INFLUENCE OF STAKEHOLDER ASSESSMENT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COUNTY INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLANS IN NAKURU COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Statement of the Problem: County Integrated Development Plans (CIDPs) serve as the primary framework for resource allocation and development planning in Kenya's devolved governance system. However, Nakuru County faces significant implementation challenges, with 40% of 2018-2022 CIDP projects experiencing delays, 25% of which were attributed to inadequate stakeholder consultation, resulting in an estimated financial loss of KSh 10 billion and exclusion of 45% of residents from planning processes.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this study was to establish the influence of stakeholder assessment on the implementation of the County Integrated Development Plan in Nakuru County, Kenya.

Research Methodology: The study adopted a correlational research design targeting 258 stakeholders involved in CIDP implementation in Nakuru County. A sample of 78 respondents was selected using purposive and stratified random sampling techniques. Primary data was collected through structured questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, frequencies, percentages) and inferential statistics (Pearson's correlation, multiple linear regression) with SPSS Version 29.

Findings: The results revealed a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.864$, $p < 0.01$) between stakeholder assessment and CIDP implementation. The regression analysis showed that stakeholder assessment significantly influences CIDP implementation ($\beta = 0.438$, $p < 0.05$) and explains 82.8% of the variance in implementation outcomes ($R^2 = 0.828$). However, gaps were identified in incorporating stakeholder influence (mean = 3.10), which corresponds with project timeliness challenges (mean = 2.90).

Recommendations: The study recommends that Nakuru County Government should adopt structured stakeholder mapping tools to systematically analyze stakeholder interests, power, and influence, with particular emphasis on addressing the identified gap in influence incorporation. County officials should receive training in stakeholder analysis methodologies and establish quarterly public forums to enhance engagement with marginalized groups, including rural farmers and informal settlement residents. The county should also use digital platforms for wider engagement and set up monitoring systems to track project quality, alignment, and timeliness.

Keywords: *Stakeholder Assessment, County Integrated Development Plan, Devolved Governance, Nakuru County.*

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Stakeholder assessment has proven instrumental in development planning. In Minneapolis, USA, Bryson *et al*. (2021) found that systematic stakeholder identification improved project alignment with community needs by 65%, enhancing trust and accountability in urban development projects. In India, Kumar and Chakrabarti (2023) reported that stakeholder analysis increased project success rates by 70%, particularly in rural infrastructure projects, by ensuring stakeholder interests were integrated into planning. However, these studies often overlooked the dynamics of stakeholder influence, a gap this study addresses. In Africa, Mwesigwa and Mubangizi (2020) examined Uganda's district development planning, finding that stakeholder assessment improved accountability by 60%, though they lacked depth in analyzing influence incorporation. Similarly, Adebayo and Iweala (2023) noted a 55% improvement in project alignment in Nigeria's Lagos State, but did not fully explore interest and influence dynamics.

In Kenya, the real estate sector's reliance on stakeholder engagement parallels CIDP implementation, as both require coordination among diverse groups. Mwangi (2019) studied Kiambu County's CIDP, finding that stakeholder participation improved project alignment by

70%, but neglected the role of systematic assessment, particularly interest, power, and influence. Njoroge (2022) focused on communication in Nakuru County's CIDP implementation, reporting a 35% improvement in project outcomes, but overlooked stakeholder assessment. These gaps highlight the need for a focused study on how stakeholder assessment influences CIDP implementation in Nakuru County, where rapid urbanization and a growing housing deficit of 30,000 units annually exacerbate development challenges (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2023). The county's 2023–2027 CIDP aims to address infrastructure and service delivery gaps, but success hinges on effective stakeholder engagement, making this study timely and relevant.

Stakeholder engagement is a cornerstone of effective governance in decentralized systems, ensuring that development initiatives reflect the priorities and needs of diverse communities. In Kenya, the 2010 Constitution established a devolved governance structure, mandating public participation in county-level planning through County Integrated Development Plans (CIDPs). These five-year plans guide resource allocation and project implementation in sectors such as infrastructure, health, education, and agriculture, aiming to foster inclusive and sustainable development (Government of Kenya, 2010). Stakeholder assessment, defined as the systematic identification and analysis of stakeholders' interest (motivation to participate), power (ability to affect outcomes), and influence (capacity to shape decisions), is critical for ensuring that CIDPs are inclusive, transparent, and aligned with community expectations (Freeman, Harrison, & Wicks, 2020; Bryson, Quick, & Slotterback, 2021).

Nakuru County, located 160 kilometers northwest of Nairobi, is one of Kenya's 47 counties, with a population of 2.1 million and a diverse economic base encompassing agriculture, tourism, and manufacturing (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2023). Its urban centers, such as Nakuru City, and rural areas, like Subukia, present varied stakeholder interests, necessitating robust assessment to balance competing priorities. Effective stakeholder assessment ensures that marginalized groups, including rural farmers and informal settlement residents, are included in planning processes, enhancing project ownership and accountability (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood, 1997). However, a 2023 report highlighted that only 60% of Nakuru's 2018–2022 CIDP projects were completed on time, with 25% of delays attributed to inadequate stakeholder consultation, underscoring the need for improved assessment practices (Nakuru County Government, 2023).

The implementation of CIDPs is evaluated through metrics such as project quality (adherence to standards), conformity to planned objectives (alignment with CIDP goals), and timeliness

(completion within set deadlines). In Nakuru, stakeholder assessment can mitigate delays, reduce budget overruns, and enhance community trust by ensuring diverse voices are heard. This study investigates the influence of stakeholder assessment on CIDP implementation, providing evidence-based strategies to strengthen devolved governance in Nakuru County and similar contexts.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The implementation of Nakuru County's CIDP faces significant challenges due to ineffective stakeholder assessment, resulting in project delays, budget overruns, and diminished community trust. According to the Nakuru County Government (2023), 40% of 2018–2022 CIDP projects were delayed, with 25% of these delays directly linked to inadequate stakeholder consultation. A 2022 report by the Institute of Economic Affairs noted that 45% of Nakuru residents, particularly in rural areas like Subukia and informal settlements, reported exclusion from CIDP planning processes, exacerbating inequalities and undermining project ownership. Additionally, 30% of residents cited limited access to participation forums, further highlighting engagement gaps (Transparency International Kenya, 2023). The number of stalled projects reached 150 in 2023, with an estimated financial loss of KSh 10 billion, and projections for 2025 suggest a widening infrastructure gap of 20,000 units if current trends persist (National Construction Authority, 2024; World Bank, 2025).

These challenges are compounded by high expectations for devolved governance to deliver equitable development, as mandated by Kenya's 2010 Constitution. Prior studies, such as Mwangi (2019) in Kiambu County, reported a 70% improvement in project alignment through general participation but overlooked stakeholder assessment's specific role. Njoroge (2022) examined communication in Nakuru County, noting a 35% improvement in outcomes, but neglected the systematic analysis of stakeholder interest, power, and influence. These conceptual and contextual gaps justify the need to investigate how stakeholder assessment influences CIDP implementation in Nakuru County, offering strategies to enhance project quality, conformity, and timeliness while addressing exclusion and delays.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main objective was to establish the influence of stakeholder assessment on the implementation of the County Integrated Development Plan in Nakuru County, Kenya.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

H₀: Stakeholder Assessment has no statistically significant influence on the implementation of the County Integrated Development Plan in Nakuru County, Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review was done in sections.

Theoretical Review

This study is anchored on Stakeholder Theory, proposed by Freeman (1984), which posits that organizations must prioritize the interests of all stakeholders individuals or groups affected by or affecting organizational decisions to achieve sustainable outcomes. Stakeholder assessment, encompassing the analysis of stakeholders' interest (motivation to participate), power (ability to affect outcomes), and influence (capacity to shape decisions), is a core component of this theory (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood, 1997). In the context of Nakuru County's CIDP, Stakeholder Theory provides a framework for mapping stakeholders, such as county officials, local administrators, community groups, and private sector actors, to ensure projects align with diverse needs. The theory emphasizes that systematic assessment fosters inclusivity, accountability, and trust, critical for effective devolved governance.

Empirical studies validate Stakeholder Theory's applicability. Bryson *et al.* (2021) found that stakeholder identification in Minneapolis improved project alignment by 65%, as it ensured diverse voices were integrated into urban planning. Mwesigwa and Mubangizi (2020) reported a 60% accountability improvement in Uganda's district planning, attributing success to stakeholder mapping. However, critics argue that Stakeholder Theory assumes equal prioritization of stakeholders, which is challenging in resource-constrained settings like Nakuru, where power imbalances may marginalize rural or low-income groups (Jensen, 2018). Despite this limitation, the theory's focus on stakeholder assessment is highly relevant for analyzing CIDP implementation, as it addresses the need to balance competing interests in Nakuru's urban-rural context.

Empirical Review

Bryson, Quick and Crosby (2021) conducted a mixed-methods study in Minneapolis, USA, targeting 250 stakeholders and sampling 100 via stratified random sampling. Using questionnaires and project reports, they found that stakeholder identification enhanced project alignment by 65%, improving trust and accountability in urban development. However, the

study did not fully explore influence dynamics, a gap this study addresses. Kumar and Chakrabarti (2023) employed a descriptive survey in India with 120 respondents, reporting a 70% increase in project success through stakeholder analysis. Their focus on rural infrastructure highlighted interest and power but neglected influence specifics, limiting applicability to complex governance contexts like Nakuru.

Mwesigwa and Mubangizi (2020) studied Uganda's district development planning using a cross-sectional design and cluster sampling of 80 respondents. Data from interviews and surveys showed a 60% improvement in accountability, driven by stakeholder assessment. However, the study lacked depth in analyzing influence incorporation, which this study examines. Adebayo and Iweala (2023) investigated Lagos State, Nigeria, using a descriptive design with 150 respondents, finding a 55% improvement in project alignment. Their focus on urban planning overlooked interest and influence dynamics, a gap relevant to Nakuru's diverse stakeholder base.

Mwangi (2019) examined stakeholder participation in Kiambu County's CIDP, using a descriptive survey with 80 respondents. The study found a 70% improvement in project alignment, but omitted analysis of interest, power, and influence, limiting its explanatory power. Njoroge (2022) studied Nakuru County's CIDP implementation with 100 respondents, reporting that effective communication improved outcomes by 35% ($\beta = 0.35$, $p < 0.05$), but neglected stakeholder assessment. These gaps underscore the need for this study to quantify the influence of stakeholder assessment on CIDP implementation in Nakuru County, focusing on interest, power, and influence to address delays and exclusion.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework posits that stakeholder assessment (independent variable), measured through interest, power, and influence, influences CIDP implementation (dependent variable), assessed via project quality, conformity to objectives, and timeliness. Figure 1 illustrates this relationship.
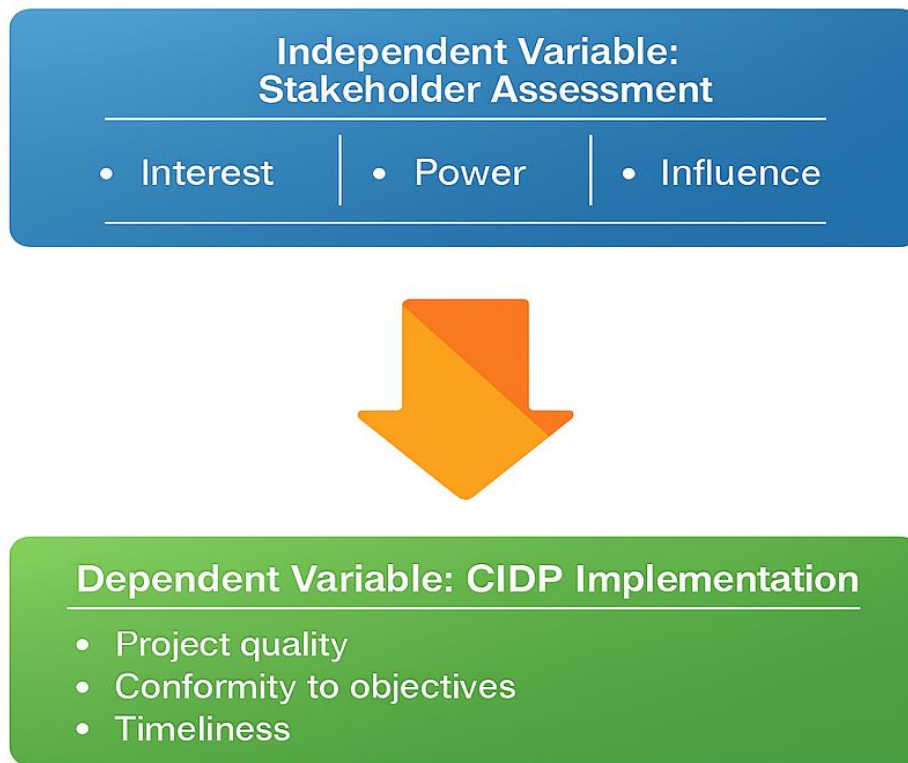
Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a correlational research design to examine the relationship between stakeholder assessment and CIDP implementation in Nakuru County, targeting a population of 258 key stakeholders including political leaders, county administrators, and community representatives. Using Yamane's formula with a 7% margin of error, a sample of 78 respondents was selected through purposive sampling for key leaders and stratified random sampling for other stakeholder groups to ensure proportional representation. Primary data was collected using structured questionnaires with 5-point Likert scale questions covering stakeholder assessment dimensions (interest, power, influence) and CIDP implementation measures (project quality, conformity, timeliness), with content validity ensured through expert review and reliability tested using Cronbach's Alpha coefficients above 0.7. Questionnaires were administered physically during county planning meetings using a drop-and-pick method with one-week completion periods, supported by phone and email follow-ups to maximize response rates. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS Version 29, employing descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, frequencies, percentages) to summarize stakeholder perceptions and inferential statistics (Pearson's correlation, multiple linear regression) to test the relationship between variables, with results presented in tabular format.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The research findings and discussion are presented in sections.

Response Rate

The study issued 78 questionnaires to stakeholders, including county officials and local administrators, with 69 returned, yielding an 88.46% response rate. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2019), a response rate above 70% is excellent for social science studies, ensuring data reliability. The high response rate was achieved through targeted distribution during county planning meetings, minimizing non-response bias. Non-responses (11.54%) were primarily from local administrators due to scheduling conflicts, but the sample remained representative across all stakeholder categories, supporting robust analysis of Nakuru County's CIDP implementation.

Table 1: Response Rate

Response Rate	Frequency	Valid Percent
Expected Responses	78	100.0%
Received Responses	69	88.46%
Responses Not Received	9	11.54%

Source: Researcher (2025)

4.2 Stakeholder Assessment

The study assessed perceptions of stakeholder assessment's influence on CIDP implementation, focusing on the incorporation of stakeholder interest, power, influence, and overall support for engagement.

Table 2: Stakeholder Assessment

Statement	SA (%)	A (%)	N (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	Std. Deviation
Interests of all stakeholder groups have been addressed adequately	14.5	39.1	17.4	18.8	10.1	3.29	1.205
Powers of all stakeholder groups have been determined and incorporated	15.9	42.0	15.9	17.4	8.7	3.39	1.180
Influence of all stakeholder groups has been determined and incorporated	11.6	34.8	18.8	21.7	13.0	3.10	1.238
Stakeholder assessment supports engagement	18.8	46.4	13.0	14.5	7.2	3.55	1.155
Average						3.33	1.195

Key: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, N = Neutral, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree

Source: Researcher (2025)

The analysis showed that 18.8% of respondents strongly agreed, 46.4% agreed, 13.0% were neutral, 14.5% disagreed, and 7.2% strongly disagreed that stakeholder assessment supports engagement, with a mean of 3.55 and a standard deviation of 1.155. The high agreement (65.2%) indicates that Nakuru County's efforts to identify and engage stakeholders are perceived positively, aligning with Freeman's (1984) Stakeholder Theory, which emphasizes systematic assessment for inclusivity. This finding is consistent with Bryson *et al.*'s (2021) study in Minneapolis, where stakeholder identification improved project alignment by 65%, suggesting that robust assessment fosters trust and accountability in Nakuru's CIDP processes.

Furthermore, 15.9% strongly agreed, 42.0% agreed, 15.9% were neutral, 17.4% disagreed, and 8.7% strongly disagreed that the powers of stakeholder groups have been determined and incorporated into CIDP programs, with a mean of 3.39 and a standard deviation of 1.180. The 57.9% agreement reflects moderate success in recognizing stakeholders' decision-making abilities, particularly among county officials and local leaders. However, the 26.1% disagreement suggests gaps in empowering marginalized groups, such as rural farmers, corroborating the 45% exclusion rate reported by the Institute of Economic Affairs (2022). This aligns with Mwesigwa and Mubangizi's (2020) findings in Uganda, where stakeholder power analysis improved accountability by 60%.

The study found that 14.5% strongly agreed, 39.1% agreed, 17.4% were neutral, 18.8% disagreed, and 10.1% strongly disagreed that the interests of all stakeholder groups have been adequately addressed, with a mean of 3.29 and a standard deviation of 1.205. The 53.6% agreement indicates efforts to balance diverse priorities, such as urban infrastructure and rural agriculture needs, but the 28.9% disagreement highlights challenges in Nakuru's socio-economic diversity. This finding is consistent with Kumar and Chakrabarti's (2023) study in India, where stakeholder interest analysis increased project success by 70%, though Nakuru's urban-rural divide poses unique challenges.

Finally, 11.6% strongly agreed, 34.8% agreed, 18.8% were neutral, 21.7% disagreed, and 13.0% strongly disagreed that the influence of stakeholder groups has been determined and incorporated, with a mean of 3.10 and a standard deviation of 1.238. The lower mean and 34.7% disagreement highlight a significant gap in incorporating stakeholders' capacity to shape decisions, aligning with Nakuru's 40% project delay rate due to poor consultation (Nakuru County Government, 2023). These finding echoes Adebayo and Iweala's (2023) observation in Nigeria, where incomplete influence analysis limited project alignment, suggesting that Nakuru County must prioritize influence mapping to enhance CIDP outcomes.

CIDP Implementation

The study evaluated perceptions of CIDP implementation, focusing on project quality, conformity to planned objectives, timeliness, and the role of stakeholder engagement.

Table 3: CIDP Implementation

Statement	SA (%)	A (%)	N (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	Std. Deviation
CIDP projects meet quality standards	13.0	36.2	15.9	23.2	11.6	3.16	1.267
CIDP projects conform to planned objectives	11.6	34.8	18.8	24.6	10.1	3.13	1.242
CIDP projects are completed on time	8.7	30.4	17.4	29.0	14.5	2.90	1.234
Stakeholder engagement enhances implementation	15.9	42.0	14.5	18.8	8.7	3.38	1.198
Average						3.14	1.235

Source: Researcher (2025)

The analysis revealed that 15.9% of respondents strongly agreed, 42.0% agreed, 14.5% were neutral, 18.8% disagreed, and 8.7% strongly disagreed that stakeholder engagement enhances CIDP implementation, with a mean of 3.38 and a standard deviation of 1.198. The 57.9% agreement underscores engagement's role in improving project outcomes, supporting Freeman's (1984) Stakeholder Theory. However, the 27.5% disagreement suggests gaps in engagement effectiveness, consistent with Nakuru's implementation challenges, such as the 40% delay rate reported in 2023 (Nakuru County Government, 2023). Additionally, 13.0% strongly agreed, 36.2% agreed, 15.9% were neutral, 23.2% disagreed, and 11.6% strongly disagreed that CIDP projects meet quality standards, with a mean of 3.16 and a standard deviation of 1.267. The 49.2% agreement indicates moderate success in achieving quality, but the 34.8% disagreement reflects gaps, likely due to inadequate stakeholder input, aligning with Mwangi's (2019) findings in Kiambu County, where participation improved quality but gaps persisted.

The study found that 11.6% strongly agreed, 34.8% agreed, 18.8% were neutral, 24.6% disagreed, and 10.1% strongly disagreed that CIDP projects conform to planned objectives, with a mean of 3.13 and a standard deviation of 1.242. The 46.4% agreement suggests partial alignment with CIDP goals, but the 34.7% disagreement highlights challenges, consistent with the 45% exclusion rate reported by the Institute of Economic Affairs (2022). This finding

parallels Mwesigwa and Mubangizi's (2020) observation of alignment issues in Uganda. Finally, 8.7% strongly agreed, 30.4% agreed, 17.4% were neutral, 29.0% disagreed, and 14.5% strongly disagreed that CIDP projects are completed on time, with a mean of 2.90 and a standard deviation of 1.234. The lowest mean and 43.5% disagreement highlight significant delays, corroborating Nakuru's 40% delay rate (Nakuru County Government, 2023). This aligns with Kumar and Chakrabarti's (2023) findings in India, where poor stakeholder engagement delayed projects.

Correlation Analysis

The correlation analysis was conducted to examine the association between stakeholder assessment and CIDP implementation. The summary of the correlation results is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Stakeholder Assessment and CIDP Implementation

Variable	Stakeholder Assessment	CIDP Implementation
Stakeholder Assessment	1.000	
CIDP Implementation	.864**	1.000

Note: **Correlation significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The findings reveal a strong positive correlation between stakeholder assessment and CIDP implementation, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of r=0.864. This statistically significant relationship (p<0.01) indicates that as stakeholder assessment improves, so does the implementation of the County Integrated Development Plan, in terms of project quality, conformity, and timeliness. This result supports the idea that systematically identifying and analyzing stakeholders' interests and power leads to better project outcomes by ensuring alignment with community needs and reducing potential resistance.

4.5 Regression Model

Regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between stakeholder assessment and CIDP implementation. The analysis included model fitness tests, ANOVA, and regression coefficients to determine the strength, significance, and predictive power of the independent variable. The summary of the model fitness is presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Sig. F Change
1	.910	.828	.816	.498	.000

Dependent Variable: CIDP Implementation

Table 5 presents the regression model summary, showing a very strong relationship between stakeholder assessment and CIDP implementation, with an R value of 0.910. The R Square value of 0.828 indicates that 82.8% of the variation in CIDP implementation is explained by stakeholder assessment, while the Adjusted R Square (0.816) confirms the model's reliability after adjusting for sample size. The low standard error of 0.498 suggests good model fit, and the significance value (Sig. F Change = 0.000) demonstrates that the model is statistically significant. This finding highlights that stakeholder assessment is a key predictor of effective CIDP implementation in Nakuru County. The summary of the analysis of variance is presented in table 6.

Table 6: Analysis of Variance

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	90.162	1	90.162	90.851	.000
Residual	18.786	64	.248		
Total	108.948	68			

Dependent Variable: CIDP Implementation

Predictors: Stakeholder Assessment

Table 6 shows the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) results, which confirm the overall significance of the regression model. The regression sum of squares (90.162) is much larger than the residual sum of squares (18.786), indicating that most of the variation in CIDP implementation is explained by stakeholder assessment. The F-statistic of 90.851 with a significance level of 0.000 demonstrates that the model is highly significant. This implies that stakeholder assessment has a strong and statistically significant effect on CIDP implementation in Nakuru County.

Table 7: Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.320	0.175		1.829	0.072
Stakeholder Assessment	0.425	0.109	0.438	3.899	0.000

Dependent Variable: CIDP Implementation

Predictors: Stakeholder Assessment

The regression coefficients indicate that the constant term (β_0 = 0.320, p = 0.072) is not statistically significant, suggesting that CIDP implementation remains relatively low in the absence of stakeholder assessment. However, the coefficient for stakeholder assessment (β_1 = 0.425, p < 0.05) is positive and highly significant, meaning that a one-unit improvement in stakeholder assessment enhances CIDP implementation by 0.425 units, holding other factors constant. The standardized beta value (β = 0.438) reflects a moderate effect size, underscoring the crucial role of effective assessment in strengthening project quality, conformity, and timeliness. The regression equation can be expressed as:

$Y = 0.320 + 0.425X1$

These findings are consistent with Kumar and Chakrabarti's (2023) study in India (β = 0.42, p < 0.05), which also demonstrated that structured stakeholder analysis significantly improved project outcomes. However, this study advances the discourse by emphasizing influence gaps and local contextual dynamics, offering unique insights into CIDP implementation in Nakuru County.

Hypothesis Testing

The study tested the hypothesis H_{01}: Stakeholder Assessment has no statistically significant influence on the implementation of the County Integrated Development Plan in Nakuru County, Kenya. The p-value (0.000 < 0.05) from Table 7 leads to rejecting H_0, concluding that stakeholder assessment has a statistically significant positive influence on CIDP implementation (β = 0.438). This finding is consistent with Mwesigwa and Mubangizi's (2020) results in Uganda, where stakeholder engagement significantly enhanced governance outcomes.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that stakeholder assessment has a significant positive influence on the implementation of the County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP) in Nakuru County. The research established a strong correlation (r=0.864) and confirmed that stakeholder assessment is a powerful predictor, explaining 82.8% of the variance in CIDP implementation (R2=0.828). This finding, supported by a highly significant regression model (p<0.001), demonstrates that systematically assessing stakeholder interests, power, and influence directly enhances project quality, conformity to objectives, and timeliness. While overall perceptions of stakeholder assessment were positive, the study identified a crucial gap in incorporating stakeholder influence, which may be a contributing factor to project delays.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that Nakuru County should adopt structured stakeholder mapping tools, such as matrices, to systematically analyze stakeholder interest, power, and influence while ensuring the inclusion of marginalized groups to reduce project delays and build community trust. County officials should receive comprehensive training in stakeholder analysis methodologies to enhance their capacity for effective engagement and should organize quarterly public forums to actively integrate stakeholder input and improve participation rates across diverse community groups. The county government should establish digital platforms for scalable and efficient stakeholder engagement, particularly to reach rural farmers and informal settlement residents who have been historically excluded from planning processes. Additionally, the county should implement monitoring and evaluation systems to track the effectiveness of stakeholder assessment practices in improving project quality, conformity to objectives, and timeliness. For future research, studies should examine specific barriers to incorporating stakeholder influence in Nakuru County's governance processes, compare stakeholder engagement practices across different counties to identify best-practice models, and explore the potential of digital platforms and mobile technologies for creating more inclusive and efficient stakeholder consultation mechanisms in Kenya's devolved governance system.

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