



Stakeholder Involvement and The Implementation of Maternal and Child Health Projects of Safaricom Public Limited Company in Siakago Sub-County, Embu County, Kenya

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Abstract:

This paper aims to assess the level of stakeholder involvement in the implementation of maternal and child health projects by Safaricom PLC in Siakago Sub-County, Embu County, Kenya. The study investigates various aspects of stakeholder engagement, including their roles, responsibilities, collaborative strategies employed, and their impact on maternal and child health projects. The research design utilized a cross-sectional survey, targeting a population consisting of 25 Safaricom Foundation staff, 7 community health workers, and 720 mothers who delivered in Siakago sub-county hospital between 2021 and 2022. A purpose sampling technique was employed to obtain the participation of 7 community health workers and 25 Safaricom staff. For the sample size of community health workers and Safaricom staff, a census approach was utilized due to the small population. Interviews were conducted to obtain data from a sample size of 256 mothers with children under 1 year old. Data collection involved structured questionnaires and interview guides, and analysis was performed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The results of the study indicate a strong positive relationship between stakeholder involvement and the successful implementation of maternal and child health projects, as evidenced by a correlation coefficient of 0.983. The coefficient estimates of 0.900 for stakeholder engagement suggests that increasing stakeholder involvement enhances the likelihood of successful project implementation. However, there were differing opinions regarding the potential impact of a lengthy hierarchical chain of command on decision-making processes. Based on these findings, several recommendations are proposed to strengthen stakeholder engagement. Prioritizing regular communication and collaborative decision-making is crucial for enhancing stakeholder involvement. Community engagement should be enhanced through comprehensive plans that incorporate community input and address their specific healthcare needs. Raising awareness and promoting education about maternal and child health practices are vital aspects to consider. Project management should optimize the chain of command and streamline decision-making processes. Additionally, conducting stakeholder analysis and sharing best practices and lessons learned are recommended for continuous improvement. In conclusion, this study sheds light on the significance of stakeholder involvement in the implementation of maternal and child health projects by Safaricom PLC. By implementing the recommended strategies, Safaricom can enhance the effectiveness of their projects and contribute to improved maternal and child health outcomes in Siakago Sub-County.

Keywords: stakeholder involvement, Implementation, Maternal and child health projects

INTRODUCTION

Stakeholder involvement is crucial for the successful implementation of maternal and child health projects Worldwide (Gupta, 2020; Simmonds, Pickett, & O'Brien, 2018). Engaging stakeholders allows organizations to effectively address the complex challenges associated with improving maternal and child health outcomes (WHO, 2019). This paper focuses on the stakeholder involvement and the implementation of maternal and child health projects by Safaricom PLC.

Maternal and child health is a global concern, particularly in developing countries, where significant challenges persist in ensuring the well-being of mothers and children (WHO, 2019). Every day, preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth lead to the deaths of approximately 810 women worldwide (WHO, 2019). Additionally, around 6.2 million children under the age of five die each year, with the majority of these deaths occurring in low-income countries (WHO, 2019). Achieving Sustainable Development Goal 3, which aims to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages, necessitates collaborative efforts from diverse stakeholders (UN, 2015).

Safaricom PLC, a leading telecommunications company in Kenya, recognizes the importance of maternal and child health and has undertaken proactive measures to address these challenges in various parts of Kenya. Through its corporate social responsibility initiatives, Safaricom has implemented various projects aimed at improving maternal and child health outcomes in the region. These projects encompass a range of interventions, including access to quality healthcare services, maternal education programs, community awareness campaigns, and the provision of essential medical supplies and equipment.

To ensure the success of these projects, Safaricom PLC has actively engaged multiple stakeholders at various levels. The involvement of stakeholders, such as local communities, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, healthcare providers, and community leaders, is essential for understanding the specific needs and challenges faced by the target population (Gupta, 2020; Simmonds et al., 2018). Furthermore, stakeholder involvement enables the identification of synergies, alignment of objectives, and mobilization of resources, ultimately leading to sustainable and impactful interventions (Gupta, 2020). This paper aims at exploring ways in which stakeholder involvement is likely to influence the implementation of maternal and child health projects by Safaricom PLC in Siakago Sub-County, Embu County, Kenya. In particular, the paper will present data on various stakeholders' engagement, their roles and responsibilities, and the strategies employed to facilitate effective collaboration influence the implementation of maternal and child care health projects.

Statement of the Problem

Maternal and child health remains a significant challenge in Kenya, with high maternal mortality rates and limited access to quality healthcare services, particularly in rural and underserved areas (United Nations Population Fund, 2020; KDHS, 2008). Despite efforts from various stakeholders, including the national government, county governments, NGOs, and corporate institutions like Safaricom PLC, the implementation of effective maternal and child health programs face numerous obstacles.

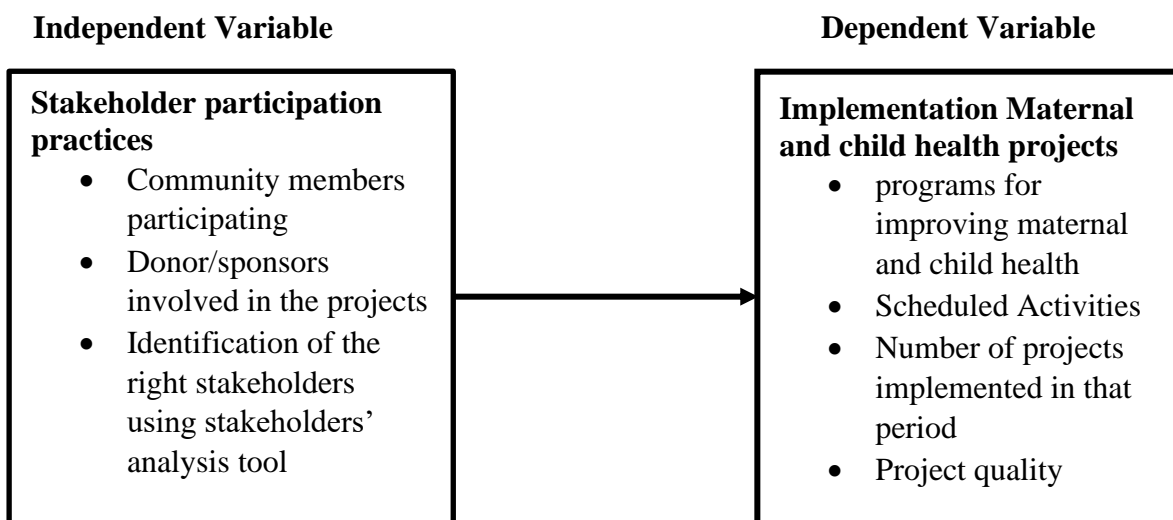
One of the key issues is the persistently high maternal mortality ratio, which indicates a high number of women and girls dying from pregnancy and childbirth-related complications (United Nations Population Fund, 2020). Although there has been a slight increase in the availability of

experienced birth attendants, a significant proportion of maternal deaths are still attributed to substandard treatment and inadequate healthcare (United Nations Population Fund, 2020). Additionally, women in rural and marginalized areas, such as Siakago Sub-County in Embu County, face greater challenges in accessing and utilizing maternal healthcare services compared to their urban counterparts (KDHS, 2008).

The low consumption of maternal healthcare services in rural and underserved areas contributes to the persistently high maternal mortality rates in these communities (KDHS, 2008). Despite the collaborative efforts of stakeholders, including Safaricom PLC, to improve the quality of maternal and child health services and programs, there are systemic challenges that hinder the effective implementation of these initiatives. The 2013 World Bank report highlights issues such as inadequate funding, poor administration, inadequate infrastructure development, corruption, and nepotism within the healthcare sector in Kenya (World Bank, 2013). These factors undermine the provision and implementation of programs aimed at improving maternal and child health, making it difficult to achieve the envisioned goals outlined in Kenya's Vision 2030 plan. In light of these challenges, it is essential to examine the extent to which stakeholder involvement influences the implementation of maternal and child health projects by Safaricom PLC in Siakago Sub-County, Embu County, Kenya.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework examines the relationship between stakeholder participation practices and the implementation of maternal and child health projects. Stakeholder participation practices consist of community members participating, donors/sponsors involved, and identification of the right stakeholders using stakeholders' analysis. Community members' active involvement in decision-making and program planning is crucial. Donors/sponsors provide financial support for project implementation. Identifying the right stakeholders helps facilitate effective collaboration. The implementation of maternal and child health projects depends on programs for improving maternal and child health, scheduled activities, the number of projects implemented, and project quality. Programs include prenatal care, safe delivery practices, and health education. Scheduled activities involve setting goals, monitoring progress, and establishing timelines. The number of projects implemented measures project quantity and service coverage. Project quality is assessed based on adherence to guidelines, healthcare accessibility, provider competency, and beneficiary satisfaction.



LITERATURE REVIEWS ON STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION PRACTICES AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH PROJECTS

Since the 1970s, the involvement of stakeholders has been widely recognized as an essential element of any program implementation (O'Brien, Phelan, Smith & Smits, 2021). Participation refers to the process of participation of all parties involved in decision-making which is influential in a positive contribution to society. According to World Bank, (2019), the process of stakeholder participation plays a key role in influencing development initiatives that consequently result in the efficient control of resources. In the past few decades, the development experiences have shown a positive impact on stakeholder involvement in the social sector evidenced by non-profit organizations and international funding agencies (World Bank, 2019). This evidence-based proof shows the reason why stakeholder involvement in decision-making has become a key factor in the development process.

The majority of community-based development projects have greatly benefited from stakeholder involvement. These projects emphasize the significance of beneficiaries' active participation in the decision-making process, which helps in program implementation. Succinctly, community-based projects that primarily rely on international funders can gain acceptance whenever they make stakeholder participation a central aspect of their activities. The active involvement of stakeholders in implementing the projects is aimed at making the development and implementation of the project more practical, efficient, and demand-driven. Nonetheless, the aspect of actively involving stakeholders in the project has not become a reality globally mainly due to a misunderstanding of the needs of the beneficiaries. According to Srinivasan and Dhivya, (2020), there is very minimal stakeholder participation in projects that involve the community as the primary beneficiary in Australia. According to Larsson and Larsson, (2020), many projects which have stakeholders as primary beneficiaries do not involve them in the implementation of project initiation to project phase-out. This has led to numerous implementation challenges. The MCH study within Siakago sub-County will investigate the level of stakeholder engagement especially the primary beneficiary and how the presence or lack of it might affect the project in the long run.

In Malaysia, Heravi, Coffey, and Trigunarsyah (2015) carried out an extensive study on the effect of stakeholder participation in enabling project planning and execution of processes. The research which included data from 200 companies deployed interviewing as the main method of collecting data. The respondents in the field of construction of residential buildings were issued with questionnaires. The findings revealed that the success of the building projects relied on active stakeholder involvement in decision-making processes. The findings further showed that the success and completion of most projects were dependent on the level of stakeholder engagement. Such approaches in the activities of the project effectively led to better project performance through the inclusion of key personnel and expertise which positively influenced the projects' performance. This research which was conducted in building projects entails evidence-based lessons, however the current study was done in the Maternal and Child Health, one of Safaricom's Corporate Social Responsibility.

According to Nashira (2021), a study conducted in Ghana, the challenges faced by organizations during the implementation of water and disinfection projects in the Gushegu Region were investigated. Nashira collected data through interviews and conducted semi-structured surveys using purposive sampling. The study aimed to uncover the reasons behind the limited involvement of project beneficiaries in the planning processes (Nashira, 2021).

The findings indicated that 54% of the participants (n = 135) agreed that stakeholders were not adequately engaged in the project planning phase (Nashira, 2021). Furthermore, the research revealed a misconception that beneficiaries did not have a significant role in decision-making, leading to only 54.8% of stakeholders being involved (Nashira, 2021).

Building upon Nashira's study, the present research addresses key gaps in understanding the importance of stakeholder involvement in the execution of maternal and child health (MCH) projects in the Siakago sub-county, Embu County. Nashira's study highlighted the challenges faced by organizations in engaging stakeholders, emphasizing the need to investigate the impact of stakeholder involvement on project execution (Nashira, 2021).

However, the current study focuses specifically on the MCH context in Siakago, aiming to fill the research gap identified by Nashira (2021). By examining how stakeholder involvement influences the execution of MCH projects, this research contributes to a better understanding of effective strategies and potential challenges in engaging stakeholders. In conclusion, Nashira's study provided valuable insights into the challenges organizations face in involving stakeholders during project implementation in Ghana. The present research builds upon these findings and addresses the gaps in understanding the significance of stakeholder involvement in MCH projects in the Siakago sub-county, Embu County, furthering knowledge in this area.

In Tanzania's Mtwara region, Mwanga (2015) conducted a study to identify the factors influencing community involvement in the development of HIV and AIDS interventions. The study revealed limited stakeholder participation in these interventions. The sample consisted of 192 individuals from the target demographic, and a cross-sectional survey research design was employed. After randomly selecting participants from the target population, a questionnaire was distributed among 12 focus groups. The researcher purposively selected eight participants from each group based on their knowledge about the topic.

The findings of the study indicated that approximately 81.8 percent of the respondents did not actively contribute to the development of HIV/AIDS interventions (Mwanga, 2015). Building upon these results, the present research aims to evaluate the extent of stakeholder involvement in the planning process and their contributions to the implementation of maternal and child health (MCH) projects in the Siakago sub-County, Embu County. This study draws upon the insights gained from Mwanga's (2015) study and aims to address the research gap identified in their findings. Specifically, it seeks to explore stakeholder involvement and its impact on the implementation of MCH projects in the Siakago sub-County, Embu County, contributing to a deeper understanding of effective strategies and potential challenges in engaging stakeholders.

Sakwa and Ochieng (2018) conducted a study in Kisumu County, Kenya, to investigate the impact of participatory asset preparation on local water projects. The study employed correlational and descriptive research designs and involved a sample of 189 families out of a target population of 360. Correlational surveys were utilized as the primary data collection method, and the findings indicated a significant influence of participatory asset preparation on project execution.

Specifically, the statistical analysis revealed that both labor sourcing and finance mobilization had p-values of 0.000 and 0.003, respectively, below the significance level of 0.05. These results underscored the importance of providing training to community members to enhance their skills in project operation, maintenance, and effective implementation.

In light of these findings, the present study aims to address the research gap regarding the effectiveness of skill transfer in project execution and management. By assessing the level of skill acquisition among stakeholders involved in the implementation, operation, and maintenance of the project, this research seeks to provide valuable insights into the impact of skill transfer and bridge the existing research gap (Sakwa & Ochieng, 2018).

Additionally, Musau and Kirui (2018) conducted a related study focusing on the direct influence of project planning on the execution of government projects within district state-run administrations, specifically examining the Machakos Province Government. Employing a qualitative descriptive research approach, the study involved a sample of 90 participants, representing 30% of workers directly engaged in project execution. Data were collected through semi-structured surveys, and descriptive and inferential statistics were employed for analysis.

The findings of Musau and Kirui's study highlighted the active engagement of the district government in stakeholder participation during project planning. The research suggested the significance of capturing stakeholders' perspectives prior to and during project execution and aligning them with appropriate expertise and capability to develop effective project frameworks. Building upon these findings, the current study aims to investigate the influence of stakeholder involvement on the execution and management of maternal and child health (MCH) projects, with a specific focus on Safaricom's CSR initiatives in the Siakago sub-county, Embu Region. By addressing this research gap, the present study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the impact of stakeholder involvement and fill the existing gap in knowledge regarding the execution and management of MCH projects (Musau & Kirui, 2018).

METHODOLOGY

Cross-sectional survey design was used in this study. Cross-sectional survey design is an observation-based research technique that entails examining data gathered from numerous subjects all at once (Creswell, 2013). The advantage of cross-sectional surveys is that it provides data from a population at a particular time when compared with the other research designs (Creswell, 2013).

The study's target population included; 25 Safaricom foundation staff, 7 community health workers, and 720 mothers who delivered in Siakago sub-county hospital between the years 2021 and 2022 as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Target Population

Respondent	Population
Safaricom Foundation Staff	25
Community health workers	7
Mothers	720
Total	752

Source: Embu County & Safaricom (2021-2022)

The procedure of selecting a predetermined number of subjects from a predetermined population set is referred to as sampling. It is highly recommendable to the researcher when selecting a sample to ensure it is a true representation of the population (Orodho, 2009). The study used purpose sampling technique to obtain 7 Community health workers and 25 Safaricom staff to participate in this study.

A sample size of 256 mothers with children under 1 year was employed in the study, according to the sampling formula presented by Yamane (1967) and accepted by Israel (1992).

$$n=N/(1+N(e)^2) \dots\dots\dots 1$$

N is the size of the population, n is the sample size, and e is the level of accuracy or significance. Therefore: -

$$\text{Sample size} = 720 / (1+720(0.05)^2) = 256$$

Hence

The total sample size of respondents is 288

Table 2: Sample Size

Respondent	Population	Sampling Method	Sample size
Safaricom Foundation Staff	25	Census	25
Community health workers	7	Census	7
Mothers with children less than 1 year.	720	$n=N/(1+N(e)^2)$	256
Total	752		288

Source: Embu County and Safaricom (2021-2022)

Data for this study were collected using a structured questionnaire administered to 25 Safaricom Foundation Staff and 7 Community Health Workers, as they were deemed the most suitable respondents for questions regarding stakeholder engagement. Additionally, interviews were conducted with mothers having children under the age of 1 to gather information on the implementation of maternal and child health projects by Safaricom PLC in Siakago sub-county, Embu County, Kenya.

The collected data encompassed both qualitative and quantitative aspects. Quantitative data underwent a cleaning process to eliminate errors, followed by coding and recording into a spreadsheet for further analysis. The researcher employed the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26 for data analysis, utilizing descriptive and inferential statistics. The inferential statistics employed included correlation analysis and linear regression.

For the interview data, a thematic analysis approach was utilized. The interviews were transcribed and carefully reviewed to identify common themes and patterns within the responses. Codes were then assigned to the identified themes, facilitating the organization and categorization of the qualitative data. The researcher systematically analyzed the coded data to extract meaningful insights and draw conclusions.

By combining both quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques, this study aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the stakeholders' engagement and the implementation of maternal and child health projects by Safaricom PLC in Siakago sub-county, Embu County, Kenya.

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Questionnaire Return Rate

The study had a sample size of 288 participants, which included 25 Safaricom Foundation Staff, 7 Community Health Workers, and 256 mothers with children less than 1 year old. After data collection, a total of 32 respondents (25 Safaricom Foundation Staff and 7 Community Health Workers) successfully answered and returned the questionnaires, resulting in a questionnaire return rate of 11.1%. Furthermore, the study conducted interviews with 180 out of the 256 eligible mothers, resulting in an interview rate of 70.3%.

Stakeholder Engagement and Maternal and CHILD HEALTH PROJECT

The aim of the study was to find out how stakeholder engagement affected how effectively Safaricom carried out its projects for maternal and child health. The results are explained in Table

3

Table 3: Stakeholder Engagement and Maternal and child health project

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
We engaged the community members by asking them the status of health in Siakago	32	4.00	5.00	4.0625	.24593
Creating awareness of the importance of Ante Natal Check-ups	32	4.00	5.00	4.9375	.24593
Creating awareness of importance Post Natal Check-ups	32	4.00	5.00	4.0625	.24593
We engaged donors/sponsors to build and equip at least maternity wings	32	4.00	5.00	4.9375	.24593
To assist pregnant women in rural locations to access healthcare facilities, we enlisted donors and sponsors to supply ambulances.	32	4.00	5.00	4.9375	.24593
Provide new delivery beds that are adjustable in several positions which will not hurt mothers while they are delivering.	32	4.00	5.00	4.9375	.24593
We engaged the following county government of Embu	32	4.00	5.00	4.9375	.24593
We engaged the Amref	32	4.00	5.00	4.9375	.24593
We engaged the National government	32	4.00	5.00	4.9375	.24593
We engaged volunteers' community health workers	32	4.00	5.00	4.9375	.24593
Valid N (listwise)	32				

The study revealed that, on average, respondents actively engaged community members in Siakago by inquiring about their health, with a mean score of 4.0625. Additionally, a significant number of participants strongly agreed that they were involved in raising awareness of the value of prenatal exams (mean = 4.9375) and postnatal exams (mean = 4.0625). The median score of 4.0625 indicated that respondents recognized the importance of engaging community members by asking about their health.

Furthermore, participants strongly agreed (mean = 4.9375) that they reached out to project recipients through door-to-door campaigns, demonstrating a proactive approach to

disseminating information. The project's chain of command was generally perceived as producing clarity and accountability, as indicated by the mean score of 4.0000. However, opinions were divided regarding whether the lengthy hierarchical chain of command during the project phase impeded decision-making, with a mean score of 3.1250.

These findings have several implications for the successful implementation of maternal and child health projects. Firstly, they emphasize the importance of community engagement and active involvement in health-related matters. This highlights the need for ongoing communication and interaction with community members to ensure their participation and support. Secondly, the results underscore the significance of raising awareness about prenatal and postnatal exams, as this can contribute to improved health outcomes for mothers and children.

Additionally, the study indicates the importance of effective project management and clear accountability within the project's chain of command. This suggests the need for streamlined decision-making processes and efficient communication channels to ensure timely project execution. It is crucial to address any potential delays or obstacles that may arise due to hierarchical structures, as reflected in the differing opinions regarding decision-making.

By considering these implications, stakeholders can enhance the implementation of future maternal and child health projects. Through improved community engagement, awareness campaigns, and effective project management, they can promote positive health outcomes for mothers and children in Siakago and similar contexts.

IMPLEMENTATION OF MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH PROJECT

To determine how much respondents agreed with the opinions given in each item, as indicated in Table 4. the mean of each item was calculated.

Table 4 Implementation of Maternal and child Health Project

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
The types of maternal and childcare projects initiated in Siakago have helped in reducing the rate of mortality rate in Embu county	32	4.00	5.00	4.9375	.24593
Over 50% of women in Embu County have benefited from maternal health interventions by Safaricom Foundation	32	4.00	5.00	4.9062	.29614
After the completion of the project in the county they have been improvement with 80% skilled deliveries, reducing the risk of maternal and infant mortality	32	3.00	5.00	4.9062	.39015
Valid N (listwise)	32				

The findings presented in Table 4.5 provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of the maternal and child care projects initiated in Siakago by Safaricom Plc. The high mean scores indicate a strong agreement among participants that these projects have successfully contributed to a reduction in mortality rates in Embu County, benefiting both mothers and children. Moreover, the study findings reveal that over 50% of women in the county have benefited from

the maternal health interventions facilitated by Safaricom Foundation, emphasizing the positive impact of accessible and beneficial maternal health services.

These significant findings have important implications for the implementation of the Maternal and Child Health Project by Safaricom Plc. They demonstrate the successful execution of the project, ensuring that residents in Siakago have access to essential maternal and child health services. The firsthand accounts shared by Interviewees 1 and 2 further validate the positive impact and benefits experienced by individuals, reinforcing the effectiveness of the project in improving health outcomes.

"I benefited from MCH health facilities by getting education on good nutrition practices to enable good growth of my fetus"

"I benefit by getting tested HIV infections and was educated on how to prevent passing the virus to my baby"

Interviewee 13 and 25 had this say respectively;

"Have never benefited from Maternal Child health Facilities since my First-born child I delivered at home assisted by a mid-wife."

"No have never benefited from Maternal Child health Facilities since the health facilities are far from our homestead and there are issues on transport"

Interviewee 35 and 67 had this to say

"Yes it I have benefited because have been given a nutrition plan for my child when she was six months"

"Yes I have benefited because I was given family planning services"

Interviewee 45 and 100 had this to say;

"Yes was able to be given all immunization and vaccine at no cost"

"Yes I have benefited because when I was pregnant my child was breeched and the gynecologist was able to re position the baby"

Interviewee no: 14 and 18 had this to say about seeking additional services for your herself and the child at the health facilities after delivery

"No! because the health facility is far from where I live and I don't have financial resources for transportation means".

"No! because I delivered at home and I didn't know am supposed to visit the clinic"

Interviewee 100 and 109 had this to say respectively

"yes, I seek family planning services for myself after delivery and the health practitioner was very detailed on explaining to me the types of family planning methods and their side effects and helped me to pick the most appropriate for me."

"Yes, I seek the services of my child immunization which were offered at no cost."

Interviewee 27 and 48 had this to say respectively

"Yes, I went to the health facility to seek medical checkup for my child who developed flu after we were discharged from the facility and I received the drugs."

"Yes, I went to the facility to seek help after I realized I have got infections from the wound which was stitched after delivery and I received treatment and medical advice on how to care for the wound."

According to the report, Safaricom Plc's Maternal and Child Health Project has been successfully implemented. This was because the vast majority of moms commented favorably on the quality of the services they received at the Siakago health center. The project's goal of providing Siakago residents with access to maternity and child health services had been achieved. The results support the claims of mothers who said they had children at the Siakago MCH facility and had a positive experience. The results of this study are consistent with those of WHO (2019), which emphasizes the need of funding appropriate maternal-child health care initiatives because doing so will benefit Kenya's economy and directly lower poverty rates. Even while the Kenyan government has achieved some considerable progress toward achieving SDG target 3.1, which aims to dramatically lower maternal deaths and infant mortalities by 2030, many different factors have been at work. The government requests assistance from donors and well-wishers because it is unable to take all the necessary steps to improve MCH there.

The implementation of Safaricom Plc's Maternal and Child Health Project has been highly successful, as indicated by the positive feedback received from the majority of mothers who utilized the services at the Siakago health center. The project effectively accomplished its objective of providing access to quality maternity and child health services for the residents of Siakago. The study findings align with the World Health Organization's (WHO, 2019) recommendations, highlighting the importance of funding appropriate maternal-child health care initiatives, which can contribute to Kenya's economic growth and poverty reduction efforts.

Although the Kenyan government has made significant strides towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 3.1, which aims to reduce maternal and infant mortality rates by 2030, several factors continue to impact the overall progress. The government acknowledges the need for support from donors and well-wishers to address the diverse challenges associated with improving maternal and child health. Their assistance is crucial in ensuring that comprehensive steps are taken to enhance the quality and accessibility of maternal-child health care services.

In summary, Safaricom Plc's successful implementation of the Maternal and Child Health Project is evidenced by the positive experiences reported by mothers at the Siakago health center. This achievement aligns with global recommendations and emphasizes the importance of sustained funding for maternal-child health care initiatives. While the Kenyan government has made significant progress, external support remains necessary to further enhance maternal and child health care in the country.

Correlation

The analysis revealed that independent variables affected dependent variables. This was achieved using the correlation of Pearson. The findings are shown in Table 5

Table 5. Correlation

		Implementation of Maternal and child health Project	Stakeholder engagement
Implementation of Maternal and child health Project	Pearson Correlation	1	.983**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	32	32
Stakeholder engagement	Pearson Correlation	.983**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	32	32

The results show that stakeholder involvement influenced strongly the implementation of MCH projects ($r= 0.983^{**}$). Stakeholder engagement was found to influence the implementation of maternal and child health projects ($r= 0.983^{**}$). The findings concur with those of Heravi, Coffey, and Trigunaryah (2015) who found that active stakeholder participation in decision-making processes was crucial for the success of building projects in Malaysia. According to the research, the degree of stakeholder engagement was a key factor in the success and completion of the majority of initiatives. Through the inclusion of important persons and skills that positively impacted the projects' performance, such approaches in the projects' activities effectively led to better project performance. The results are consistent with those of Nashira (2021), who discovered that stakeholder involvement is crucial during the implementation phase and that excluding them can result in future, unforeseen difficulties.

Table 6: Coefficient estimate

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.976	.651		1.499	.141
	Stakeholder engagement	.900	.163	.810	-5.536	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Implementation of Maternal and Child health projects,

The study conducted a regression analysis to examine the relationship between stakeholder engagement and the implementation of maternal and child health projects. Consistent with prior research findings, the results showed a positive and statistically significant relationship between stakeholder engagement and the implementation of these projects.

The coefficient estimates of 0.900 for stakeholder engagement suggest that an increase in stakeholder involvement is associated with a higher likelihood of successful project implementation. This finding is consistent with previous studies that have highlighted the importance of stakeholder engagement in promoting project success and effectiveness (Heravi, Coffey, & Trigunaryah, 2015; Nashira, 2021; Sakwa & Ochieng, 2018). Stakeholders, including community members, donors/sponsors, and the identification of the right stakeholders through stakeholder analysis, play a crucial role in decision-making, program planning, and project execution (World Bank, 2019).

The statistically significant beta coefficient of 0.810 further supports the idea that stakeholder engagement has a substantial impact on the implementation of maternal and child health

projects. This finding aligns with the literature, which emphasizes the positive influence of stakeholder involvement on project performance and outcomes (Heravi et al., 2015; Musau & Kirui, 2018). Engaging stakeholders effectively enables the inclusion of diverse perspectives, expertise, and resources, leading to better project performance and improved health outcomes for mothers and children (Mwanga, 2015; Nashira, 2021).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the positive relationship between stakeholder involvement and the implementation of maternal and child health projects, as indicated by the strong correlation coefficient of 0.983, emphasizes the significance of stakeholder engagement in project success. The coefficient estimates of 0.900 for stakeholder engagement suggest that increasing stakeholder involvement enhances the likelihood of achieving successful project outcomes.

Additionally, the study's descriptive statistics reveal the need to carefully consider the structure of the project's chain of command. While the project phase's chain of command was generally perceived positively, there were divided opinions regarding the potential impact of a lengthy hierarchical structure on decision-making processes. This implies the importance of ensuring efficient decision-making by addressing any potential drawbacks associated with the project's organizational structure.

By recognizing and addressing these implications, stakeholders involved in maternal and child health projects can enhance project implementation and ultimately improve health outcomes for mothers and children. Engaging community members, promoting awareness, and involving stakeholders effectively will contribute to better project performance and successful delivery of healthcare services. Project planners and managers must consider these findings and implement strategies that prioritize community engagement, stakeholder involvement, and efficient decision-making processes in future initiatives.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings and implications of this study, several recommendations can be made to enhance the implementation of maternal and child health projects:

1. **Strengthen Stakeholder Engagement:** Given the significant positive impact of stakeholder involvement on project implementation, it is essential to prioritize and actively engage stakeholders throughout all stages of the project. This includes community members, donors/sponsors, government agencies, and relevant organizations. Strategies such as regular communication, collaborative decision-making, and involving stakeholders in project planning and evaluation should be implemented.
2. **Enhance Community Engagement:** The study highlights the importance of engaging community members in project activities. It is recommended to develop comprehensive community engagement plans that involve seeking community input, incorporating their perspectives, and addressing their specific healthcare needs. This can be achieved through methods such as community meetings, focus groups, and participatory approaches to ensure community ownership and sustainability of the projects.
3. **Promote Awareness and Education:** Raising awareness about the importance of maternal and child health practices, such as prenatal and postnatal exams, is crucial. Implementing targeted awareness campaigns using various channels, including community events, media platforms, and interpersonal communication, can effectively disseminate information and empower individuals to make informed decisions about their health.

4. Optimize Project Management: Project planners and managers should carefully consider the structure of the project's chain of command. While a positive perception of clarity and accountability was observed, concerns were raised about the potential impact of a lengthy hierarchical structure on decision-making processes. It is recommended to streamline the decision-making process, minimize bureaucratic hurdles, and foster a collaborative and agile working environment.
5. Conduct Stakeholder Analysis: Before project initiation, stakeholders should be identified through a systematic stakeholder analysis process. This will ensure that all relevant stakeholders are identified, their interests are understood, and appropriate engagement strategies are developed. Regular reassessment of stakeholders throughout the project lifecycle is also recommended to adapt to changing dynamics and address emerging needs.

By implementing these recommendations, stakeholders involved in maternal and child health projects can maximize the positive impact on health outcomes and contribute to the overall well-being of mothers and children in the community.

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