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MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND SUSTAINABILITY OF HEALTH PROJECTS FUNDED BY NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS IN MACHAKOS COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The broad objective of this research was to investigate the factors affecting the sustainability health project funded of non-government health projects in Machakos County. Descriptive survey research design was adopted targeting 250 project managers, team leaders, communication officers, projects representatives, contractors and consultants from these projects from Machakos County. The sample size of 80 respondents was selected through stratified random sampling. The analysis was done through use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences. Data was analyzed through descriptive and inferential analysis. Descriptive analysis included means and standard deviations, correlation and regression and presented through tables and figures. The stakeholder participation, digital inclusion, budget allocation and management competence was found to have a positive significant influence on the sustainability of project funded by non- governmental organization in Machakos County, Kenya. The study concludes that engaging local communities, government entities, and other relevant parties in the planning and implementation phases of these projects is essential for their long-term success. Digital inclusion facilitates improved communication, access to information, and the ability to leverage online resources, which can lead to greater community participation and ownership of projects. Budget allocation facilitates the implementation of various sustainability practices and also fosters collaboration among stakeholders, including local communities, government entities, and private sector partners. Effective management practices, including strategic planning, resource allocation, and stakeholder engagement, significantly contribute to the overall success of these projects. The study recommends that non-governmental organizations should prioritize stakeholder engagement as a core component of their project design and execution. NGOs should prioritize strategies that promote digital literacy and infrastructure development as part of their project planning and implementation processes. NGOs should explore various funding avenues, including grants from international organizations, partnerships with private sector companies, and crowdfunding initiatives. There is need for establishing mentorship programs that pair experienced project managers with less experienced individuals can facilitate knowledge transfer.

Key Words: *Management Competence, Budget Allocation, Stakeholder Participation, Digital Inclusion*

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INTRODUCTION

Project sustainability is defined by many economists and international development agencies as the capacity of a project to continue to deliver its intended benefits over a long time Bamberger and Cheema, (2020). A development program that is sustainable can deliver long-term benefits after major donors have stopped providing financial and managerial assistance. It involves ensuring that the various institutions that were financed through the project continue to benefit from the project's success. This process involves deciding whether the project's outcomes will continue beyond its current duration, and if it can be carried out without external support. A project can be described as an endeavor that involves gathering various resources, such as human and financial, in a novel manner to accomplish a task that has a unique design and is expected to achieve beneficial changes . It can also be considered to be the achievement of specific objectives, which involves a series of activities and tasks which consume resources Munns, A. K., & Bjeirmi, B. F. (2023). A project has to be completed within a set specification, having definite start and end dates.

The sustainability of health organizations is becoming increasingly important to various stakeholders. These include the managers, donors, and beneficiaries of these organizations. The decline in the amount of funding from foreign sources has affected the operations of numerous non-governmental organizations in the country. In addition, the 2013 amendments to the PBO Act, which restricted the remote subsidy of NGOs to 15% of the total spending plan, has caused a strain to the public benefit organization budget. Due to the increasing reliance on external funding from developing nations and the exhaustion of donors in rich countries, there has been a rise in discussions about how NGOs can become sustainable, Mango, (2019).

According to Waiganjo, Ng’ethe & Mugambi (2022), over-reliance on external donor funds has led to the inability of NGOs to sustain themselves or their projects. Since they have become more accountable and loyal to their external donors, NGOs have lost their credibility. They have also started to consider local donors as a potential source of funding. Due to the increasing number of donors and the complexity of the situation, the NGO sector is now in a dilemma: how to manage the resources it has available while still being accountable and effective? One of the biggest challenges faced by the sector in Kenya is sustainability.

Sustainability refers to the "ability of heads to retain up an association over the long haul (Renz, 2019). A sustainability strategy aims to maintain a certain level of financial leverage over a set period, Bowman, 2021). The sustainability of an organization depends on its key objective and strategies. This can vary between charities and revenue-driven groups, (Renz, 2020). After the termination of external support, a development project can be considered sustainable. It can achieve this by producing a level of output that is expected to be beneficial for a long time, (US Agency for International Development, 2020).

A sustainability of a project is a process that aims to ensure that the organizations continues to benefit the beneficiaries through after the completion of a project, IFAD, (2020). The sustainability of a project is a measure of its long-term potential. It requires evaluating the project's success in the medium and long-term without the need for external financial support, IFAD, (2020). A project is an endeavor in which various resources, such as human, financial, and material, are organized in a novel manner. It can be undertaken in order to achieve a unique scope of work and meet specific qualitative and quantitative objectives (Bolles, 2022). It can also be the achievement of specific objectives, which involves a series of activities and tasks which consume resources (Munns & Bjeirmi, 2020). A project has to be completed within a set specification, having definite start and end dates.

Effective project delivery relies on robust project management strategies (PMSs), encompassing behaviors, methods, tools, and processes. These strategies are crucial for ensuring successful project outcomes within an organization. Plattfaut (2022) identifies key PMSs vital for exceptional project delivery, including resource allocation, stakeholder participation, management commitment, and digital inclusion. This study will adopt these strategies.

Resource allocation, a fundamental element of project management, involves the systematic distribution of an organization's assets – such as personnel, finances, technology, materials, and time – to various project units. This process, as described by Waititu (2022), ensures the efficient utilization of resources and their alignment with specific project tasks. Ronoh and Kirui (2020) emphasize that effective resource allocation facilitates efficient scheduling and task assignment, contributing to overall project success.

Engaging stakeholders is a crucial aspect of effective project management, fostering project success and ensuring sustainable outcomes. By involving beneficiaries in the project process, a sense of ownership and investment is cultivated, leading to greater buy-in and ultimately, a more successful project (Uwamariya, Safari & Kengere, 2021). Establishing committees and granting them a voice through project resolutions ensures that diverse perspectives are considered and respected, contributing to a more collaborative and efficient project environment (Ngare & Cheluget, 2019). Stakeholder participation also serves as a vital mechanism for ensuring compliance with established rules and regulations, including donor guidelines, further promoting transparency and accountability (Masika, 2020). By actively involving stakeholders, projects are more likely to progress in a manner that aligns with their objectives, fostering stronger relationships and ultimately achieving greater impact (Cvijović, Obradović & Todorović, 2021).

Machakos County in Kenya is home to about twenty-five Non-government Organization (NGO Coordination Board Data, 2022). Many of these NGOs are based there while others have simply set up their branch offices in Machakos County to enable them to maintain proximity to Nairobi. Non-health organization are important to the social and economic development of Machakos County. Health being one pillar to drive development for the current government.

Non-governmental health organizations (NGOs) are indispensable partners in the progress of both developed and developing societies, notably in areas like Machakos County, Kenya. Their mission extends far beyond profit-driven ventures and encompasses essential services that address fundamental societal challenges. NGOs advocate for the rights of the disadvantaged, protect the environment, empower farmers, provide emergency aid, and offer healthcare to the vulnerable. These multifaceted interventions play a pivotal role in alleviating social and humanitarian crises, ensuring that the most marginalized communities receive the support they need.

NGOs traditionally rely on the generosity of donors and grants to fund their operations. However, in recent years, the rising costs of their essential work and the increasing demands for their services have outpaced traditional funding sources. This gap in funding presents a significant challenge, forcing NGOs to make difficult choices – either reducing the scope or quality of their services or seeking innovative ways to secure additional funding.

Health NGOs in Machakos County are facing a critical sustainability crisis. Declining donor funding has created a pressing need for these organizations to secure alternative revenue streams to maintain their valuable services. This decline in funding is forcing many NGOs to operate under immense financial strain, threatening their very existence.

Statement of the Problem

The survival of NGOs in Kenya is significantly influenced by effective project management and financial sustainability. While many NGOs rely heavily on international donor funding (Ali, 2021), this dependence can be detrimental when funding is withdrawn, leading to project stagnation and even the closure of organizations (Nelson, 2020). The lack of sustainable funding models is a major contributing factor to the failure of many NGOs (Kisinga, 2019). Strong management practices, however, can ensure that NGOs continue operating even after donor support ends, enabling them to maintain their projects and achieve their goals.

Numerous local studies have explored the role of NGOs in Kenya. Ali (2019) investigated the factors influencing sustainable funding for the Sisters Maternity Home in Garissa, Kenya. The study identified income generation, government support, and relationship building as key contributors to funding sustainability. Similarly, Mugambi (2020) examined sustainability strategies employed by NGOs in Kenya. They found that internal funding sources, strategic partnerships, and effective organizational structures played crucial roles in ensuring NGO sustainability within the Kenyan context.

While Karanja (2021) investigated factors influencing NGO sustainability in Kenya, focusing on the impact of government policies, funding sources, and management practices in Isiolo County, this research takes a different approach. This study focused solely on local health NGOs in Machakos County, examining a distinct set of variables compared to the previous study, which encompassed both international and local NGOs. This shift in focus allowed for a deeper examination of the specific challenges and opportunities faced by local health NGOs in a particular geographical context.

Many of the local NGOs in Kenya are new, small and without a guaranteed future (Gathee, 2019). This has made them struggle to put effective, and efficient management systems for good governance in place, and whose survival largely relies on donor funding. There has been an increase in the number of NGOs registered in Kenya of late. However, seventy percent of the NGOs collapse before six years of operation (NGO Council, 2021). This problem is accrued to sustainability of their activities. This poses a gap in which the study will be based on to fill through a study on the factors affecting the project sustainability of non-government health projects in Machakos county Kenya. The study focuses on lack of stakeholder participation, inadequate digital inclusion, unfavorable budget allocations and minimum management competence as the factors that have contributed to un- sustainability of health projects funded by non-governmental organizations in Machakos County.

Research Objectives

The general objective of the study was to investigate the influence of management strategies on the sustainability of non-governmental organizations health projects in Machakos County. The specific objectives of the study were to:

- To establish effect of stakeholder participation on the sustainability of project funded by non-governmental organization in Machakos County, Kenya.
- To examine role of digital inclusion on the sustainability of projects funded by non- governmental organization in Machakos County, Kenya.
- To evaluate the effect of budget allocation on the sustainability project funded by non-government organization in Machakos County, Kenya.
- To assess relevance of management competence affects the sustainability of non- governmental organization's health projects in Machakos County, Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

Resource Dependency Theory

The resource dependency theory was advanced by Pfeffer and Salancik (2019). Resource dependence theory (RDT) maintains that organizations are resource-insufficient, and they strive to sustain and acquire resources from their external environment. Pfeffer and Salancik (2019) argue that resources are controlled by external actors who exert demands on the organization. These factors perceive certain advantages in their relationship with the organization and exercise power through control over resources. The heavier the dependence on external resources, the more the demands of particular factors controlling these resources are influential. The challenge is for the organization to proactively and effectively manage incompatible and competing demands.

The resource dependency theory was advanced by Pfeffer and Salancik (2020) Local NGOs are heavily reliant on external funders, often facing unpredictable funding flows and fluctuating demands, creating a challenging environment for their operations (Moore, 2020). The behavior of an NGO is shaped by its reliance on external resources and the influence of donors controlling those resources. The extent of this resource dependence plays a significant role in an NGO's financial practices, ultimately impacting its long-term sustainability (Scott, 2020). If an NGO fails to adhere to the criteria established by external funders, the organization risks funding withdrawal, leading to sustainability challenges.

Stakeholder Theory

Stakeholder theory, as proposed by Freeman (1994), asserts that all legitimate individuals and groups involved in an organization's activities seek benefits from their participation, and the prioritization of their interests is not inherently clear. Stakeholder theory emphasizes the importance of aligning management actions with the interests of all stakeholders. It recognizes that stakeholders, defined by their unique interests, are inherently valuable and deserve consideration. Therefore, the goal is to create a framework where management can effectively address and satisfy the needs of everyone involved in the organization. According to Sisodia (2020), stakeholder theory advocates for a managerial approach that prioritizes the interests of all legitimate stakeholders. This approach involves implementing specific attitudes, organizational structures, and practices that ensure simultaneous consideration of the needs of every stakeholder group

Projects with comprehensive stakeholder management plans strive to address the interests and expectations of each stakeholder. Al-Yafei, (2020). To effectively manage stakeholders, project managers must reconcile the diverse interests and requirements of individuals and groups involved in the project Friedman, A. L., & Miles, S. (2002).

Project managers require this theory to enhance their effectiveness in navigating the intricate, ever-changing, and demanding project landscape. The reason is that it contributes to providing an ethical, effectual, efficient, and pragmatic approach to managing projects. (Derakhshan, Turner & Mancini, 2019). Effective stakeholder management is crucial for projects to achieve established goals.

Parmar, B. L., Freeman, R. E., Harrison, J. S., Wicks, A. C., Purnell, L., & De Colle, S. (2010) acknowledged that while stakeholder analysis can enhance business growth, they also affirmed that not all stakeholders hold equal influence in the organization's financial performance. This detracts from stakeholder theory by undermining the foundational principle of involving parties beyond management in organizational governance. (Cvijović, Obradović & Todorović, 2021).

Agency Theory

According to the theory proposed by Alchian and Demsetz (1972) and Jensen and Meckling (1976), an organization can be conceptualized as a juncture of contracts among resource holders. In this arrangement, one party (the principal) holds the power to make decisions that directly impact another party (the agents). An agency relationship emerges when individuals known as principals engage other individuals, referred to as agents, to perform specific services. This arrangement involves delegating decision-making authority to the agents. The presence of this relationship typically results in agency costs, which are expenses associated with maintaining an effective agency relationship Bendickson, J., Muldoon, J., Liguori, E., & Davis, P. E. (2016). Institutions in which the government has ownership and is the primary source of financing are significantly impacted by the government's expectations for returns, with the success of projects serving as the primary indicator of the effectiveness of this relationship. The government's control over these institutions extends to dictating the level of returns it expects.

Agency theory faces criticism due to an inherent conflict of interest in its implementation. The agent's interests, objectives, and plans inevitably differ from those of the principal. (Dong, Karhade, Rai & Xu, 2021).

The internalization of the agent as a part of the organization's family can occasionally temper this. The principal supports the agent in this capacity.

The expenses associated with managing the agency are also notably complex and may exceed the projected returns for the organization. (Shogren & Raley, 2022). Consistent with agency theory, the contractual relationship between individuals is driven by their self-serving interests. Additionally, project owners and contractors entrust project managers with specific responsibilities. Prior to project initiation, four primary stakeholders are involved: the project owner, contractors, project manager, and donor. The fundamental assumption is that all these stakeholders will collaborate effectively as a cohesive team towards achieving the project's stated objectives. While it might seem otherwise, inherent conflicts of interest exist in this situation. Furthermore, one party may possess significantly more information than the others, creating an imbalance known as information asymmetry. This disparity can also contribute to potential conflicts between the parties involved in the contract Panda, B., & Leepsa, N. M. (2017).

Technology Acceptance Model

Davis (1986) proposed a theory aiming to explain and predict the adoption and use of specific digital technologies by staff within project organization. This theory sheds light on the factors that influence individuals' decisions to adopt digital technologies. It posits that their intentions, attitudes, perceptions of usability, and overall views on the technology play a crucial role in shaping their adoption choices. This theory (Davis, 1986) also examines how external factors influence the decision to adopt and use digital technologies.

This theory suggests that individual behaviour is driven by their behavioural intentions, which are influenced by both their personal attitudes and subjective norms. These attitudes and norms, in turn, are shaped by factors such as beliefs (Hsu, Liu, Tsou & Chen, 2019). According to Ajzen (1985), Three types of faith influence behaviour: control, subjective, and behavioural. Environmental factors beyond an individual's control can shape technology adoption decisions. Efforts should focus on considering the degree of control an individual has over their behaviour. Holden, R. J., & Karsh, B. T. (2020)

This theory directly supports the fourth objective of digital inclusion in this study. From, this theory, A successful project management approach to digital inclusion relies heavily on a solid framework.

Empirical Review

In this section empirical studies are reviewed in the subsequent sections. The review of empirics focuses on stakeholder participation, digital inclusion, budget allocation and management competence towards sustainability of health projects funded by NGOs in Machakos county. The studies so reviewed are critiqued to point out possible gaps that will be filled by the proposed study.

Stakeholder Participation and Sustainability of Health Projects

In their study, Habumuremyi and Tarus(2021) examined the influence of stakeholder involvement on the sustainability of projects within the Rwandan context, with a specific focus on community-based initiatives. The research employed a descriptive methodology, with a sample size of 401 participants. The interactive and passive participation observed directly influenced the sustainability of the projects. Stakeholder participation, as a concept, fosters inclusivity by incorporating all project members into the decision-making process. Accordingly, stakeholder participation is strongly advocated to ensure the long-term viability of projects.

Uwamariya, Safari, and Kengere (2021) demonstrated the importance of stakeholder engagement for achieving sustainable project outcomes. Employing descriptive research design, 246 individuals were identified as potential participants, of whom 152 were sampled The questionnaire provided primary data, revealing a significant correlation between stakeholder participation and project sustainability.

Masika (2020) focused on stakeholder participation and sustainability of the health projects in Uganda. The study examined various degrees of stakeholder participation, ranging from passive and interactive to functional and optimal. The research design employed a correlational approach to establish relationships between different variables. Despite a target of 255 participants, only 153 were surveyed and incorporated into the study. The study indicated that functional participation was apparent through the establishment of interest groups.

Nzomo and Gachengo (2021) conducted a descriptive analysis of stakeholder participation in water projects within Machakos County, examining its impact on project sustainability. Their study was grounded in participatory theory. The participants in the project included project managers, members of water committees, and community elders. These community leaders were chosen to represent the project's beneficiaries. Analysis revealed a direct and significant link between stakeholder participation and the project's sustainability.

Digital Inclusion and Sustainability of Heath Projects

The impact of digital transformation on project management has been explored in several studies. Kozarkiewicz (2020) conducted an empirical analysis of project managers, demonstrating that digital transformation significantly and positively enhanced project management processes. Meanwhile, Feise and Graf-von-Hatzfeldt (2019) focused on medium-sized technology companies to investigate the influence of digitalization on project team management. Their study developed a framework that highlights how digitalization fosters innovation by supporting and enhancing virtual team collaboration and communication. These studies collectively underscore the transformative effects of digital technologies on project management, encompassing both individual processes and team dynamics.

Digitalization's impact on project management was explored in a study by Marnewick and Marnewick (2022). Using desk research, they found that technological advancements and vast data volumes necessitate projects to embrace new technologies that streamline their operations. Agile methodologies have become prevalent among project managers to enhance efficiency.

Alhassan and Adam (2021) analyzed the relationship between digital inclusion, technological access, and quality of life. Their research drew on secondary data from 121 countries (2018). They employed structural equation modeling to demonstrate that globally, digital inclusion and access significantly contribute to an improved quality of life.

Bajwa and Deichmann (2018) conducted a survey-based study to examine the impact of digitalization on project management. The study drew upon the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) as its theoretical framework.The researchers employed a quantitative survey design using a validated questionnaire. The validity of the instrument was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha and was found to be acceptable.

Budget Allocation and Sustainability of Health Projects

Ronoh and Kirui (2020) investigated the relationship between resource scheduling and project performance in residential construction in Nairobi. Utilizing a survey design, they employed simple random sampling to gather data from 79 residential construction projects. Through a questionnaire, they collected information on resource scheduling practices and project outcomes. Their analysis revealed that efficient and effective allocation of project equipment significantly contributed to the successful completion of construction projects.

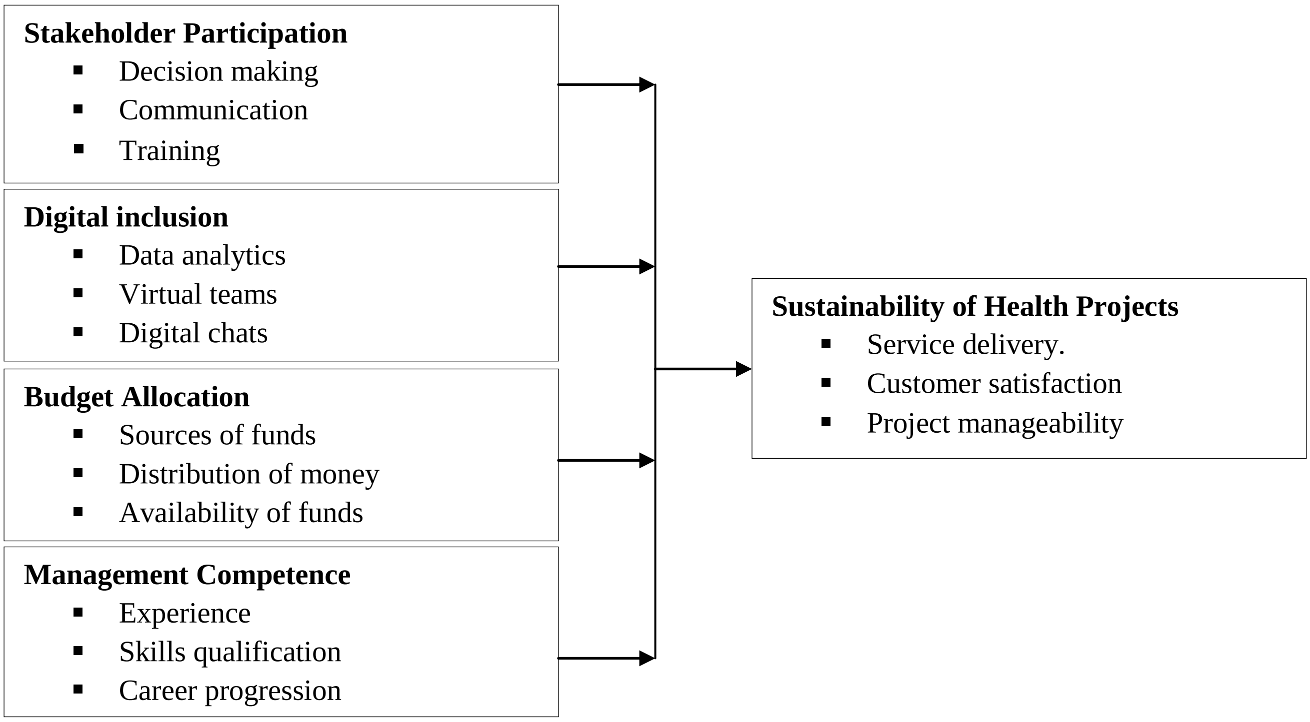
Waititu (2022) conducted a study to examine the impact of resource allocation on the performance of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems. Using World Vision as a case study, the researcher investigated how specific resources, including personnel, funding, technology, and materials, influence M&E performance. Data was collected from 9 child protection projects through a questionnaire. The analysis revealed that the allocation of these resources significantly contributes to the effective functioning of M&E systems, enhancing their ability to monitor progress, evaluate outcomes, and make data-driven decisions.

Management Competence and Sustainability of Health Projects

In his study, Muriithi(2023) identified several management factors and capabilities that contribute to the sustainability of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Effective governance structures, characterized by clear policies and procedures, play a vital role. Additionally, strong top management with a deep understanding of the organization's goals and the ability to guide its achievement is crucial. The leadership team should possess the necessary qualifications, skills, and experience to navigate complex challenges. Furthermore, human resource policies that foster employee motivation and retention contribute to the organization's sustainability. The adoption of appropriate leadership approaches also enables NGOs to meet their objectives and ensure long-term viability.

Ansoff and McDonnell (2020) emphasize general management competence as a crucial indicator for organizational effectiveness. Similarly, Okorley and Nkrumah (2022) highlight the significant role of competent management in the sustainability of local NGOs. They argue that effective management enables oversight of development program implementation. Furthermore, a harmonious relationship among management, staff, and the board is deemed essential for NGO success.

Conceptual Framework



Independent Variables **Dependent Variable**

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Author (2024)

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The core use of descriptive design is to describe data or information with numbers (create a number of pictures of the information) (Orodho, 2019). A questionnaire was used in the data collection was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The research design enabled the researcher to generalize the findings to a larger population.

Target Population

The target population of this study was 10 completed project funded by non-government health organizations that operate within Machakos County. According to a report from the NGO council of Kenya (2023), there were 25 NGOs that operate within Machakos County. These NGOs has 320 employees from which a sample was involved in the study. The study mainly targeted employees in the management positions and key representatives of the community benefited from the non-government health projects.

Sampling Size and Design

Bhardwaj (2019) observe that sampling helps researchers save money by enabling them to obtain the same information from a sample as they would from the population. The study used stratified random sampling method to ensure equal representation of the respondents; and to select 80 respondents as the sample size. The sampling frame was mainly based on professionals running health-related non-governmental organizations in Machakos County; they were project managers, team leaders, communication officers, project representatives, contractors and consultants.

Data Collection Instrument

This study relied on primary data that was collected using a self-administered questionnaire that will consist of closed ended questions. Thanem and Knights (2019) noted that large amount of information can be collected within a short period by use of questionnaires. Studies have also shown that questionnaires are useful tools for data collection since they are easier to administer and analyse (Fellows & Liu, 2021). Questionnaires were administered through drop and pick later method. Three research assistants were hired and trained in advance to help in administering questionnaire to respondents.

Data Analysis and Presentation

This involves reducing and organizing data to produce useful findings that the researcher can interpret. The gathered data was both qualitative and quantitative. After receiving the questionnaires back, coding and editing for completeness and consistency was carried out. The SPSS was used to generate descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation among others in analyzing the data. Inferential statistics will also be used in data analysis. This included multiple regression analysis which was done to determine the relationship between the study variables. The regression equation was formulated as below;

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \varepsilon$$

Whereby

Y = Sustainability of health projects

X_1 = Stakeholder Participation

X_2 = Digital inclusion

X_3 = Budget allocation

X_4 = Management competence

ε = error term

β_0 = Coefficients of determination

β_1, β_2, β_3 and β_4 = Coefficients of variables

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Response Rate

The questionnaires were distributed among a total of 80 participants. The finding presented indicated that 92.5% of the participants completed the questionnaires, while 7.5% did not respond. According to Nulty (2021), a response rate of 80% or higher is deemed adequate for data analysis. Therefore, the achieved response rate of 92.5% is considered sufficient for proceeding with the data analysis.

Descriptive Statistics Results

The results of the quantitative data were presented using descriptive statistics, such as Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (SD), which were produced using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The next sub-sections present the findings.

Stakeholder Participation

The respondents were given a list of statements describing the influence of stakeholder participation on the sustainability of project funded by non- governmental organization in Machakos County, Kenya to rate their level of agreement on each. The results are presented in Table 4.3.

Table 1: Stakeholder Participation

Statements	**SD (%)**	**D (%)**	**N (%)**	**A (%)**	**SA (%)**	**M**	**SD**
Participation of stakeholders through committees has enhanced management and sustainability of health projects funded by NGOs in Machakos county	2.7	4.1	0	41.9	51.4	3.96	1.04
Stakeholders of the health projects funded by NGOs advocate for compliance with regulations to enhance management and sustainability of projects	10.8	5.4	6.8	33.8	43.2	4.25	0.749
Stakeholder participation in NGOs funded projects in Machakos county has improved accountability by enhancing sustainability	0	6.8	1.4	27.1	64.9	4.59	0.408
Interactive participation of stakeholders in health projects funded NGOs in Machakos County has led to an improvement sustainability of projects	13.5	8.1	4.1	20.3	54.1	3.97	1.029
Interactive participation has allowed stakeholders to take part in planning of NGOs funded health projects in Machakos county to ensure there is sustainability	12.2	6.8	0	28.4	52.7	4.07	0.928
Aggregate score	7.84	6.24	2.46	30.3	53.26	**4.17**	**0.831**

Source: Research Data (2025)

The results in Table 1 indicated that there was a general agreement from the respondents that stakeholder participation had an influence on the sustainability of project funded by non- governmental organization in Machakos County, Kenya as indicated by aggregate mean and standard deviation score of 4.17 and 0.831 respectively. The finding also revealed that majority (83.56%) of the respondents agreed on the statements, 2.46% indicated neutral and 14.08% disagreed.

This finding suggests that the majority of respondents strongly believe that involving stakeholders in the planning, implementation, and evaluation phases of projects significantly enhances their long-term viability and effectiveness. The finding agrees with Uwamariya, Safari, and Kengere (2021) who demonstrated the importance of stakeholder engagement for achieving sustainable project outcomes. The study also revealed a significant correlation between stakeholder participation and project sustainability. The finding also agrees with Habumuremyi and Tarus(2021) research observation that stakeholder participation, as a concept, fosters inclusivity by incorporating all project members into the decision-making process.

Digital Inclusion

The respondents were given a list of statements describing the role of digital inclusion on the sustainability of projects funded by non- governmental organization in Machakos County, Kenya to rate their level of agreement on each. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Digital Inclusion

Statements	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	M	SD
Digitalization has allowed information sharing for improved service delivery in health projects funded by NGOs in Machakos county	13.5	4.1	0	51.4	31.5	4.15	0.847
Application of data analytics has allowed sustainability health funded by health projects by NGOs in Machakos county to beneficiaries	5.4	1.4	0	51.4	31.1	4.27	0.73
Digital inclusion has facilitated communication to improve service delivery of health project funded by NGOs in Machakos county to beneficiaries	0	0	0	35.1	35.1	4.55	0.449
Virtual teams resulting from digital inclusion has improved service delivery in health project funded by NGOs in Machakos county	2.7	2.7	0	50	44.6	4.51	0.488
Collaboration due to virtue teams has improved service delivery in health project funded by NGOs in Machakos county.	21.6	12.2	5.4	22.9	37.8	3.99	1.01
Aggregate score	**8.64**	**4.08**	**1.08**	**42.16**	**36.02**	**4.29**	**0.705**

Source: Research Data (2025)

Table 2 shows agreement among respondents on the positive impact of digital inclusion on the sustainability of NGO projects in Machakos County, Kenya, with a mean score of 4.29 and a standard deviation of 0.705. This finding was agreed by majority (78.18%) of the respondents, 1.08% indicated neutral and those respondents who disagreed were represented by 12.72%.

This finding indicates strong agreement that digital inclusion is crucial for enhancing the effectiveness and longevity of these initiatives. The low standard deviation suggests that respondents share similar views on the benefits of digital inclusion, such as improved access to information and better stakeholder engagement. These factors are recognized as vital for project success. The finding is consistent with Kozarkiewicz (2020) research which focused on the impact of digital transformation on project management demonstrating that digital transformation significantly and positively enhanced project management processes. The finding is also consistent with Feise and Graf-von-Hatzfeldt (2019) research which focused on medium-sized technology companies to investigate the influence of digitalization on project team management. These studies collectively underscore the transformative effects of digital technologies on project management, encompassing both individual processes and team dynamics.

Budget Allocation

The respondents were given a list of statements describing the influence of budget allocation on the sustainability of projects funded by non- governmental organization in Machakos County, Kenya to rate their level of agreement on each. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Budget Allocation

Statements	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	M	SD
The adequate funds from NGOs have improved the sustainability of health projects in Machakos county	14.9	5.4	0	29.7	50	3.85	1.149
Regular audits have improved management strategies and sustainability of NGOs funded in Machakos county	0	0	0	41.9	58.1	4.53	0.477
Adequate time allocated for staff in health projects funded by NGOs Machakos County has improved management strategies and sustainability of the projects.	21.6	12.2	4.1	21.6	40.5	3.74	1.258
Physical material scheduling based on priorities has reduced costs incurred in management and sustainability of health projects funded by NGOs in Machakos County.	10.8	8.1	2.7	29.7	48.5	4.29	0.71
Aggregate score	**11.8**	**6.4**	**1.7**	**30.7**	**49.3**	**4.10**	**0.899**

Source: Research Data (2025)

Table 3 shows an agreement among respondents on the positive impact of budget allocation on the sustainability of NGO projects in Machakos County, Kenya, with a mean score of 4.10 and a standard deviation of 0.899. The finding implies that most respondents share a similar viewpoint regarding the importance of budget allocation, highlighting a collective understanding of its role in enhancing project sustainability. In addition, the finding was agreed by majority (80.0%) of the respondents, 1.70% indicated neutral and those respondents who disagreed were represented by 18.20%.

The finding agrees with Ronoh and Kirui (2020) who investigated the relationship between resource scheduling and project performance in residential construction in Nairobi. Their analysis revealed that efficient and effective allocation of project equipment significantly contributed to the successful completion of construction projects. The finding also agrees with Waititu (2022) who conducted a study to examine the impact of resource allocation on the performance of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems and revealed that the allocation of these resources significantly contributes to the effective functioning of M&E systems, enhancing their ability to monitor progress, evaluate outcomes, and make data-driven decisions.

Management Competence

The respondents were given a list of statements describing the influence of management competence on the sustainability of projects funded by non- governmental organization in Machakos County, Kenya to rate their level of agreement on each. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Management Competence

Statements	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	M	SD
Management skills in health projects funded by NGOs in Machakos county is demonstrated through staff training for improved sustainability and management	10.8	5.4	6.8	33.8	43.2	4.25	0.749
Competitive reward provided to staff in health projects funded by NGOs in Machakos county has resulted to good management strategies and sustainability	2.7	2.7	0	50	44.6	4.51	0.488
Existence of competent staff has enhanced service delivery for health projects funded by NGOs in Machakos county	21.6	12.2	4.1	21.6	40.5	3.74	1.258
Availability of experienced staff has improved beneficiaries' satisfaction of the health project funded by NGOs in Machakos county	13.5	8.1	4.1	20.3	54.1	3.97	1.029
Clear promotion opportunities have motivated staff working in health funded by NGOs in Machakos county to improve service delivery	14.9	5.4	0	29.7	50	3.85	1.149
Aggregate score	**12.70**	**6.76**	**3.00**	**31.08**	**46.48**	**4.06**	**0.935**

Source: Research Data (2025)

The results shows an agreement among respondents on the positive impact of management competence on the sustainability of NGO projects in Machakos County, Kenya, with a mean score of 4.06 and a standard deviation of 0.935. In addition, the finding was agreed by majority (77.16%) of the respondents, 3.00% indicated neutral and those respondents who disagreed were represented by 19.46%.

The finding concur with Muriithi (2023) research observation that effective governance structures, characterized by clear policies and procedures, play a vital role. Additionally, strong top management with a deep understanding of the organization's goals and the ability to guide its achievement is crucial. The finding also concurs with Okorley and Nkrumah (2022) research which highlight the significant role of competent management in the sustainability of local NGOs by indicating that effective management enables oversight of development program implementation.

Sustainability of Health Projects

The respondents were given a list of statements describing the sustainability of projects funded by non-governmental organization in Machakos County, Kenya to rate their level of agreement on each. The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Sustainability of Health Projects

Statements	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	M	SD
There is efficient service delivery in health projects funded by NGOs in Machakos county.	32.4	21.6	6.8	20.3	18.9	3.08	1.918
Beneficiaries are satisfied with services from health projects funded by NGOs in Machakos county	44.6	29.7	0	13.5	12.2	2.91	2.088
There reliable services provided by health project funded by NGOs in Machakos county	47.3	31.1	2.7	12.2	5.4	2.46	2.539
The health projects funded NGOs in Machakos county has reduced the costs incurred by beneficiaries to access health services	24.3	39.2	5.4	13.5	17.6	3.12	1.88
Aggregate score	**37.15**	**30.4**	**3.73**	**14.88**	**13.53**	**2.89**	**2.106**

Source: Research Data (2025)

The results show that there neutral view among respondents on the sustainability of NGO projects in Machakos County, Kenya, with a mean score of 2.89 and a standard deviation of 2.106. In addition, the finding was agreed by majority (28.4%) of the respondents, 3.73% indicated neutral and those respondents who disagreed were represented by 67.55%.

The finding is in contrary with Bowman (2021) research observation that a sustainability strategy aims to maintain a certain level of financial leverage over a set period. The finding also contrasts with Renz (2020) research finding that after the termination of external support, a development project can be considered sustainable and can achieve this by producing a level of output that is expected to be beneficial for a long time.

Multiple Regression Analysis Results

A regression analysis was conducted to assess the relationship between the dependent variable, which is project sustainability, and the independent variables, including stakeholder participation, digital inclusion, budget allocation and management competence. The findings are detailed in Tables 6, 7, and 8.

Table 6: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.902	0.814	0.759	1.0061

Source: Research Data (2025)

The findings presented in Table 6 indicate that the independent variables examined account for 0.759 (or 75.9%) of the sustainability of project funded by non- governmental organization in Machakos County, Kenya, as reflected by the adjusted R square value. Therefore, this implies that an additional 24.1% of project sustainability is influenced by factors that were not included in this study.

Table 7: Analysis of Variance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	101.348	4	25.337	32.258	0.004
	Residual	54.196	69	0.785		
	Total	155.544	73			

Source: Research Data (2025)

The findings presented in Table 7 indicate that the significance value of the study was 0.004a, which demonstrates that the model is significant, as it is below the threshold of 0.05. This suggests that the independent variables examined have a predictive influence on the dependent variable. Furthermore, the results reveal that the calculated F value exceeds the tabulated F value (32.258 > 25.337) at the 5% significance level, thereby affirming the model's significance.

Table 8: Coefficients

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	0.557	0.211		2.639	0.003
	Stakeholder participation	0.708	0.362	0.0711	1.956	0.004
	Digital inclusion	0.791	0.229	0.0568	3.454	0.002
	Budget allocation	0.776	0.197	0.0451	3.939	0.002
	Management commitment	0.799	0.306	0.0593	2.611	0.003

Source: Research Data (2025)

The results in Table 8 indicate that stakeholder participation had a positive and significant influence on the sustainability project funded by non-government organization in Machakos County, Kenya as indicated by beta value (β=0.0711, $P<0.05$). The positive coefficient indicates that as stakeholder engagement increases, so does the overall success and sustainability of the project. The finding agrees with Masika (2020) research observation that functional participation was apparent through the establishment of interest groups.

The research indicated that digital inclusion exerted a positive and substantial impact on the sustainability initiative supported by a non-governmental organization in Machakos County, Kenya, as evidenced by a beta value (β=0.0568, $P<0.05$). This suggests that the integration of digital technologies and access to digital resources significantly enhances the effectiveness and reach of sustainability programs in the region. The finding is consistent with Alhassan and Adam (2021) who analyzed the relationship between digital inclusion, technological access, and quality of life and demonstrated that globally, digital inclusion and access significantly contribute to an improved quality of life.

The research indicated that the allocation of budget resources exerted a positive and significant impact on the sustainability project financed by a non-governmental organization in Machakos County, Kenya, as evidenced by a beta value (β=0.0451, $P<0.05$). This suggests that increased financial investment in the project correlates with enhanced outcomes in sustainability efforts. Specifically, the positive beta value indicates that for every unit increase in budget allocation, there is a corresponding increase in the effectiveness and reach of the sustainability initiatives implemented by the NGO. The finding concurs with Sadiq (2019) research who revealed a significant connection between resource allocation strategies and project performance.

The research indicated that management competence exerted a positive and significant impact on the sustainability project supported by a non-governmental organization in Machakos County, Kenya, as evidenced by a beta value (β=0.0593, $P<0.05$). This suggests that effective management practices and skills are crucial for the successful implementation and outcomes of sustainability initiatives. The positive beta value indicates a direct relationship between management competence and the project's success, meaning that as management competence increases, so does the effectiveness of the sustainability project. The finding is consistent with Njoroge (2023) research finding which suggest that strong leadership and effective organizational management are essential for the long-term success of NGOs in both Ghana and Kenya.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The general objective of the study was to investigate the influence of management strategies on the sustainability of non-governmental organizations health projects in Machakos County. The study specific objectives were to establish effect of stakeholder participation, digital inclusion, budget allocation and management competence on the sustainability of project funded by non- governmental organization in Machakos County, Kenya. Data collection was conducted through the use of questionnaires. The analysis employed descriptive statistics alongside multiple regression analysis techniques. Below is a summary of the findings.

The study sought to establish effect of stakeholder participation on the sustainability of project funded by non-governmental organization in Machakos County, Kenya. The stakeholder participation was found to have a positive significant influence on the sustainability of project funded by non- governmental organization in Machakos County, Kenya. Individuals involved in health projects financed by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) promote adherence to regulations to improve the management and sustainability of these initiatives. The involvement of stakeholders in NGO-funded projects within Machakos County has led to increased accountability and strengthened sustainability. Engaging stakeholders interactively has facilitated their involvement in the planning of health projects funded by NGOs in Machakos County, thereby ensuring long-term sustainability.

The study sought to examine role of digital inclusion on the sustainability of projects funded by non-governmental organization in Machakos County, Kenya. The study found that there was a positive significant relationship between digital inclusion and the sustainability of projects funded by non- governmental organization in Machakos County, Kenya. The advent of digitalization has enabled enhanced information sharing, thereby improving the delivery of health services in projects funded by NGOs in Machakos County. The integration of digital tools has fostered better communication, leading to more effective service delivery for beneficiaries of health initiatives supported by NGOs in the region. Additionally, the formation of virtual teams through digital inclusion has significantly enhanced the efficiency of health project services funded by NGOs in Machakos County.

The study sought to evaluate the effect of budget allocation on the sustainability project funded by non-government organization in Machakos County, Kenya. The study revealed a positive significant effect of budget allocation on the sustainability project funded by non-government organization in Machakos County, Kenya. Regular audits have enhanced management strategies and the sustainability of NGOs operating in Machakos County. Prioritizing physical material scheduling has led to a reduction in costs associated with the management and sustainability of health projects funded by these NGOs. Sufficient funding from NGOs has significantly bolstered the sustainability of health initiatives in Machakos County.

The study sought to assess relevance of management competence affects the sustainability of non-governmental organization's health projects in Machakos County, Kenya. The management competence was found to have a positive significant effect on the sustainability of non- governmental organization's health projects in Machakos County, Kenya. The competitive compensation offered to personnel involved in health initiatives funded by NGOs in Machakos County has led to effective management strategies and enhanced sustainability. The management capabilities within these health projects are evidenced by staff training aimed at fostering improved sustainability and management practices. Furthermore, the presence of experienced staff has significantly increased the satisfaction levels of beneficiaries participating in the health projects supported by NGOs in Machakos County.

The study concludes that engaging local communities, government entities, and other relevant parties in the planning and implementation phases of these projects is essential for their long-term success. Stakeholder involvement facilitates knowledge sharing and capacity building, empowering local populations to take an active role in the management and sustainability of the projects. This empowerment is crucial for ensuring that the benefits of the initiatives extend beyond their initial implementation, promoting resilience and adaptability in the face of changing circumstances. The study also concludes on the importance of continuous engagement and feedback mechanisms, which allow for ongoing assessment and adjustment of project strategies.

The study concludes that digital inclusion facilitates improved communication, access to information, and the ability to leverage online resources, which can lead to greater community participation and ownership of projects. When communities have better access to digital technologies and the internet, they are more likely to engage with and benefit from the initiatives implemented by NGOs. Access to digital tools and the internet facilitate entrepreneurship and job creation. Access to technology helps these groups advocate for their rights, participate in decision-making processes, and access resources that were previously out of reach.

The study concludes that budget allocation facilitates the implementation of various sustainability practices and also fosters collaboration among stakeholders, including local communities, government entities, and private sector partners. The study also concludes that when adequate funds are directed towards environmental programs, there is a marked improvement in community engagement, resource management, and overall project success. Strategic planning in budget allocation is important as targeted investments lead to more efficient use of resources and greater impact.

The study concludes that effective management practices, including strategic planning, resource allocation, and stakeholder engagement, significantly contribute to the overall success of these projects. NGOs better navigate challenges, optimize resource use, and ensure that project objectives align with the needs of the local community through fostering a competent management team. Training and capacity-building programs for project managers and staff leads to improved decision-making and problem-solving abilities which enhances project outcomes and promotes greater community involvement and ownership of sustainability efforts.

The study recommended that non-governmental organizations should prioritize stakeholder engagement as a core component of their project design and execution. This will enable them to enhance the sustainability and impact of their efforts, ultimately contributing to the broader goals of community development and environmental stewardship in Machakos County and beyond. The NGOs can significantly enhance the sustainability and impact of their efforts through embedding a collaborative ethos into their operational frameworks. Ultimately, this approach contributes to the broader goals of community development and environmental stewardship in Machakos County and beyond, paving the way for more resilient and thriving communities.

The study recommended that NGOs should prioritize strategies that promote digital literacy and infrastructure development as part of their project planning and implementation processes. This will empower local populations, enhance their capacity to manage and sustain projects, and ultimately contribute to more resilient and self-sufficient communities. The study also recommends that the NGOs in Machakos County should invest in digital infrastructure and training programs to bridge the digital divide. This investment will not only support the sustainability of NGO projects but also foster economic development and social cohesion within the region.

The study recommends that NGOs should explore various funding avenues, including grants from international organizations, partnerships with private sector companies, and crowdfunding initiatives. This diversification can enhance financial stability and provide more resources for the sustainability project. There should be a collaborative workshops and meetings that facilitate discussions on budget needs and foster a sense of ownership among stakeholders, which can lead to increased financial support. Training in financial management, proposal writing, and project monitoring can empower local stakeholders to effectively advocate for and manage budget allocations.

The study recommends that there is need for establishing mentorship programs that pair experienced project managers with less experienced individuals can facilitate knowledge transfer. Creating platforms for NGOs to share experiences, challenges, and solutions can enhance collective management skills. This could include forums, online groups, or regular meet-ups where stakeholders can discuss their projects and learn from one another. Leveraging technology, such as project management software and mobile applications, can streamline project planning, execution, and monitoring. Training on these tools can improve efficiency and accountability in project management.

Suggestions for Further Study

The study suggests that further studies should be done that focus on other management strategies on the sustainability of non-governmental organizations health projects in Machakos County that have not been studied so as to address a conceptual gap. The study further suggests that different study should be done that focus on other type of projects within the County apart from health projects.

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