	Proportion	Sample size
Resident engineers	8/152*110	6
Assistant engineers	16/152*110	12
Materials engineers	8/152*110	6
Inspectorate	34/152*110	25
Surveyors	54/152*110	39
Public Participation Office	7/152*110	5
General public representative	25/152*110	18
Total	**152/152*110**	**110**

The structured (closed-ended) questionnaires were used so as to get the uniform responses from the respondents. The closed-ended questionnaire was formulated in form of a Likert scale. The completed questionnaires were coded into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 25. Data analysis was carried out using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics was used to summarize the quantitative data so as to allow a meaningful description of a distribution of the scores. Descriptive statistics included frequency, means and standard deviation. Inferential statistics to be used in this study was correlation and multiple regression. Presentation of analyzed data was done using percentages, mean and standard deviation by use of frequency tables.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 110 questionnaires were given out to respondents, out of which 101 were completed and returned. This results to a response rate of 91.82%, which is considered high. The non-response rate was approximately 8.18%, with 9 questionnaires not returned. Kothari and Garg (2015) state that responses with a 50% are considered adequate, 60% are good, and more than 70% are exceptional. Table 3presents the study results.

Table 3: Response Rate

Response rate	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Response	101	91.82
Non response	9	8.18
Total	**110**	**100**

Descriptive Statistics

Influence of Baseline Information Provision on Project Performance

The Respondents were asked five questions regarding the influence of baseline information provision on performance of road projects. A Likert scale was used to display the responses. Table 4 summarizes and presents the responses of research participants.

Table 4: Influence of Baseline Information Provision on Project Performance

Statement	**Mean**	**SD**
1. Stakeholders are actively involved in defining the key performance indicators (KPIs) used to measure the success of road projects.	3.70	1.23
2. Baseline data on road project performance (e.g., traffic volume, road condition) is readily available to all stakeholders involved in the project.	3.72	1.14
3. Stakeholders are informed about the methodology used to collect baseline data on road project performance	3.83	1.18

Statement	Mean	SD
4. Stakeholder input on baseline data collection is considered and integrated into the process whenever possible	3.73	1.25
5. The involvement of stakeholders in baseline information provision leads to a more comprehensive understanding of road project performance	3.76	1.29
Aggregate	**3.75**	**1.22**

The aggregate mean of 3.75 suggests that respondents generally 'agree' with the statements, indicating that stakeholder involvement in baseline information provision is viewed positively. The respondents agreed that stakeholders are actively involved in defining the key performance indicators (KPIs) used to measure the success of road projects, with a mean rating of 3.70 and a Standard deviation of 1.22

Linear Regression Model

The study used a regression model to illustrate how baseline information provision had an influence on the performance of road projects in Uasin Gishu County. The simple linear regression for the independent variable, baseline information provision, and the dependent variable, performance of road projects in Uasin Gishu County, was carried out and modelled by the linear regression analysis, and the results are presented in Tables 5, 6 and 7.

Table 5: Regression Model Summary of Baseline Information Provision

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.747[a]	.558	.553	.61963

The model summary results in Table 5 indicate that R = 0.747 and R^2 =0.558. R value gives an indication that there is a linear association between baseline information provision and performance of road projects in Uasin Gishu County. The performance of road projects is significantly correlated with baseline information provision as indicated by the R value. According to the R^2, that explanatory power of the independent variable is 0.558. This indicates that the regression model can account for about 55.8% of the variation in performance of road projects, while variables other than baseline information provision can account for 44.2% of the variation.

Adjusted R^2 accounts for the model's predictor count by adjusting it by less than chance. Because it is sensitive to the addition of unrelated factors, the adjusted R^2, which is 0.553, is slightly lower than the R^2 value, provides an accurate indication of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. This suggests that the baseline information provision is significantly influences performance of road projects in Uasin Gishu County. These results are consistent with the study by Ondiek *et al.,* (2020) found that project cost planning contributed most to the success of road construction projects followed by project scope planning, then project risk planning, while project time planning contributed little to the success of road construction projects.

Table 6: Analysis of variance for Baseline Information provision

Model		Sumof Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	47.959	1	47.959	124.911	.000b
	Residual	38.011	99	.384		
	Total	85.970	100			

a. Dependent Variable: performance of road projects in Uasin Gishu County

b. Predictors: (Constant), Baseline Information Provision

Table 6 indicates that the F-statistics produced (F = 124.911), which was significant at p=0.000, thus confirms the fitness of the model. Therefore, there is a statistically significant association between baseline information provision and performance of road projects in Uasin Gishu County. This means that the independent variable (baseline information provision) is a significant predictor of the dependent variable (performance of road projects) in Uasin Gishu County.

Table 7: Regression Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.306	.206		6.347	.000
	Baseline information provision	.684	.061	.747	11.176	.000

a. Dependent Variable: performance of road projects.

Regression of coefficients results in Table 7 showed that baseline information provision has a positive and significant effect on performance of road projects (β_1=0.684, p=0.000<0.05). This implied that a unit increase in baseline information provision lead to 0.684 units increase in the performance of road projects in Uasin Gishu County. The study done by Mukanama and Mukuru, (2024) the predictors (Project cost effectiveness, Project team competency, and Stakeholders' engagement) and the Performance of education sponsored project of Pan African Education Empowerment Project in Rwanda are well correlated (R value of 0.807).

The optimal model of the regression was;

$Y = 1.306 + 0.684X_1$ ……

CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that baseline information provision has a very significant influence on the performance of road projects in Uasin Gishu County. In the case of selecting KPIs, stakeholder participation has been useful in the establishment of measures and also helps in the development of basic information on traffic flow, physical state of roads, and other factors that are essential in the system. By actively participating in the method of data collection and incorporating the data that reflects stakeholder feedback within the evaluation process, it becomes easier to get a detailed picture of project performance. Essentially, it is rather beneficial both for project managers in terms of setting acceptable goals and resource distribution, as well as for risk identification in the course of project development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that project managers prioritize the systematic collection and dissemination of baseline information for road projects. Stakeholders should be actively involved in defining the key performance indicators (KPIs) and contributing to the data collection process. By ensuring that all stakeholders have access to comprehensive and accurate baseline data, project teams can improve decision-making, set realistic goals, and better manage potential risks. Local governments and agencies should establish standardized protocols for collecting and sharing baseline data, ensuring that it is integrated into the planning and execution phases of future projects.

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