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INFLUENCE OF CHANGE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ON PROJECT PERFORMANCE IN PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION UNITS OF THE COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF NAIROBI, KENYA

BY

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Abstract

Project performance remains a major concern in public sector institutions due to persistent project delays, cost overruns, and failure to achieve intended development outcomes. Change management practices have increasingly been recognized as essential in enabling organizations to adapt to changing organizational, technological, and policy environments, thereby improving project implementation outcomes. This study examined the influence of change management practices on project performance in Project Implementation Units (PIUs) of the County Government of Nairobi, Kenya. The study was anchored on the Dynamic Capabilities Theory and adopted a convergent parallel mixed-methods research design. A target population of 215 employees was used, from which 140 respondents were selected through stratified and simple random sampling techniques. Primary data were collected using questionnaires and interview guides. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression analysis, while qualitative data were analysed through thematic analysis. The findings established that change management practices had a positive and statistically significant relationship with project performance ($r = 0.211$, $p < 0.05$) and significantly predicted project performance ($\beta = 0.201$, $p = 0.036$). Qualitative findings reinforced the importance of effective communication, employee adaptability, stakeholder engagement, and structured change implementation in enhancing project performance. The study concludes that strengthening structured change management practices enhances project performance in public sector Project Implementation Units. The study recommends institutionalizing comprehensive change management programmes, strengthening communication mechanisms, and enhancing staff capacity-building initiatives to improve project implementation outcomes within county governments.

Keywords: Change management, project performance, project implementation units, public sector, county government, Kenya.

1. Introduction

Public sector organizations are functioning in a quickly changing and complicated setting of rapid technology innovation, globalization, altering stakeholders' expectations, fiscal constraints and ongoing policy adjustment. Flexible capacities exist when organizations are able to adapt successfully to environmental changes while still being efficient, accountable and providing sustainable services. Change management has therefore evolved as a strategic skill for businesses to anticipate, manage and sustain change in the company to facilitate successful project completion. Research conducted in Kenya indicates that premeditated change management tactics like organizational learning, leadership support, communication and employee participation are crucial in improving organizational performance and operational effectiveness (Kibe & Kihara, 2022; Muthiani et al, 2025). Change management is a systematic technique and toolbox for managing the human side of change to achieve a desired outcome. Alter management helps people and organizations successfully change how they operate, every day. Change management is a process of communication, including stakeholders, training of employees, handling opposition and organization learning that is ongoing. These techniques build an environment where employees understand the need for change, participate in the change process, and are better prepared to meet the changing needs of the organization. Therefore, organizations with excellent change management systems are better positioned to successfully implement projects and achieve their targeted organizational goals (Matiku & Kimencu, 2025; Mule & Njuguna, 2024).

In many parts of the world governments have institutionalized approaches to change management and strategy implementation in an effort to improve project performance and delivery of public services . Countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom and certain European countries have developed strategic management systems, performance management systems and project governance frameworks to promote accountability and effectiveness in implementation. Public sector activities in many industrialized economies are however, riddled with implementation problems like bureaucratic delays, cost overruns and lack of coordination. So, formal management practices are not sufficient to ensure project success. This is done by strong project governance and good change management methods (Crawford, 2021; Hayat et al., 2022).

The same things happened in the countries that were emerging. Countries like China, India and South Korea have undertaken massive organizational reforms to improve infrastructure development, modernization of the public sector and socio-economic transformation. Yet these advances have been unable to overcome the internal organizational resistance, regulatory lacunae, insufficient stakeholder coordination and lack of institutional adaptation that continue to impede project execution. As seen in the previous instances, to enable successful implementation, it is essential to integrate organizational change management along with strategic planning in the project life cycle (Stanitsas et al., 2021; Teece et al., 1997).

African countries have been progressively undertaking institutional reforms for better governance, accountability and development outcomes. Delays, cost overruns, lack of institutional capabilities, lack of stakeholder involvement and lack of leadership backing continue to hamper many development endeavors. Earlier studies in Kenya have reported similar conclusions that change management strategies have a considerable impact on operational efficiency and organizational performance of public institutions. This points toward a need to enhance the organizational adaptiveness in the reform process (Murithi & Wainaina, 2022; Mule & Njuguna, 2024). Reforms in public sector are affecting devolution, Kenya Vision 2030 and performance management and have impacted the implementation of development projects in Kenya. County governments will provide infrastructure, health, water, housing and other public services thru Project Implementation Units (PIUs) which will be responsible for procurement, financial administration, monitoring and evaluation, technical supervision and project implementation. The divisions are successfully executing projects and enhancing public sector performance in a changing political, financial and institutional environment. Strong change management is more crucial. The latest literature on management of change and strategic transformation of organizations in Kenya also points to the fact that formal change projects lead to enhanced results in organizational effectiveness and execution (Kibe & Kihara, 2022; Muthiani et al., 2025; Matiku & Kimencu, 2025).

The County Government of Nairobi is a particularly relevant environment to explore change management approaches as it is responsible for a variety of large scale development initiatives involving a varied range of stakeholders, large scale public expenditure and complicated institutional arrangements. The County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP III 2023-2027) is the strategic framework for the implementation of development initiatives aimed at boosting economic growth, improvement of service delivery, poverty reduction and urban development. But with these institutional frameworks in place, many county efforts are struggling to implement them. A study on the Kenya Informal Settlements Improvement Project (KISIP) established that the provision of infrastructure was significantly lagging and the rate of project completion was much below anticipated expectations. Implementation challenges have been attributed to inadequate leadership commitment, lack of stakeholder participation, poor communication and inefficient change management approaches (Kimambo, 2022). Empirical research has largely focused on predictors of organizational performance such as strategic planning, organizational performance, procurement procedures, leadership, monitoring and evaluation or stakeholder involvement. Few studies have specifically assessed the effect of change management approaches on project success of Project Implementation Units functioning inside county governments. Also, previous research has addressed private sector enterprises or individual development efforts and not the more complicated governance arrangements of structured implementation contexts involving numerous stakeholders and constant institutional alterations. This is a real and relevant gap in the literature. Therefore, this study sought to analyze the effect of change management strategies on project performance in the Project Implementation Units of the County Government of Nairobi Kenya.

Statement of the Problem

Effective change management is widely accepted as one of the important success factors for project implementation as it enables firms to adapt to evolving policy contexts, technological changes, stakeholder expectations and organizational reforms. Structured change management approaches in the public sector prepare employes for change and reduce resistance to organizational change, improve communication, boost stakeholder participation, leading to better project implementation and improved organizational performance. Thus, Project Implementation Units (PIUs) are expected to adopt effective change management methods to guarantee that public projects are completed within anticipated timeframes, budgets and quality standards while achieving the desired socio-economic benefits.

But the performance of the project in many public sector entities is below the expectations. County governments in Kenya have improved strategic planning and established Project Implementation Units to deliver projects identified under Kenya Vision 2030, County Integrated Development Plans (CIDPs) and other national development frameworks. However, challenges in implementation continue to pose a threat to project success. These include project delays, cost overruns, poor coordination, inefficient use of resources and failure to deliver expected development results, consequently constraining the impact of public investments.

This is especially in the County Government of Nairobi where Project Implementation Units undertake a large number of large development projects involving huge public resources. The Office of the Auditor-General said Nairobi City County had stalled development projects worth about KSh 1.36 billion and another 68 development projects valued at KSh 1.062 billion, whose contracts had expired before they were completed. These implementation problems have retarded the delivery of services, lowered the efficiency of exploitation of public resources and impaired the accomplishment of targeted development objectives for county dwellers. Studies have been carried out on strategic planning, organizational performance, procurement systems, leadership, monitoring and evaluation and stakeholder participation. However, there is relatively little empirical evidence on the effect of change management practices on project performance in Project Implementation Units in county governments. Most prior studies have been conducted in private sector firms or individual project settings rather than in organized public sector implementation contexts with multiple stakeholders, complicated governance systems and ongoing institutional reforms. This constitutes a gap both in empirical research and in relation to existing literature. Therefore, the study sought to investigate the effect of change management strategies on project performance in Project Implementation Units of the County Government of Nairobi, Kenya. The study aimed at providing empirical evidence that would guide policy and managerial measures to enhance organizational adaptability, improve project implementation and boost the performance of public sector development projects.

2. Theoretical Framework

Dynamic Capabilities Theory

This study is anchored on Dynamic Capabilities Theory (DCT), originally proposed by Teece and Pisano (1994) and further developed by Teece, Pisano, and Shuen (1997). The theory explains how organizations achieve sustained performance by continuously integrating, building, and reconfiguring internal and external resources to respond effectively to rapidly changing environments. Unlike traditional resource-based perspectives that emphasize the possession of valuable resources, Dynamic Capabilities Theory argues that long-term organizational success depends on an organization's ability to continuously sense environmental changes, seize emerging opportunities, and transform its operational capabilities to remain effective under changing conditions.

Dynamic Capabilities Theory identifies three interrelated organizational capabilities that determine organizational adaptability. The first capability, sensing, refers to an organization's ability to identify changes in its internal and external environment, including technological developments, policy reforms, stakeholder expectations, and emerging risks. The second capability, seizing, involves mobilizing organizational resources and making timely strategic decisions to capitalize on identified opportunities or respond to emerging challenges. The third capability, transforming, focuses on continuously reconfiguring organizational structures, processes, competencies, and resources to sustain performance under changing operational conditions (Teece et al., 1997). These capabilities collectively enable organizations to remain resilient, competitive, and responsive in dynamic environments.

The theory has received considerable empirical support across various organizational settings. For example, Chiarelli (2021) reported that organizations possessing strong adaptive capabilities were more effective in responding to environmental changes and consistently achieved superior organizational performance. Similarly, Das et al. (2025) established that organizations capable of continuously reconfiguring their resources and operational processes enhanced both organizational competitiveness and overall performance. Although these studies provide valuable evidence supporting Dynamic Capabilities Theory, most have been conducted within private sector organizations, particularly in technology, manufacturing, and retail industries. Consequently, limited empirical evidence exists regarding the applicability of the theory within public sector Project Implementation Units operating under complex governance structures and multiple stakeholder environments.

Within the context of public sector organizations, Dynamic Capabilities Theory provides an appropriate theoretical lens for explaining how change management practices influence project performance. Public sector institutions frequently operate in environments characterized by changing government policies, evolving regulatory frameworks, fiscal constraints, technological advancements, and increasing public expectations regarding service delivery. Consequently, Project Implementation Units must continuously adapt their organizational processes, strengthen employee capabilities, improve communication systems, and effectively manage organizational change to sustain project performance. Structured change management practices therefore represent organizational dynamic capabilities that facilitate successful adaptation during project implementation.

The theory is particularly relevant to the present study because change management practices including employee training, resistance management, communication, stakeholder engagement, and organizational adaptability reflect an organization's capacity to reconfigure its resources and processes in response to changing operational environments. By strengthening these capabilities, Project Implementation Units are better positioned to deliver projects within planned timelines, budgets, and quality standards while enhancing stakeholder satisfaction. Accordingly, Dynamic Capabilities Theory provides a robust theoretical foundation for explaining the relationship between change management practices and project performance in Project Implementation Units of the County Government of Nairobi.

3. Empirical Literature Review

Change Management Practices and Project Performance

Change management has become an essential organizational capability for enhancing project performance, particularly in environments characterized by rapid technological advancement, policy reforms, evolving stakeholder expectations, and increasing organizational complexity. Effective change management enables organizations to anticipate, plan for, implement, and sustain organizational transformation while minimizing employee resistance and strengthening commitment to organizational objectives. Organizations that institutionalize structured change management practices including effective communication, employee participation, stakeholder engagement, continuous training, and organizational learning are more likely to achieve successful project implementation and improved organizational performance (Teece et al., 1997; Stanitsas et al., 2021).

Evidence from developed countries consistently demonstrates that structured change management practices positively influence organizational and project performance. Organizations that implement comprehensive communication strategies, continuous employee development programmes, stakeholder engagement mechanisms, and structured implementation processes demonstrate greater organizational flexibility, enhanced employee commitment, and improved coordination during project execution. These capabilities enable organizations to respond effectively to dynamic operating environments while maintaining high levels of performance. Nevertheless, much of this evidence originates from private sector organizations, creating uncertainty regarding its applicability to public sector Project Implementation Units operating under complex governance, accountability, and regulatory systems (Crawford, 2021; Ferlie & Ongaro, 2022; Stanitsas et al., 2021).

Evidence from developing countries similarly supports the positive contribution of change management to organizational performance. For example, Matiku and Kimencu (2025) established that structured change management practices including effective communication, employee training, stakeholder involvement, and resistance management significantly improved organizational performance within the banking sector in Kenya. The authors concluded that organizations implementing structured change management frameworks experienced higher employee commitment, smoother organizational transitions, and improved institutional performance. However, their study focused primarily on organizational performance within commercial banking institutions rather than project performance within public sector Project Implementation Units, thereby limiting the generalizability of the findings to county government project implementation contexts.

Similarly, Mule and Njuguna (2024) reported that change management practices relating to resource allocation significantly improved organizational performance within the Kenya Revenue Authority. Their findings demonstrated that structured organizational change enhanced operational efficiency, organizational compliance, and institutional effectiveness. However, the study examined a single dimension of change management—resource allocation—and concentrated on organizational performance rather than project performance, leaving important questions regarding the broader influence of integrated change management practices on public sector project implementation unanswered.

Additional empirical evidence from Kenya indicates that employee participation during organizational change contributes positively to project quality, timely completion of projects, and effective utilization of organizational resources, particularly within infrastructure and public sector development programmes. However, much of the existing literature has concentrated on individual components of change management, such as employee participation or communication, while giving comparatively less attention to the integrated influence of communication, employee training, stakeholder engagement, resistance management, and organizational adaptability as complementary dimensions of change management.

Collectively, the empirical literature demonstrates that change management practices contribute significantly to organizational effectiveness by strengthening communication, improving employee adaptability, reducing resistance to organizational change, and facilitating successful implementation of organizational initiatives. Nevertheless, several important research gaps remain. First, many previous studies have examined isolated dimensions of change management rather than conceptualizing change management as a multidimensional organizational capability comprising communication, employee training, stakeholder engagement, resistance management, and organizational adaptability. Second, most studies have focused on organizational performance as the outcome variable rather than project performance, despite project success being measured through timely completion, budget adherence, quality of deliverables, and stakeholder satisfaction. Third, relatively limited empirical evidence exists regarding the influence of integrated change management practices within Project Implementation Units operating in county governments, particularly within the County

Government of Nairobi. Addressing these empirical and contextual gaps provided the basis for the present study.

4. Research Gap

Although substantial empirical evidence demonstrates that change management practices positively influence organizational performance across different sectors, several important knowledge gaps remain. First, existing studies have predominantly examined organizational performance as the outcome variable rather than project performance, despite project success encompassing multiple dimensions, including timely completion, budget adherence, quality of deliverables, and stakeholder satisfaction. For example, Matiku and Kimencu (2025) examined the influence of change management practices on organizational performance in Kenya's banking sector, while Mule and Njuguna (2024) investigated the effect of resource allocation as a change management practice on the performance of the Kenya Revenue Authority. Although these studies confirmed the positive contribution of change management to organizational effectiveness, they did not specifically examine project performance within public sector Project Implementation Units (PIUs), thereby limiting the applicability of their findings to project-based implementation environments.

Second, many previous studies have investigated isolated dimensions of change management, such as communication, employee participation, stakeholder involvement, or resistance management, rather than conceptualizing change management as an integrated organizational capability comprising communication, employee training, stakeholder engagement, resistance management, and organizational adaptability (Teece et al., 1997; Stanitsas et al., 2021). This fragmented approach limits a comprehensive understanding of how these complementary dimensions collectively influence project implementation outcomes.

Third, much of the existing empirical literature has been conducted within private sector organizations, commercial banks, revenue authorities, manufacturing firms, and other corporate settings. While these studies provide valuable insights into organizational change, their findings may not be directly transferable to Project Implementation Units operating within county governments, where project implementation is influenced by public accountability requirements, political oversight, complex procurement procedures, multiple stakeholder interests, and dynamic policy environments (Ferlie & Ongaro, 2022; Crawford, 2021).

In Kenya, research on project performance has largely focused on strategic planning, organizational performance, procurement systems, monitoring and evaluation, and stakeholder participation. Comparatively little empirical attention has been devoted to examining how integrated change management practices influence project performance within Project Implementation Units responsible for coordinating multiple public sector development projects. Furthermore, empirical evidence focusing specifically on the County Government of Nairobi remains limited despite the scale, complexity, and strategic importance of its development programmes.

Accordingly, this study addressed both an empirical and a contextual gap. The empirical gap relates to the limited evidence regarding the influence of integrated change management practices on project performance, while the contextual gap concerns the scarcity of studies conducted within Project Implementation Units of the County Government of Nairobi. By examining this relationship, the study contributes context-specific evidence to the literature on change management, project management, and public sector administration and provides practical insights for strengthening project implementation within county governments.

5. Conceptual Framework

The study conceptualizes change management practices as the independent variable influencing project performance within Project Implementation Units (PIUs) of the County Government of Nairobi. Change management practices were operationalized through five interrelated dimensions: organizational communication, employee training, resistance management, stakeholder engagement, and employee adaptability. These dimensions reflect an organization's ability to prepare, support, and sustain change during project implementation.

Project performance constituted the dependent variable and was measured using four widely recognized indicators: timely project completion, budget adherence, quality of project deliverables, and stakeholder satisfaction. These indicators collectively provide a comprehensive assessment of project success in public sector implementation environments.

The study further recognizes that project implementation within public institutions is influenced by contextual conditions such as government policy support, resource availability, and the regulatory environment. These factors may either strengthen or constrain the effectiveness of change management practices during project implementation. However, they were not examined as independent variables but were acknowledged as contextual conditions that may shape implementation outcomes.

Accordingly, the study proposes that strengthening organizational communication, improving employee capacity through training, effectively managing resistance to change, enhancing stakeholder engagement, and promoting employee adaptability will improve project performance within Project Implementation Units.

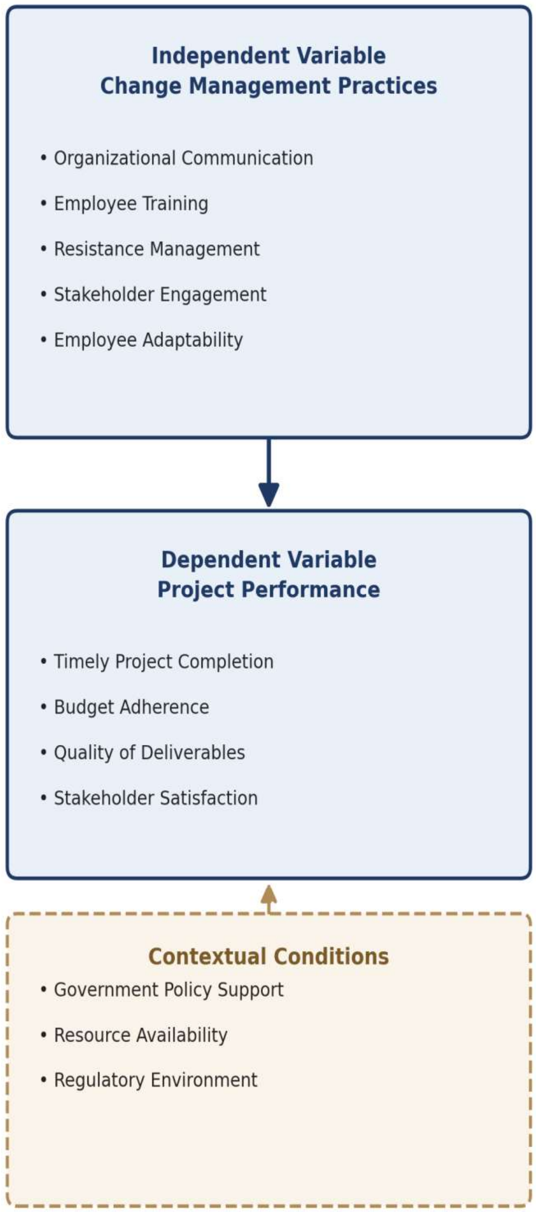

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework showing the relationship between Change Management Practices and Project Performance

6. Research objective

To assess the relationship between change management practices and project performance in PIUs in County Government of Nairobi, Kenya.

7. Research Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted a convergent parallel mixed-methods research design, which enabled the concurrent collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data. The design was appropriate because it facilitated a comprehensive examination of the relationship between change management practices and project performance by integrating statistical findings with participants' experiences and perceptions. Quantitative and qualitative data were analysed independently and subsequently integrated during interpretation to provide a richer understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

Study Area and Target Population

The study was conducted within Project Implementation Units (PIUs) of the County Government of Nairobi, Kenya. The target population comprised 215 employees directly involved in project implementation across ten county sectors. These respondents included Project Managers, Strategic Planning Officers, Monitoring and Evaluation Officers, Implementation Supervisors, and Support Staff, selected because of their direct involvement in planning, coordinating, supervising, and monitoring development projects.

Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure proportional representation of all staff categories within the Project Implementation Units. Subsequently, simple random sampling was used to select respondents from each stratum. The sample size of 140 respondents was determined using Yamane's (1967) sample size determination formula, representing approximately 65% of the target population.

Data Collection

Primary data were collected using structured questionnaires and semi-structured interview guides. Questionnaires generated quantitative data regarding respondents' perceptions of change management practices and project performance using five-point Likert-scale items. Semi-structured interviews were administered to 25 key informants, including Project Managers, Strategic Planning Officers, and senior administrators, to obtain in-depth insights into organizational experiences relating to change management and project implementation. The combined use of questionnaires and interviews facilitated methodological triangulation and enhanced the comprehensiveness of the findings.

Pilot Study, Validity and Reliability

Prior to the main survey, a pilot study involving 14 respondents drawn from Project Implementation Units in Kiambu County was conducted to assess the clarity, relevance, and suitability of the research instruments. Content validity was established through expert review by the research supervisors and senior academic staff from the Department of Social Sciences and Development Studies, who evaluated the relevance, clarity, and comprehensiveness of the instruments.

The internal consistency of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. The reliability coefficients were 0.856 for Change Management Practices and 0.847 for Project Performance, both exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70, thereby demonstrating acceptable reliability of the research instruments.

Table 1: Reliability Statistics for Study Instruments

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	N
Change Management Practices	0.856	140
Project Performance	0.847	140

Data Collection Procedure

Following approval from the university, authorization was obtained from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) and the management of the County Government of Nairobi. Respondents were informed about the objectives of the study, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and anonymity before data collection commenced. Questionnaires were administered electronically and in hard-copy formats, while interviews were conducted either physically or virtually according to participants' preferences. Completed questionnaires and interview recordings were securely stored to safeguard participants' confidentiality.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize respondents' perceptions of change management practices and project performance. Inferential analysis comprised Pearson's correlation to assess the relationship between study variables and multiple regression analysis to determine the influence of change management practices on project performance. Qualitative data obtained through interviews were analysed using thematic analysis, and the findings were integrated with quantitative results during interpretation to provide a comprehensive explanation of the study findings.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained through the appropriate institutional processes before commencement of the study. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents. Participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity, and the information collected was used solely for academic purposes. Data were securely stored and accessed only by the researcher to protect participants' privacy.

8. Results and Discussion

Respondent Characteristics

A total of 140 questionnaires were distributed to employees working in Project Implementation Units (PIUs) within the County Government of Nairobi. The respondents represented different professional categories, including Project Managers, Strategic Planning Officers, Monitoring and Evaluation Officers, Implementation Supervisors, and Support Staff. The diversity of respondents enhanced the credibility of the findings by capturing perspectives from employees directly involved in project planning, implementation, supervision, and monitoring.

Descriptive Analysis of Change Management Practices

Descriptive statistics were computed to examine respondents' perceptions of change management practices within Project Implementation Units. The analysis focused on organizational communication, employee training, resistance management, stakeholder engagement, and employee adaptability.

Overall, respondents reported that structured change management practices were implemented to a moderate to high extent within Project Implementation Units. Employees generally agreed that communication regarding organizational change had improved, training programmes enhanced staff preparedness, and organizational efforts to manage resistance contributed positively to project implementation. However, responses also suggested opportunities for strengthening stakeholder engagement and institutionalizing structured change management processes to improve consistency across project implementation units.

These findings suggest that while change management practices are recognized as important within Project Implementation Units, their implementation remains uneven across different organizational settings. Consequently, strengthening structured communication mechanisms, employee capacity-building initiatives, and stakeholder participation may further improve project implementation outcomes.

Relationship Between Change Management Practices and Project Performance

Pearson's correlation analysis revealed a positive and statistically significant relationship between change management practices and project performance ($r = 0.211$, $p < 0.05$). The findings indicate that improvements in change management practices are associated with corresponding improvements in project performance. Although the strength of the relationship is modest, its statistical significance demonstrates that change management contributes meaningfully to successful project implementation within Project Implementation Units.

Table 2: Correlation Between Change Management Practices and Project Performance

Variables Correlated	r	N
Change Management Practices – Project Performance	0.211*	140

*Correlation is significant at $p < 0.05$ (2-tailed)

The findings support previous empirical studies that identify communication, employee preparedness, organizational adaptability, and resistance management as important determinants of successful project implementation. For example, Matiku and Kimencu (2025) found that structured change management practices, including communication, employee training, stakeholder involvement, and resistance management, significantly improved organizational performance. While their study focused on organizational performance, the present study demonstrates that similar practices significantly enhance project performance within public sector Project Implementation Units. Similarly, Matiku and Kimencu (2025) reported that communication, employee training, and resistance management positively influence organizational performance. While these earlier studies focused primarily on organizational performance, the present study demonstrates that similar practices significantly enhance project performance within public sector Project Implementation Units.

Influence of Change Management Practices on Project Performance

Multiple regression analysis established that change management practices significantly predicted project performance ($\beta = 0.201$, $p = 0.036$). The positive regression coefficient indicates that improvements in organizational communication, employee training, stakeholder engagement, resistance management, and employee adaptability contribute positively to project implementation outcomes. The findings therefore support the alternative hypothesis that change management practices significantly influence project performance within Project Implementation Units.

Table 3: Regression Results for Change Management Practices on Project Performance

Predictor	β	p-value
Change Management Practices	0.201	0.036

The results further reinforce the propositions of Dynamic Capabilities Theory, which argues that organizations capable of continuously sensing environmental changes, seizing emerging opportunities, and transforming organizational resources are better positioned to sustain superior performance under changing conditions. Within the County Government of Nairobi, Project Implementation Units operate in environments characterized by changing policies, evolving stakeholder expectations, and resource constraints. Effective change management therefore represents a critical organizational capability that enables these units to adapt successfully while maintaining project performance.

Discussion of Findings

The findings demonstrate that change management practices constitute a significant organizational capability for enhancing project performance within public sector Project Implementation Units (PIUs). Specifically, effective communication, employee training, stakeholder engagement, resistance management, and organizational adaptability collectively improve the implementation of development projects by reducing uncertainty, strengthening employee commitment, facilitating organizational learning, and enhancing organizational responsiveness to change.

These findings are consistent with Dynamic Capabilities Theory (Teece et al., 1997), which posits that organizations capable of sensing environmental changes, seizing emerging opportunities, and reconfiguring internal resources are more likely to achieve sustained performance in dynamic environments. Within the context of Project Implementation Units, structured change management practices represent critical organizational capabilities that enable institutions to adapt effectively to policy reforms, stakeholder expectations, and operational challenges while maintaining successful project implementation.

The findings further corroborate previous empirical studies. Matiku and Kimencu (2025) found that structured change management practices, particularly communication, employee training, stakeholder involvement, and resistance management, significantly improved organizational performance within Kenya's banking sector. Similarly, Mule and Njuguna (2024) established that change management practices relating to resource allocation enhanced operational efficiency and organizational performance within the Kenya Revenue Authority. Likewise, Stanitsas et al. (2021) emphasized that organizational adaptability and effective management practices are essential for achieving successful project implementation, particularly in complex and dynamic project environments.

However, unlike these previous studies, which primarily examined organizational performance within corporate or public institutions, the present study specifically examined project performance within public sector Project Implementation Units. The findings therefore extend the existing body of knowledge by demonstrating that integrated change management practices including communication, employee training, stakeholder engagement, resistance management, and organizational adaptability significantly enhance project performance within county governments. Consequently, the study addresses both the empirical gap concerning project performance and the contextual gap relating to Project Implementation Units identified in the existing literature.

9. Conclusion

This study examined the influence of change management practices on project performance in Project Implementation Units (PIUs) of the County Government of Nairobi, Kenya. The findings established that change management practices have a positive and statistically significant influence on project performance. Specifically, organizational communication, employee training, stakeholder engagement, resistance management, and employee adaptability were identified as critical dimensions that contribute to improved project implementation outcomes.

The study further established that organizations capable of effectively managing change are better positioned to complete projects within planned timelines, adhere to budgetary requirements, improve the quality of project deliverables, and enhance stakeholder satisfaction. These findings support Dynamic Capabilities Theory, which emphasizes that organizations capable of continuously adapting their internal capabilities are more likely to sustain superior organizational performance under changing environmental conditions.

Overall, the study concludes that strengthening structured change management practices is essential for improving project performance within public sector Project Implementation Units. Consequently, county governments should institutionalize change management as a strategic organizational capability for enhancing the successful implementation of development projects.

10. Practical Implications

The findings have important implications for public sector management and project implementation.

First, county governments should develop and institutionalize comprehensive change management frameworks to guide organizational reforms and project implementation.

Second, Project Implementation Units should strengthen organizational communication by ensuring that employees and stakeholders receive timely, accurate, and consistent information throughout project implementation.

Third, continuous employee training and capacity-building programmes should be implemented to enhance staff preparedness and organizational adaptability during periods of change.

Fourth, managers should establish structured mechanisms for identifying and managing resistance to organizational change, thereby promoting employee commitment and reducing implementation delays.

Finally, policymakers should integrate structured change management practices into county project management guidelines to improve project delivery, accountability, and efficient utilization of public resources.

11. Study Limitations

This study was conducted exclusively within Project Implementation Units of the County Government of Nairobi. Consequently, the findings may not be directly generalizable to other county governments or public institutions operating under different organizational, political, or socio-economic conditions.

Additionally, the study relied primarily on self-reported questionnaire responses, which may have been influenced by respondents' perceptions and experiences despite the measures taken to ensure confidentiality and anonymity.

12. Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should extend this investigation to Project Implementation Units in other county governments to facilitate comparative analyses across different institutional contexts.

Further studies should also examine additional organizational factors that may influence project performance, including leadership effectiveness, organizational culture, technological readiness, institutional capacity, and governance structures.

Longitudinal studies are recommended to examine how change management practices influence project performance over time, particularly during the implementation of major organizational reforms within the public sector.

13. Contribution to Knowledge

This study makes several important contributions to the existing body of knowledge.

From a theoretical perspective, it extends the application of Dynamic Capabilities Theory by demonstrating that structured change management practices function as organizational capabilities that significantly enhance project performance within public sector Project Implementation Units.

From an empirical perspective, the study addresses an important knowledge gap by providing evidence on the relationship between change management practices and project performance within county government Project Implementation Units, an area that has received limited scholarly attention.

From a practical perspective, the findings provide evidence-based recommendations that can inform policy formulation, managerial decision-making, and organizational reforms aimed at strengthening project implementation and improving service delivery within county governments.

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