



Vol. 6, Iss. 1 (2025), pp 397 – 408, May 3, 2025. www.reviewedjournals.com, ©Reviewed Journals

INFLUENCE OF STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION ON THE PERFORMANCE OF DAIRY COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES PROJECTS IN NAKURU COUNTY, KENYA

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Accepted: April 23, 2025

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.61426/business.v6i1.334>

ABSTRACT

In Kenya, Vision 2030 recognizes the importance of the agricultural sector as being among the core areas that will boost the economy to the next level. One of the sub-sections is Dairy farming, which is part of agricultural production. To increase the dairy farmers' market access, dairy cooperative societies were formed by farmers. However, the project performance of the cooperative societies has been wanting. For instance, there have been low profitability levels, a decrease in the quantity and quality of dairy feeds, poor provision of service delivery and poor market infrastructure. This study focused on the influence of stakeholder participation on the performance of the dairy cooperative society projects in Nakuru County, Kenya. The study was anchored on stakeholders' theory. The study used both descriptive and explanatory designs. The descriptive and explanatory research techniques were adopted, and then a census was used to pick all 17 dairy cooperative societies' projects, which formed the study's target population. A total of 119 respondents represented a sample size who were obtained by employing a simple sampling procedure. The selected respondents included 1 project manager and 6 team members per project. The study relied on primary data. Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were both used to analyze the data and depicted by the use of figures and tables. The results showed that stakeholder participation had a strong and significant relationship with performance ($P < 0.05$). The study concluded that organizations should focus on encouraging stakeholder participation in order to improve performance. This study was beneficial to dairy cooperative managers, stakeholders, scholars, and academicians.

Key Words: *Communication, Roles and Responsibilities, Consultations*

CITATION: Maswili, C. M. (2025). Influence of stakeholder participation on the performance of dairy cooperative societies' projects in Nakuru County, Kenya. *Reviewed Journal International of Business Management*, 6 (1), 397 – 408. <https://doi.org/10.61426/business.v6i1.334>

INTRODUCTION

Projects that had limited or failed to involve the stakeholders, in most cases they rarely succeed. In this case, the stakeholders involve a specific group of people, individuals, or even organizations which are affected or have some influence on the performance of the project. Tengan and Aigbavboa (2021) active stakeholders' participation or involvement from the planning stage to the stage of implementation is important to ensure the success of any project. The project managers and sponsors agree that stakeholders' participation is vital for project success (Dwivedi & Dwivedi, 2021).

Martinez and Olander (2015) stated that; the involvement of stakeholders is seen to be an important dimension in monitoring and evaluation strategy. Stakeholder participation is vital in ensuring the credibility of decision making process. The process of stakeholder participation becomes a democratic process where the opinions of stakeholders are taken into consideration. Therefore, this dimension plays a vital role in project performance.

O'Halloran (2014) indicated that stakeholders' participation is directly associated with project performance. In India, Dwivedi and Dwivedi (2021) affirmed that stakeholders' participation engagement enhanced the efficiency and effectiveness in their expansive environmental society. This has proved to be the reason there is the need and widespread aspiration worldwide to strengthen the involvement of stakeholders' participation in projects. As per Hirpa, Ralston, Deressa, and Collin (2022) involvement of stakeholders' participation is equivalent to the normative justification, which is proclaimed that justification and transparent participation are associated with human values and their rights. This is in the form of social justice, equity, equality and democratic rights.

Observation by Tengan and Aigbavboa (2021) from Ghana affirmed that stakeholder participation has been highly recommended for project successful implementation. This practice aligns with the contribution of Okwang (2017) from Uganda, who indicated that stakeholders' participation in any project highlights the benefits accrued by their engagement. This fosters a successful implementation and enhances the performance of the project through incorporating local skills, knowledge, as well as other valuable resources. However, according to the study carried out in Kenya by Bellion (2020) indicated that stakeholder participation has minimal or no influence on the project performance.

Performance of Projects

Project performance is ascertained by monitoring and evaluating the progress. The success of a project is evaluated, and this helps project management in making corrective and inclusive decision that captures the views of all stakeholders. Project performance is determined by focusing on its operational effectiveness, project's objective achievement, return on asset, quality of the goods or service, completion time and achieving the deadline on scheduled time (Gaibo & Mbugua, 2019). Thompson, Pulleyblank *et al.*, (2016)

There are different project performance measurements, but time and cost have been found to be more predominant dimensions adopted by a majority of the studies. For instance, a study by Thompson, Pulleyblank, Parrott and Essex (2016) adopted cost effectiveness as the key project performance indicator. The indicator was preferred because the project goals need to be attained at a low cost. Therefore, this would allow the management to do a comparison between the cost incurred versus the benefits accrued from the project in monetary value.

In Pakistan, cost, time, and quality have been considered the three most key indicators to determine project performance (Nisa, Javed, & Akhtar, 2015). A study by Hubert and Mulyungi (2018) adopted output, deadline, cost effectiveness, and goal attainment as the factors to measure project performance. A study in Rwanda by Erasmus (2018) employed cost effectiveness, operational efficiency as major variables to measure the success of the rice farmers' cooperative society's project performance. On the other hand, a study conducted in Kenya focusing on project customer satisfaction, project profitability, and project growth by Kimeu (2021) used the indicators to measure and determine project performance. On the same note, the time of project completion,

costs of operation, and quality of the product were adopted to determine project performance by Yusuf, Otonde and Achayo (2017).

Therefore, the current study adopted operation costs, operation efficiency, output quality and completion time as the indicators to measure project performance. The study preferred these indicators because they have been used widely by different scholars in different studies.

Dairy Cooperative Societies Projects, Nakuru County

The county of Nakuru has roughly a population of 2.2 million with a coverage of 7,500.0 km². The county is known to be one of the areas in East and Central African countries that practices dairy farming on a large scale. The county has, for a long time, enjoyed a remarkable development in the dairy sector. Some of the Kenyan counties have used Nakuru County as a benchmark in dairy cooperative societies and how these societies have improved the development of the county and the livelihood of the farmers, as well as residents in the area (Otieno, 2020). In 2021, Nakuru County was one of the best counties in the country with over 380,000 dairy cattle producing approximately 300 million litres of milk, generating 10 billion Kenyan shillings in the same year (Monica, 2022)

Dairy cooperative societies' projects are meant to help in improving the production of milk, processing of milk, as well as marketing dairy products. This is initiated through a collection of milk, training and development at the same time, accessing the services and inputs for dairy farmers, and this has led to a boost in livelihoods and income. Monica (2022) asserts that dairy cooperatives in Nakuru county have enabled smallholder farmers to increase productivity and enjoy a large market share.

The Department of Agriculture in Nakuru County showed that seventy per cent of the land has been put into agriculture, where a good part of it is used for dairy farming. This has resulted in the emergence of dairy cooperative societies. Due to the competitiveness of the sector, dairy cooperatives have sought to engage in different dairy cooperatives' society projects, like putting in place points of milk collection, a project for cooling milk, and logistics projects for transporting milk (Wangu, Mangnu & van, 2021).

Statement of the Problem

The dairy sector in Kenya generates a revenue of four per cent of the GNP, forty per cent of livestock contributes to GDP, and fourteen per cent of agriculture also contributes to GDP (Otieno, Muendo & Mbeche, 2020). In the recent past, there has been an indication of increased demand for milk and other milk products. However, in line with this demand, Nakuru county has encountered challenges which range from adulteration of milk and this has posed health risks to consumers, microbial contamination, as well as physical and chemical composition, and this compromises the dairy products. As a result, it leads to a decline in the demand for the unprocessed milk (Ndungi *et al.*, 2021; Nyokabi *et al.*, 2018). Due to this, there is a need for the dairy cooperative societies to come up with dairy projects which will involve stakeholders' participation. However, different studies have indicated contradicting findings on the role of stakeholders' participation in project performance. For instance, Tengan and Aigbavboa (2021) found that stakeholders' participation played a critical role in enhancing firms' project performance. However, according to the results of Bellion (2020), who carried out a study in Bomet County, Kenya, indicated that stakeholders' participation did not have a positive contribution to milk cooling project performance. It is therefore on this note that more studies need to be carried out to ascertain the influence of stakeholders' participation on a project's success. Thus, this study sought to find the influence of stakeholder participation on the performance of dairy cooperative societies' projects in Nakuru County, Kenya.

Objective

Influence of stakeholder participation on the performance of dairy cooperative societies' projects in Nakuru County, Kenya.

Research Hypothesis

H₀₁ There is no statistically significant relationship between stakeholder participation and the performance of dairy cooperative society's projects in Nakuru County, Kenya

LITERATURE REVIEWED

Theoretical Framework

Stakeholders Theory

The theory was developed by Freeman in the year 1984. Freeman argued that a stakeholder can be an individual or a group of individuals who are or may be affected by the organization, which is trying to achieve its goals and objectives. As asserted by Muthaura and Omwenga (2017), stakeholder theory encompasses sponsors, the public, shareholders, clients, special interest groups and government.

According to Martinez and Olander (2015), stakeholders are considered to be an important integral part of a project's success or performance. Without the support of the stakeholders, the project's objective, vision and goal may fail to be realized. The theory of stakeholders manages the organization's strategies. The project managers determine if projects are successful, at the same time, how they intend or manage their relationship with the stakeholders, like financiers, customers, employees, communities, facilitators, and suppliers (Freeman, Dmytriiev & Phillips, 2021). In general, this theory emphasizes the importance of a good relationship between the project management and stakeholders.

This theory has received backlash from different quarters. For instance, it is assumed that different views from different stakeholders are balanced against one another. It is also criticized that the interests of the group are, in most cases, diverse and hard to handle satisfactorily. In some circumstances, some specific stakeholders' interests will be given priority before other stakeholders' interests (Mansell, 2014). This theory will help in advancing the knowledge of the influence of stakeholders' participation on dairy cooperative societies' project performance.

Related Literature

The section captures the studies related to the researcher's topic of study. This will help in understanding the topic and enable to identify of the research gaps that can be suggested for further research. Martinez and Olander (2015) affirmed that stakeholder participation can be put into practice in different forms in order to help in improving the process of making decisions. Therefore, stakeholder participation is a key input in organizational performance.

A study by O'Halloran (2014) sought to determine the role of stakeholders' engagement in the performance of construction industry projects in Ireland. The research used a systematic quantitative literature review. The study reviewed 30 literature materials, and this presented a sample size for the study. Extracted summaries from the literature materials were analyzed using content analysis. The study focused on stakeholders' participation based on frequency of consultations, decision-making fairness, and role and responsibilities. It was established that the efficient involvement of the groups and individuals in decision-making fostered the performance of the projects. The stakeholders' participation helped in checking as well as evaluating project progress and thus kept the management on track to accomplish the project on time, at an effective cost and achieving quality work. Therefore, it can be recommended that public and private organization need to embrace stakeholders' participation for effective and efficient decision making.

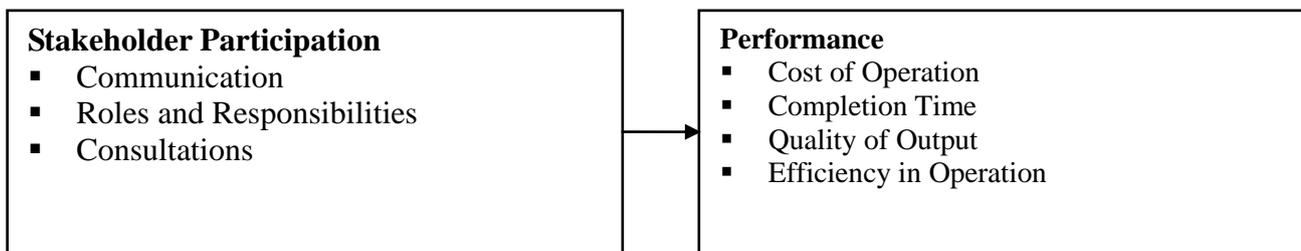
In another study by Tengan and Aigbavboa (2021) in Ghana, examined factors that affected the Monitoring and evaluation of construction firms' performance. Different factors were examined to ascertain their influence on performance. Qualitative Delphi approach was used and the study took 11 experts as a sample size. The study established that stakeholders' participation played a greater role in Monitoring and Evaluation, thus enhancing firms' project performance. The stakeholders' participation was in terms of frequent

consultations and communication. The study therefore recommended that there was a need to have stakeholders' participation as a mandatory practice for any organisation's projects.

In Uganda, Okwang (2017) carried out a study focusing on the role of stakeholders' contribution on students, teachers and school performance in the district of Serere district. The study used cross cross-sectional design with 63 respondents who were selected from different school departments. Primary data was collected by conducting one-on-one interviews and administering questions to the respondents. The analyzed and interpreted data revealed that stakeholders' participation had a major influence on positive student and school performance. In conclusion, it can be stated that stakeholders like parents, sponsors and the community at large must be involved in schools in decision-making for better performance of results.

In contradiction to the reviewed studies, Bellion (2020) conducted a study in Kenya focusing on the effect of stakeholders' engagement on the performance of Bomet milk chilling projects in Bomet County. Descriptive design was employed where 150 participants were picked through a simple and stratified random sampling technique. To collect data for analysis, the study used questionnaires and scheduled interviews. The data was analysed using inferential statistics. The results indicated that stakeholders' participation did not have any positive significant effect on milk chilling projects performance.

Conceptual Framework



Independent Variable

Dependent Variable

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

Research Design: The study relied on descriptive and explanatory designs. The research was aided by this research design because it explores and delivers a more thorough situation which is being studied (Taguchi, 2018). A similar approach was adopted by Niyivuga, Otara, and Tuyishime (2019). The objective of a descriptive study was to describe or represent the issue under consideration. Explanatory research aimed at explaining why particular events act in a specific way.

Target Population: Nakuru County has a total of 17 registered dairy cooperative societies with a membership of 2,255 (Kenya Dairy Board, 2020). In this particular research, the research anticipated information from 17 projects. The 17 dairy cooling projects were considered because the employees working in these projects were in good position to provide data for the study.

Sampling Technique and Sample Size: The researcher preferred the use of simple sampling technique. The technique assists in reducing the risk of being bias and it allows application of different statistical techniques (Manna & Mete, 2021). In this case 7 staffs were picked from 17 projects totaling to a sample size of 119 respondents. In other words, 1 project manager and 6 team members were considered per project.

Table 1: Sample size

Set	Sample size
Project managers	17
Team members	102
Sum Total	119

Source: Combine data from the Human Resource Department (2020)

Data Collection Instruments: Primary data was the most preferred in this research. The researcher collected primary data from the respondents using a questionnaire.

Pilot Testing: The pilot testing was conducted in the neighbouring Laikipia County, utilizing 12 respondents, or 10% of the sample size, whose dairy cooperative societies are considered to have similar characteristics.

Data analysis and Presentation: SPSS was used to generate inferential and descriptive statistics such as mean, mode and standard deviation. Content analysis conversely, was used to evaluate the qualitative facts which were analyzed thematically. Percentages, frequencies, standard deviation, and mean are the descriptive statistics which were adopted to expound the phenomenon under investigation.

Multiple regressions were also utilised to evaluate the relationship between stakeholders' participation and the performance of the dairy cooperative society's projects.

Data was analyzed using multiple regression analysis. The empirical model that was used for data analysis is illustrated below;

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon$$

Where;

Y= Performance of Dairy Cooperative Society's Projects

β_0 = constant term

β_1 = Coefficient of independent variable

X_1 = Stakeholder Participation

ε = error term

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings from the questionnaire analysis are outlined in this section. The quantitative data were displayed in tables and included percentage frequencies, mean, standard deviation, and regression analysis. Using content analysis, qualitative results from constructed open-ended questions were examined and presented according to themes found in the respondents' content. The chapter combined and made use of both quantitative and qualitative results.

Descriptive statistics

Using a Likert scale with 1 denoting strongly disagree, 2 disagree, 3 neutral, 4 agree, and 5 strongly agree, descriptive analysis was conducted. The frequency that resulted was used to calculate the mean and standard deviation.

Findings on Stakeholder Participation

Respondents were asked on a scale of 5-1 the level of agreement with the statement on stakeholder participation, the results obtained are in the following Table 2.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics for stakeholder involvement

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
The communication strategies help in the flow of information from the organization to the stakeholders.	98	2.00	5.00	3.9286	.45972
Stakeholders' roles and responsibilities help in monitoring and evaluation.	98	2.00	5.00	3.8776	.46006
There are frequent consultations between the stakeholders and the cooperative society management.	98	2.00	5.00	3.8061	.54975
The feedback of the stakeholders is always analyzed and implemented.	98	2.00	5.00	3.5204	.82774
Stakeholder participation has led to the quality of output.	98	2.00	5.00	3.7755	.72554
Average	98			3.78164	.604562

Source: Researcher's Data (2024)

From Table 2 above, it was revealed that communication strategies satisfactorily help in the flow of information from the organization to the stakeholders among cooperatives societies in Nakuru County (mean was 3.9286) and standard deviation (0.45972) implying that opinion was uniform across all the responses hence the strategies of communication across all the cooperative societies in Nakuru aid in passing of information to the stakeholders.

Further, the results showed that stakeholders' roles and responsibilities somewhat help in monitoring and evaluation (mean 3.8776) and standard deviation (0.46006). This suggests that the role of the stakeholders is geared towards attaining optimum monitoring and evaluation results for the cooperative societies. There were satisfactory frequent consultations between the stakeholders and cooperative society management (mean of 3.8061). The low standard deviation (0.54975) revealed that cooperative societies in Nakuru carry out frequent consultation, which brings together all the shareholders of the targeted societies, an idea which has enabled management to achieve the tenets of monitoring and evaluation, as satisfactorily agreed by nearly all the respondents.

The feedback of the stakeholders is always sufficiently analyzed, implemented and put into execution to improve monitoring and evaluation goals (mean 3.5204). All of the respondents shared a similar viewpoint (standard deviation of 0.782774), indicating that feedback from all the stakeholders was considered in the implementation accordingly.

Stakeholder participation has satisfactorily led to the quality of output (means 3.7755), which implies that participation by all the stakeholders has been a factor for quality output across all cooperative societies in Nakuru. This opinion was held by the majority of the respondents, as shown by the low variation (standard deviation 0.72554). The results went against Bellion (2020) that there was no positive contribution of stakeholders' participation in the designing, planning, implementing, and M&E of the milk cooling project to its performance and affirms the results from Tengan and Aigbavboa (2021) on factors affecting M&E and performance of construction firms in Ghana, the study identified various factors being behind the influence of its performance which included stakeholder participation through frequent consultations and communication played a major role on M&E this enhanced construction firm's performance. Also, Okwang (2017) concluded that stakeholder participation influenced performance positively.

Findings on Performance

Respondents were asked in a Likert scale of 5-1 to give their opinion on the performance of Cooperative societies in Nakuru County, the range was as in SD-1, D-2, N-3, A-4, SA-5, and feedback was computed and tabulated in Table 3.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics for performance

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
The cooperative society has put in place an effective financial plan	98	2.00	4.00	3.6020	.66951
There is an effective process of formulating and implementing effective business strategies in a cooperative society.	98	2.00	5.00	3.6939	.61608
The cooperative society has effective marketing development plans in place.	98	2.00	5.00	3.7653	.60583
The monitoring and evaluation planning process assists in estimating the cost and resources needed for the cooperative society's projects	98	2.00	5.00	3.7143	.77326
Monitoring and evaluation planning has led to efficiency in the cooperative society's operations.	98	2.00	5.00	3.8163	.72292
Average	98	2.00		3.71835	0.67752

Source: Researcher's Data (2024)

From Table 3, the findings revealed that there has been a moderate reduction in the cost of operations among the cooperative societies (mean 3.2245) and standard deviation (0.94739). The results revealed that projects are somewhat completed on time, mean (3.0918) and a standard deviation (1.10376). The cooperative societies have somewhat ensured high quality of output in the cooperative society (mean 3.1939), and standard deviation (0.92679). Results satisfactorily revealed that there is an increase in efficiency in operation in cooperative societies (mean 3.7551), and the low variation also supported the conclusion (standard deviation 0.64314).

In addition, the results showed that products delivered give sufficient satisfaction to the customers (mean 3.7041 and standard deviation 0.69177) showing homogeneity.

Inferential Statistics

Correlational and Multiple regression analysis were implemented to investigate inferential statistics. A considerable amount of 5% was used to explore the significant impact of stakeholder participation on dairy cooperative society's project performance. The relationship between the independent variable and dependent variable was explored in Table 4.

Correlation Analysis

Table 4: Correlation Analysis

	Stakeholder participation	Performance
Stakeholder participation	Pearson Correlation	.414**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	98
Performance	Pearson Correlation	.414**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	98

Source: Research Data (2024)

Findings indicated that involvement of stakeholders has a moderately beneficial relationship with performance ($r = 0.414$, $P < 0.005$).

Regression Analysis

The coefficient table, ANOVA, and model summary were adopted to demonstrate the regression analysis. This was used to test the research questions and hypotheses. The model summary findings are displayed below in Table 5.

Table 5: Model Summary

Model Summary					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.599 ^a	.358	.331	.53389	1.968

a. Predictors: (Constant), Stakeholder Participation
b. Dependent Variable: Performance of Dairy Cooperative Societies

Source: Researcher's Data (2024)

From Table 5, results indicated a strong relationship between stakeholder participation and performance ($r=0.599$). Stakeholder participation contributed a variation of 35.8%, while other factors that the study did not consider contributed 64.2%.

Table 6: ANOVA

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	14.808	4	3.702	12.988	.000 ^b
	Residual	26.509	93	.285		
	Total	41.316	97			

a. Dependent Variable: Performance of Dairy Cooperative Societies

b. Predictors: (Constant), Stakeholder participation

Source: Researcher's Data (2024)

Results from Table 6 showed that there is a significant relationship between stakeholder participation and the performance of cooperative societies, $P < 0.005$. Hence, the factors that were examined remain vital for the performance of cooperative societies in Nakuru County.

Table 7: Regression Coefficient

Coefficients								
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error				Beta	Tolerance
1	(Constant)	-3.597	1.167		-3.083	.003		
	SP	.799	.250	.282	3.199	.002	.886	1.128

a. Stakeholder participation (SP)

b. Dependent Variable: Performance of Dairy cooperative societies (PDCS)

Source: Research Data (2024)

Results from the regression coefficient in Table 7.0 revealed that stakeholder participation had a positive and significant relationship with performance, $P < 0.05$. The relationship was as shown.

$$Y = -3.597 + 0.799 X_1$$

Where X_1 is stakeholder participation. This denotes that a unit change in stakeholder participation will result in 79.9% unit change in performance. This indicated that stakeholder participation led to the influencing on performance.

Hypothesis Testing

H₀₁ There is no statistically significant relationship between stakeholder participation and the performance of the dairy cooperative society's projects in Nakuru County, Kenya. The null hypothesis is rejected because the finding revealed a significant positive relationship between stakeholder participation and the performance of cooperative societies ($\beta_3 = 0.799$, $P < 0.05$). The finding coincided with the outcome by Okwang (2017) in the Serere district of Uganda that stakeholder participation influenced school and students' performance positively. Though it was done in school to measure the effect of stakeholder participation on performance, unlike the current result in which the variable was project management and stakeholder participation, as Tengan and Aigbavboa (2021) found that stakeholder participation through frequent consultations and communication played a major role in M&E and firm performance.

SUMMARY

The chapter provides an overview of the findings that were utilized to formulate conclusions and recommendations.

The findings showed that cooperative societies have affected communication strategies that help the flow of information from the organization to the stakeholders. This means that strategies of communication have been channelled to reach all and sundry within cooperative societies in Nakuru County. Further, the role of stakeholders and their responsibilities has been able to help in monitoring and evaluation processes in Nakuru's cooperative societies. Cooperative societies in Nakuru County had in place frequent consultations between the stakeholders and cooperative society management that helped improve the overall performance. There was the use of feedback mechanisms that enabled cooperative societies to analyze them before implementation. Stakeholder participation was utilized in cooperatives in Nakuru, which gave the societies the ability to improve their performance, hence, stakeholder participation had a positive significant relationship with performance.

CONCLUSION RECOMMENDATION

The study established that there is a significant positive relationship between stakeholder participation and performance. This was a result of communication strategies being placed to enable communication to and from particular cooperative societies and stakeholders, the role of the stakeholder in which they ensure monitoring and evaluation processes function, and frequent systems in place for consultation between the stakeholder and the management of the cooperative society.

The study proposes that consideration should be given to stakeholder involvement in management. This will guarantee inclusivity in the creation and execution of projects, minimizing unnecessary projects that stakeholders and employees are aware of. In a similar vein, establishing efficient monitoring and evaluation will guarantee that projects are used and carried out within Nakuru's cooperative society. Frequent consultation meetings should be part of the management to motivate the employees as part of the system. Stakeholder participation fosters a sense of belonging and accountability among employees. When managers are actively involved in the day-to-day operations of the organization, it demonstrates their commitment to the success of the company, motivating employees to perform at their best.

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