

Unlocking Potential: How Communication Drives Project Performance in Local NGOs in Hargeisa, Somaliland

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Abstract: For a long period, Project Management scholars have investigated diverse viewpoints to explain how communication influences project performance. Effective communication plays a pivotal role in project success, while its absence significantly contributes to project failure. This article is developed out of a study that sought to evaluate influence of communication on projects that are managed by non-governmental organizations in Hargeisa, Somaliland. The study used cross-sectional and survey research designs, with random sample of 123 project managers of projects of local non-government organizations; from a study population of 180 project managers of local non-government organizations in Hargeisa City, Somaliland. Data was collected using a questionnaire and analyzed through both descriptive statistics and inferential statistics precisely correlation and multiple linear regression analysis methods. The study found that 20% of the changes in project performance is attributed to communication. The F statistical value of 26.444 was significant at $p \leq 0.05$, therefore the null hypothesis was rejected implying that project communication significantly affected project performance. The independent variable (project communication) was introduced to the first model in the first stage of the analysis, and the results of the regression indicated that the project communication had positive relationship on project performance with: $\beta = 13.195$, $t = 5.804$). Hence, overall conclusion indicate that communication has a significant influence on project performance of local non-government organizations in Hargeisa, Somaliland. The study recommends that local non-government organizations should consider improving project performance adopting good communication.

Keywords: Communication, Project Performance, Local NGOs, Hargeisa, Somaliland, Project Management.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The art of project management has a rich history, stretching back thousands of years to the brilliant minds of ancient Egypt. However, corporations began using systematic project management tools and processes for big projects approximately fifty years ago. Project performance refers to the attainment of time, cost, and quality dimensions of performance of a given project. According to Muute (2019) Project performance refers to the ability to complete a project according to the required specifications, on time, within budget, all while ensuring stakeholder and customer satisfaction. On the other hand, communication is the exchange of information with the emphasis on creating an understanding between the sender and the receiver (Caltrans, 2007). According to Machange, (2019), communication is measured as communication flow, quality of information, communication channels, and communication management tools and plan. In this study, communication was

conceptualized as communication flow, communication channels and communication plan.

Project performance in local NGOs has been poor and has been questioned by many donors including international funding agencies operating in Somaliland. In Somaliland, 36% of LNGO projects fail each year and with a lack of project management, 70% of these 36% failed projects are local, and 27% of NGO failed projects are in the Hargeisa district (MoNP&D, 2021). In the Hargeisa district, NGOs capacity is low with 25% insufficient project management practices (MoNP&D, 2021); yet there are limited studies that can explain this situation. This study aims to explore the influence of communication skills on the project performance of local NGOs in the Hargeisa District of Somaliland, uncovering how effective communication can drive success in these organizations.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This section addresses both theoretical as well as the empirical literature reviews.

➤ *Theoretical Literature Review*

This study was anchored on the Diffusion Theory which was developed by Westland in 1969. How fresh project perspectives and ideas proliferate across the project is explained by the diffusion theory. This theory of channel communication plays a crucial role during the planning and execution of project ideas. The theory highlights the importance of having clear and solid project plans to prevent confusion and ensure that all team members can effectively adapt. The diffusion theory is selected because in project management, it promotes openness and feelings of inclusion by the team members and also the project stakeholders to achieve the predetermined objectives of the project. However, the project becomes a failure when the project managers do not use the right channels of communication for the diffusion of ideas (Westland, 1969). From this perspective, the theory is used to provide non-governmental organizations with a positive role in project performance. The link between communication skills and their result on project performance makes the theory very related to this study.

➤ *Empirical Literature Review*

Various empirical studies highlight the link between project communication and project performance. In a study by Muluka, Mukanzi, and Paul (2021), the influence of project communication management on the success of the Digital Literacy Program in Western Kenya was explored. The research focused on 380 Board of Management members within the Ministry of Education across the counties of Kakamega, Bungoma, Busia, and Vihiga in Western Kenya. It utilized descriptive, survey, correlational, and cross-sectional research methods, with primary data collected through self-administered questionnaires. The results indicated a strong relationship between project communication and the success of the Digital Literacy Program, with a correlation of $r = 0.345$ and a p -value of 0.000.

A descriptive research design was applied by Mkutano, & Sang, (2018) who investigated how project communication influences project performance in Nairobi County of Kenya with a sample of 201 NGO projects. Questionnaires were used to collect data. The study found that project communication has a significant effect on project performance in Nairobi County ($r=0.805$, $p>0.000$).

A study conducted by Odhiambo, Ouko, and Muhoho (2020) used a descriptive research approach to explore how communication influences the performance of projects in Kenyan commercial banks. The research focused on project managers from all 43 banks in the Kenyan banking sector, with data collected primarily through questionnaires. The

findings revealed a significant impact of project communication on the success of banking projects ($r = .619$, $P = .001$).

III. METHODOLOGY

The study on which this article is based used cross-sectional and survey research designs. According to Watson (2015), a cross-sectional study is defined as an observational research type that analyzes data of variables collected at one given point of time across a sample population. A cross-sectional study has advantages that include ability to prove and/or disprove assumptions, and it helps to collect a large amount of data from a large population in a short time (Levin, 2006). Cross-sectional survey designs are usually useful for any mode of data collection and are appropriate designs in this study as well. The study population was 180 projects of LNGOs in Hargeisa District (MoP&ND, 2021). The study use a sample of 123 LNGO projects with 123 respondents who were project managers of the subject projects.

The study employed simple random sampling to select the sample. Simple random sampling is a fundamental technique where subjects (a sample) are randomly chosen from a larger group (the population), with each individual selected purely by chance and every member of the population having an equal opportunity to be included in the sample (Stuart, 1962).

Data was collected through self-administered questionnaire tool which had open-ended and closed-ended items. The research seeks to collect mainly quantitative data. Primary data for this study was collected from the managers of the selected LNGOs projects.

Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and presented using percentages, frequency tables, means and standard deviation. Responses from the questionnaire were tabulated, coded, and processed by use of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 22. Inferential statistics was necessary to enable the researcher to estimate population on parameters and test the hypothesis for the purpose of generalization of the findings. Inferential statistics was applied for quantitative data analysis using multiple linear regression method. Content analysis was used to analyze qualitative data by developing the main themes out of the responses. Multiple linear regression was used to measure the association between factors influencing project management practices and project performance in terms of magnitude and direction. Multiple linear regression examined a combination of all factors. The following empirical model guided the study.

$$PC = \beta_0 + \beta_1 PC + \epsilon_i$$

Where:

PP= Project Performance

β_0 = Constant Term

β_1 = Regression Coefficient

ϵ_i = Regression Residual

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

➤ Response Rate

A total of 123 questionnaires were sent to the respondents, out of which a total 123 questionnaires were adequately filled and returned with a response rate of 100%.

➤ Respondents Characteristics

The data gathered from the returned questionnaires was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential methods. Of the 108 respondents, 70.4% were male and 29.6% were female. In terms of age, the majority (51.9%) were between 26 and 35 years old, while 32.4% were aged 36 to 45, and 15.7%

were between 16 and 25 years old. This shows that most respondents were in their middle years. Regarding education, 88% of the respondents had university-level education, 7.4% had secondary education, and 4.6% had primary, intermediate, or diploma qualifications. These figures highlight that most respondents were university-educated. In terms of employment duration, 77.8% of the respondents had been with their organizations for 1 to 5 years, 17.6% had between 5 and 10 years of experience, and 4.6% had over 10 years of experience. This indicates that majority of the staff have one (1) to five (5) years of experience in their current organizations.

➤ Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics of the variables were analyzed using parameters like the sample mean and standard deviation. The results of these statistics are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Variables

Variable	Mean	Aggregate Score Standard Deviation
Project communication	3.91	1.07
Project Performance	4.13	0.87

Table 2. Regression Results for Hypothesis of Direct Effect

Model	R ²	R ² AdjR ²	F-val.	B	T	Sig
Model	.200	.192	26.444			
PC				.330	5.142	.000
PP				13.195	5.804	.000

The descriptive analysis of the variables, presented in Table 1, shows that the average score for project communication is 3.91, with a standard deviation of 1.07. Using a 5-point Likert scale, a score of 3.91 (agree) suggests that most respondents were in agreement with the project communication items, and the standard deviation of 1.07 indicates little variation in their responses. Furthermore, the average score for project performance was 4.13, reflecting strong agreement with the related items, while the standard deviation of 0.87 suggests minimal variability in the responses. 4.4 Hypothesis Testing.

The study aimed to examine the effect of project communication on the performance of projects in local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Hargeisa, Somaliland. To achieve this goal, a hypothesis was developed stating that "project communication has no significant effect on the performance of projects in NGOs in Hargeisa, Somaliland" (H01). Multiple linear regression was used to assess the statistical significance of the proposed relationships at a 95% confidence level. The study focused on identifying the significant effect of project communication on the performance of projects in local NGOs in Hargeisa, Somaliland. As shown in Table 2, the results of the regression analysis reveal that the coefficient of determination (R^2)

indicates that project communication accounted for 0.20% of the variation in project performance. The F-statistic value of 26.444 was found to be significant at $p \leq 0.05$, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This suggests that project communication had a significant influence on project performance. In the first stage of the analysis, where project communication was introduced as the independent variable, the regression results demonstrated a positive relationship between project communication and project performance, with $\beta = 13.195$ and $t = 5.804$. These findings confirm that project communication significantly influenced the performance of projects within local NGOs in Hargeisa, Somaliland.

V. CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATION

➤ Conclusion

The study examined the influence of project communication on the performance of local NGO projects in Hargeisa District, Somaliland. A hypothesis was developed to guide the research, and the results of the hypothesis testing indicated that project communication had a significant effect on the performance of these projects in Hargeisa District, Somaliland.

➤ Recommendations

The study suggests that future research should be conducted across all regions of Somaliland. It recommends expanding the scope of the study to include a broader range of areas beyond Hargeisa District, incorporating additional variables and dimensions such as financial resources, managerial factors, technical aspects, social influences, and institutional factors.

➤ Theoretical and Contextual Implications

The research findings show that project communication plays a key role in the success of local NGO projects in Hargeisa District, Somaliland. These results provide valuable insights to the existing research on project performance, demonstrating that effective communication in managing local NGO projects leads to positive results. This evidence is particularly important in the context of Somaliland, where there is limited research on this topic. Additionally, the diffusion theory helps explain how new ideas and approaches spread throughout a project, emphasizing the crucial role communication plays in both planning and execution stages of project development.

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