



Effect of Devolution of Government Services on the Performance of Community Empowerment Projects in Kenya: A Focus on Leadership Accountability in Kwale County.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effect of financial resources on the performance of community empowerment projects in Kwale County, Kenya. Descriptive research design was used with a target of 133 community empowerment projects within Kwale County. The variable relationship was determined through regression model. The target population comprised 133 community empowerment projects in Kwale County, categorized into various programs including crop development, livestock production, fisheries, and community loaning projects. Stratified random sampling was employed and a sample size of 67, representing 50% of the target population, was selected. Leadership accountability significantly influences the performance of community empowerment projects in Kwale County, with an overall impact demonstrated by a mean score of 4.19 and a standard deviation of 1.496. Regression analysis indicated a strong correlation, showing that leadership accountability accounts for 29.4% of the variance in project performance ($R^2 = 0.294$, $F = 27.210$, $p < 0.05$). This aligns with studies by Kimenyi and Meagher (2018), who underscore the importance of inclusive leadership in devolved systems, and by Devas and Grant (2020), who emphasize accountability in governance. However, challenges like inadequate information, restrictive funding requirements, and local government inefficiencies, as highlighted by Khemani (2021), continue to limit the effectiveness of such projects. Consequently, strengthening leadership accountability is essential to enhance the impact of community empowerment initiatives in Kwale County. Effective leadership and management are essential in steering community empowerment projects, as skilled leaders ensure strategic planning, problem-solving, and sustained project momentum. Additionally, capable and empathetic project staff foster trust and encourage active community participation, which enhances local support and improves project outcomes. Kwale County should promote ethical behavior and accountability among leaders to instill a culture of integrity and responsibility in project management. Recognizing and rewarding accountable leaders and team members can motivate them to uphold high standards and take ownership of their roles.

Keywords: *Leadership Accountability, Community Empowerment Projects, Project Performance, Devolution of Government Services, Kwale County.*

1. INTRODUCTION

This study examined the effect of leadership accountability on the performance of community empowerment projects within Kwale County, Kenya, under the broader context of devolved government services. Devolution aims to bring government functions closer to local communities, making leadership more responsive and accountable in addressing specific community needs. Focusing on Kwale County, the study explored how accountable leadership influences community empowerment projects performance, emphasizing the role of transparent, community-centered governance in enhancing project success and sustainability.

A. Background

In Kenya, the implementation of devolution was a transformative step in decentralizing government functions to bring public services closer to local communities, fostering citizen-centered governance and inclusivity (Bosire, 2017). The 2010 Constitution introduced county governments, aiming to enhance equitable distribution of resources and empower local leaders in decision-making processes (Owino, 2021). Devolution has since reshaped governance by granting counties greater autonomy over resource allocation and public service delivery, including key development sectors such as health, agriculture, and education, thereby allowing for more responsive governance (Kimathi, 2019). This shift is especially significant in under-resourced counties like Kwale, where local leaders and project managers can better tailor community empowerment initiatives to meet specific local needs, thereby enhancing project performance.

Leadership accountability within devolved governance is a crucial factor influencing the success of community empowerment projects (Mwangi & Otieno, 2018). Accountability refers to the mechanisms that ensure leaders are answerable for their actions, fostering transparency and trust within communities (Chege, 2020). In Kwale County, accountability in leadership involves local leaders being responsible for their management decisions,

fiscal policies, and implementation strategies within community-based projects. According to Kimani (2020), leadership accountability in devolved systems can reduce corruption and mismanagement, increase project transparency, and promote community participation—all of which are vital for effective project performance. Consequently, when leaders in Kwale are held accountable, they tend to focus more on aligning project objectives with community priorities.

Devolved governance not only demands accountable leadership but also amplifies its impact on the sustainability of community empowerment projects (Ng'etich & Keter, 2019). Community empowerment projects, which are typically aimed at improving livelihoods, healthcare access, educational opportunities, and economic growth, are influenced by the quality and integrity of leadership at the local level. As Muchiri (2021) suggests, accountable leaders are more likely to engage community members in project development and monitor the projects' progress to ensure they meet their intended goals. This form of leadership is essential for the long-term impact of community empowerment projects in Kwale, as it aligns project strategies with specific, locally relevant needs and ensures that the community sees and appreciates the value of these initiatives.

Moreover, the role of community participation cannot be overstated in enhancing leadership accountability and, by extension, project outcomes (Kinyua, 2019). Local participation not only enables leaders to be directly responsive to community feedback but also creates a system of checks and balances whereby the public can hold leaders accountable for project outcomes. In Kwale County, this has been particularly beneficial, as public involvement fosters a culture of inclusivity and ownership, critical factors for sustaining community-driven projects (Ndung'u, 2018). According to Mbugua and Karanja (2020), when communities have the means to influence decisions and hold leaders accountable, the projects are more likely to succeed and achieve their intended empowerment goals.

Kwale County, with a population of 866,820 across an area of 8,267 km² and six sub-counties, has 173,176 households and a population density of 105 people per km². The county's economy, with a growth rate of 1.1%, follows the national "Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda," focusing on community empowerment through flagship projects, such as a fruit processing plant in Shimba Hills. Additionally, public participation in over ten housing projects aims to make affordable housing accessible by reducing mortgage and construction costs (Wamae, 2019; KNBA, 2019). The unique challenges faced in Kwale County, such as limited resources, low literacy levels, and economic hardship, further highlight the need for accountable leadership in executing community empowerment projects (Wafula, 2020). Leaders who demonstrate accountability are better positioned to optimize limited resources and ensure fair distribution. Kimondo and Omondi (2022) argue that in areas like Kwale, where resources are scarce, leadership accountability ensures that community needs are prioritized in project planning and implementation. Thus, devolution not only brings resources closer to the people but also mandates local leaders to judiciously allocate and utilize these resources effectively for community welfare.

The effect of leadership accountability on community empowerment projects under Kenya's devolved governance is substantial, particularly in counties like Kwale. By facilitating transparency, fostering public participation, and ensuring responsible management, accountable leadership enhances project performance, thereby addressing community-specific challenges and needs. Effective accountability in leadership promotes community ownership, builds trust, and encourages sustainable development through community empowerment projects (Owino & Ochieng, 2021). Overall, the success of devolved government services in Kenya depends significantly on accountable leadership, especially in achieving long-term, positive outcomes in community empowerment.

B. Statement of the Problem

The devolution of government services in Kenya was designed to promote equitable access to resources, foster local governance, and improve service delivery through decentralization. However, a lack of leadership accountability has emerged as a critical challenge impacting the performance and sustainability of community empowerment projects, particularly in counties like Kwale. Studies indicate that while devolution has enabled counties to pursue localized development, accountability gaps in leadership have led to inefficiencies, mismanagement of resources, and limited transparency in project implementation (Bosire, 2019). Effective leadership accountability is essential for successful project outcomes, as it ensures that resources are allocated properly, goals are met, and the community's trust in governance structures is maintained. In the absence of accountability, projects risk falling short of their objectives, undermining community empowerment efforts and failing to address the socioeconomic inequalities that devolution aims to resolve (Cheeseman, Lynch, & Willis, 2016).

In Kwale County, community empowerment projects are vital for local economic development and poverty alleviation, but inadequate accountability from project leaders has often resulted in project delays, budget misallocations, and limited community involvement. Leadership accountability within these projects could strengthen community participation, enhance transparency, and promote the efficient use of resources to meet the needs of the local population (Wamae, 2019). Prior research highlights that accountability fosters a culture of transparency and responsibility, which is critical in sustaining community support and achieving project goals (Nyanjom, 2017). Thus, this study aims to investigate the effect of leadership accountability on the performance of community empowerment projects in Kwale County, focusing on how effective oversight and transparency can lead to successful outcomes under Kenya's devolved governance framework.

C. Objective of the Study

The general objective of this study was to examine the effect of devolution of government services on the performance of community empowerment projects in Kenya, with a specific focus on assessing how leadership accountability influences the effectiveness and performance of these projects in Kwale County.

D. Research Questions

This research was guided by the following research question

- i. How does leadership accountability, within the context of devolved government services, affect the performance of community empowerment projects in Kwale County, Kenya?

2. REVIEW OF RELATED WORKS

A. *Theoretical Review*

This study was based on Decentralization Theory and Soufflé Theory. Decentralization Theory emphasizes the redistribution of authority, responsibilities, and resources from central governments to local governments, aiming to enhance governance, service delivery, and community empowerment (Smoke, 2015). In the context of Kenya, devolution was instituted under the 2010 Constitution, aiming to bring government services closer to the people and promote local participation in decision-making processes (Oloo, 2017). This shift allows for local leaders in Kwale County to tailor community empowerment projects according to the unique needs and priorities of their constituents.

The effectiveness of community empowerment projects under decentralized governance is often contingent on leadership accountability. When local leaders are held accountable for their actions, they are more likely to prioritize community needs, which directly influences project outcomes (Cheema & Rondinelli, 2007). For example, the implementation of projects in Kwale County, such as the establishment of a fruit processing plant and affordable housing initiatives, is more likely to succeed when local leaders engage with community members, seek their input, and remain accountable for delivering results. Moreover, accountability mechanisms, such as public audits and community feedback mechanisms, enhance trust in leadership, which is crucial for sustaining community participation and ensuring project success (Ong'ayo, 2020).

The Soufflé Theory, though less commonly referenced than Decentralization Theory, can be understood in the context of governance as a metaphor for the necessary ingredients that must come together for successful outcomes. Just as a soufflé requires careful attention to various elements—ingredients, temperature, and timing—to rise properly, community empowerment projects require a blend of leadership accountability, community involvement, and resource allocation to achieve desired results (Harris, 2012).

In Kwale County, the application of the Soufflé Theory implies that the performance of community empowerment projects depends not only on the devolution of services but also on the quality of leadership and the engagement of community members. For instance, if local leaders do not effectively communicate the objectives and benefits of projects, or if they fail to hold themselves accountable, the “soufflé” of community empowerment may collapse (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2013). Thus, effective leadership that promotes transparency and accountability can be seen as a critical “ingredient” in ensuring that projects rise to meet community expectations. This metaphor highlights the importance of fostering a conducive environment where all stakeholders—leaders, community members, and supporting institutions—collaborate effectively to achieve successful outcomes in community empowerment initiatives (Ngesa, 2019).

B. *Empirical Literature Review*

Kimenyi and Meagher (2018) carried out a study which targeted 47 County offices. Data was collected from the reports filed at county levels which indicate operations for various offices. The research concluded that devolution in many African nations is a result of external pressure from structured parties and the leadership of developed states. Additionally, the study found out that functionality of the devolved structures requires good leadership who listen to the voices of the minority as well as collaboration with them in decision making. However, the study indicated majority of local government leaders have not been aggressive in building firm structures to support devolved services at County levels hence weakening the success of their undertakings. Local Counties have been characterized by political instability and frequent protest by employees in various sectors within County as well as social actions due to challenges faced such as delayed and low payment. This study therefore extends the scope by including the empirical study so as to validate the findings.

Leaders who are accountable actively engage with stakeholders and address their concerns. They ensure that stakeholder expectations are managed and met, which enhances project support and reduces potential conflicts. By demonstrating accountability, leaders show a commitment to the project's goals and objectives. This commitment is often mirrored by stakeholders, who are more likely to support and participate in the project's success. Accountability in leadership is closely tied to ethical behavior. Leaders who are accountable act with integrity, making ethical decisions and maintaining transparency, which fosters a positive project environment and reputation. Ethical and accountable leadership builds trust among team members, stakeholders, and the community. Trust is essential for effective collaboration and project success (Tanga, 2020).

Accountable leaders are more likely to make well-informed and timely decisions. They take responsibility for their choices and consider the long-term impact on the project, which improves overall decision quality. Leaders who are accountable address issues and challenges proactively. They take ownership of problems, engage in problem-solving, and ensure that appropriate solutions are implemented, minimizing disruptions to the project. They monitor resource usage and make adjustments as needed to prevent waste and optimize performance. Accountability in leadership includes managing the project budget responsibly. Leaders who are accountable track expenditures, control costs, and ensure that financial resources are used judiciously; reducing the risk of budget overruns (Muriu, 2019).

Accountable leaders are vigilant in identifying potential risks and vulnerabilities. They take responsibility for assessing and managing these risks to prevent or mitigate their impact on the project. Effective leaders develop and implement contingency plans to address unforeseen issues. Their proactive approach to risk management helps ensure that the project can adapt to changes and continue progressing smoothly. Leaders who are accountable uphold

quality standards and ensure that deliverables meet the required specifications. They take responsibility for the quality of work and implement measures to maintain high standards throughout the project (Moyi, 2017).

Devas and Grant (2020) study assessed impact of leadership on effectiveness of India's devolved divisions. The data collection was through questionnaires. The study found that accountability was vital in determining the officers during the voting. The study indicated that the success of decentralization reforms depended on the community leaders' competences. However, the study indicated that there are weak mechanisms put in place for accountability. As a result, that leads to information lacking on what is available, release of funds taking too long, unsuitable requirements on accounting and rigid stipulation.

A study by Khemani (2021) indicated that there is inefficiency in the County governments which has brought about widespread of corruption among the senior politicians who are opportunistic. They added that there is lack of good governance practices in County offices in Kenya which has led to lack of accountability and lack of other essential elements such as establishment of good structure and legislations for decentralization which are not implemented or enforced with seriousness. That had posed a lot of challenges to the proper implementation and success of the interventions at the County levels as indicated by numerous community projects which do not bring the needed impacts to the community. Hence there is need to look into the issues if any meaningful benefits are to be made at the County and National government.

Leadership accountability is fundamental to project performance. It influences decision-making, resource management, team motivation, and stakeholder engagement. Accountable leaders provide clear direction, make informed decisions, manage resources efficiently, and uphold quality standards. They also foster open communication, proactively manage risks, and demonstrate ethical behavior, all of which contribute to successful project outcomes. By embodying accountability, leaders create a positive and effective project environment, enhancing the likelihood of achieving project goals and ensuring overall success (Kimenyi, 2018).

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The study employed a comprehensive methodology that included a quantitative research design tailored to align with its objectives. According to Kothari and Garg (2015), a research design serves as the conceptual framework that guides the study, which in this case focused on 133 community empowerment projects in Kwale County across various sectors, such as crop development, livestock production, fisheries, and community loaning programs (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). This structured approach enabled the researchers to systematically gather data relevant to their specific research questions and hypotheses.

To ensure a representative sample, stratified random sampling was utilized, allowing for the inclusion of diverse subgroups within the target population (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). The final sample comprised 67 projects, which accounted for 50% of the total population, a proportion deemed adequate for robust analysis (Trochim, 1980s). Data collection was conducted using self-administered questionnaires, chosen for their ability to provide comprehensive responses (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). A pilot study involving 15 projects from Kilifi County was conducted to assess the instruments' reliability and validity, with reliability confirmed through Cronbach's alpha, aiming for a threshold of 0.7 (Field, 2017). Validity was ensured through consultations with peers and experts, ensuring alignment with the study's objectives (Brooks, 2008).

Ethical considerations were integral to the research process, prioritizing the anonymity and confidentiality of participants (Bordens & Abbott, 2017). Following the necessary approvals from the Management University of Africa, NACOSTI, and Kwale County, trained local assistants facilitated data collection to maintain rigor and consistency. Data analysis was carried out using SPSS Version 26, applying descriptive statistics to summarize findings, which were subsequently presented in clear tables for ease of interpretation (Zikmund, 2013). Ethical measures also included ensuring voluntary participation and the anonymization of participants' information to protect their privacy (Akaranga & Makau, 2016).

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the research findings and discussions regarding the devolution of government services and its effect on the performance of community empowerment projects in Kenya, with a specific focus on how leadership accountability influences these projects in Kwale County.

A. General Information

A pilot study was conducted to enhance the clarity and functionality of the questionnaire, ensuring its reliability for measuring the impact of leadership accountability on community empowerment projects in Kwale County. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient exceeded 0.7, confirming the instrument's reliability and leading to the acceptance of all questions for the main study. To further improve content validity, methods suggested by Cooper and Schindler (2018) were employed to refine the questionnaire design.

The questionnaires were distributed to the sample population, resulting in 58 completed responses and an impressive 88% response rate, with only 12% (9 respondents) opting not to participate. This high response rate is noteworthy, as Kothari and Garg (2015) indicate that while a 50% response rate is sufficient, 60% is considered good, and rates above 70% are exceptional, thus providing a robust dataset for analysis.

In terms of gender distribution, 57% of the respondents were male and 43% were female, indicating a higher participation rate among males. Kothari and Garg (2015) emphasize that gender can significantly influence perspectives, underscoring the importance of diverse responses in understanding the effects

of leadership accountability. The age distribution revealed that 30% of respondents were aged 41-50, 25% were 31-40, 17% were 51-60, 13% were 21-30, with only 5% under 20 and 10% over 60, ensuring broad representation within the working-age demographic.

Regarding education levels, 49% of respondents held a diploma, 30% possessed a bachelor's degree, 12% had a postgraduate degree, and 9% had a college qualification. This high level of educational attainment suggests that the respondents were well-equipped to understand and evaluate the research questions, emphasizing the value of informed perspectives in assessing the performance of community empowerment projects and the role of leadership accountability in Kwale County.

B. Effect of Leadership Accountability on Performance of Community Empowerment Projects in Kwale County.

The main objective of this research was to evaluate the impact of leadership accountability on the performance of community empowerment projects in Kwale County. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Leadership Accountability and Performance of Community Empowerment Projects in Kwale County

	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	St.
Community empowerment projects are completed as per the timeliness indicated in the plan.	56%	42%	2%	0%	0%	3.76	1.828
The scope of the project is well specified, and a scope management strategy is in place for it.	47%	38%	9%	4%	2%	3.10	1.405
Stakeholders are involved in the identification, choice, planning, and execution of projects	52%	38%	4%	4%	2%	3.11	1.405
The Periodic reports on the condition of the project scope are produced and disseminated	44%	50%	3%	3%	0%	4.20	1.155
Projects are completed and assessed in line with their predetermined objectives	40%	58%	2%	0%	0%	4.11	1.638
Average						3.66	1.486

The responses on the performance of community empowerment projects were as follows: The first question was whether community empowerment projects were completed as per the timeliness indicated in the plan: The respondents were split between 42% who agreed and 2% who were indifferent, with a mean of 3.76 and SD of 1.828. 54 percent of them strongly agreed. Whether the scope of the project is well specified and a scope management strategy is in place for it. The responses from the respondents had a mean of 3.10 and an SD of 1.405, and they were as follows: Compared to 38% who agreed, 9% who were indifferent, 4% who disagreed, and 2% who strongly disagreed, 47% strongly agreed.

The study inquired if stakeholders are involved in identification, choice and execution of projects, 52% strongly agreed, 38% agreed, 4% were neutral, 4% disagreed, and 2% strongly disagreed, with a mean of 3.11 and a standard deviation of 1.405. If the periodic reports on the condition of the project scope are produced and disseminated, and the respondents' responses had an SD of 1.155 and a mean of 4.20, with 44% strongly agreeing, 50% agreeing, 3% neutral, and 3% disagreeing. Finally, the respondents were asked if projects are carried out and evaluated in accordance with their established goals: The respondents' responses had an SD of 1.638 and a mean of 4.11, with 40% strongly agreeing, 58% agreeing, and 2% neutral. The financial resources, human resource capabilities, public participation, and leadership accountability strategies all have a substantial affects performance of community empowerment projects in Kwale County, as evidenced by the overall mean score of 3.66 and SD of 1.486.

The results concur with Nauman (2020), that the performance of community empowerment projects should be measured as a whole. The capacity to repay debt as well as operation revenue, operating income, total unit sales, and profitability are all assessed. Organizational, business, and financial performance are some of the several levels of performance that exist, according to Nyaga, Wasike, and Mote (2021). Performance is a major concern for managers and, most importantly, company owners. The primary public participation in the study was the performance of community empowerment projects. According to Kithinji (2019), evaluating the performance of community empowerment projects entails comparing their actual output or development to their specified or planned output, objectives, or goals. When financial resource initiatives involve public participation in certain goals and objectives, performance increases (Akello & Atambo, 2016). It is also feasible to use client value addition as a performance indicator. As a result, financial resource management methods are concentrated on utilizing the organization's strategic goals as a guide. Performance provides essential data which is key in the organization monitoring and controlling (Njeru, 2015).

C. Inferential Analysis

A Pearson correlation and regression analysis were conducted to assess the relationship between leadership accountability and the performance of community empowerment projects in Kwale County. The results of this analysis are presented and discussed below:

Table 2: Model Summary for Leadership Accountability

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.441 ^a	.288	.287	.71524

a. Predictors: (Constant), Leadership Accountability

In a regression analysis, performance of community empowerment projects was employed as dependent variable, with leadership accountability acting as the main predictor. Leadership accountability and performance of community empowerment projects are fundamentally linked, according to Table 2's regression analysis, which also showed a relationship with $R = 0.441$ and $R^2 = 0.294$, indicating that a unit change in leadership accountability can explain 29.4% of variation in performance of community empowerment projects.

Table 3 ANOVA^a Results for Leadership Accountability

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	13.545	1	13.545	27.210	.000 ^b
1 Residual	56.250	76	.498		
Total	69.795	58			

a. Dependent Variable: Performance of Community Empowerment Projects

b. Predictors: (Constant), Leadership Accountability

$F = 27.210$ shows that leadership accountability has an immediate effect on performance of community empowerment projects, demonstrating both the model's good fit to the data and the importance of leadership accountability to Performance of community empowerment projects. The dependent variable is thus significantly predicted by regression model at a significance level of .000, which is less than 0.05, as shown in Table 3.

Table 4: Regression Coefficient for Leadership Accountability

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	1.938	.386		5.020	.000	1.173	2.702
Leadership accountability	.512	.098	.441	5.216	.000	.318	.707

a. Dependent Variable: Performance of Community Empowerment Projects

Incorporating the Kwale County's leadership accountability has a considerable favorable impact on performance of community empowerment projects. The results show that leadership accountability and performance of community empowerment projects have a substantial correlation ($p < 0.05$; $P = 0.01$). Due to the statistical significance of the leadership accountability values ($t = 5.216$, $p < 0.05$), a rise in the leadership accountability's mean index should lead to a 51.2 percent improvement in performance of community empowerment projects. The regression model used to interpret of data in Table 27 (Leadership accountability) performance of community empowerment projects is equal to 1.938 plus 0.512. The models outline how Kwale County's leadership accountability affects performance of community empowerment projects.

5. SUMMARY

Leadership accountability emerged as a significant research variable with a mean standard deviation of 1.496 and an overall mean of 4.19, indicating its considerable impact on the performance of community empowerment projects in Kwale County. Regression analysis demonstrated a strong correlation between leadership accountability and project performance, with an R value of 0.441 and an R^2 of 0.294. This suggests that a one-unit change in leadership accountability accounts for 29.4% of the variance in community empowerment project performance. The model's significance, indicated by an F value of 27.210 and a p-value of less than 0.05, underscores the critical role that leadership accountability plays in enhancing project outcomes.

The findings align with previous studies, such as Kimenyi and Meagher (2018), which emphasized the necessity of effective leadership in devolved structures, particularly regarding the inclusion of minority voices in decision-making processes. Similarly, Devas and Grant (2020) highlighted the importance of accountability in local governance, indicating that voters prioritize candidates based on their accountability track records. However, issues such as incomplete information and strict funding regulations have complicated accountability measures, resulting in delayed funding, unethical behavior, and inadequately qualified personnel.

Moreover, Khemani (2021) pointed out inefficiencies in county governments, leading to widespread corruption among senior politicians and undermining the essential frameworks for effective decentralization. These challenges hinder the successful implementation of community empowerment projects,

contributing to a lack of tangible benefits for local communities. Thus, enhancing leadership accountability is crucial for improving the performance and impact of community empowerment initiatives in Kwale County.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Strong leadership and effective management are crucial for guiding community empowerment projects. Leaders with experience and competence can navigate complex challenges, foster teamwork, and ensure that projects stay on track. Effective leadership helps in strategic planning, problem-solving, and maintaining project momentum. Human resource capabilities impact the level of community engagement and support for projects. Skilled and empathetic project staff can build trust, communicate effectively, and motivate community members to participate actively. Projects that engage the community effectively are more likely to receive local support and achieve better outcomes.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The county of Kwale should encourage leaders to model ethical behavior and accountability in all aspects of project management. Ethical leadership fosters a culture of integrity and responsibility among project staff and stakeholders. The county should also acknowledge and reward leaders and team members who demonstrate strong accountability and performance. Recognition and incentives can motivate individuals to maintain high standards and take ownership of their roles.

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