

Delegation of Duties on Strategic Plan Implementation in County Government of Nakuru, Kenya

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ABSTRACT: *Nakuru County Government has been facing the problem of poor state of county roads, shortage of water and strategic plan implementation in terms of attainment of goals, budgetary allocation to projects and timelines in project completion. The study sought to establish the effect of delegation of duties on strategic plan implementation in county government of Nakuru, Kenya. The study was anchored on implementation theory and theory of delegation, accountability and empowerment. A descriptive research design and census were used in the study. The target population was 107 employees in job group P and Q from the 11 ministries in the county. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24. Qualitative data was analyzed using content analysis. Content validity of research instrument was determined through a pilot study. Principle Axis factoring method was used to test the construct validity of research instrument. Cronbach's Alpha method was used to determine reliability of research instrument with the aid Statistical Package for Social Sciences. Data was presented in form of tables. Findings indicated that there was a strong positive and significant effect of delegation of duties on strategic plan implementation. It was recommended that the county government should have a clear flow of communication between the various management levels. The study's results assist the county government and other policymakers identify major competitive forces in the environment and to develop methods to enhance performance, in order to facilitate project implementation.*

KEY WORDS: delegation of duties, strategic plan implementation, county government of Nakuru

INTRODUCTION

As leaders, managers, and supervisors distribute tasks to capable subordinates, they not only create opportunities for personal and professional growth but also enhance the overall functioning of their teams (Mtshali, 2016). One of the primary benefits of delegation is the efficient allocation of resources (Aceke, Muola, and Kimiti, 2019). The authors contend that by entrusting responsibilities to individuals with the appropriate skills and expertise, organizations can ensure that tasks are handled competently and expediently. They argue that it leads to enhanced productivity and the optimal utilization of available talent. Delegation of duties is a fundamental concept that underpins effective management and organizational success (Kavanagh, 2020). The scholar argues that it involves the process of entrusting tasks, responsibilities, and authority from a higher-level individual to a subordinate or a team member. The practice plays a pivotal role in fostering empowerment, optimizing efficiency, and ensuring a balanced distribution of work within an organization. Delegation empowers employees to take ownership of their work, make decisions, and contribute meaningfully to the organization's objectives. This empowerment not only boosts morale but also nurtures a culture of trust and collaboration, enabling a more cohesive and innovative work environment (Amehule, 2022). The author affirms that managers are freed from micromanagement and can focus on strategic planning, problem-solving, and other high-value activities that drive organizational growth. This redistribution of workload results in improved time management and the ability to tackle complex challenges with a fresh perspective (Ahmad, Abdulhamid, Wahab, and Nazir, 2022).

The implementation of a strategic plan is the orchestration of strategies into harmonious action (Secundo, Massaro, Dumay, and Bagnoli, 2018). The scholars affirm that it is the pivotal juncture where vision takes tangible form, where abstract concepts evolve into concrete steps. They further affirm that implementation is the nexus of planning and execution, a bridge between the ethereal realm of ideas and the practical world of results. It is the alchemy that transforms intentions into achievements. The implementation of a strategic plan is the crucial phase where strategies which are carefully crafted, objectives, and goals that are outlined in the plan are put into action (Secundo, Massaro, Dumay, and Bagnoli, 2018). It involves translating the conceptual framework of the plan into tangible activities, processes, and initiatives that drive an organization toward its desired future state. Implementation of strategic plan, which is the most crucial stage in strategic management, is influenced by wrong priorities, resource shortages, inadequate target assessment, wrong scheduling of project completion time, inadequate project identification, formulation, and design, and faulty policy conceptualization (Eadie, 2018). A strategic plan is the manifestation of an organization's vision and mission, encapsulating its overarching goals and the means to achieve them success (Mansoori and Lackeus, 2020). The authors point out that it is a roadmap to navigate through the treacherous terrains of business, articulating the trajectory to growth, sustainability, and success

In Nakuru County government in Kenya, a program focuses and coordinates team activities on accomplishing objectives. Strategy implementation translates plans and policies into actions. County gains from strategic plan implementation. These advantages include growth in the number of departments, personnel, and quality of service, higher income, and number of items sold (Opano, 2013). Strategies are meant to improve competitiveness, modernize agriculture, diversify tourism, provide appropriate infrastructure, manage human settlement, promote industrialization, conserve natural environment/resources, improve the transport network and outline sustainable management techniques (Birisha, 2017). The strategies include resource allocation, information and decision-making, work breakdown structure (WBS), authority matrix, and leadership-staffing communication (Mwende, 2018). The Integrated Development Plan of Nakuru County in Kenya outlines development strategies (Kihara and Kamiri, 2018).

Nakuru County Government in Kenya experiences, water shortage coupled with bad roads and strategic planning. Poor delegation and resource mismanagement have led to increased corruption, poverty, inequality, and economic stagnation. However, the current study focused on goals, budgets, timeframe delayed, and abandoned projects. Major development projects in Nakuru County in Kenya remain unfinished, either in progress, halted, abandoned, or completed and awaiting commissioning (Auditor General Report of 2017/2018). In the fiscal year ending 30 June 2019, Nakuru County in Kenya allocated Ksh 6.28 billion for development activities. In 2019 the Auditor General reported inexplicable budget variances. The statement of receipts and payments recorded Ksh 1,004,826,087 under usage of goods and services for the year ended 30 June 2018, whereas the supporting schedules indicated 1,019,538,808 (Kenya shillings), resulting in variation of 14,712,721 (Kenya shillings). The correctness of 1,004,826,087 (Kenya shillings) under goods and services couldn't be guaranteed. Mismanaging resources affects strategic plan implementation. Therefore, the study sought to assess the effect of delegation of duties on strategic plan implementation in county government of Nakuru, Kenya.

OBJECTIVE

To assess the effect of delegation of duties on strategic plan implementation in county government of Nakuru, Kenya

LITERATURE REVIEW

The section comprises theoretical and empirical review

Theoretical literature review

The study was guided by implementation theory and theory of delegation, accountability and empowerment. Jackson introduced implementation theory in 1991. Implementation theory assumes that communication is a central component for exchanging information between the top management and the employees (George, McGahan, and Prabhu, 2012). There has to be effective cooperation in execution of tasks, delegation of responsibilities and meeting

deadlines. Implementation theory was relevant to the current study because in order for the county government to implement the strategic plan effectively, it has to maximize utilization of the budgetary allocation and align implementation to the strategic plan. The theory explains more on implementation of strategic plan in the county government of Nakuru, Kenya.

The study was also anchored on the theory of delegation. The theory assumes that as organization gets larger it becomes necessary to divide up the work. The delegation-accountability relationship requires the manager to control the work of the support staff and play a leadership role. Leadership involves assigning tasks, setting the context for the assigned tasks, and communicating expected results and deadlines for the tasks, (Drucker, 2011). Strategic leaders set strategic directions on how the organization participates in strategy implementation, (Sjostrom, 2013). The theory was relevant to the current study in explaining the effect of delegation of duties on the strategic plan implementation in county government of Nakuru, Kenya.

Delegation of Duties and Strategic Plan Implementation

Wang, Luo, Lu, Sun, & Maksimov, (2014). did a case study on the effect of delegation on strategic plan implementation in manufacturing firms in China? The study used purposive sampling technique to select 10 senior managers and 50 employees. Semi-structured interviews, observation, and document analysis were used to collect data. The findings revealed that delegation of duties in strategic plan implementation positively influenced employee motivation, task ownership, and overall organizational performance. Al-Jammal, Al-Khasawneh, and Hamadat (2015) conducted a study on the impact of the delegation of authority on employees' performance at great Irbid municipality. Sample size of 200 out of 1500 represented employees in central and executive management through a random sampling. The results of the study indicated that there is a statically significant for delegation of authority on efficiency, effectiveness and empowerment of employees' performance at great Irbid municipality

Okuoga (2016) studied the effect of delegated authority on a project in Nairobi, Kenya. Qualitative methods and processes were used to achieve the study's goals. About 120 workers were selected using stratified random sampling. Data was collected using a questionnaire and analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. The research findings showed that delegating financial management, human resource management, monitoring and evaluation logistics, supply chain, affect completion of USAID-funded Aphia plus project in Nairobi County, Kenya. In the current research census was used, target population was 107 and research results showed that there was a strong positive and significant effect of delegation of duties and strategic plan implementation in county government of Nakuru, Kenya. The findings imply that delegation of duties enhances strategic plan implementation.

Kennedy and Keino (2017) studied on the effect of delegating responsibility at Twiga Chemical Industries Ltd, Kenya. The study used descriptive and correlation research designs. The target population was 200 permanent workers and stratified sampling technique was used to select a sample size. Questionnaire was used to gather primary data. Legislative delegation and organization performance are linked. Results showed that adjudicative delegation and organization performance were positively connected. The findings further demonstrated that monitoring and enforcement delegation were positively and substantially connected. Results demonstrated a positive and negligible relationship between agenda setting delegation and organization performance. The current study covered delegation in terms of responsibility, authority and accountability. The results showed that there was a strong positive and significant effect of delegation of duties on strategic plan implementation in county government of Nakuru, Kenya. The findings indicated that delegation of duties enhances strategic plan implementation.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Independent Variable

Dependent Variable

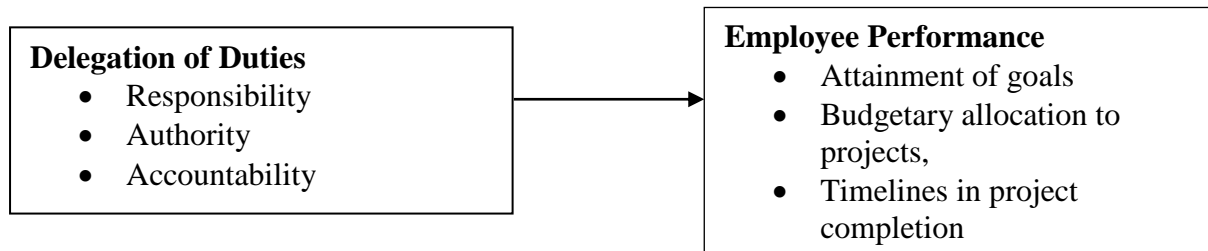


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive research design was employed as it was suitable for collecting data. According to the County Government of Nakuru, Kenya, there are 10 ministries. The study targeted 107 employees in job group P and Q from the 11 Ministries in Nakuru County. The employees were targeted since they were directly involved in the development and implementation of county strategic plans.

Table 1: Target Population

Ministries	Heads of Department	Percentage %
County Treasury	15	14
Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries.	12	11
Health Services	41	38
Water Environment Energy and Natural Resources	1	1
Youth Culture Gender, Sport and Social Services	1	1
Public Services Training and Devolution	26	24
Infrastructure	3	8
Lands, Physical Planning and Housing	2	1
Industry, Marketing and Tourism minister	2	1
Education, Vocational Training ICT and e-Government	2	1
County Public Service Board Members	2	1
Total	107	100

Source: County Government of Nakuru Human Resource Records of 2022

Considering the target population was manageable the researchers used census survey to incorporate all the 107 targeted respondents

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study issued 107 questionnaires to respondents but 75 responded representing 70%. According to Babbie (2002) any response of 65% and above is adequate for analysis.

Table 2: Response Rate

Sampled No. of respondents	No. of Questionnaires Returned	Response Rate (%)
107	75	70

Table 3: Gender of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	43	43
Male	32	32
Total	70	100

From the findings 43% of the respondents were male while 57% were female. This implies that majority of the respondents were female who are involved in strategic plan implementation in Nakuru County Government in Kenya.

Table 4: Age Brackets of the Respondents

Years	Frequency	Percentage
20 – 30 Years	12	16
31-40 Years	26	35
41-50 Years	32	43
Above 50 Years	5	6
Total	75	100

Source: Research Data (2022)

Respondent aged between 20-30years were 16 % , 35% o were aged 31-40 years, 43% of them were aged between 41- 50 years while 6% were above 50 years. This implies that majority of the respondents were in age brackets of 31-40 years and 41-50 years.

Delegation of Duties

The researchers sought to establish the effect of delegation of duties on the strategic plan implementation in county government of Nakuru in Kenya. The findings are indicated in Table 5 below

Table 5: Delegation of Duties and Strategic Plan Implementation

Delegation of Duties	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Employees are held responsible for their actions	75	4.403	0.778
Responsible employees are able to complete tasks on time	75	4.307	0.738
Employees are given authority to use skills in work assignment	75	4.145	0.807
Employees are given some authority to make decision in regard to task	75	4.387	0.869
Employee are held accountable for their actions	75	4.181	0.513
Accountability among employee ensure effectiveness	75	4.532	0.636
Delegation of duties is crucial in strategic plan implementation	75	4.307	0.745

Source: Research Data (2022)

The findings in Table 5 reveal that the employees are held responsible for their actions (mean of 4.403). The variation that employees are held responsible for their actions was low (Standard deviation of 0.778). Furthermore, responsible employees are able to complete tasks on time (mean of 4.307) though there was low variation in completion of tasks, (standard deviation of 0.738). Employees are given authority to use skills in work assignment (mean of 4.145). However, there was low variation (standard deviation of 0.807). Employees have some authority to make decision in regard to task (mean of 4.387) variation in decision making was low (standard deviation of 0.869).

Employees are held accountable for their actions (mean of 4.181) though there was a low variation (standard deviation of 0.513). From the findings accountability among employees ensure effectiveness (mean of 4.532,) though variation in effectiveness was low (standard deviation of 0.636). Delegation of duties is crucial in strategic plan implementation (mean of 4.307). However, variation in strategic plan implementation was low (standard deviation of 0.745). According to Ratemo (2017) responsible employees work to advance company success and strive to perform their daily duties well. Responsible employees are engaged in their daily activities and establish a culture of accountability that advances individual careers and increases company productivity.

Strategic Plan Implementation in County Government of Nakuru, Kenya

The researchers sought to assess the strategic plan implementation in County Government of Nakuru, Kenya. The findings were as indicated in Table 6

Table 6: Strategic Plan Implementation in County Government of Nakuru, Kenya.

Statements	N	Mean	Std
The county government is able to attain annual goals	75	3.855	1.185
The county government is able to attain the short term goals	75	4.403	0.778
County projects are implemented in the stipulated timelines	75	4.307	0.738
County services are offered within the stipulated timelines.	75	4.145	0.807
The county projects implemented are within the proposed budget frames	75	4.452	0.592
Implementing county projects within the budget frame cuts on the project costs	75	4.145	0.807
The number of stalled projects has greatly reduced	75	4.532	0.636
The number of abandoned projects have greatly reduced	75	4.307	0.745

Source: Research Data (2022)

The findings in table 6 show that the county government is able to attain annual goals (mean of 3.855). There was little variation in attainment of annual goals (standard deviation of 1.185). Moreover, the county government is able to attain the short term goals (mean of 4.403). Variation in attainment of the short term goals was low (Standard deviation of 0.778). The county projects are implemented in the stipulated timelines (mean of 4.307). Variation in the stipulated timelines was low (standard deviation of 0.738). The county services are offered within the stipulated timelines (mean of 4.145) However, there was a low variation (standard deviation of 0.807). According to the findings, county projects implemented are within the proposed budget frames (mean of 3.855). There was some variation in county projects being

implemented within the proposed budget frames (standard deviation of 1.185). Implementing county projects within the budget frame cuts on the project costs (mean of 4.403). Variation in the project costs was low (standard deviation of 0.778). The number of stalled projects has greatly reduced (mean of 4.307). Variation in reduction in number of stalled projects was low (standard deviation of 0.738). Majority of respondents stated that the number of abandoned projects have greatly reduced (mean of 4.145). Variation in number of abandoned projects being greatly reduced was low (standard deviation of 0.807).

According to Makau (2018) the county government of Nakuru in Kenya has created an online platform to manage the county development budget. The County Projects Management System currently tracks budget and performance data for various programs and projects from the various wards implemented since 2013/14 financial year, mainly supporting the realization of the County's Vision 2025. The author argues that it helps to reduce delayed and incomplete projects, as well as frequent cost over-runs. The web-based platform serves as a unified project information repository, allowing coordinated monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of county government development projects and therefore allows the public to keep track of the projects being implemented by the county government.

Table 7: Correlation between Delegations of Duties and Strategic Plan Implementation

		Strategic Plan Implementation
Delegation of Duties	Pearson Correlation	.619*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.023
	N	75

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Research Data (2022)

In addition, the study conducted a correlation analysis between delegation of duties and strategic plan implementation in county government of Nakuru, Kenya. The coefficient of correlation ($r=0.619$ and $P=0.023$) illustrated in Table 7 shows that there is a strong positive and significant effect of delegation of duties on strategic plan implementation in county government of Nakuru in Kenya. The findings showed that delegation of duties enhances strategic plan implementation in county government of Nakuru in Kenya. The study findings concur with findings of Zatar's (2014) study the effects of delegation of authority (financial, administrative) on the performance level of employees. At 5% level of significance results showed that there was a statistically significant effect of the delegation of authority (financial, administrative) on the level of performance of employees in banks in Saudi Arabia. Al.Jammal (2015) established out that there was a statically significant effect of delegation of authority on efficiency, effectiveness and empowerment of employees' performance at great Irbid municipality.

Table 8: Analysis of Coefficients Using SPSS Version 24

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
(Constant)	.038	.145		.260	.796
Delegation	.233	.081	.245	2.877	.006

Dependent Variable: Strategic Plan Implementation in County Government

According to the intercept (β_0), when the independent variable is held constant, the value of strategic plan implementation in county government will be 0.038. In addition, a unit increase in delegation of duties would result to 0.233 units increase in the strategic plan implementation in county government of Nakuru, Kenya.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Research results are beneficial to performance of county governments in Kenya in regard to implementation of plans and projects. The findings indicated that given a mode of communication a number of citizens can be reached and ensures that there is clarity on information. In addition, the research findings enable stakeholders understand county government's strategic decisions and subsequently provide guidance on the path to sustain efficiency and effectiveness. The study results are useful to employees because the findings indicated that employees are held responsible for their actions on delegated functions. The study results guide organizations to develop appropriate strategies and methods for implementing the strategic plans. The study is a stepping stone for future researchers.

CONCLUSIONS

Employees are held responsible for their actions and responsible employees are able to complete tasks on time. In addition, the study revealed that employees are given authority to use skills in work assignment and authority to make decision in regard to task. Accountability among employee ensures effectiveness and delegation of duties is crucial in strategic plan implementation. There was a strong positive and significant effect of delegation of duties and strategic plan implementation in county government of Nakuru, Kenya.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The management should put in great efforts to motivate employees for performance in strategic implementation. The county government should coordinate the activities of different departments effectively because coordination leads to achievement of common goals or objectives of the organization, gives freedom to the employees, and encourages them to be initiative.

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