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PROJECT LEADERSHIP AND PERFORMANCE OF SOLAR ENERGY PROJECTS IN KIAMBU COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to examine the influence of project leadership on performance of solar energy projects in Kiambu County, Kenya. Specifically, the study sought to: determine the influence of Project team Idealization; examine the influence of project prioritization on performance of solar energy projects in Kiambu County. The study was underpinned by the transformational leadership theory, contingency theory. The study focused on street lighting solar projects and solar home systems. Descriptive survey design was adopted. The target population included the solar projects undertaken in Kiambu County that included integrated solar street lighting and solar home systems (113) which formed the unit of analysis. The unit of observation included representatives of solar service providers in Kiambu County; project managers (34), ministry of energy representatives in Kiambu County (10), and community representatives (256) as captured in the County Intergrated Development Plan of 2018–2022. Thus, a total of 300 respondents formed the unit of observation and a sample of 171 was drawn. Specifically the study found Project Team Idelaization to have a strong positive correlation and highly influenced performance of solar energy projects in Kiambu County. Project Prioritization had an insignificant positive correlation with performance of solar energy projects in Kiambu County. The study recommends the project manager and the project team should also be conversant with various techniques for prioritizing project such as Net Present Value, MoSCoW, Internal Rate of Return, Risk Priority Matrix, Priority Matrix, and many others to ensure only projects that are aligned to the organization's strategy are undertaken. The project leader should be accountable and capable to enhance the productivity of the followers and their satisfaction through assistance, support job development, and being pleasant to their followers.

Keywords: Project Leadership, performance of Solar energy projects, project prioritization, project team idealization

Background of the Study

Kenya power has been aggressively trying to increase access to power having doubled the access from 32% in the year 2013 to about 75% of the households in the year 2022. The access rate of urban areas stands at 100% while rural access is at 65%. The Covid-19 pandemic hit hard the energy sector, and this led to companies scaling down their operations in order stay in the market (International Trade Administration, 2022). Kenya lies within the tropics and is endowed with significant solar energy resources. Kenya has high solar potential as its geographic location provides suitable conditions for solar energy throughout the year. It is estimated that the country receives daily insolation of 4–6 kWh/m^2 (EPRA, 2022).

According to the Global Solar Atlas, the practical photovoltaic power output potential ranges between 4.04–5.15 kWh / kWp. Therefore, solar energy is abundant throughout the year and can be tapped to meet the country's energy demand (Global Solar Atlas, 2022). However, solar energy has remained largely unutilized in Kenya. According to EPRA, the country has installed a capacity of approximately 100 MW. This is about 0.67% of the total annual solar potential in Kenya which is projected to be 15,000 MW. Garissa Solar Farm is the largest solar power plant with an installed capacity of 55 MW. The plant is state-owned and was commissioned in 2019. The government has launched other solar projects in Samburu, Kisumu, Uasin Gishu, and Nakuru to increase solar power capacity. The projects are supported by the government and private entities. Private entities are also investing in solar farms to reduce reliance on grid power (EPRA, 2022).

Kiambu county is located in the central region of Kenya and has a total area of 2,543.3 km^2 where 476.3 km^2 is covered by forest. The county has 12 sub-counties namely: Gatundu South, Kiambu, Lari, Kikuyu, Kabete, Limuru, Githunguri, Gatundu North, Juja, Thika Town, Ruiru, and Kiambaa. According to the County Integrated Development Plan for the period 2018 to 2022, the county has 98% coverage of electricity and the rural area households have been connected due to the rural electrification programme with the total households connected to electricity being about 70%. However, solar energy is still at less than 8% coverage. As part of the recommendations for the challenges faced by the county, the suggestion of adopting an alternative power source such as solar power to reduce the high-power bills in the county was recommended (County Government of Kiambu, 2018).

According to the County Government of Kiambu County Integrated Development Plan 2018–2022, the county has been faced with many challenges in the implementation of the CIDP which all relate to lack of transformational leadership. The county has witnessed slow transition of functions which were devolved, too many stalled projects, under development of infrastructure, weak monitoring and evaluation systems, inadequate technical personnel, lengthy and bureaucratic procedures that delay implementation of projects, inadequate power supply, and weak public-private partnership frameworks (County Government of Kiambu, 2018). The county has also identified the key issues that need to be addressed which include: proper planning and management to ensure successful implementation of projects and programmes, coming up with strong monitoring and evaluation systems, team cohesion between departments and coordination of teams in order to enhance service delivery, introduction of capacity building of staff in order to improve service delivery, strengthening of PPPs in order to improve the implementation of projects, and the adoption of performance appraisals and performance contracts to ensure better results

Project leadership style is a complete pattern of a leader's behavior as seen by the leader's personnel. The distinct way in which a leader interacts with team members and the way he handles the duties (Smith, Busi, Ball, & Van Der Meer, 2019). Managing people in a project environment is different from managing them in departments. Thus, the project manager's job is more complex as compared to those managing departments though they may have similar responsibilities or people (Newton, 2015). The success of project teams is highly dependent on the team leader or the project manager's ability to effectively manage and influence the diverse

pool of individuals. Since project teams are diverse, interdependent, and multidisciplinary in nature, it is essential for project managers to integrate the efforts of the project participants through team building.

Statement of the Problem

Kiambu County government has installed about 2,315 streetlights by use of solar energy between 2013-2017. According to the CIDP 2018-2022, the county has 98% coverage of electricity and the rural areas households have been connected due to the rural electrification programme with the total households connected to electricity to be about 70%. However, solar energy is still at less than 8% coverage (County Government of Kiambu, 2018). The county government has also been faced with many challenges in implementation of CIDP which all relate to lack of transformational leadership. The county has witnessed slow transition of functions which were devolved; too many stalled projects, under development of infrastructure, weak monitoring and evaluation systems, inadequate technical personnel, length and bureaucratic procedures that delay implementation of projects, in adequate power supply, and weak public-private partnership framework (County Government of Kiambu, 2018). In Kiambu county, there is poor team communication as the project leaders target to achieve the success of the project. Studies have shown just 64% of projects attain their objectives. Therefore, 32% to 36% of projects failed or incurred losses, which poses a considerable loss of opportunities and resources globally. Concluding that the problem of unsuccessful projects requires further attention to leadership issues as listed by Anthony and Gupta (2019).

Research Objectives

This study sought to examine the influence of Project leadership on the performance of solar energy projects in Kiambu County, Kenya.

The study specifically sought:

i. To determine the influence of Project Team Idealization on the performance of solar energy projects in Kiambu County, Kenya.
ii. To examine the influence of Project Prioritization on the performance of solar energy projects in Kiambu County, Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

Transformational leadership was introduced by James MacGregor Burns (Burns, 1978). Transformational leadership style challenges the team members to take responsibility of their work, boost motivation and morale of the team and improve performance (Hughes, 2018). Transformational leadership style is outfitted towards change and improving the individuals of the team and general execution (Bass & Bass, 2008). Transformational leadership comprises of four dimensions idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and inspirational motivation. Out of these four dimensions inspirational motivations positively correlates with leadership effectiveness (Ghasabeh, Soosay, & Reaiche, 2015). Transformational leaders are charismatic and have an appeal to help their followers to be creative, provide inspiration, and always encourage intellectual stimulation of project team members (Bass & Avolio, 2006).

Contingency theory states that effective leadership depends on the degree of fit between a leader's qualities and leadership style and that demanded by a specific situation (Lamb, 2013). Contingency theories of leadership focus what characteristics create a fit with the related environmental condition (Amanchukwu, Stanley, & Ololube, 2015). No particular or specific leadership style is appropriate in all situations, i.e., no one fits all. Success is dependent upon some factors including the style of leadership; qualities of the followers; and the components of the situation (Charry, 2012). A contingency factor is thus any condition that is deemed to be relevant to the environment for consideration (Naylor, 1999)**.**

Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework is illustrated in figure 1 below.

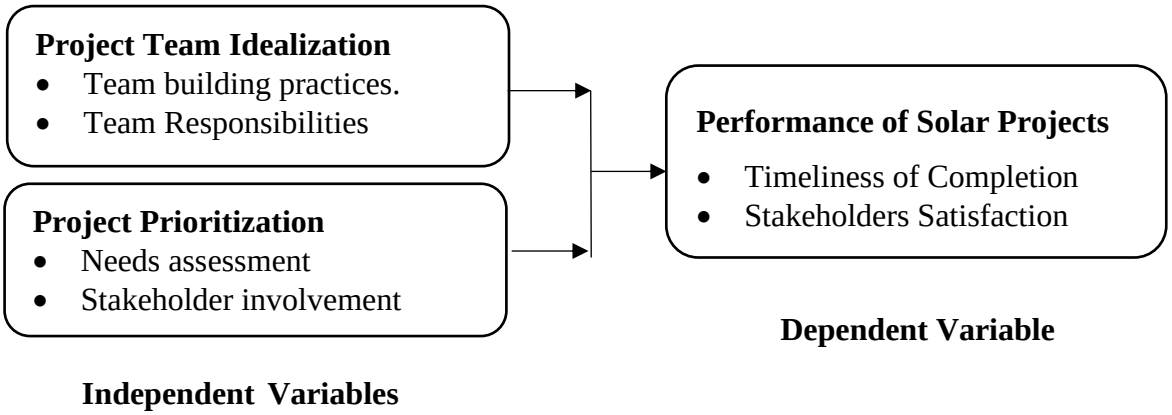

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Project Team Idealization

Project Team Idealization is the state where a leader provides the vison as well the sense of mission to the project team (Bass & Bass, 2008). The leader instills pride and as a result gains the respect of the project team. Idealized influence is the extent to which the leader acts in a way that is pleasant to the project team and consequently stimulates the team to develop an attachment with their leader (Yulk, 2012). The idealized leader considers the needs of the team over his/her personal needs and in such a manner that is not only consistent but also articulated to the values, ethics, and principles (GEBCZYNSKA, 2019).

An individual with transformation leadership style triggers ideas that stimulate team members' initiatives and inspires motivation that is unusual which enhance productivity. Idealized behavior has two components which are attributes and behaviors. Individual consideration tends to be optimists and are sensitive to the needs of subordinates and as well provide attention to the team members. They treat people with dignity and respect. they trust people and delegate responsibilities to assist in getting tasks accomplished in attainment of goals. These leaders have the willingness to stimulating and creating learning experiences to their followers through delegations and treating everyone uniquely. These leaders have the accountability and capability to enhance the productivity of followers and their satisfaction through assistance, support job development, and being pleasant to their followers. They have attention to desire of their followers by making them feel appreciated and treated differently but fairly on an individual basis (Ali, Said, Yusof, & Mat, 2016).

Project Prioritization

Project prioritization is the process of determining the extent to which new projects and existing projects are the most urgent for an organization. This is done through several project prioritization methods that allow portfolio managers to assess the feasibility, impact, and potential value of a project (Wakeman, 2022). Prioritization is that process of determining the urgency or relative importance of projects (Eby, 2021). Prioritizing projects and initiatives are important to organization to ensure maximizing of their resources by focusing on projects that have strategic priority (Taylor, 2023). A project manager needs a certain expertise and skills to manage any project whether simple or complex. Thus, the project manager must juggle with the constraints, budgets, tight schedules, inherent risks, allocation of risks, and even interdependent tasks. The use of systematic processes that adhere to best practices in the industry saves a lot of efforts and time. Experienced project managers often possess skills and expertise needed for prioritizing projects based on experience on the projects or through formal

trainings as well study of project management qualifications. However, it's rare for a project to occur any given time and thus there will be many projects and the portfolio manager has the overall responsibility of many projects that compete for attention and thus needs effective prioritization (Symonds, 2023).

Project prioritization is important for strategic alignment. This ensures that in all the projects only the projects that are aligned to the organization strategy are done and this saves the organization a lot of resources. Prioritization also helps ensure that higher return on invest (ROI) projects are undertaken by the organization. project prioritization also ensures that project resources aren't stretched between low value projects and helps in resource planning (McAbee, 2021). Taylor (2023) explained that the main purpose of prioritization is to focus the finite resources on the right things. Prioritization helps in deciding what and when to do, what not to do, identify here to allocate the resources (time, people, and finances), enhance employee productivity, and maintain focus on what is deemed important. Eby (2021) opined that project prioritization has many benefits. The project team spends time efficiently, be more organized, increase the success rate of project. Further the major benefits of project prioritization as noted by experts include increased efficiency, improved organization, increased team cohesion, increased success rate and improved buy in.

Empirical Review

Project Team Idealization and Performance of Projects

In a study by Tabassi et al (2020) found that transformational leaders are better suited in the construction industry as they used their emotional behaviours to attract the project team. Thus, there is improved team performance. Amin et al (2016) study on the relationship between transformational leadership with project team performance in Pakistan found a strong positive significant correlation between idealized influence and project team performance in both public and private sector experts in Pakistan. The study also found that Idealized Influence as a key behaviour of transformational leadership had a positive significant relation with project team performance in Pakistan (Amin, Kamal, & Sohail, 2016). Wagude et al (2015) studied the influence of idealized behaviours on the implementation of Constituency Development Funds construction projects in public secondary schools in Kisumu County in Kenya. The study targeted 2,540 respondents comprising of 217 principals, 216 board of management and 2,106 teachers from public schools where a sample of 384 was drawn. Ex-post facto design was adopted in the study. The study found that the strength of the relationship between Idealized behaviour and CDF projects implementation in public schools in Kisumu County is dependent on conflict resolutions (Wagude, Nderitu, & Onyango, 2015).

Project Prioritization and Performance of Projects

According to McAbee (2021) project managers are being saddled with more and more projects which all seem to be of the highest priority however, its ironical when all projects are urgent and priority as nothing gets prioritized and this leads to blown deadlines, missed opportunities, and stalled projects. Project prioritization helps project managers and project teams to know precisely what they need to focus on a daily to increase efficiency as well as productivity. Increase in productivity and efficiency the project success rate increases as well. Research suggests that organizations that prioritize projects deliver 40% more than the those that do not prioritize. Eby (2021) opine that there are many factors that determine priority in projects which include, specific needs of the organization, availability of resources, time, and budget. Thus, project managers need to weigh in the factors to determine the projects with the highest priority. According to Survey by PMI in 2016, only 52% of projects met their original goals and the business intent when the project management culture was a low. However, there was an increase on 20% when there was project prioritization culture. Both project prioritization and project management are crucial for project success.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research adopted descriptive survey research design. The target population was the solar projects undertaken in Kiambu County that included solar street lighting and solar home systems. There are 113 solar projects in Kiambu County which formed the unit of analysis. The unit of observation included representiatives of solar service providers in Kiambu, project managers (34), ministry of energy representatives in Kiambu County (10), and community representatives (256) as captured in the County Intergrated Development Plan of 2018-2022 (County Government of Kiambu, 2018). Thus, the unit observation will be 300 respondents invovled in the aforementioned 113 solar projects. A sample of 171 was used in this study.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Questionnaires were distributed to the sample of 171 respondents involved in solar energy projects in Kiambu County. A total of 130 questionnaires were duly filled and returned, accounting for 76% rate of return.

Descriptives Analysis

This section attempts to establish the influence of Project leadership on the performance of solar energy projects in Kiambu County, Kenya. A Likert scale was used where the responses were coded as follows: 1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree.

Performance of Solar Energy Projects

The main objective was to examine the influence of Project leadership on the performance of solar energy projects in Kiambu County, Kenya. Performance of solar energy projects was measured by looking at timeliness of completion of projects, stakeholder satisfaction, and budgetary compliance. According to APM (2018) project performance refers to meeting goals and objectives while meeting customer satisfaction and meeting technical requirements with the commonly used indicators for assessing success considered constraints such as scope, time, and cost. Transformational leadership style has been viewed as a new alternative to traditional project management as it promotes team effectiveness. Transformation leaders are aimed to ensure transforming individual teams to exceed the status quo in order to improve the ability for innovation and also adoption (Tabassi, Ramli, & Dashti, 2020). Table 1 below shows the status of performance of solar energy projects in Kiambu County.

Table 1: Status of Performance of Solar Projects in Kiambu County

Performance of Solar Projects	SD %	D %	N %	A %	SA %	Mean
Project leadership has helped ensure the solar projects meet deadlines.	22.3	16.2	16.9	22.3	22.3	3.06
Project leadership has helped ensure projects are completed on time.	16.2	21.5	36.9	16.2	9.2	2.81
Project leadership has helped ensure the projects adhere to project budget.	16.2	2.3	11.5	64.6	5.4	3.41
Project leadership has ensured the projects have minimal cost overruns.	9.2	35.4	17.7	28.5	9.2	2.93
Through effective project leadership the solar projects are implemented according to specifications.	23.8	11.5	6.2	26.2	32.3	3.32
The residents of Kiambu county are satisfied with how the solar projects are performed.	0.8	3.1	19.2	19.2	57.7	4.30
Mean performance of Solar Projects						***3.30***

The findings from Table 1 reveal that the composite mean of 3.30 could not clearly establish the status of performance of solar energy projects in Kiambu county resulting from project leadership activities. A majority (44.6%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that project leadership has helped ensure the solar projects meet deadlines while a minority (38.5%) disagreed. Whether effective project leadership has helped ensure projects are completed on time, a majority (37.7%) disagreed while a minority of (36.9%) could neither agree nor disagree with only 25.4% affirming the statement. Majority of the respondents (70%) agreed project leadership has helped ensure the project adhere to project budget and only 18.5% disagreed. On whether project leadership has ensured the projects have minimal cost overruns, majority of the respondents (44.6%) disagreed while only 37.7% affirmed the statement. Through effective project leadership the solar projects were implemented according to specifications as greed by most of the respondents (58.5%) with only 35.4% in disagreement. Finally, majority of the respondents (76.9%) agreed that the residents of Kiambu county were satisfied with how the solar projects are performed.

Project Team Idealization

The first specific objective was to determine the influence of Project Team Idealization on the performance of solar energy projects. In measuring the objective, the study looked at team building practices, team responsibilities, and team cohesion. Successful project teams are highly dependent on the ability of the project manager or the team leader in effectively managing as well as influencing the people of mixed diversity. Team building is a must learn for the project manager to integrate the multidisciplinary and diverse project teams. The project manager must also build commitment to the project vision through communication, motivation, and participation in decision making (PM4dev, 2019). Table 2 shows the statistics.

Table 2: Project Team Idealization

Project Team Idealization statements	SD %	D %	N %	A %	SA %	Mean
The project leader stimulates the project team and there is an attachment that is developed.	23.8	11.5	6.2	26.2	32.2	3.32
The project leader considers the needs of the team over his personal needs.	.8	3.1	19.2	19.2	57.7	4.30
The project leadership has organized team building practices to integrate the project team.	6.2	10.8	10	40	33.1	3.83
The leadership is supportive to team development and is capable to enhance productivity.	16.2	12.3	21.5	44.6	5.4	3.11
The project leader delegates responsibilities in to assist in getting tasks accomplished.	45.4	3.1	14.6	32.3	4.6	2.48
The project leadership creates a learning experience and treats everyone uniquely.	16.2	2.3	11.5	64.6	5.4	3.41
The project leadership ensures team cohesion through commitment to the project vision.	9.2	35.4	17.7	28.5	9.2	2.93
The project leadership motivates and involves the project team members in the decision-making process.	23.8	11.5	6.2	26.2	32.3	3.32
Mean Idealized Team Influence						***3.34***

The mean of 3.34 doesn't provide clear evidence to suggest the influence of Project Team Idealization activities of project leadership on the performance of solar energy projects in Kiambu County. Specifically on the statements, respondents (58.5%) agreed that the project leader stimulates the project team and there is an attachment that is developed. However, about 35.4% disagreed on the statement. Majority of the respondents (76.9%) agreed that the project

leader considered the needs of the team over his personal needs. It was also agreed by most of the respondents (73.1%) that project leadership had organized team building practices to integrate the project team. Respondents (50%) also supported the argument that the project leadership was supportive to team development and was capable to enhance productivity. Majority of the respondents (48.5%) generally disagreed that project leader delegated responsibilities to assist in getting tasks accomplished and only 26.9% affirmed the statement. Respondents (70%) also agreed that the project leadership created a learning experience and treated everyone uniquely. On whether project leadership ensured team cohesion through commitment to the project vision, 44.6% disagreed on the statement while 37.7% affirmed the statement. Majority of the respondents (58.5%) agreed that the project leadership motivated and involved the project team members in the decision-making process.

Project Prioritization

The second specific objective was to examine the influence of project prioritization on the performance of solar energy projects in Kiambu County, Kenya. Project Prioritization was measured by looking at needs assessment, stakeholder involvement, and team skills. According to Wakeman (2022) Project prioritization is the process of determining the extent to which new projects and existing projects are the most urgent for an organization done through several project prioritization methods that allow portfolio managers to assess the feasibility, impact and potential value of a project. Table 3 below shows the statistics for the variable project prioritization.

Table 3: Project Prioritization

Project Prioritization statements	SD %	D %	N %	A %	SA %	Mean
The project leader prioritizes the projects undertaken by the organization.	.8	3.1	19.2	19.2	57.7	4.30
The project leader has the skills and expertise needed for prioritizing projects based on experience on the projects or through formal trainings	6.2	10.8	10	40	33.1	3.83
The project leader ensures only the projects that are aligned to the organization strategy are undertaken.	16.2	12.3	21.5	44.6	5.4	3.11
The project manager ensures there is adequate resources and appropriately utilized and the skill sets are appropriately shared across the projects.	45.4	3.1	14.6	32.3	4.6	2.48
The techniques used in prioritizing projects cover value, cost financial analysis, risk, and the objectives of the business.	18.5	11.5	5.4	40	24.6	3.41
The project manager invites project team after identifying the tasks that are believed to make up the project.	23.8	13.8	6.2	47.7	8.5	3.03
Team skills and competence such as listening, problem solving, support, conflict management and feedback skills have a significant role on project performance.	23.8	11.5	6.2	26.2	32.3	3.32
The project manager appreciates important skills in the project such as feedback, communication, and problem-solving skills.	4.6	3.1	15.4	19.2	57.7	4.30
Mean Project Prioritization						***3.48***

The mean of 3.48 for project prioritization indicates to some extent the influence of project prioritization activities of project leadership on performance of solar energy projects in Kiambu

County. Based on that, the respondents generally (76.9%) agreed that the project leader prioritizes the projects undertaken by the organization. It was also generally agreed that the project leader has the skills and expertise needed for prioritizing projects based on experience on the projects or through formal trainings, and this was supported by 73.1% of the respondents. Majority of the respondents (50%) also supported that the project leader ensured only the projects that are aligned to the organization strategy were undertaken. This was however contrary to 44.7% of the respondents. The respondents (48.5%) disagreed with the opinion that the project manager ensured there was adequate resources and appropriately utilized and the skill sets are appropriately shared across the projects. However, a minority (36.9%) of the respondents affirmed the opinion.

It was agreed by the majority (64.6%) of the respondents that the techniques used in prioritizing projects covered value, cost financial analysis, risk, and the objectives of the business. Though 30% of the respondents disagreed while only 5.4% were undecided on the issue. The respondents also generally agreed that the (56.2%) project manager invited project team after identifying the tasks that are believed to make up the project. This was also contrary to 37.7% of the respondents. Respondents (58.5%) also agreed that the team skills and competence such as listening, problem solving, support, conflict management and feedback skills played a significant role on project performance. However, 35.4% of the respondents felt otherwise. Finally, the respondents believed that the project manager appreciated important skills in the project such as feedback, communication, and problem-solving skills. This was supported by a majority of 76.9% of the respondents against 23.1% minority who were undecided on the issue.

Correlation Analysis

The correlation can also be explained based on being significant or insignificant. Person correlation (r) was used to explain the correlation as shown in Table 4 below.

Table Error! No text of specified style in document. **: Coefficient of Correlation**

Variables		**Project Performance**	Project Team Idealization	Project Prioritization
Performance of Solar Energy Projects (SPP)	r	1	.627**	.275**
	Sig.		.000	.002
	N	130	130	130

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Based on the findings shown in Table 4 there is a significant positive correlation between Project Team Idealization and performance of solar energy projects as depicted by a correlation value (r = .627, Sig = .000). The association is strong since r = .627 nears 1. The findings are supported by the study by Amin *et al* (2016) on the relationship between transformational leadership with project team performance in Pakistan who found a strong positive significant correlation between idealized influence and project team performance in both public and private sector experts in Pakistan. The study also found that Idealized Influence as a key behaviour of transformational leadership had a positive significant relation with project team performance in Pakistan. The study also found a significant positive correlation between project prioritization and performance of solar energy projects though the correlation is weak (r= 275, Sig = .002). McAbee (2021) opined that project prioritization helps project managers and project teams to know precisely what they need to focus on a daily to increase efficiency as well as productivity. Increase in productivity and efficiency increases the project success rate as well. Research suggests that organizations that prioritize projects deliver 40% more than the those that do not prioritize.

Inferential Analysis

Regression analysis helps to understand how a typical value of a dependent variable or criterion variable changes when any one of the independent variables is varied, while the other independent variables are held constant.

Table 5: Regression Results

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	11.970	.262		5.291	.000
Project Team Idealization	.976	.100	.955	9.714	.000
Project Prioritization	.135	.120	.115	1.128	.262

a. Dependent Variable: Performance of Solar Energy Projects

The regression results show that the constant for the model was 1.387 and significant (Sig = .000< 0.05) as supported by t-calculated (5.291) which was found to be greater than the t-critical (± 1.979). The variable Project Team Idealization (β = .976, Sig = .000) show a significant strong positive correlation (r = .955) with performance of solar energy projects in Kiambu County. The findings are also supported by Gębczyńska (2019) who found that the combination of leadership style influence project success in PBO in Polish consultancies where inspirational motivation, contigent reward , and idealized influence combination influenced project success and was ranked the 3rd combination. Amin *et al* (2016) found idealized influence as a key behaviour of transformational leadership and a positive significant relationship with project team performance in Pakistan. Wagude *et al* (2018) also found idealized behaviour significantly influenced implementation of CDF projects in public schools in Kisumu County.

Project Team Idealization has a direct relationship with performance of solar energy projects since (β = .976) is positive implying that an increase in performance by a unit needs a .976 of Project Team Idealization in Project leadership influences performance of solar energy projects by .955 or 95.5%. Project prioritization (β = .135, Sig = .262) has an insignificant weak correlation (r = .115) with performance of solar energy projects in Kiambu County. There is a direct relationship between project prioritization and performance of solar energy projects in Kiambu County since (β = .135) however, the relationship in this study is insignificant. Thus, an increase in project prioritization activities by .135 units leads to an increase in performance of solar energy projects by a unit. Project prioritization in transformational leadership influences performance of solar energy projects by .115 or 11.5%. The study concluded that project prioritization had an insignificant influence on performance of projects. The findings are contrary to McAbee (2021) who posited that project prioritization helps project managers and project teams to know precisely what they need to focus on daily to increase efficiency as well as productivity and thus an increase in project success rate as well. Research suggests that organizations that prioritize projects deliver 40% more than the those that do not prioritize. The findings are also contrary to findings from a survey by PMI in 2016 where only 52% of projects met their original goals and the business intent when the project management culture was a low. However, there was an increase on 20% when there was a project prioritization culture. Thus, both project prioritization and project management are crucial for project success.

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \varepsilon \ldots\ldots\ldots \text{(i)}$$

Where;

Y = Performance of Solar Energy Projects (SPP)

X_1 = Project Team Idealization (PTI);

X_2 = Project Prioritization (PP);

The model can thus be fitted as follows:

$$Performance\ of\ projects = 1.387 + .976PTI \ldots\ldots (ii)$$

CONCLUSION

In attaining the first objective, the study aimed to answer the research question, 'What is the role of Project Team Idealization on performance of solar energy projects in Kiambu County, Kenya?' The findings revealed that Project Team Idealization has a positive significant influence on performance of solar energy project in Kiambu County. The study therefore concludes that, Project Team Idealization in Project leadership significantly influences performance of projects. The second objective of the study was to examine the influence of project prioritization on performance of solar energy projects in Kiambu County, Kenya. The study answered the research question, 'What is the influence of project prioritization on the performance of solar energy projects in Kiambu County, Kenya?'. The study found a weak insignificant positive correlation with performance of solar energy projects in Kiambu County.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and the conclusions made, the study established that Project leadership significantly influences performance of solar energy projects in Kiambu County, Kenya. Project Team Idealization was found to significantly influence performance of solar energy projects in Kiambu County. These types of leaders instil pride to the team and work for the benefit of the team. The study highly recommends project leaders to embrace idealized team influence since a project is a team work process and to achieve success cohesion of the project team is crucial. Project prioritization was found to have an insignificant influence on performance of solar energy projects in Kiambu County. However, prioritizing projects and initiatives are important to organization to ensure maximizing of their resources by focusing on projects that have strategic priority. This study therefore recommends that, a project manager should possess certain expertise and skills to manage any project whether simple or complex and he/she needs to possess skills and expertise needed for prioritizing projects based on experience on the projects or through formal trainings as well study of project management qualifications.

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