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RESEARCH ARTICLE

INFLUENCE OF INFORMATION SHARING ON PERFORMANCE OF WOMEN-GROUP BEEKEEPING PROJECTS IN KAJIADO COUNTY -KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The involvement of stakeholders or lack of it in a project management can positively or negatively influence project performance. The participation of stakeholders in dissemination of information in project documents, meetings, public hearings and seminars is important in making them aware of the performance of the project. Hence the purpose of this study was to determine the influence of sharing information on the performance of women group beekeeping projects in Kajiado County – Kenya. Thus, the specific objectives of the research were to determine how information sharing through seminars, public hearings, documentation, bulletins and use of leaflets influence performance of the beekeeping projects. Cross sectional research design was used in a mixed mode research approach. Quantitative data was collected through open and crossed-ended questionnaires while qualitative data was collected through an interview guide, observation and focus group discussions. Research instruments were tested for validity through content- related, construct and face validity. Reliability was tested using coefficient Cronbach alpha. A sample size of two hundred and seventy-two (272) respondents was drawn from a target population of eight hundred and forty-five (845) members drawn from forty-two (42) registered women beekeeping groups and five key informants in Kajiado County, Kenya. Regression models and correlation data analysis were used, while non-parametric tests were used to test hypotheses in the study. Qualitative data was scrutinized using content analysis, categorization into themes, narrations of respondents' quotations and verbatim explanations. The results showed that majority of the women beekeeping projects depended on the use of seminars (88.21%) and public hearings (48.58%) as their tools of information sharing while relying on the use of farm visits with a mean of 3.95; extension workers with a mean of 3.48 and seminars or workshops with a mean of 3.89 as their methods of information sharing. Information sharing influenced project performance at $p > 0.05$. It is recommended that to achieve maximum project performance, it is necessary that Project Managers and Extension workers incorporate information sharing processes in their planning in order to achieve maximum project performance. Further research should also be conducted to investigate other factors that contribute to the successful performance of women beekeeping projects.

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INTRODUCTION

According to Neshkover *et al.,* (2012) there are several modes of information sharing such as sharing among individuals and organizations. However, the advent of wide distributed networks, intranets, cross-platform compatibility has facilitated the huge growth in global information sharing in organizations (Olander and Landin, 2008). Neshkova *et al.,* (2012) observed that community participation in projects involve the process or activity of informing the public and inviting them to have input in the decision-making processes. This can be done through approaches like seminars, public hearings, policy dialogues and feedback (Carlos *et al.,* 2015). Whereas minor decisions and emergency situations are generally not appropriate in information sharing process, project circumstances with far-reaching impacts warrant stakeholder's involvement. This should be done proactively, in order to avoid problems in the performance of projects. The focus is usually to share information and gather input from stakeholders who may have an interest in the project. Stakeholders shape projects from the early stages by ensuring resources are available to contribute to project success and provide insight regarding the probable reaction to a project's outcome. This facilitates project adjustments when necessary, and wins organizational support (PMBOK, 2013). The role of stakeholders often changes throughout a project life cycle. However, the willingness of stakeholders to perform the activities assigned to them during the project cycle greatly contributes to the success or failure of the project (World Bank, 2005). The benefits of sharing project information include a reduction in mistrust of the project process or increase in commitment to the project objectives and processes and heighten credibility of the project's outcome (Maina, 2013). The project information sharing and the level of involvement depend on the project's vision, mission and the reporting process to the management. Stakeholder information sharing in project planning and management can have remarkable influence on project performance and success. Gitonga (2010) noted that stakeholders' activities in production should aim at increasing productivity and quality of honey, beeswax and other hive products. The low

productivity in beekeeping is likely to adversely affect household incomes and employment. Leisyte, *et.al,* (2014) advised that project information sharing should be encouraged in order to promote improved management and production. Lewis, (2002) also noted that quality project management should start right from the beginning of the planning phase but not when the stakeholders are receiving the project outcomes. The advantage of quality involvement is to ensure fewer problems are created in the later stages of the management process, hence resulting in better final quality project delivery. When stakeholders are not involved, the projects may not generate the expected performance due to the absence of effective planning and management process (Jugdev, *et. al.,* 2006). Quality planning and management involving sharing information with beekeepers is the most important aspect as in any project and therefore requires maximum consideration.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the Pragmatism philosophy that was used to inquire into the experiences of the women in the beekeeping groups as the key stakeholders in this study (Kaplan, 1964). The study employed a mixed mode research approach where quantitative and qualitative approaches were employed (Gakuu, Kidombo and Keiyoro, 2018). The qualitative approach, on the other hand was used to obtain a holistic data on what went on in the women beekeeping projects. The approach suggested that social reality lies within the unit of research and that the act of investigating the reality had an effect on that reality, (Leedy, 2010). This approach paid considerable regard to the qualitative state of the individual beekeepers. The study used a combination of descriptive survey, co relational, cross-sectional and observational research designs. The choice of these designs was informed by the descriptive and inferential data that was required in the study (Gakuu *et al*., 2018). The descriptive method was concerned with finding out the what, where and how information sharing was applied in this study (Cooper and Schindler, 2003).The research investigated the relationship between the influence of information sharing as the independent variable, project leadership as a moderating variable and beekeeping project performance as a dependent variable. The cross-sectional design involved using the different women groups who shared common characteristics and recording information that was observed in the groups at any one given time. The target population in this study was forty-two (42) registered women beekeeping groups within Sub- Counties or Constituencies of Kajiado North, Kajiado Central, Kajiado East, Kajiado south and Kajiado West. Each registered group had twenty (20) members. The population size was therefore eight hundred and forty (840) beekeepers. The target population also included five (5) key informants who were purposefully selected from Extension officers, Non-governmental organizations, Donors/Financiers, Community Leaders and Administration Officers from the Sub-Counties of Kajiado County.

Table 1. Target population

Category	Target population
County Livestock Production Officer	1
Non-governmental officer	1
German Agro Action(Donor/Financier)	1
Maasai Community Leader	1
Local chiefs	1
Women Beekeepers	840
Total	845

Primary data was collected using questionnaires, interview guides and observations. Focus group discussions were held with the beekeeping women leaders and purposefully selected key informants in the beekeeping area who provided further data. Secondary data was collected from desk top review of existing publications and other authentic documents from Government Departments. The use of more than one method for gathering data ensured methodological triangulation. An interview guide was used to collect data from the key informants and the focus group discussions.

The data was collected, examined and checked for completeness and clarity. Descriptive, correlation and content methods of analysis were used to analyze the cleaned data. Quantitative data was coded, entered and analyzed through descriptive statistics using Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) versions 21 software programme. Frequency tables with varying percentages were used to present the findings. The qualitative data was analyzed by categorization into themes and narrations of respondents' quotations and verbatim explanations. This data was analyzed using thematic interpretation in accordance with the objectives of the study and thereafter presented in narrative excerpts within the report. Multiple regression models and correlation were used to show the nature and strength of relationships among the variables.

RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS

A total of 272 questionnaires were distributed to women beekeepers in all the five sub-counties namely Central, East, West, South and North sub-counties. The actual numbers of the returned copies of the questionnaire were 212, translating into 77.94 % return rate which was considered adequate, Dilliman, (2000).

Focus of Information sharing

The indicators for information sharing were presented in Table 2 on a Likert scale where SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, N =Neutral, D= Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree, No=Total number of respondents. Majority (3.95) of the respondents agreed that the information that was shared with the stakeholders focused on their interest on the project. The information that was shared was enough and properly distributed in leaflets and bulletins as shown with a mean score of 3.89. Other respondents agreed that information was presented in good time 3.84 mean score; and that information aimed at educating the stakeholders. The information was also easily understood during the public hearing as was indicated by a mean score of 3.74.

The results therefore, indicated that the focus was to provide an opportunity for the stakeholders to share information in which they had an interest in and that was useful for the project performance. The information was availed in good time; was enough; properly distributed and easily understood by the stakeholders.

Tools used to pass Information

The results showed that majority (88.21%) of respondents agreed that seminars were the most frequently used tools for passing information. The results were shown in Table 3; The respondents (88.21%) reported that the use of seminars was their preferred tool of information sharing, while 48.58% preferred use of public hearings. However, 41.51% used radio; 10.85% reported the use of leaflets/documents while 5.6% of the respondents reported to have used regular bulletins as their tool to pass information. The findings therefore revealed that majority of the women beekeeping projects depended on the use of seminars and public hearings as their tools of information sharing.

Methods through which information was shared within the projects

The consistent methods of information sharing were found to be through farm visits, seminars or workshops and use of extension workers. A few of the respondents disagreed on the use of radio, newspapers, Video, Facebook, short massages and regular bulletins as methods of sharing information. The respondents therefore agreed that most of the women beekeeping projects relied on the use of farm visits, extension workers and seminars/workshops as their main methods of information sharing.

Influence of Information sharing on performance of beekeeping projects

The study sought to establish how information sharing influenced performance of the women beekeeping projects. The results were

Table 2. Information sharing

	Degree of Agreement								
	SA	A	N	D	SD	No	%	Mean	ST Dev
Focuses on interests in the project	37.7	16.8	14.7	13.1	17.7	212	100	3.9481	0.7035
Motivates stakeholders	39.1	15.4	17.5	10.3	17.7	212	100	2.8915	0.6549
Information is available in good time	36.3	18.1	20.3	10.3	14.9	212	100	3.8396	0.6023
Leaflets and bulletins make distribution easy.	40.5	14	18.9	14.5	12.1	212	100	3.8915	0.6549
Information educates stakeholders	41.8	12.6	14.7	15.8	14.9	212	100	3.7915	0.6549
Information is easily documented	43	13.9	13.6	14.8	13.9	212	100	3.6915	0.6549
Information in public hearings is understood easily	18.9	14.7	21.3	25.1	19	212	100	3.7396	0.7558

The study sought to establish the methods that were used in information sharing. The results were shown in Table 4 Where SA= strongly Agree, A = Agree, N =Neutral, D= Disagree, SD =Strongly Disagree, No= Number of respondents.

Table 3. Tools used to pass information within the project

Tools used to pass information	Total Respondents	Number Responding to tools used.	Percentage
Seminars	212	187	88.21
Public hearings	212	103	48.58
Radio	212	88	41.51
Leaflets/document	212	23	10.85
Regular bulletins	212	12	5.66

Table 4. Methods through which information was shared

	Degree of Agreement								
	SA	A	N	D	SD	No	%	Mean	STDev
Extension workers	39	15.5	14.7	11.7	19.1	212	100	3.479	1.2065
Farm visits	40.4	14.1	17.5	8.9	19.1	212	100	3.952	1.3089
Radio, newspapers	37.6	16.8	20.3	8.9	16.3	212	100	1.330	0.4713
Video, Facebook, sms	41.8	12.7	18.9	13.1	13.5	212	100	1.230	0.4713
Seminars/workshops	43.1	11.3	14.7	14.4	16.3	212	100	3.896	1.1918
Regular bulletins	13.1	22.9	15.8	31.3	16.9	212	100	1.5	0.7696

Table 5. Influence of information sharing on performance of beekeeping projects

	Degree of Agreement								
	SA	A	N	D	SD	No	%	Mea	STD
Improves planning and execution of project	41.2	13.3	14.7	13.1	17.7	212	100	3.061	0.7027
Reduces time required for decision-making	42.6	11.9	17.5	10.3	17.7	212	100	3.117	0.7352
Increases quality of decisions made	39.8	14.6	20.3	10.3	14.9	212	100	3.061	0.7794
Reduces time required to complete an activity	44	10.5	18.9	14.5	12.1	212	100	4.721	0.8723
Influences control of activity costs	45.3	9.1	14.7	15.8	14.9	212	100	3.456	0.8384
Results to increased production.	39	11	18.7	13.4	17.9	212	100	3.556	0.8384

shown in Table 5. Majority (4.72) of the respondents strongly agreed that information sharing reduces the time required to complete project activities and increases production. The sharing results in increased production as shown by a score of 3.55. Other respondents agreed that information sharing reduces time required for decision-making as shown by a mean score of 3.12. Others agreed that information sharing improves planning and execution of project activities as was shown by a mean score of 3.06 and increases the quality of decisions 3.06. Other respondents strongly agreed that information sharing influences control of project costs and leads to better management of budgets resulting to increased production. From the findings it can be deduced that information sharing improves planning and execution of project activities; reduces time required for decision-making, increase the quality of decisions made; reduces the time required to complete an activity; influences control of activity costs, leads to the better management of budgets and results to increased production. An informant interview with the Administration officer from Eastern division revealed that information sharing in Kajiado Women beekeeping projects was carried out through; seminars, leaflets, bulletins, written documents and through public hearing.

DISCUSSION

The researchers found out that the stakeholders shared information with other participants who had an interest in the project and that useful information originating from the project management office was availed to project members. Leisyte *et. al.,* (2014) advised that information sharing should be encouraged in order to promote improved management and production. Such information should be provided in good time and it should be enough and properly distributed. These findings concur with those of Neshkova, *et. al.,* (2012) who observed that community participation involves the process or activity of informing the public and inviting them to have input into the decisions that affect them.

Further, the study findings showed that majority of the women beekeeping projects depended on the use of seminars (88.21%) and public hearings (48.58%) as their tools of information sharing while relying on the use of farm visits at a mean of 3.95; extension workers with a mean of 3.48, and seminars or workshops at 3.89 as their methods of information sharing. From the data on information sharing in projects it was concluded that information sharing eventually improves planning of project activities as was recorded with a mean of 4.72; it reduces time required for decision making 3.73; increases the quality of decisions made 3.56; reduces the time required to complete an activity 3.46; and influences control of activity costs 3.12 leading to better management of projects and resulting to increased production. The relationship between the dependent variable that is performance of projects and the independent variable using regression analysis showed that taking all other independent variables at zero, a unit increase in information sharing will lead to a sizeable increase 0.56 in performance of the beekeeping projects. At 5% level of

significance and 95% level of confidence, information sharing showed a .028 level of significance. Kruskal Wallis test on the data collected at 1 degree of freedom showed information sharing yielded a Chi-square value of 1.85 and the level of significance was 0.17 at p>0.05. Thus information sharing influenced project performance p >0.05. Lapenu and Pierret (2005) also found that information sharing is an integral part of a stepwise process of decision-making. They noted that at different project phases, involvement may take the form of sharing information, consulting, dialoguing, or deliberating on decisions. This is consequently a meaningful part of formulating and implementing good policy. Specific information sharing is part of an ongoing relationship among the different partners who are concerned in the project performance (Lapenu and Pierret 2005).

Conclusion

The researchers concluded that information sharing among the women beekeepers in Kajiado county eventually improves planning of project activities, reduces time required for decision-making, increases the quality of decisions made, reduces the time required to complete the activity and influenced control of cost of project activities . At the same time, it led to better management of budgets which resulted in increased production. The information shared among project stakeholders should be easily understood; and that the use of seminars, public hearings, extension workers, farm visits, seminars and workshops are favorable modes of information sharing. It is therefore concluded that availability of information enhances project performance in terms of increased honey production at 25-30kg per hive, higher quality in cleanliness, moisture content at 18-20% and higher incomes.

Recommendations

Based on this study, it was recommended that since the aim in Project Planning and Management is to achieve maximum project performance, it is necessary that Project Managers and Extension workers who undertake beekeeping projects incorporate information sharing processes in their planning in order to achieve maximum project performance. It was further recommended that further research should be conducted to investigate other factors that contribute to the successful performance of women beekeeping projects. In addition it was recommended that project managers should adopt effective and efficient information sharing processes as well as other practices that would enhance project performance.

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