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## INFLUENCE OF SELECTED LEADERSHIP STYLES ON IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN NAROK COUNTY: A CASE OF NAROK NORTH SUB-COUNTY

Asige Mmaiti Lawrence\*<sup>1</sup>, Walter Kipkorir Kiboi<sup>2</sup>, Obushe Dennis Omuse<sup>2</sup> and Phillip Chemelil<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Social Sciences & School of Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences and Creative Industries,  
P.O BOX 861-20500, Maasai Mara University, Narok -Kenya

<sup>2</sup>Department of Humanities and Public Administration, School of Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences and Creative Industries,  
P.O BOX 861-20500, Maasai Mara University, Narok -Kenya

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\*Corresponding author:  
Asige Mmaiti Lawrence,

### ABSTRACT

Currently, governments of most developing countries are aware of the need to foster development in local communities as well as nationally and have special programs to stimulate and help communities to improve their livelihoods. Despite advances in research on project management, many projects continue to face many challenges and problems concerning their implementation. This study sought to examine influence of leadership styles in implementation of community development projects in Narok North sub-County, Kenya. The study adopted planning theory to guide its study parameters. A descriptive research survey design was adopted for this study. The target population comprised of 40 employees from the former USAID/APHIAplus allied Community Based Organization (Enaitoti Naretu Olmaa, Narok District Network Forum and Olmareilang) as of 2019 who were involved in various community development projects in the study area up to 2020. The study was a census as all the 40 employees were selected for the study. A questionnaire was used as the main data collection instrument. Data analysis was done using descriptive statistics of frequencies and percentages. The findings of the study were presented using tables and charts. The study findings established that leadership styles affect implementation of community development projects and that leadership style has an important influence on the implementation community-based projects in the study area. The findings of the study are expected to be beneficial to the community members, the CBOs locally and nationally and other stakeholders who benefit either directly or indirectly. The Government will also benefit through improved implementation of community development projects and development at the community level generally.

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## INTRODUCTION

According to World Bank (2021), Community development projects initiated several decades ago have left remarkable changes in the society by their positive contributions in different localities in which they were established. The society has benefited to a great extent through improved living conditions hence livelihood for many people (Cleland & Ireland, 2007). According to Odoyo (2013), projects are a representation of the commitment of resources to produce specific outputs within a given time and budget framework. Projects may be initiated within a short or a long-time frame by a community requiring modest inputs and producing tangible outputs. Odoyo (2013), also noted that communications and material resources was among the key factors influencing the initiation of projects during the second world war period.

There was much less emphasis on small -scale development specifically related to the needs and welfare of the people in their local communities or societies at large. According to Tropman (2014), governments of developing countries are aware of the need to further development in local communities by establishing projects that are sustainable and support community needs. Nationally, there are special programs to stimulate and help communities to improve their living standards altogether. Most of community development projects according to United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization UNESCO and United States of America Aid for International Development (USAID), and a wide variety of community -based organizations (CBOs) have become tools through which development programs are being initiated. Thus, the field of community development includes any action by any agency that is primarily designed to benefit the community socially, economically and to some extent politically through civic education, leadership and proper governance programs (Michael, Kinyua & Mwamba, 2021).

In a report by United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR 2019), it was established that achieving community project sustainability requires appropriate community-based approaches for development including the extent to which leadership has to be applied. By involving the community members in project implementation process, it brings about consolidation of efforts among community members in advancing their endeavor towards community driven projects. This approach recognizes the resilience capacities, skills and resources of people concerned, in order to deliver on the goals that support project implementation and sustainability (Michael, Kinyua & Mwamba, 2021). The term community development has been adopted to refer to different scenarios. For instance, in the United States, the term has been used to complement and replace the idea of urban restoration, which focused on physical development projects (Tropman, 2014). As early as 1974, the Federal laws on Housing and Community Development Act provided a way for state and local governments to channel funds to Community Development Corporations and other not –for profit organizations. In Russia, Dongier, Dury and Doran (1999), further noted that community groups enjoy control over decision making through the support by Community-driven development (CDD). Poor people are treated as assets and partners in the development process, building on their institutions and resources. The community is supported through strengthening and financing inclusive community groups, facilitating community access to information, and promoting an enabling environment through policy and institutional reform by the CDD process. Experience demonstrates that by directly relying on poor people to drive development activities, CDD has the potential to make poverty reduction efforts more responsive to demands, more inclusive, more sustainable, and more cost-effective than traditional centrally led results at the local levels and complementing market economy and government-run programs. With these prevailing attributes, CDD can play an important role in strategies to reduce poverty (Kouzes, Barry & Posner, 2017). With poor people in Egypt, it is also established that in CDD arrangements, control of decisions and resources rests with community groups, who may often work in partnership with demand-responsive support organizations and service providers, including elected local governments, the private sector, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and central government agencies (Campbell & Fainstein, 2013). Access to information and appropriate support for poor men and women can ensure effective organization of resources through community development initiatives (House, 2014). Poor communities have greater capacity than generally recognized and they will also gain by making good use of resources targeted at poverty lessening. Besides, studies have also indicated that the poor can be liberated from the yoke of poverty by developing their capacity, building social and human capital, facilitating community and individual empowerment, deepening democracy, improving governance, and strengthening human rights activism and employing appropriate leadership for the success of development projects locally (Tropman, 2014).

Community-Driven Development (CDD) programs have also been embraced in African states like Ghana since the last several decades, as an effective Programme-Based Approach (PBA) to development (Dongier *et al.*, 2003). CDD has further been defined as a development approach that gives control over planning decisions and investment resources to community groups and local governments by the World Bank. CDD provides communities with a tone of voice and control over all the five project cycle stages and it is believed to enhance sustainability, improve efficiency and effectiveness, allow poverty reduction efforts to be embraced, make development more non discriminative, empower poor people, build social and human capitals, improve governance and leadership and balance market and public sector activities (Dongier *et al.*, 2003). In Nigeria, CDD is increasingly seen as a bridge between bottom-up and top-down approaches to improved governance and service provision. CDD approach was adopted as a mechanism for improved service delivery in key public sectors. But building on the principles of participatory governance and country-based aid this has become hallmarks of development of CDD and its support. The International Development Association (IDA) has also used CDD to foster social accountability

that supports decentralization of services to all the poor people all over (Michael, Kinyua & Mwamba, 2021). In an effort to analyze the performance of water systems in six countries (Benin, Bolivia, Honduras, Indonesia, Pakistan, and Uganda), Katz and Sara (1997) found that community-based approaches like appropriate leadership styles significantly increased sustainability. The analysis found that there was a strong linkage between participation of community members and project sustainability. Newman *et al.* (2002), noted that project sustainability was achieved through information access, capacity building at all levels, training of the community members in operations and maintenance, control over financial resources, and effectiveness in the implementation of the projects. Narayan (2010) critically analyzed lessons from over one hundred projects funded by different agencies like USAID and many others in over 40 developing countries and found that the participation of local communities was an important factor in project implementation and later on sustainability.

According to Narayan (2010), community development process requires the involvement and contribution of local residents in identifying the strategies they wish to use to improve their quality of life. Participation is seen as developmental, educative, and integrative and as a means of protecting freedom. One of the key assumptions of participation is that local residents will be more supportive of the project, and therefore increase the likelihood of its success, if residents have input in the decision-making process. Cleland and Ireland (2007), noted that local residents probably have a better knowledge about assets and needs of the community. They further noted that, public participation is considered the centre-piece of the democratic process and leadership development. One of the distinguishing characteristics of community development is that it involves the creation of local organizations (CBOs) to help build assets and educate communities on proper development processes and procedures. Green and Haines (2008), concluded that community-based organizations offer several advantages in initiating programs, contacts and information about the neighborhood. Community based projects are also controlled by local residents. Most, if not all, projects go through a life cycle which varies with the size and complexity of the project. The life cycle for medium to large projects will generally follow the project cycle starting from conception, feasibility, evaluation, authorization, implementation, completion, operation and termination (Cleland & Ireland, 2007). In identification, one project idea out of several is chosen and defined. Feasibility comprises tests for technical, commercial and financial viability, technical studies and investment appraisal plans are made.

According to Odoyo (2013), projects are often initiated in the context of a unstable, unpredictable and vibrant environment. He further noted that many projects, therefore, are usually marred by challenges, constraints and risks as they are execution through completion. Odoyo (2013), added that despite the significant input of human and financial resources, many fall short of expectation. Many failed to meet the priority needs of target beneficiaries, costs escalated, stated outputs were not achieved or if achieved were not sustained, implementation dates slipped by or adverse outcomes were not projected and predictable in the long run.

According to Ali (2012), projects are influenced by a multiple of factors which can be external or internal to the organization responsible for its management and execution. Poor project management, inadequate opportunities for potential beneficiaries to participate in project identification and design, poor linkages between project activities and project purpose, insufficient attention to exterior environment during project design, among others are factors that influence most of the projects in the community. Projects that are likely to succeed are those that take into consideration socio-economic factors within the community where they are initiated (WHO/UNICEF, 2019). Ali (2012), further noted that the important thing for the project manager is to recognize what these factors are and how they impact on the project during the various phases from inception to final handover, or even disposal. The external or internal influences are known as the project environment. The external factors

making up this environment are the client, consultants, contractors, suppliers, competitors, politicians, national and local government agencies, public utilities, pressure groups, the end users and the general public. Internal influences include the organization management, the project team, internal departments, and stakeholders.

According to UNICEF (2020), Kenya has experienced many failures relating to community development projects and particularly in pastoral communities like in Samburu, Maralal, West Pokot and Narok County. Philip *et al* (2013), noted that between 2002 and 2007, the Government of Kenya in association with NGOs have spent a substantial amount of money in developing community-based projects such as water, education, health and sanitation, economic related projects, girl-child issues among others. However, the success of these projects has remained a puzzle to many people since many have failed before their termination phase. Aubel (2004), indicated that these failures are often attributed to the approach used by the donor firms not involving the community in project development and management as well as in monitoring and evaluation of the success of projects (Kouzes, Barry & Posner, 2017).

According to Philip *et al* (2013), there are varied results on factors affecting implementation of community-based projects in pastoral areas like Narok County. Albert (2007), noted that stakeholders who are supposed to support the success of the project have had their own agenda and preferences for participating in the project. On the other hand, Yacoob and Hashim (2009), indicated that the nature of the project contributes to the failure of the project but little has been documented on how this influences implementation process. It is against this background that this study seeks to establish factors that affect implementation of community development projects in Narok County, Narok North sub-County.

**Statement of the problem:** Despite advances in research on project management, many projects continue to face many challenges and problems concerning their implementation (Michael, Kinyua & Mwamba, 2021). Empirical evidence suggests that a combination of various factors have attributed to the failure in implementation of community development projects. According to Kemuma (2015), successful implementation of projects depended on human factors, such as project leadership, top management support, project team and technical factors. While projects require certain leadership styles to thrive, many studies have not established how leadership styles influence implementation of community development projects across Narok County. This research therefore sought to examine how leadership styles influence implementation of community development projects in Narok North sub-County.

Previous research has also indicated that although there is continued donor support for community development projects in Narok County, many community developments projects do not complete their project cycle. Development projects such as water, sanitation, health and education among others have either been terminated prematurely or they have just stalled because of various factors. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the extent to which selected leadership styles have influenced implementation of Community development projects in Narok County with a focus on Narok North sub-County, Kenya.

**Purpose of the study:** The purpose of this study was to examine the extent to which selected leadership styles affect implementation of community development projects in Narok North sub-County.

#### **Research Question**

To what extent does selected leadership styles affect implementation of community development projects in Narok North sub-County, Narok County, Kenya?

**Concept of Community Development:** Kirk and Shutte (2004), in their study on community leadership, development and awareness defined the concept of community development in terms of rural and

community development. One of the early definitions that are widely accepted was developed by the United States International Cooperation. It emphasized the process where individuals in the community joined forces to plan and take actions regarding community problems. They identified community problems, needs, plan and conduct activities together using available community resources. According to the United Nations report of 2020, it was established that community development projects could rely on outside help from government and private organizations. It was further established that community development is a process whereby the efforts of individuals in the community are combined with efforts of government and non-governmental bodies to improve and develop community socially and economically. These efforts should lead to national development provided a more inclusive definition of community development as a process of community activities that are planned and organized in such a way so as to raise the quality of life in the community in terms of economy, social, culture, spiritual and the environment through initiatives and active participation of the community members and with minimum help from outside (Kouzes, Barry & Posner, 2017).

According to Fullan and Michael (2021), a community is defined according to geographical location, shared local interest and needs, shared advantages and disadvantages in a given population. According to World Bank (2022), a community is also a group of people living in the same locality and shares some autonomy in organizing their local social lives. Community Development is currently a broad term applied to the practices and academic disciplines of civic leaders, activists, involved citizens and professionals to improve various aspects of local communities. Davies and Brent (2018), in their study on developing sustainable leadership indicated that development seeks to empower communities, individuals and groups of people by providing them with the skills they need to effect change in their own communities. According to Davis and Brent (2018), skills are often created through the formation of large social groups working for a common agenda. Community developers must understand both how to work with individuals and how to affect communities' positions within the context of larger social institutions. Davies and Brent (2008) further indicated that rural community development encompasses a range of approaches and activities that aim to improve the welfare and livelihoods of people living in rural areas. As a branch of community development, these approaches look into social issues particularly community organizing.

According to Kouzes, Barry and Posner (2017), rural community development is important in developing countries where a large part of the population is engaged in farming. They also noted that a range of community development methods have been created and used by organizations involved in international development. Most of these efforts to promote rural community development are led by 'experts' from outside the community such as government officials, staff of Non-governmental organizations and foreign advisers who come to facilitate community development projects for the improvement of these communities (Kouzes, Barry & Posner, 2017). The long debate being witnessed about the issue of community participation, in which questions about sustainability of these efforts and the extent to which rural people are or are not being empowered to make decisions for themselves have been raised (Kouzes, Barry & Posner, 2017). This contrasts with other forms of rural development that focus on public works and technology in general. In Kenya, an estimated two million people are being positively impacted by community-based projects efforts. The focus of CBPs has included interventions in education, water, sanitation, health care, agriculture, spiritual nurture, community capacity building as well as microenterprise development (Kouzes *et.al*, 2017). Community based development projects are planned for a certain period of time called gestation period or life-span after which they come to an end and the community is expected to continue running the project and make them self-sustaining. Government organs and NGOs in partnership with communities do establish community-based development projects. However, the project activities collapse following the phase-out of funders support.

A World Vision (2009) evaluation report analysis show that, most community development projects have failed to sustain themselves, become self-reliant and the communities have failed to continue running them after funding organizations withdraw their support. Some factors which should have been worked out, in order to stop this trend of projects collapsing are not done despite support being meant for a specified period with the objective of making the projects self-reliant. In Kenya community development has been considered by various scholars as being very critical in the general development of rural areas. A study by Kemuma (2015) conducted in Kisii County, sought to examine project performance factors that are considered important in project implementation process. In that was established that planning, monitoring and evaluation framework, sources of finance and stakeholder involvement constituted very important implementation strategies, which have an overall influence to the project performance. Using both primary and secondary sources of data collection Semi-structured questionnaires was used to collect the data. This current study sought to examine influence of leadership styles on implementation of community development projects in Narok North sub-County.

#### **Leadership styles and Implementation of Community Development**

**Projects:** Kibebe and Mwirigia (2014), describe leadership is described as relations between two or more members of a group that often involves a structuring or restructuring of the situation and the perception and expectations of the members. According to Kirk and Shuttle (2004) leaders are agents of change and their acts affect other people more than other people's acts affect them. Leadership occurs when one group member modifies the motivation or competencies of others in the group. According to House (2014), leadership has been defined as the ability of a person to influence, inspire and facilitate others to add new ideas towards the effectiveness and success of the organizations of which they are members. Hargreaves (2007), did not only look at leadership as a way of influencing others, but also from the future orientation perspective where he indicated that, through leadership people are empowered to improve human and resource capacity for their own good. It also provides opportunity for leaders and stakeholders to net-work learn from and support each other in achieving organizational goals for the future (Mwirigia, 2014). Such leaders seek to promote development and change for the better. Dibella et al (2023), in their study on Laissez Fare Leadership, defined leadership as a specific trait, competency, or ability that an individual can possess. Even though this definition of leadership has been allowed, the concept of leadership remains unclear and hence continues to be a strong area of development and research especially when it comes to adoption of proper leadership styles that are pro-development. Burns, (2003), in his study on transforming leadership noted that, it is often difficult to separate leadership from other processes of social influence. According to Hersey, Blanchard and Johnson (2011), leadership is the art of influencing an individual or group, regardless of the justification. It is generally, defined by the specific theory studied or the conditions under which the leader operates during a particular given period of time. Davies and Brent (2008), further defined leadership as the ability to mobilize people towards a shared vision, while encouraging individual development in the whole process. A similar view was held by Fullan and Michael (2001), who indicated that leadership is a process of influence used by an individual to encourage an individual or group to pursue objectives held by the leader so as to achieve desired objectives. Similarly, Hargreaves, Andy and Dean Fink (2006), defined leadership as a comprehensive activity conceived in terms of group processes, exercise of influence of behaviors, a form of persuasion and as many combinations of these definitions. This study will adopt this definition of leadership in examining the influence of leadership styles on successful implementation of community development programs. The various leadership styles adopted for his study are examined below;

**Laissez-faire leadership style:** Kouzes, et.al (2017) defined this leadership style as that functions that guides people's interactions when there is no interference by government or any other powers from outside. It is considered as a natural economic order that brings

about maximum well-being for the individual and extends to the community in general. Leadership being an interactive process provides needed guidance and direction; it involves three interacting dynamic elements: a leader, a follower and a situation. The leader's role is to influence and provide direction to his/her followers and provide them needed support for theirs and the organization's success (Wanjohi, 2010) Based on the definition of this leadership style, this study sought to examine how this interactive process of leadership influences implementation of community development projects in Narok north sub-County so that conclusions can be made on how it affects implementation of community development projects.

**Autocratic leadership style:** According to Dibella et al (2023), the autocratic leadership style thrives in highly ordered hierarchical ladder environments such as the military or very bureaucratic organizations like some of which operate in Governments. An autocratic leader exercises almost absolute power and commands strict compliance and conformity to the set codes of conduct, rules, procedures and processes. In other words, this kind of leader demands compliance of the highest order at whatever given time. Wanjohi (2010), also noted that the autocratic leader generally has a well defined and controlled disciplinary process with an emphasis on punishments for non-compliance. An autocratic leader determines prescribed policies, procedures, rules, and goals. He or she is the overall decision maker in the organization. According to Hargreaves, Andy and Dean Fink, (2006) autocratic leaders are usually inflexible in their beliefs and perceptions. They believe that followers have minimal abilities and capabilities and need close supervision and direction, and that controls are needed to assure their compliant behavior in the execution of community development programmes. Autocratic leaders believe their style is highly efficient (Pfeiffer, 1977). Unfortunately, this style of leadership results in minimal or no innovation, and virtually no personal or corporate improvement in the community where they rule. Most individuals are familiar with the autocratic leaders because such leaders are prevalent even today.

**Democratic leadership style:** According to Hersey & Blanchard (2004), Democratic leadership is sometimes referred to as liberal leadership. This leadership is where the leader recognizes each person's self worth and esteem needs. The actions of the leader are based upon trust, integrity, honesty, equality, openness and mutual respect. Democratic leaders mostly employ servant leadership and they recognize the importance of the people they serve and lead. They also show consideration and concern for others by empathetic listening and understanding. They foster open communication among all employees at all levels. Reasons and circumstances pertaining to decisions that affect the employees, department, or organization are shared in a timely fashion (Bullogh & Amanda 2008). Under such leadership, a highly positive, motivation-oriented environment is established to help satisfy the higher-level self-esteem and self-actualization needs as defined by Abraham Maslow (1998) in his hierarchy of needs. Ultimately, the democratic and enlightened leader strives to empower the followers to their maximum capability and desire so as to yield more out of them. At the same time, Bullogh and Amanda (2008) noted that the democratic leader places a strong emphasis on teamwork, while functioning as a facilitator to develop a natural synergy among the group members. The democratic leader practices employee association in considering important issues and exercises influence in reaching consensual decisions. The ultimate goal is to democratically attain commitment to and ownership of decisions. Such a leader according to Busiinge (2010), is said to have high performance and quality expectations and recognizes that the only way to attain them is through a workforce that is committed. The followers participate in establishing goals for community transformation especially goals for the good of the community and goals for their own personal growth, learning and development. The democratic leader places a high emphasis upon rewards rather than punishment in many instances. When discipline or correction is needed, it is administered fairly. This leader recognizes that mistakes will happen in the execution of community development programmes or any other work assigned to the followers and considers them learning opportunities that should not be punishable anyhow. In this

way, everyone benefits and the mistakes may not reoccur (Davies & Brent, 2008). This style tends to involve most of the people in the implementation of the projects and it ensures that the views of these people are taken into consideration hence enhancing implementation of the projects in all over the world. From this discussion it is noted that the success of any community development project will depend on the leadership style used in implementation process. It is for this reason that this leadership style was tested to ascertain whether it is important in implementation of community development projects in Narok North sub-County.

The effect of the attitudes of the community and its leadership on realization of projects is vividly captured by Busiinge (2010) his research on the impact of donor aided projects through NGOs and Social and Economic Welfare of the Rural Poor. In the reports, interviews with the NGO staff revealed that the communities don't own the projects that they implement and unless there was hand-outs they did not want to participate. Projects also seemed to have created the impression that nothing can work without money. As a result of this, some of the leaders and community members did not want to attend meetings of project activities and that was affecting the ownership of the projects and the work of local leaders. It was also emerging from interviews with communities that projects often undermined what people know and they participate for formality reasons and not because they believed in the project (Busiinge, 2010). It is further noted that research on this kind of leadership style is also concentrated in organizations where the activities are of commercial nature like businesses and not for welfare as is in community development projects. The study applied this concept to examine factors affecting implementation process of community-based projects in Narok north Sub-County. On local leadership in Kenya, Busiinge (2010), advises that communities have an important role to play and can therefore not afford to sit back and watch as projects collapse. While the NGOs have played an active role to monitor the performance of government programs, local leaders need to step up their efforts to monitor the implementation of NGO projects as well so as to promote development in their localities. Bass (2015), on the other hand noted that governments and Non-Governmental Organizations need to create and participate in information sharing platforms to discuss development progression in their communities. If this is done, collaborators keep watch of each other's performance and responsibility in community development programs. To manage a project, the clientele usually set up a project organization which can supply the resources for the project and service it during the whole project life cycle (Okumu, 2012).

The Project Steering Committee (PSC) acts as an administrative authority during the life cycle of the project. Its job is to ensure that the interests of the sponsoring organization are sheltered and that the project is run and delivered to meet the requirements of these organizations in question (Williams, 2003). The PSC is required to consult or make decisions and policy declarations on major issues. The project office, usually headed by a project manager, is almost compulsory for project supervision in large projects. Having this kind of set up for a project makes leadership more effective and sustainable in the implementation phase of the project cycle. The most important and complicated issue bearing on local level planning and development is project leadership. Effective project leadership may lead to social and personal empowerment, economic development, and socio-political conversion in general (Narayan, 2010). Yet there are obstacles: the power of central bureaucracies, the lack of local skills and organizational experience, social divisions, and the impact of national and transnational structures (Kaufman and Alfonso, 1997). The need for project leadership in development and management is nonetheless accepted and recognized in the proficient literature as having an influence development projects but certification of the same on project implementation in Narok north sub-County is not well documented. According to Kibebe and Mwirigia (2014), in their study on factors affecting effective implementation of sub-County development fund (CDF), they established that leadership and decision making is a great challenge to the implementation of CDF initiated projects in Bungoma County.

They noted that decision making should not only involve the experts, professionals and the management but also the residents who are the beneficiaries of the project. However, they cautioned that the locals are not to be given the full mandate to make the project related decision since this may inconvenience implementation process. According to them, low level of awareness burdened with illiteracy was identified as key factor affecting effective implementation of Community development projects in Kenya. Many studies conducted in Kenya to establish the influence of leadership on community development projects is limited with little literature such as Leadership and Business Management, which has only focused on leadership styles generally in business realm but not focused in implementation of community development projects in Kenya. According to a study carried on small and medium enterprises the adoption of democratic leadership style where the owner of a business and the employees are involved in the decisions making improved implementation of strategic plan, open communication in the business and constant feedback also improved implementation of strategic plans.

Murigi (2013), conducted a study on influence of head teachers' leadership styles on pupils' performance in Murang'a, Kenya and one of the leadership style variables was autocratic leadership style. The measures used in autocratic leadership were punishment, task oriented, commands and supervision. According to Bwisa (2014), study autocratic leader focused in their managerial role as they were task oriented and getting things done. The study observed that the autocratic leader motivated the staff through punishment. However, the study had no link to implementation of community development projects in Narok North Sub-County, Narok County, Kenya. In this environment, little interaction or communication is expected among associates. Out-flowing information is highly restricted while in-flowing communication is well filtered and protective in nature (Ronald, 2004). It is noted that this leadership style has the power centered in only one person and the rest are required only to follow. In Kenya, studies conducted to examine the influence of autocratic leadership have mainly focused on commercial related firms. A few studies such as Oxfam (2007), and World Bank (2004), have considered leadership among the community development projects but in a general perspective. Most of the literature on how leadership related factors influence the level of community participation in community development projects in the Kenyan context has been descriptive and isolated in terms of context. The few studies that have been comparative are not comprehensive in their outlook on how leadership style affects implementation of community-based projects for instance Kamuiru and Bwisa (2014); Okumu (2012) Wanjohi (2010). The literature has been keen to point out specific issues while wearing a blind eye on others. Whilst quantitative based evidence maps out the general factors affecting implementation process in community development projects, the level of leadership in projects, methodological approach adopted are inadequate for the understanding of how leadership styles affects the implementation of community development projects in Kenya (Blackburn, 2009). In Narok County generally and Narok North sub-County specifically, a similar scenario is also observed where there is scanty literature clearly documented on how the leadership styles have influenced the implementation of the many projects that have been initiated in this area. This study sought to establish how autocratic leadership style affects implementation of community development programs in Narok North Sub-County.

**Theoretical Framework:** Throughout the centuries, there has been growing and persistent demand towards development of integrated approaches to planning as a way of combating complex development problems. Planning theory seems to be of great value in helping planners pinpoint major problems facing communities and anticipation of corresponding results and outcomes. The adaptive sustainable planning theory is suggested and amply delineated as an effective overarching normative framework for the development of an integrated planning approach that guides implementation towards achievement of predicted results and outcomes. This study is inclined to planning theory propounded by Allmendinger, (2002). Planning

theory propagates that planners pinpoint major problems facing their communities and anticipate significant corresponding outcomes. It further serves as a warning sign that tends to continuously direct practitioners' attention and channel their efforts towards important matters, setting the stage for developing contingent strategies and appropriate responses. The adaptive sustainable planning theory is delineated as an effective overarching normative framework for the development of an integrated planning approach that provides organization to the field and guides practitioners towards realizing their role as effective decision makers. Theories of planning, however, mean different things to different people. Practitioner planners tend to generally view theories as useless in their practical endeavors. Conversely, planning academicians tend to view, and heavily rely on, theories as an integral part of the planning profession. Put differently, academicians seem to be more inclined to employing a great deal of theories, regardless of their practical benefits, whereas practitioners have more propensities towards avoiding theories in general, regardless of how beneficial they could be to their practice. This partially contributes to the gap between theory and practice. The key contribution of this theory on factors influencing the implementation of community development projects is not its reliance on the typical notion of sustainability per se but rather its unique and thorny approach of how it ought to be used as a way of moving forward with planning and policy-making to ultimately enhance a better community development process.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was conducted in Narok North sub-County and a descriptive research survey design was adopted in order to guide the study variables. The study population comprised of 40 employees from the USAID/APHIAplus supported CBOs (Enaitoti Naretu Olmaa, Narok District Network Forum and Olmareilang) who were involved in various community development projects and programmes in the study area up to 2020. The employees of USAID/APHIAplus related CBOs were considered for the study because they have been working in various projects for a long time in Narok North sub-County. All the 40 employees were used as the study population and therefore the study was a census. The study used a questionnaire as the main research instrument. The study results were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequencies, means and percentages. Data was presented by use of charts, frequency tables and bar charts.

### Data Analysis, Presentation and Interpretation

**Response rate:** The study distributed a total of 40 questionnaires. A total of 35 questionnaires were collected back for analysis. This represented a response rate of 87.5 % which was acceptable for analysis. According to Babbie (2003), a response rate of 70 % and above is acceptable for use in further analysis for a descriptive study. The five questionnaires that were not returned were from the respondents who were not present during the time when the questionnaires were being collected and yet they had been included in the sample.

**Findings of the Study:** The findings of the study were organized as follows.

**Response on Demographic Factors:** The study sought to establish the demographic distribution of the respondents in terms of gender, level of educational, work experience and how long they had worked under APHIA plus related CBOs.

**Gender of the respondents:** The study sought to establish the gender of the respondents because it has an influence on the responses since males and females have different perceptions about various factors affecting implementation of community development projects. It was important for this study to establish the gender composition of the

respondents. This helped to ensure a representative sample for the study the results are presented in Figure 4.1.

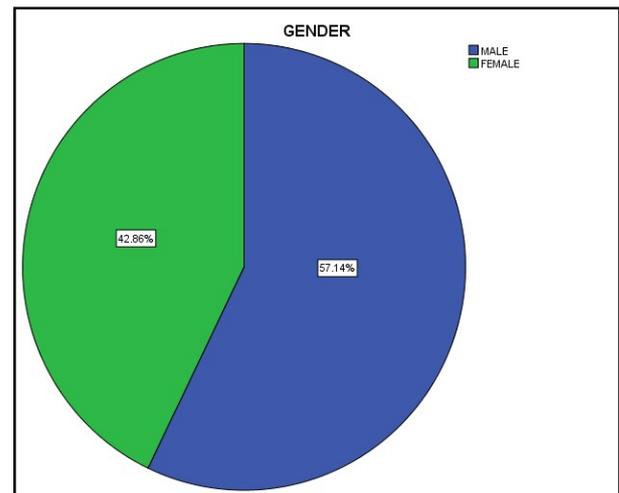


Figure 4.1. Response of Gender

The results in figure 4.1 shows that a total of 20 (57 %) of the respondents were male and 15 (43%) were female. This implies that most respondents who participated in the implementation process were male and this could be because they are usually more involved in field work than females.

**Level of education of respondents:** The study sought to establish the level of education of the respondents because it also has an influence on the responses since people with different academic levels also have different perceptions about influence of selected leadership styles affecting implementation of community development projects. It was important for this study to establish the education composition of the respondents. This helped to ensure a representative sample for the study. The results are presented in figure 4.2.

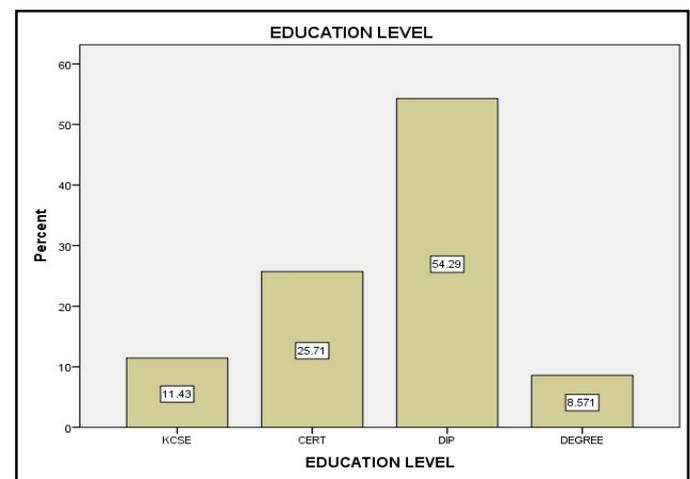


Figure 4.2. Educational level of the respondents

The results in figure 4.2 show that majority of the respondents 19 (54%) had pursued a diploma, those who had done a certificate were 9 (26%), 4 (11%) of the respondents had done KCSE while the rest 3(9%) had pursued a degree. This shows that most of the respondents had attained the relevant education level that enabled them to easily handle matters concerning implementation of projects in Narok North Sub-County, Narok County generally.

**Work experience of the respondents:** The study also sought to establish the work experience of the respondents. This has an influence on the perceptions of different people because the more experience a person has the more, they understand the extent to which

leadership styles affects implementation of community development projects in the study area. The results were presented in Figure 4.3.

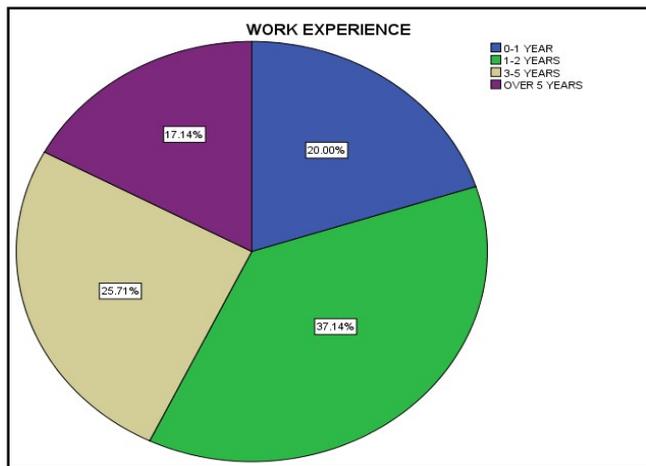


Figure 4.3. Work experience of the respondents

From figure 4.3, the study established that majority of the respondents 13 (37%) had 1-2 years of work experience while 9 (26 %) had a work experience of between 3-5 years. Further analysis revealed that 7(20%) of the respondents had a work experience of 0-1 year while the rest of the respondents 6 (17%) had had a work experience of over 5 years. From the results, most of the respondents had a considerable work experience that could help them explain how leadership styles implementation of community development projects in Narok North Sub-County. The study revealed that respondents were of the opinion that leadership styles affect how community development projects are likely to achieve community development mandates including sustainability of livelihoods.

**Number of year's respondents had worked under APHIA plus CBOs:** The study also sought to establish the number of years that the respondents had worked under APHIA plus related CBOs. The number of years that the respondent had worked under APHIA plus related CBOs is important because it denotes good understanding of the extent to which selected leadership styles influence implementation of community development projects in the study area. This was used to capture the perception of different years that the respondents had worked under APHIA plus related CBOs. The results were presented in Figure 4.4.

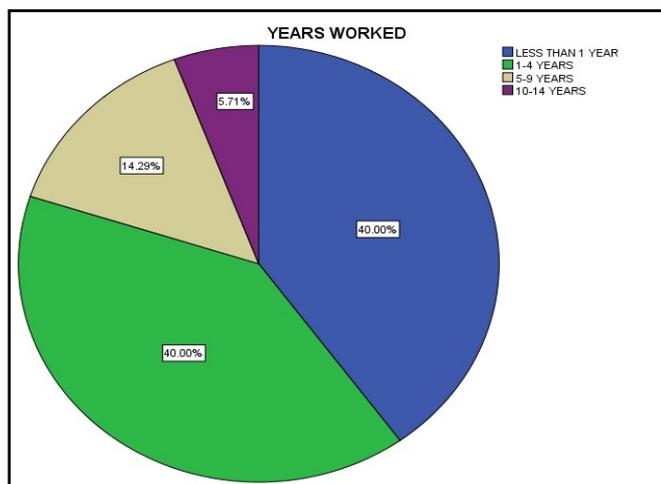


Figure 4.4. Number of years the respondents had worked under APHIA plus CBOs

From figure 4.4, most of the respondents 14 (40%) had worked under APHIA plus related CBOs for a period of 1 year or less. A similar number 14(40%) had worked in these NGOs between 1-4 years.

Furthermore, another 5(14%) had worked in these CBOs between 5-9 years. Lastly, the rest 2(7%) had worked in these CBOs between 10-14 years. This shows that most of the respondents had worked in these CBOs for a considerable number of years hence they understand what project implementation was since they had practiced it for quite some time. Also, this shows that they have knowledge of factors affecting implementation of community development projects in Narok North Sub-County.

**Project Leadership Styles and Implementation of Community Development Projects:** The study sought to establish whether project leadership styles affect implementation of community development projects in Narok North Sub-County. The respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree with the statements. The respondents were asked to rate their opinion on a 5 scale Likert whereby 1= Strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3 = not sure, 4 = Agree and 5= Strongly Agree. The responses were presented in this section where the descriptive analysis was presented, then correlation and the ordinary least square regression. The results in table 4.1 show that majority of the respondents 15(42.9%) and 14(40.0%) agreed and strongly agreed respectively that they understand the importance of leadership in implementation of community development projects. Only 3(8.9%) disagreed with the statement. This implies that community members understand the importance of leadership in implementation of community development projects in the study area and that this should be put into consideration while promoting community development projects. The results also show that majority 22(62.9%) of the respondents agreed while 9(25.7%) strongly agreed with the statement that the success of project implementation process is influenced by leadership styles with only 3(8.6%) disagreeing. The results further indicated that over 80% of the respondents agreed with the statement (M=4.11; SD=.676). This implies that there was a relationship between the project implementation process and the leadership style. On whether democratic leadership style was appropriate in implementation of community development projects in the study area, 17(48.6%) of the respondents agreed, 15(42.9%) strongly agreed and only 3(8.6 %) disagreed with the above statement. The overall response indicates that that over 80% of the respondents (M=4.34; and SD=.639) agreed that democratic leadership style is appropriate in the implementation of community development projects. However, it was further established those who did not agree with the above statement noted that this kind of leadership style may delay implementation of development projects especially in scenarios where people are not ready to agree on the right course of action to be followed.

Regarding Autocratic leadership style most of the respondents 16 (45.7%) and 13 (37.1%) agreed and strongly agreed that it is also an appropriate leadership style in implementation of community development projects (M=4.03; SD=1.12). From the results, this shows that autocratic leadership style is also acknowledged among majority of the respondents who participated in the study. It was also important to examine whether Laissez faire leadership style is best in implementation of community development projects. The results show that most of the respondents 20(57.1%) and 10(28.6%) agreed and strongly agreed with the statement while only 1(2.9%) strongly disagreed. This shows that most of the respondents (M=4.09; SD=0.818) agreed that laissez faire leadership is also practices. However, further analysis revealed that those who disagreed noted that communities require some sort of guidance so as to ensure they are on the right trajectory in terms of development. The results also show that majority of the respondents 18(51.4%) agreed, 10(28.6%) strongly agreed and 2(5.7%) disagreed with the statement that project leadership styles affect implementation of community development projects. This was confirmed by the high mean value (M=4.03 and SD=.822) which shows that over 80% of the respondents agreed that project leadership style has an important effect on the implementation of the project. In general, the above results indicate that there is need to develop and apply a given leadership style in the development of community related project. This will propagate a holistic approach towards development issues.

Table 4.1. Project Leadership Styles and Community Development Projects

Statements	SD	D	N S	A	S A	Mean	S.D
I understand the importance of leadership in implementation of community development projects.	1 (2.9%)	3 (8.6%)	2 (5.7%)	15 (42.9%)	14 (40%)	4.09	1.040
The success of project implementation process is influenced by leadership styles	0	1 (2.9%)	3 (8.6%)	22 (62.9%)	9 (25.7%)	4.11	.676
Democratic leadership style is best in implementation of community development projects	0	0	3 (8.6%)	17 (48.6%)	15 (42.9%)	4.34	.639
Autocratic leadership style is best in implementation of community development projects	3 (8.6%)	0	3 (8.6%)	16 (45.7%)	13 (37.1%)	4.03	1.124
Laissez faire leadership style is best in implementation of community development projects	1 (2.9%)	0	4 (11.4%)	20 (57.1%)	10 (28.6%)	4.09	.818
Project leadership styles affect implementation of community development projects	0	2 (5.7%)	5 (14.3%)	18 (51.4%)	10 (28.6%)	4.03	.822

**Conclusion of the study:** The purpose of this study was to examine influence of selected leadership styles on implementation of community development projects in Narok North Sub-County. The results revealed that leadership styles are very important in the successful implementation of community development projects. The study further avers that leadership styles adopted by the project/programme managers is an important factor in the successful implementation of the community development projects in the study area. However, the study revealed that projects have different stages and each stage might require a different leadership styles at different stages which indicates that there is no single leadership style that can be adopted to influence implementation of community development projects. Any leadership style, if well used can impact development processes in the community. The findings of this study also support the planning theory as it has highlighted the factors that form major problems facing communities and anticipation of corresponding results and outcomes during the implementation of community development projects. The result concludes that having an effective plan that involves all stakeholders is the most important part of project implementation since it will ensure right leadership styles have been adopted for certain projects. The results therefore support planning theory as used in the study as it has addressed the significant challenges that face any project implementation process.

**Recommendations for the study:** The study made the following recommendations;

#### Policy recommendations

- This study will contribute to the policy issues of community development and therefore it is recommended that policies should address the issues of leadership styles whereby through research it is possible to understand the leadership styles that are most appropriate at each stage of project implementation.
- Policies to address the level of community involvement most appropriate for different types of projects needs to be put in place. This will go along away to reduce the level of failure of projects because of community unwillingness to support the process.
- Policy makers will find the findings of this study very relevant in enhancing the gaps in the current policy on project management and particularly with regard to project implementation.

#### Practical Recommendations

- Based on the study findings, it is recommended that project management teams in communities should ensure that they tailor their leadership styles to suite the entire project lifecycle so that each phase of the project is effectively managed.
- Community participation is also very important in community development processes. Based on the study findings, it is important to indicate that community participation is one of the most important elements in the success of any project because of the aspect of ownership.
- Finally, the study recommends that project teams need to clearly understand the nature of the project being implemented so that they can put in place the most appropriate strategies to ensure that

the implementation process is successful including appropriate leadership styles.

#### Areas for Further Study

- This study considered only one factor affecting implementation of community-based projects in Narok North sub County. There is need for a further study to look at other factors that influence project implementation process.
- There is also need to have a study specifically address the nature of the projects by looking at different types of the projects and understanding how the characteristics of these projects influence their implementation process.
- Furthermore, the same study can be done in other areas in the country other than Narok County to find out if same results can be replicated.

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