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Factors Affecting Performance of Donor Funded Nutrition Projects: A Case Study of Mercy USA Nutrition Project, Kenya

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Abstract: Projects remain the instruments of choice for policy makers in international development. Yet, paradoxically, the poor performance of projects and the disappointment of project stakeholders and beneficiaries seem to have become the rule and not the exception in contemporary reality. Kenya is one of the countries that receive a lot of donor support to set up nutrition projects for the purpose of improving the nutrition status of its population. Despite enormous resources channeled by donors in setting up these projects, little impact has been realized as trends in mortality rates continues to surge as a result of malnutrition. This study sought to establish the influence of training in project management and project identification on the performance of Mercy USA nutrition project. The researcher adopted descriptive research design. Census method was used for this research. The study instruments used were questionnaires with both closed and open ended questions. Statistical analysis was carried out using the Statistical package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 20). The study established that the performance of MUSA nutrition project was being affected by other factors other than training in project management. Project identification was also established to be a critical factor in performance of donor funded project. The results of this study can assist donors, donor supported agencies and other stakeholders to understand issues that support or inhibit the performance of nutrition projects.

Keywords: Project Training, Donor Funded Projects, Mercy USA Nutrition Project

1. Introduction

Since time immemorial, human civilizations have used various types of projects to deliver change or benefit to societies. They include the projects such as Voyages of Discovery of Henry the Navigator, the Great Pyramids of Egypt, the ancient Roman roads, the Grand Canal of China, the Dykes of Holland and the Atomic bomb among others. Since 1950s, the development agenda has been characterized by projects and programs aimed at improving the quality of life of beneficiary communities, be it in physical or qualitative terms (Fowler & Walsh, 2008).

According to Asian Development Bank (2010), Projects are conceived principally as investment interventions to generate returns. Assessment of projects performance thus focuses on the capacity of projects to continue generating intended returns optimally during its lifecycle. This enhances accountability for resources used. Kwak (2002), states that projects remain the instruments of choice for policy makers in international development. Yet, paradoxically, the poor performance of projects and the disappointment of project stakeholders and beneficiaries seem to have become the rule and not the exception in contemporary reality. According to Meltzer commission (2000), dissatisfaction with project results and performance dates back to the 1950s. The same commission avers that project failure rate at the World Bank was over 50% in Africa until the year 2000.

Jeffrey and Dennis (2004) noted that projects are often initiated in the context of a turbulent, unpredictable and dynamic environment. Many projects, therefore, are usually bedeviled by challenges, constraints and risks as they are executed through completion. Consequently, despite the significant input of human and financial resources, many fall short of expectation. (Belassi, 1996) stated that many projects

failed to meet the priority needs of target beneficiaries, costs escalated, stated outputs were not achieved or if achieved were not sustained, implementation dates slipped by or adverse outcomes were not anticipated.

Other scholars have observed that projects are influenced by a multiple of factors which can be external or internal to the organization responsible for its management and execution (Chauvet, Collier, Fuster, 2007). Some of the factors that lead to underperformance of projects include poor project management, inadequate opportunities for potential beneficiaries to participate in project identification and design, poor linkages between project activities and project purpose, insufficient attention to external environment during project design, among others (Green & Haines, 2008).

It has also been recognized that projects were likely to succeed when account was taken of socio-economic context in which they operated (Batten, 2001). The important thing for the project manager is to recognize what these factors are and how they impact on the project during the various phases from inception to final hand-over, or even disposal (Albert, 2007). The external or internal influences are known as the project environment. The external factors making up this environment are the client (customer), consultants, contractors, suppliers, competitors, politicians, national and local government agencies, public utilities, pressure groups, the end users and the general public. Internal influences include the organization management, the project team, internal departments, and stakeholders (Green & Haines, 2008).

Politics manifests itself in all organizations as opinions and attitudes of the different stakeholders in these organizations. In addition, the stakeholders relied upon by the project may also have their own agenda and preferences for participating in the project (Honadle & Rosengard, 2003). The relationships to the project by stakeholders can vary from very supportive to antagonistic, but depending on their field of influence, must be considered and managed (Ika, 2009). However, neither the sponsor nor the project manager has control over external politics such as political turmoil which may disrupt the project. Economic influence has two levels: first, the internal economics principle relating to the viability of a project holds that unless there is a net gain, there is no point in even considering embarking on a project. The external or macro-economic factors relate to high interest rates and prices, tariff barriers, embargoes and shipping restrictions, among other influences, of which the project manager has no control over (Ika, 2009). This assertion is also supported by Khan (2000), when he stated that several factors were responsible for poor performance of donor funded projects. Khan noted that some of the factors were simple, some were quite complex, some were within the control of the project management, while others came as external threats. Khan concluded by noting that some of the factors could be and indeed ought to be taken care of right at the design stage of a project, whereas, others could be tracked and corrected during implementation, through monitoring.

Many projects like construction projects inevitably affect the communities in whose area they are carried out. Conversely, the opposite holds true that the benefitting communities also affect projects being rolled out in their areas. It is vital therefore to inform the residents in the affected areas as early as possible of the intent, purpose and benefits to the community of the project (Crawford & Bryce, 2003). Some projects cannot be started until after a public inquiry, environmental impact assessment, route survey or lengthy planning procedures (Belassi & Tukel, 2008). It goes without saying that unless a project is technically sound it will end in failure. The technical requirements have to be firmed up at an early stage after a rigorous assessment of all realistically available options. Each option may then be subjected to a separate feasibility study and investment appraisal to ensure the project will achieve the stated technical performance goals (Gasper, 2003).

The World Bank's private arm, the International Finance Corporation has discovered that only half of its African projects succeed. In an independent rating, the Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) claimed that 39% of World Bank projects were unsuccessful in2010 (Chauvet et al., 2010). World Bank projects all too frequently fail to achieve their goals due to a number of problems that could be termed "managerial" and "organizational"(Kwak, 2002): imperfect project design, poor stakeholder management, delays between project identification and start-up, delays during project implementation, cost overruns, coordination failure, etc. (Youker, 1999; Kilby, 2000; Ahsan & Gunawan, 2010). This study investigated the effect of project training on project performance.

1.1. Research Objectives

1. To determine the effect of project management training on the performance of Mercy USA nutrition project
2. To determine the effect of project identification on the performance of Mercy USA nutrition project

1.2. Research Questions

1. What is the effect of training in project management on the performance of Mercy USA nutrition project?
2. What is the effect of project identification on the performance of Mercy USA nutrition project?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Goal-Setting Theory

Goal-setting theory suggests two cognitive determinants of behavior: intentions and values. Intentions are viewed as the immediate precursors of human action. The second cognitive process manifests itself in the choice or acceptance of intentions and subsequent commitment to those goals (Locke, 1968). It is the recognition that instructions will affect behavior only if they are consciously accepted that makes goal setting a cognitive theory of motivation. A goal is that level of performance the

individual is trying to accomplish; it is the object or aim of behavior. According to Locke (1968), goals direct attention and action. In addition, they mobilize effort in proportion to perceived requirements of the goal or task (Locke,Shaw, Saari, and Latham, 1981). Therefore, goal setting, like expectancy theory, may explain how and why behavior is facilitated or restrained in the pre-training, training, and post training processes. Goal-setting theory holds that, once a hard task is accepted, the only logical thing to do is to try until the goal is achieved or until a decision is reached to lower or abandon the goal (Locke, 1968).

Research further suggests that both goals and feedback are necessary to improve performance and that participation, incentives, and individual differences affect performance primarily through goal setting (Locke, Shaw, Sarri, and Latham, 1981). McLean and Persico (1994) cautioned, however, that these goals must be valid, which requires that they meet three criteria: data must be derived from a system in a state of statistical control, a valid methodology must be used, and employees must be able to meet the goal.

In a study of a management development program for hospital administrators, Wexley and Nemeroff (1975) found that a treatment group assigned performance goal were significantly better at applying learned KSAs than a control group for which no goals were assigned. However, Gist, Bavetta, and Stevens (1990) contrasted the effects of goal setting and self-management as transfer strategies in the use of salary negotiation strategies in a simulation. They found that self-management training resulted in a significantly higher level of transfer than did goal setting.

2.2. Transfer of Training Model

Traditional approaches to transfer of training tend to consider it as a horizontal link between training and performance. A comprehensive review of the literature (Baldwin and Ford, 1988) classified the factors affecting transfer of training into three categories: training inputs, including trainee characteristics, training design, and work environment; training outputs, consisting of learning and retention; and conditions of transfer, which focus on the generalization and maintenance of training. All three sets of training input features are seen as affecting learning and retention, which directly influence generalization and maintenance. However, a significant purpose of training and development is to improve performance (Swanson, 1995). Learning is of little value to organizations unless it is transferred in some way to performance (Holton, Bates, Seyler, and Carvalho, 1997). Kuchinke (1995) also argued that learning is a means, not a primary organizational outcome. Learning is an internal behavior, whereas performance is usually a more external one. Therefore, training outputs should emphasize performance, not just learning.

Holton (1996) provided a conceptual evaluation model of training focused on individual performance. This model proposes three primary outcomes of training intervention: learning, individual performance, and organizational results. These outcomes are defined, respectively, as achievement of the learning outcome desired in an HRD intervention, change in individual performance as a result of learning being applied on the job, and results at the organizational level as a consequence of change in individual performance.

2.3. Training in Project Management

Today we believe that an organization's competitive success is achieved through people (Pfeffer, 1994). It follows, then, that the skills and performance of people are critical. Many organizations spend much money on training, believing that training will improve their employees' performance and hence the firm's productivity. In 1997, organizations with more than one hundred employees were estimated to have spent $58.6 billion in direct costs on formal training.

And with the inclusion of indirect costs, informal on-the-job training, and costs incurred by small organizations, total training expenditures could easily reach$200 billion or more annually (Holton, Ruona, & Leimbach, 1998). However, unsettling questions continue to be raised about the return on this investment.

There is strong consensus that acquisition of knowledge, skills, behaviors, and attitudes through training is of little value if the new characteristics are not generalized to the job setting and are not maintained over time (Kozlowskia & Salas, 1997). In other words, training is useless if it cannot be translated into performance. According to Swanson (1995), for HRD to become a core business process, performance is the key. Transfer of training is a core issue with respect to linking individual change to the requirements of the organizational system. Therefore, if we believe that training truly makes a difference in organizational and individual performance, we must understand how to support transfer of training in organizations.

According to Project Management Body of Knowledge (2004), project management is the process of planning, scheduling and controlling project activities to meet project objectives. On its part, Project Management Institute (2004) views project management as the application of skills and techniques to project activities to meet or exceed the stakeholders' needs and expectations. Project management has become increasingly important in the development of any nation. Consequently, various organizations have used project management techniques as a means of bridging the gap between failure and success in implementation of projects. However, despite this increased awareness of the importance of skills in project management by organizations, most projects still fail (Atkinson 1999).

Project management requires personnel to perform numerous and different tasks in the project. Personnel issues, bordering on recruitment, selection, and training are an important, but often overlooked in most projects. In many situations, personnel for the project team are chosen with less regard for the skills necessary to effectively contribute to implementation success. While laying emphasis on the importance of project management skills, GoK and UNAFRI (2011), pointed out that performance of most projects in

Kenya was jeopardized by inadequacy of skills by the implementing officers of community service order projects.

Training of project personnel is an important variable influencing performance of projects. The provision of appropriate training for project implementers, according to Aus AID (2000), is often a key strategy for achieving sustainable benefits. To improve the prospects for optimal performance of projects, training of project staff should be done at the right time that is not towards the end but should be conducted throughout the project to give room for repetition. Whereas the most appropriate type of training will depend partly on the nature of individual programs and projects, experience shows that certain approaches are more likely to achieve maximal benefits than others. Effective training should not only 'educate' but also motivate. Employees must be selected on merit and the training should be of direct relevance to their work. Trained employees must also be given the opportunity to apply newly acquired skills on completion of training. Training, such as on-the job training, mentoring and short-course competency based training are more likely to support more sustainable benefits than overseas courses or long-term 'academic' training for a few. In cases where some employees are transferred or leave over time, training must also be repeated and refresher courses given if the required skill base is to be maintained throughout.

Establishment of project teams is a critical and essential project management process. According to Clements (2006) a project should have a team that is as small as possible, avoiding members with duplicate skill sets and non-essential members. Larger teams usually face communication challenges especially when the members have different levels of commitments.

PMBOK Guide (2004) adds that it is vital to have a good project team to work with, with core skills that can be evolved to core competences and capabilities for the whole organization. All members of the project team must be committed to the success of the project and the overall mission of the organization.

2.4. Project Identification

During the identification phase, ideas for projects and other development interventions are identified and screened for further study. This normally involves extensive and intensive consultation with the intended beneficiaries of each intervention, an analysis of the problems they face, and the identification of potential options to address these problems (European union, 2003). After this is done, a decision can then be made on the relevance of each project idea, both to the intended beneficiaries and to the programming framework, and on which ideas should be further studied during the formulation phase. In actual practice, projects should be identified from the perspective of the needs or demand of the beneficiaries whether at community or national levels. Tekalign & Tsige (2002) observe that project identification is an important stage such that it can affect the whole process including performance after its completion and transferring to operational phase. Unfortunately, this stage is often overlooked and in some cases, the actual need of the beneficiaries is not captured when designing projects. Instead of demand driven approach, some donors including international organizations normally end up following supply driven approach.

Westland & Jason (2006) noted that in most developing countries, the process of project identification and preparation is neither feasible from the point of view of factor and resource endowment nor efficient from the point of view of comparative advantages. The result is that a substantial number of defective, moribund and in other ways ineffective projects are identified and executed. Projects are neither planned nor executed in isolation. They represent a milieu, an interaction of interests. However well prepared a project may be from the point of view of its economic analysis; it is not likely to succeed unless it reflects adequately the practical realities within the economy. A case in point is the Lake Turkana Fish Processing Plant project. According to Cocks (2006), the development agency of Norway decided that exploiting the resources of Lake Turkana would be a good development initiative for the region. The agency thought that this would have the benefit of increasing incomes, employment, and stability in the face of weather patterns and climate change. With these intentions, a fish-processing factory was constructed in the area during the 1980s and the herders were trained and hired as fishers and factory workers. The longstanding traditions and nomadic culture of the population were overlooked by the decision-makers at the top and the project was largely implemented without first consulting with the community. As a result, the factory proved to be a worthless business. This was attributed to the nomadic culture of the workers who were expected to keep the factory up and running in spite of their cultural perspective on fishing in general. This is a society where owning cattle is perceived as a sign of wealth. The factory is now largely unused and has not contributed to the growth or development of the region as was intended.

Beneficiary participation is an important factor for donor funded projects. Since it gives many benefits and final product to the community, donors are always insisting the projects with beneficiary participation. However, for smooth execution of beneficiary participatory projects has to cross many hurdles for its successful completion. Identify those drawbacks and addressing them is necessary.

2.5. Empirical Review

According to Kozlowskia & Salas (2007), although there is consensus that acquisition of knowledge, skills, behaviors and attitudes through training is of little value if the new characteristics are not generalized to the job setting and are not maintained over time, there is need to have organization's staff implementing a project trained in management of projects. This study established that most of the project implementers had not been trained in project management. According to Kozlowskia & Salas (2007), although training in project management is useful to project implementers, it is

useless if it cannot be translated into project performance. Holton, Ruona & Leimbach (2008) held that several questions continue to be raised on the return on investments that organizations get as a result of sending their staff for training if the benefits cannot be translated into performance. Majority of the respondents held that it was difficult for them to execute project activities due to lack of training in project management. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Swanson (1995) who argued that transfer of training is a core issue with respect to linking the individual change to the requirements of the organizational system.

Project Management Institute pulse of professional research (2010) defined project performance as the ability of a project to meet its goals as envisaged in the project documents. The institute indicated that meeting the constraints of time, cost, quality and scope was the center piece of ensuring optimal performance. The institute further posits that adherence to project goals and budgetary allocations significantly impacts on organizations ability to survive the turbulence of a dynamic macro-economic environment. According to United States of African Development Foundation Report (2010), project performance is the ability of a project to effectively utilize available resources in ways that achieve intended results. USAID Foundation (2010) concludes by stating that assessment of projects performance thus focuses on the capacity of projects to continue generating intended returns optimally during its lifecycle.

In a study conducted by Kozlowskia & Salas (1997) on organizational development, they noted that there was a strong consensus that acquisition of knowledge, skills, behaviors, and attitudes through training was of little value if the new characteristics were not generalized to the job setting and were not maintained over time. They observed that training was useless if it could not be translated into performance. According to Swanson (1995), for human resource development to become a core business process, performance is the key. The same study continued to state that transfer of training is a core issue with respect to linking individual change to the requirements of the organizational system. Swanson concluded by saying that for training to be useful in organizational performance, there is need to understand how to support transfer of training in organizations. Atkinson (1999) on his part noted that despite increased awareness of the importance of skills in project management by organizations, most projects still fail.

2.6. Conceptual Framework

Smyth (2004) observes that a conceptual framework helps a researcher to properly identify the problem he is looking at, frame questions and find suitable literature. The independent variables for this study will be training in project management while the dependent variable will be project performance. The relationship is presented in figure 1

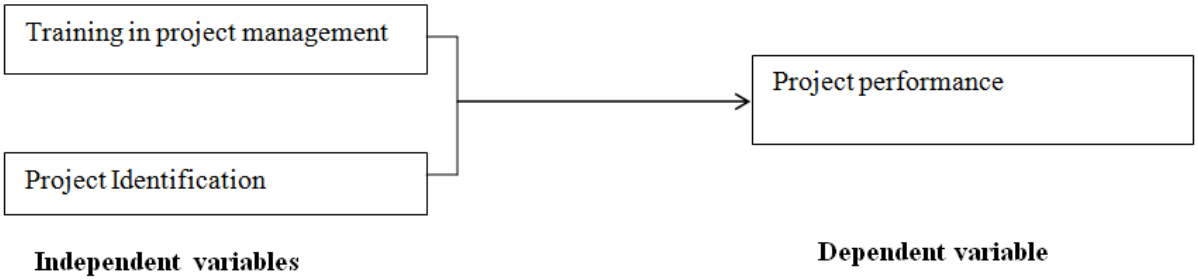

Figure 1. *Conceptual Framework.*

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

Berg (2001) defines research design as a road map used for planning when undertaking a research study. He indicates that research design aims at visualizing and imagining how the research will be undertaken, the type of data to be collected, how it will be collected and how much it will cost the researcher. It therefore enables the researcher to obtain relevant data from which he/she is able to draw conclusions. While agreeing with this definition, Yin (1994) defined research design as a "logical plan for getting from here to there, where "here" is the initial set of questions to be answered by the participants and "there" is some set of conclusions derived from the findings".

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. Descriptive research is a process of collecting data in order to test a hypothesis or to answer questions about the current status of the subjects in the study (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). A descriptive study was the best for this study because it determines and reports the way things are. A survey was conducted among staff members of Mercy USA nutrition project in Migwani district, District Health Management Team. A structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data. This enabled the researcher to have a systematic collection and presentation of data in order to determine the factors affecting performance of Mercy USA nutrition project.

3.2. Study Population and Sample

A population is an entire group of individuals, objects or items from which samples are taken for measurement (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). Mulusa (1988) on his part held that population is evaluation as a group or category of human being, animals, other animate and inanimate things which

have one or more characteristics in common and have been selected as a focus of a study.

According to Daniel (2007), a target population consists of all members of a people or objects to which the results of a study are generalized. The target population for this study was nine Mercy USA staff members, 15 Migwani DHMT members, and 15 health facility in charge staff. The study also targeted 50 caregivers

According to Richard (2007), a sampling frame is the population from which the sample is selected. This definition is also supported by Anthony (2005), when he defined a sampling frame as a set of source materials from which the sample is selected. The sampling frame for this study was Mercy USA nutrition project in Migwani district, DHMT members, facility in charge staff and caregivers of children who had benefited from this project.

The researcher adopted both census and systematic sampling method for this study. A survey may be conducted by census method or sample method. When the whole area or population of persons is contacted the method is known as census method. When a small group is selected as representative of the whole mass it is known as sampling method. Advantages of census are; data are obtained from each and every unit, accurate and reliable is obtained and it can be exploited as a basis for various surveys. Systematic sampling method confers the following advantages; it is time saving especially if the population to be interviewed is large. It is also possible to generalize the results of the findings to the general population under study. A combination of Census and systematic sampling method was suitable for this study because the target population consisting of project implementers was small in size and if sampled the results would not be representative enough. This category consisted of MUSA staff, DHMT members and facility in charge staff. Therefore, nine MERCY USA project staff, 15 DHMT members and 15 facilities in charge were censured making a total of thirty nine respondents in this category.

The study interviewed 50 caregivers of children who had benefited from this project out of 500 total caregivers. Therefore, the caregiver of every Kth child on the children's register in each health facility was contacted with each health facility giving a total of 5 beneficiaries. In total, 50 caregivers were expected to participate in the study. However, only 41 of them took part in the research project.

3.3. Research Instruments

The researcher used a survey questionnaire as the main data collection instrument for this study. According to Kisilu (2010), this is a research instrument that gathers data over a large sample. Kisilu also noted that this research instrument has various advantages which include: Information being able to be collected from a large sample and diverse region, confidentiality can be upheld, a lot of time can be saved in the process of gathering data. Since questionnaires are presented in paper format there is no opportunity for interview bias. The study employed both closed and open ended questionnaires.

Before the beginning of data collection exercise, the researcher was given an introduction letter from the department of procurement and entrepreneurship in the school of Human Resource and Development of Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and technology. The researcher requested Migwani District Medical officer of Health and Mercy USA nutrition project manager in writing for an opportunity to administer questionnaires to their staff members as part of efforts to obtain data for the study.

In the course of the study, both primary and secondary data was collected and used in making various conclusions and recommendations. Primary data for the study was collected using structured questionnaires. The questionnaires for the DHMT members and Mercy USA project staff was self-administered because these respondents are educated and were able to read and write.

Secondary data was collected by reading, analyzing and recording data contained in readily prepared materials such as monthly progress reports and project proposals. The tools that were used to collect and record secondary data included field note books, pens, pencils and rubbers.

A pilot study is a min-version of a full-scale study or a trivial run done in preparation for the complete study or pretesting of research instruments, including questionnaires or interview scheduled (Polit et al and Baker, 2002). Tight (1996) had concurred with Polit et al. and Baker (2002) by defining pilot test as trying out all research techniques and methods which a researcher has in mind to see how well they work in practice. Before using the questionnaire for generating data for the study a pilot study was conducted in Mercy USA nutrition project in Garissa which had similar characteristics to Mercy USA nutrition project in Kitui in terms of project objectives and activities.

The purpose of pre-testing the questionnaire was to establish whether the research instruments would provide the needed data for the study, verify whether the questionnaires were clear to the respondents and to assess and identify any problems respondents encountered in answering the questions provided.

Reliability refers to how consistent a research procedure or instrument is. It therefore, means the degree of consistency demonstrated in a study (Daniel, 2007). Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) state that pre-testing helps in enhancing the reliability of the instruments as being a consistent measure of the concept being measured. The study used Cronbach's alpha formula to test reliability. .

To ensure reliability the researcher carried out a pilot study by use of the test-retest technique where the questionnaires were administered twice at the same group of respondents. Time lapse between the first and second test was two weeks.

3.4. Data Processing and Analysis

Data analysis refers to examining what has been collected in a survey or experiment and making deductions and inferences (Kombo, 2010). It involves uncovering underlying structures; extracting important variables,

detecting any anomalies and testing any underlying assumptions. Data analysis was based on the research questions designed at the beginning of the research. The data collected was inspected and cleaned to ascertain their accuracy, completeness and uniformity.

The data was then organized according to the instrument used to avoid mixing them up. The researcher calculated the percentage and frequencies. Statistical analysis was carried out using the Statistical package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. This computer program was used to analyze the data after it had been inspected, cleaned, coded and classified. Descriptive statistics was then used to find out the effects of training in project management, stakeholder's management, project identification, funding and how they affect the performance of Mercy USA nutrition projects. After data analysis the researcher has presented the results in tables and graphs. The results of the study have been compared with literature review to establish the factors that influence performance of donor funded nutrition projects.

Content analysis has been used to analyze qualitative data in this study. Content analysis examines the intensity with which certain words have been used (Kombo, 2010). Content analysis systematically describes the form or content of written and/or spoken materials. In interpreting results, the frequency with which a symbol or idea appears may be interpreted as a measure of importance, attention or emphasis.

4. Research Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1. Respondents Rate

The study targeted 9 Mercy USA Nutrition project staff, 14 DHMT members, 15 facility in charge staff and 50 beneficiaries participating in the implementation of MUSA nutrition project in Mwingi. In total of 38 questionnaires for Mercy USA and MOH staff and 50 interview guides for beneficiaries were issued which were filled and returned back for data analysis. After data collection, 37 out of the targeted 38 questionnaires were responded to; therefore, 37 questionnaires were used in the analysis. 41 out of the targeted 50 beneficiaries were interviewed. Collectively, this was 89.7% response rate. This response rate was adequate and in tandemn with Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), provision that a response rate of 50%, is adequate for analyzing and reporting.

4.2. Training in Project Management

The research project established that only 8.1% of those involved in the implementation of MUSA nutrition project in Mwingi had undergone training in project management with the remaining 91.9% having not undergone any form of training in project management. Out of those who had undergone training in project management, 66.7% acknowledged that the training they received was relevant to the management of nutrition project and were able to use the acquired skills to improve the performance of the nutrition project. This information is presented in table 4.1 and table 4.2 as shown below.

Table 4.1. *Training in project management.*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	3	3.2	8.1	8.1
	No	34	36.6	91.9	100.0
	Total	37	39.8	100.0	

Table 4.2. *Relevance of Training.*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	YES	2	2.2	66.7	66.7
	NO	1	1.1	33.3	100.0
	Total	3	3.2	100.0	
Missing	System	90	96.8		
Total		93	100.0		

In attempt to establish the effect of training in project management on the performance of MUSA nutrition project, respondents were asked to indicate whether they had been trained in project management. According to Kozlowskia &Salas (2007), although there is consensus that acquisition of knowledge, skills , behaviors and attitudes through training is of little value if the new characteristics are not generalized to the job setting and are not maintained over time, there is need to have organization's staff implementing a project trained in management of projects. This study established that most of the project implementers had not been trained in project management. According to Kozlowskia & Salas (2007), although training in project management is useful to project implementers, it is useless if it cannot be translated into project performance. Holton, Ruona & Leimbach (2008) held that several questions continue to be raised on the return on investments that organizations get as a result of sending their staff for training if the benefits cannot be translated into performance. Majority of the respondents held that it was difficult for them to execute project activities due to lack of training in project management. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Swanson (1995) who argued that transfer of training is a core issue with respect to linking the individual change to the requirements of the organizational system.

4.3. Project Activeness

In an attempt to establish the level of project activity, the study sought to find out the status of the ongoing MUSA nutrition project. From the data collected and analyzed, it was realized that 15.8% of the respondents held that the project activities had expanded. 68.4% held that the project activities had been maintained with 15.8% contending that the project's activities had reduced. Further, 32.4% of the respondents agreed that MUSA nutrition project was active, with 43.4% holding the view that the nutrition project was partially active

with 24.3% holding that the project was inactive.

4.4. Project Performance

Table 4.3. *Level of activity.*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Expanded	3	3.8	15.8	15.8
	Maintained	13	16.7	68.4	84.2
	Reduced	3	3.8	15.8	100.0
	Total	19	24.4	100.0	

Table 4.4. *Level of project activity.*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Active	12	15.4	32.4	32.4
	Partially Active	16	20.5	43.2	75.7
	Inactive	9	11.5	24.3	100.0
	Total	37	47.4	100.0	

Most of the respondents held that the performance of MUSA nutrition project was not as impressive as was envisaged in the project's documents. According to the respondents who participated in this study, there were certain aspects of the project that undermines the attributes of a properly performing project. The following findings came out. The study established that the project was partially active with the flow of benefits to the beneficiaries being irregular and far between. This showed that the project performance was dwindling. These findings are in agreement with the findings of (Belassi, 2004) who stated that many projects are usually bedeviled by challenges, constraints and risks as they are executed making them to fail to meet the priority needs of the target beneficiaries. In addition, the study established that MUSA nutrition project had not expanded from the time it was initiated to the time when the study was conducted. This is demonstrated when 68.4% of the respondents held that the project had maintained its very initial capacity of serving only 10 health facilities of the entire district. Similar findings were also presented by (Jefferey & Denis, 2004) when they noted that projects are often initiated in a turbulent, unpredictable and dynamic environment which requires through scrutiny in order to conquer and expand. These findings also concurs with the findings of Cocks (2006) who held that projects which cannot sustain continuous flow of benefits to the target beneficiaries at a maintained or expanded state are deemed to have failed.

4.5. Regularness of MUSA Nutrition Project (Beneficiaries)

As part of efforts to establish how regular the project's benefits flows to the beneficiaries, the beneficiaries of this project were interviewed. 19.5% of the beneficiaries stated that MUSA nutrition support was regular, while 51.2% stated that MUSA nutrition support was not regular while 29.3% did not know whether the benefits emanating from MUSA nutrition support was regular.

Table 4.5. *MUSA Nutrition support regular.*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	8	10.3	19.5	19.5
	No	21	26.9	51.2	70.7
	Dont know	12	15.4	29.3	100.0
	Total	41	52.6	100.0	

4.6. Project Training and Project Performance

Since, the value of the computed t-statistic is greater than the critical value, i.e**.** 0.858>0.397 at 95% CI, the H0 (null hypothesis) is rejected meaning the performance of the Mercy USA nutrition project in terms of its continuous flow of benefits to the beneficiaries depends on other factors other than training in project management. However, majority of the respondents held that it was difficult for them to execute project activities due to lack of training in project management. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Swanson (1995) who argued that transfer of training is a core issue with respect to linking the individual change to the requirements of the organizational system.

Table 4.6. *Project Training and Project Performance.*

Model fit		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.794	.465		1.707	.097
	Trained_in_project_mngmnt	.206	.240	.143	.858	.397

a. Dependent Variable (beneficiaries continuously benefiting from the project activities.

Table 4.7. *Project Identification and Project Performance.*

Model fit		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.700	.568		2.991	.005
	Involved in identification	.050	.480	.018	.104	.918

a. Dependent Variable: project activity

Since, the value of the computed t-statistic is less than the critical value, i.e. 0.104<0.918 at 95% CI, the H0 (null hypothesis) is accepted meaning project identification is vital for the performance of the Mercy USA nutrition project. Hence, H0 is significant.

Based on the research findings, the study recommends

Project implementers should be equipped with project management skills. Not only should project implementers be trained in project management skills, but they should also be able to translate the acquired skills into the performance of the project. This study focused on effect of project training on performance of Donor funded Nutrition projects in Kenya. There is need for future studies to look at factors affecting project performance in donor funded projects in collaboration with the government of Kenya. There is also a need to look at effect of the education level of project managers on the performance of Donor funded nutrition projects.

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