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The Influence of Leadership Styles on Public Participation in Monitoring and Evaluation of Preschool Projects in Migori County, Kenya

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Abstract:

*Effective leaders are today required by each organisation to enhance unity and performance among other key virtues. In Kenya, the 2010 constitutional promulgation ushered in a new administrative mandate to devolved counties, where key services like preschool education are to be handled by county governments. County Governments are thus expected to start up preschool projects which suit the needs and demands of the local society. Scholars have established that there have been low levels of public participation in projects started up by local authorities, particularly in the developing world, Kenya included, although the same is considered an important endeavor particularly in M&E. Whether low public participation is attributed to leadership styles in these devolved units is yet to be established through research. The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of leadership style on public participation in M&E of preschool projects in Migori County. Specific objectives were to assess the level of public participation in M&E of preschool projects; establish the types of leadership styles employed; and to establish the relationship between leadership style and public participation in M&E of preschool projects in Migori County. Target population was 884 preschool project committee members and 7 sub county ECE officers. A sample size of 399 was derived using Yamane's (1967) formula. Questionnaire was used to collect data. Descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlations and regressions were used for data analysis. It was found that the leadership style in place provides little support for public participation in M&E of preschool projects, although respondents considered it to be an essential practice to enhance the same. Leadership style was found to correlate positively and highly ($.816^{**} < p = 0.03$, 2 tailed) with public participation in M&E of preschool projects, with a beta of 0.609 and R^2 of 0.725. This suggests that the more favourable leadership style is, the higher public participation in M&E of preschool projects would be in the county government on one hand, and that leadership style accounts for 72.5% of public participation in M&E of the projects in the county government under study. For the enhancement of public participation, the study recommends that democratic and participative leadership styles should be put in place by the county governments. Moreover, given that 27.5% of public participation in M&E of preschool projects in the devolved units is not explained by leadership style, it is recommended that further studies be done on the influence of other institutional factors like organizational structure on public participation in M&E of preschool projects in this area.*

Keywords: Public participation, Leadership Style: Migori County Government, Preschool projects

1. Introduction

In the contemporary business world, and in every walk of life for that matter, leadership is practiced to promote harmony, unity, strength and prosperity. Leadership is practiced in schools and colleges, factories and farms, business enterprises, dispensaries and hospitals, in the civil and military organizations of a country and public life, at all levels (Anyango, 2015). Leadership is a social influence process in which the leader seeks the voluntary participation of subordinates in an effort to reach organizational goals (Omolayo, 2007). A leader can be defined as a person who delegates or influences others to act so as to carry out specified objectives (Mullins, 2004). Additionally, Batista-Taran, Shuck, Gutierrez & Baralt (2009) assert that leaders are the individuals in the organization who set the tone and culture. Leadership, on the other hand, has been defined by Northouse (2004) as a process whereby one individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal. Today's organizations need effective leaders who understand the complexities of the rapidly changing global environment. If the task is highly structured and the leader has good relationship with the employees, effectiveness will be high on the part of the employees. The study further revealed that democratic leaders take great care to involve all members of the team in discussion and can work with a small but highly motivated team. Nonetheless, the relationship that exists between leadership styles and public participation has hardly been focused upon by researchers.

Public participation has been accepted by project management practitioners and scholars as an appropriate means of gaining and conveying the society's interest and concerns with regard to development plans and interventions (Marzuki, 2015). Public participation stimulates information exchange between all the development stakeholders which will further enhance mutual understanding and relations between them, resulting into unreserved support for the specific project in question (Cavric, 2011). Theron (2005), on the other hand, states that it is almost impossible to suggest any developmental intervention without involving the intended beneficiaries (p113). There is however, some evidence that there exist low level of public participation in government interventions across Africa, although little has been offered linking the same with leadership styles of the projects. For instance, Siphuma (2009) examined the role of ward committees in public participation in the local government of Thulamela Municipality, South Africa and found that although statutes provide for public participation, there are no strategies on the ground to support the same.

Equally, Kwena (2013) examined the factors affecting community participation in the management of development projects through LASDAP in Narok County; Kilgoris Constituency. The study established very low community participation in LASDAP process, limited awareness coming out strongly as one of the reasons for poor local involvement in the development projects. Information regarding managerial and accountability of projects remains unknown in the absence of public participation, particularly in Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E). Another study by Ole Lesinko (2015) investigated the factors influencing performance of M&E of CDF Government projects in Narok East (Kenya) using a descriptive and correlational survey designs on a sample of 122 respondents. It revealed that although M & E is important for success of any project, most Government projects have not been able to adopt it effectively.

A project, being a specific activity to be carried out using resources for the benefit of particular groups and with a beginning and an end, has four main resources which need to be managed in order to ensure that the projects is successful (Wachamba, 2013). These are people, time, money and scope (Wachamba, 2013: 9). Scholars like Bamberger (2006) and Dobrea and Ciocoiu (2010) have argued that M&E of a project functions as an accountability mechanism, fostering greater transparency, enhances governance and democracy, and the voice of civil society. In addition, Shapiro (2011) reasons that M&E helps in identifying project areas that are on target and those that need to be adjusted or replaced. While monitoring focuses on tracking if a project follows the planned trend, evaluation checks efficiency, effectiveness and impact of a project by comparing between the actual and the planned achievements (Hunter, 2009; Wachamba, 2013). Although there are research evidence showing direct relationship between leadership styles and overall organizational performance, leadership styles and public participation has received a dearth of information. This therefore begs for an empirical inquiry to establish if the low public participation (particularly in M&E) witnessed among projects initiated by local governments is associated with leadership styles of these projects.

The County Government of Migori has initiated 68 preschool projects since 2014 as is stipulated by the Constitution of Kenya 2010. These projects are meant to ensure that children aged between 3 and 7 years are provided with quality education to enable successful enrollment in primary education with minimum difficulties (Republic of Kenya, 2009). The management of the projects are required to be carried out through involvement of all stakeholders: parents, teacher, and the County Government. However, there is evidence that public participation in most projects initiated by local authorities in Kenya is low, although little is known about leadership styles practiced in these authorities. Moreover, the relationship between leadership styles and public participation in M&E of projects in these areas is unknown.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

It is generally accepted that public participation stimulates information exchange between all the proposed stakeholders in a project: the public, government and (sometimes) donors. This has the potential of enhancing mutual understanding and relationship between the stakeholders and resulting in the government and the proposed project enjoying unwavering support. Additionally, public participation in M&E of preschool projects, for instance, aids in identifying stages which need improvements as well as establishing project efficiency and impact on the intended beneficiaries. However, available evidence indicates that there is low level of public participation in projects initiated by local authorities in Kenya. Research has revealed that leadership style of an organization has a direct relationship with overall organizational performance, although there is little evidence showing that leadership style among county governments influence public participation in M&E of projects among these entities. Furthermore, information pertaining to leadership styles prevailing among preschool projects of county governments is scanty. The need to discover the relationship between leadership style and public participation in M&E of preschool projects thus informed the present study, taking the case of Migori County.

1.2. Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the influence of leadership style on public participation in M&E of preschool projects in Migori County. The specific objectives were to:

- i. Find out the level of public participation in M&E of preschool projects since 2014 in Migori County, Kenya
- ii. Assess the types of leadership styles practiced in preschool projects since 2014 in Migori County, Kenya.
- iii. Establish the relationship between leadership styles and public participation since 2014 in M&E of preschool projects in Migori County, Kenya.

1.3. Scope of the Study

This study focused on types of leadership style and how the same influence public participation in M&E of preschool projects. Data was collected from committee members in charge of day to day management of the preschool projects. Data was collected using questionnaires administered on committee members during the month of December 2016.

2. Literature Review

The influence of leadership style on public participation in M&E of projects (preschool projects included) has received minimum attention of researchers. This contrasts massive attention that leadership styles and organizational performance have received from scholars. For instance, Crossen (2015) examined the mediating influences of leadership style, and moderating effects of organisation formalisation, upon the relationship between self-leadership and follower engagement in New Zealand. Overall, the results suggested a positive relationship between a leader's behaviour-focused strategies and transformational leadership. Another study by Paracha, Qamar, Mirza and Waqas (2012) investigated between transformational and transactional leadership style that has an impact on employee performance using data from 6 schools working in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Result showed that transactional and transformational both are significantly positive associated with Employee performance however transactional leadership was more significant than transformational. It is hence clear from the two studies that comparison between leadership style and public participation in M&E is hardly being considered.

In Pakistan, Iqbal, Anwar and Haider (2015) inquired the effect of leadership styles practiced in an organization and their effect on employee performance, by seeking and understanding of the effect of different leadership styles: autocratic, democratic, and participative style- on employee performance. It concluded that the autocratic leadership is useful in the short term and democratic leadership style is useful in all time horizons. And participation leadership style is most useful in long term and effect on employees is positive. Similarly, Ogunola, Kalejaiye and Abrifor (2013) assessed the correlations between management style and job performance of employees of selected Nigerian brewing industries. Using a sample of 200 employees from two brewing industries in Oyo and Osun States of Nigeria, it was found that there was a relationship between management styles and job performance. Also, employees were found to be more responsive to the autocratic management style due to the nature of the work in the industries. Apparently, the relationship between leadership style and public participation in M&E seems to be neglected.

In Kenya, a study by Koech & Namusonge (2012) investigated the main effects of leadership styles on organizational performance at state-owned corporations in Kenya. It specifically sought to determine the impact of laissez-faire, transactional and transformational leadership styles on organizational performance at state-owned corporations. Correlations between the transformational-leadership factors and organizational performance ratings were high (0.518 to 0.696, $P < .05$), whereas correlations between the transactional-leadership behaviors and organizational performance were relatively low (0.219 to 0.375, $P < .05$). As expected, laissez-faire leadership style is not significantly correlated to organizational performance. Using a cross sectional survey design, Anyango (2015) assessed the effect of leadership styles on employees' performance at Bank of Africa, Kenya. Overall, scores in transformational leadership style were found to be strongly correlated with both measures of employee performance and overall performance except for the intellectual simulation dimension, which had insignificant positive correlation with quality of performance. It was thus interesting to discover which type of leadership style correlates highly with public participation in M&E of preschool projects in Migori County.

Although public participation in local government (and other governmental) projects has been proved to be low, public participation in M&E of projects seem not to have been focused upon by many researchers. Siphuma (2009) examined the role of ward committees in public participation in the local government of Thulamela Municipality, South Africa. Using interviews on elected councilors and chief officers alongside observation of IDP representative forums, budget consultative meetings as well as review of local government statutes, it found that although statutes provide for public participation, there are no strategies on the ground to support the same. Equally, Kwena (2013) examined the factors affecting community participation in the management of development projects through LASDAP in Narok County; Kilgoris Constituency. A qualitative research approach was followed in which data was gathered through document analysis and field interviews. The study established very low community participation In LASDAP process, limited awareness coming out strongly as one of the reasons for poor local involvement in the development projects.

There are many factors that have been revealed by researchers to be generally affecting implementation of M&E of projects in Kenya. However, the manner in which leadership style influence public participation in M&E of projects among newly created county governments seem not to have been focused upon, going by a few studies on this phenomenon. Mwangi, Nyang'wara and Ole Kulet (2015) assessed the factors affecting M&E of (CDF) projects with reference to technical capacity, political influence, stakeholders' participation, and budgetary allocation in Laikipia West constituency, Kenya. M&E process is significant in ensuring the objectives of the CDF projects are achieved. The model was able to explain 85.6% of the variances in effectiveness in M&E thus it's a significant tool on CDF projects at 5%. On the other hand, Ole Lesinko (2015) investigated the factors influencing performance of M&E of CDF Government projects in Narok East (Kenya) using a descriptive and correlational survey designs on a sample of 122 respondents. Findings revealed that the level of training on M & E was of central importance to the performance of M & E of public projects, and there was a high correlation between training and Performance of M&E.

3. Research Design, Instruments and Analysis

The study was conducted in Migori County, Kenya. This is one of the forty seven (47) counties in the country. Migori County currently has 68 active preschool projects which are provided with lead teachers, teaching and learning materials, as well as infrastructure. Being managed by committee members and at least one trained preschool teacher, 13 members of each preschool alongside one sub county director of ECDE were targeted. The target population was therefore 884 committee members and 7

officers, totaling to 891. This study adopted Yamane (1967; cited in Israel, 2013) formula to calculate the sample size of committee members from whom data was collected using questionnaire as shown below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2} = \frac{884}{1 + 884(0.05)^2} = 399$$

Where n is the sample size, N is the population size, and e is the level of precision (0.05).

To ensure equal representation of each sub county in the study, stratified random sampling which involves dividing the population into homogeneous subgroups and then taking a simple random sample of $f = n/Nx$ sample size in each subgroup will be used (Patton, 2002). Where f is the sample size of the sub group; n is the population of the sub group; and N is the target population. Questionnaire and interview guide were used for data collection. To ensure reliability of research instruments, pilot test was done. The pilot testing of the questionnaire was carried out on 10% of the sample size (or 39) purposively sampled committee members who were subsequently excluded from the main study; thereafter issues arising from the questionnaire were clarified. Internal consistency of the instrument was determined via the test re-test reliability index using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient (Cronbach, 1951). Test/re-test method involves administering the same test on the same individuals at two different times (Kumar, 2005). Table 1 presents Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for the reliability test.

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
Leadership style	.946	14
Public Participation	.791	12

Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha scales for reliability test

It is evident that the scales obtained for reliability test signals consistency of the instrument in measuring the variables in the study. As Table 1 indicates, leadership style, with 14 items, reported a reliability of .946, while public participation, with 12 items, reports a reliability of .791. This is within the threshold of .70 stipulated by Nunnally (1978). On the other hand, for checking of validity, the instrument was subjected to content, face and construct validity test. Face validity was done by asking the respondents about their view on the research instrument so that it can be refined and corrected before the actual presentation in the field. The content validity was computed using the content validity ratio which is the extent which test scores are ascertained as claimed. The study was able to collect data from 272 respondents, signifying 68.17% questionnaire return rate. Equally, all the 7 sub County directors of ECDE were interviewed by the researcher. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse levels of public participation and types of organization structure adopted by preschool projects. Correlations and regressions were used to establish the relationship between organizational structure and public participation in M&E of preschool projects.

4. Research Findings

Table 2 presents a summary of demographic profile of the sampled heads of sections;

Profile	Measurement	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	201	73.9
	Female	71	26.1
	Total	272	100
Age	Less than 19	10	3.68
	20 - 29	19	6.99
	30 - 39	115	42.28
	40 - 49	102	38.24
	50 and above	26	9.56
	Total	272	100
Education Level	None	9	3.31
	Primary	59	21.7
	Secondary	116	42.65
	Certificate	66	24.26
	Diploma/Degree	22	8.09
	Total	272	100
Occupation of respondents	Non-skilled artisans	53	19.49
	Skilled artisans	109	40.07
	Professional career	110	40.44
	Total	272	100

Table 2: Demographic profile of respondents

Table 2 illustrates that majority (73.9%) of the sampled committee members of preschool projects are males, while 26.1% were females. This demonstrates the male dominance in projects initiated by the County Government of Migori. However, the proportion is above 15% threshold stipulated by the 2010 constitution (Republic of Kenya, 2010). With regard to age distribution of study respondents, most (42.28%) of the committee members aged between 30 and 39 years; 38.24% aged between 40 and 49 years; 9.56%

of aged 50 years and above; 6.99 were between 20 and 29 years of age, while the remaining 3.68% were below 20 years in age. The findings suggest that most of the committee members were mature adults who were developing in parenting duties, and were probably eager to ensure better education for their young ones. Equally, Table 2 also illustrates that most (42.65%) of the committee members have secondary education; 24.26% certificate level of education; 21.7% primary level of education; 8.09% had diploma/degree level of education, and the remaining 3.31% had not attained any level of education. This implies that the sampled committee members were literate and were capable of participating in activities like M&E of the specific preschool. Additionally, with secondary level of education, the sampled respondents (mostly parents of preschool children) are able to understand the expected outcome of a preschool project on ECE learners.

Lastly, concerning occupations of the respondents, it is indicated in Table 2 that most (40.44%) of the sampled committee members are professionals in their careers; 40.07% were skilled artisans, while the remaining 19.49% were unskilled artisans. This implies that the committee members under study were able to appreciate work progress or project implementation progress as well as evaluation of project outcomes.

4.1. Level of Public Participation

The first objective assessed the levels of public participation in M&E of preschool projects in the study area. Descriptive statistics obtained from the analysed data is presented in Table 3.

	N	Mean	SD
Involvement of members of the public in M&E of projects	272	4.32	0.736
Public satisfaction with their involvement in M&E of projects	272	2.36	1.003
Consultations with communities and stakeholders	272	2.43	1.132
County staff satisfaction with their involvement in M&E of projects	272	3.15	0.961
Mean Score	272	3.88	0.958

Table 3: Distribution by level of public participation

Table 4.5 indicates that the sampled respondents were generally undecided with regard to the existence of aspects of public participation presented in the study instrument. Mean score for the aspects of public participation in M&E is 3.88, and based on the study instrument, 3 denotes undecided. Equally, members agreed ($M=4.32$; $SD=0.736$) that there is involvement of members of the public in M&E of projects in the county. However, the sampled respondents disagreed ($M=2.36$; $SD=1.003$) that members of the public are satisfied with their involvement in M&E of pre-school projects in the area. Additionally, the sampled members of pre-school committees also disagreed ($M=2.43$; $SD=1.132$) that there is consultations with communities and stakeholders in M&E processes in the county. The respondents were nonetheless undecided ($M=3.15$; $SD=0.961$) as to whether or not the county staff are satisfied with their involvement in M&E of pre-school projects in the county.

4.2. Types of Leadership Styles and Public Participation in M&E

The second objective of the study sought to establish the types of leadership styles and how the same are employed to enhance public participation in M&E. The participants were asked to give responses to statements describing features of leadership styles as they influence public participation in M&E of preschool projects in the county as: Almost Always True (AAT) -- 5Frequently True (FT) -- 4Occasionally True (OT) -- 3Seldom True (ST) -- 2Almost Never True (ANT) -- 1. Table 4 presents distribution by types of organizational structure and public participation in M&E of preschool project.

	N	Mean	SD
Autocratic style	272	3.21	0.897
Participative style	272	3.64	1.023
Transactional style	272	3.84	0.975
Transformational style	272	2.98	0.992
Mean Score	272	3.42	0.972

Table 4: Distribution by Leadership Style and Public Participation

Results shown in Table 4 indicates that the sampled respondents considered none of the presented leadership styles as being frequently or infrequently ($M=3.42$; $SD=0.972$) employed by the leadership of the pre-school projects for the enhancement of public participation in M&E. They indicated that autocratic leadership style ($M=3.21$; $SD=0.897$) was neither frequently nor infrequently employed; participative leadership ($M=3.64$; $SD=1.023$) and transactional leadership style ($M=3.84$; $SD=0.975$) were both neither frequently nor infrequently employed by the leadership of the projects. Transformational leadership style ($M=2.98$; $SD=0.992$) was however, indicated by the sampled respondents to be infrequently employed in the management of the pre-school projects. These results imply that the organizational leadership of the county governance in Kenya was not enhancing public participation in monitoring and evaluation of the preschool county governments funded construction projects in Migori County.

4.3. Relationship between Leadership Style and Public Participation in M&E of Projects

Through Pearson Correlations, the relationship between organizational structure and public participation in M&E was also measured by the researcher. Table 5 presents the Pearson Correlations at 0.01 significant level (2-tailed).

		Public participation in M&E	Leadership style
Public participation in M&E	Pearson Correlation	1	.816**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	272	11
Leadership Style	Pearson Correlation	.816**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	

Table 5: Pearson Correlations

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

Table 5 shows the relationship between the dependent (public participation) and the independent (Leadership style) variables to be positive and highly correlated. Significant and strong relationship is found with leadership (.816**, $p < 0.01$; 2-tailed). This is suggestive of the fact that the more favourable leadership style is, the higher public participation in M&E of preschool projects would be in the County Government of Migori.

Further, regression analysis was also run. Table 6 and Table 7 illustrate the findings of linear regressions.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.023	.326		6.204	.000
	Leadership Style	1.188	.093	.609	12.790	.000

Table 6: Model summary

a. Dependent Variable: public participation in M&E of projects

Table 6 illustrates that there is a positive relationship between the coefficients of leadership style and public participation in M&E of preschool projects. The coefficient for leadership style is 0.609. This implies that for every unit improvement in leadership style, we expect 0.609 unit increase in public participation in M&E of preschool projects in the County Government of Migori.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics		
					R Square Change	F Change	df1
1	.803 ^a	.725	.706	.32307	.725	18.477	1

Table 7: Regression Model

With $R^2 = 0.725$ in the model summary (Table 6), the coefficient of determination (predictor indicator) reveals that 1 unit change in leadership style under this study results in 72.5% change in public participation in M&E of preschool projects. Thus, leadership style accounts for 72.5% of public participation in M&E of preschool projects in the county government. The stability of this result is reflected by the minimum adjustment in the adjusted R^2 value of 0.706; only showing a decrease of 0.019. Hence, leadership style explains 72.5% of public participation in M&E of the preschool projects under this study, with a significant model fitting ($F=18.477$; $p < 0.000$). This implies that 27.5% of public participation in M&E of preschool projects is attributed to other factors other than leadership style.

5. Discussions

Relationship between leadership style and public participation in M&E of preschool projects has been shown to be high. With leadership style explaining 72.5% of public participation, it is imperative that for M&E of preschool projects to be carried out through stakeholder involvement, supportive leadership remains mandatory. Several scholars have found that supportive type of leadership style enhances organizational performance in various ways. Paracha, et al (2012) established that in Rawalpindi and Islamabad, transactional leadership was more significant than transformational leadership style in determining employee performance. Iqbal, Anwar and Haider (2015) also found in a study done in Pakistan that although autocratic leadership is useful in the short term and democratic leadership style is useful in all time horizons, participative leadership style is most useful in long term. Moreover, among state – owned corporations, Koech & Namusonge (2012) established that transformational-leadership factors and organizational performance ratings are highly correlated.

The achievement of organizational goals has also been established to correlate highly with leadership style practiced by the management in Nigeria. Osabiya and Ikenga (2015) revealed that there is significance relationship between leadership style and employees' performance in the attainment of organization goals and objectives. Between autocratic, democratic, and participative types of leadership, Iqbal et al (2015) found that although autocratic leadership is useful in the short term and democratic leadership style is useful in all time horizons, participative leadership style is most useful in long term and effect on employees is positive. Anyango (2015) similarly established that authoritative leadership style had insignificant relationship with employee performance, while laissez faire style had insignificant although positive relationship with the same. Perhaps low public participation in local

government initiated projects is succinctly explained by the fact that democratic and participative leadership are not maximally employed by project officers.

6. Conclusions

This study therefore concludes that leadership structure highly influences public participation in M&E of preschool projects in Migori County. The actual type of leadership styles desired among these projects gears towards participative and democratic styles. In the county of Migori, democratic and participative styles of leaderships are not practiced whole-heartedly going by the revelation that the county project officer reserves the final authority for making decisions and not the stakeholders. It is thus expected that with an improvement in leadership style, public participation in M&E of preschool project will proportionally improve.

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