

## INFLUENCE OF BALANCE SCORECARD'S INTERNAL BUSINESS PROCESS FOCUS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF YOUTH-BASED DONOR-FUNDED PROJECTS IN HOMABAY COUNTY, KENYA.

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### Abstract

*Ill-defined and un-streamlined business processes result in inconsistencies across various business functions and confusion that may slow down service delivery and attainment of organizational objectives. Therefore, a clear Business Process Management (BPM) strategy is needed to provide the right stimulus for organizational competitiveness due to improved service offerings and enhanced productivity to maximize shareholder value. Whereas youth-based organizations are expected to engage the youth and tap into their energy and synergies while exploiting development opportunities that abound in most rural areas, a myriad of challenges, including strategy misfit, poor organizational capacity, weak monitoring and evaluation framework, uncoordinated and ill-focused community participation have hampered efforts to effectively and strategically implement development projects. It remains imperative, therefore, for organizations to apply appropriate strategic models that would guarantee sustainable project management. The purpose of this research, therefore, was to investigate the influence of Balance Scorecard's (BSC) internal business process focus on the implementation of youth-based donor-funded projects in Homabay County, Kenya. The study adopted a correlational research design with a study population of 471 Managers of the registered Youth Groups in Homabay County. Data was collected from a sample of 216 youth group managers using a self-administered questionnaire; and was analyzed using multiple regression. The study found out that there was a significant positive relationship between BSC's internal business processes focus and the implementation of youth-based donor-funded projects in Homabay County. It also identified bottlenecks that limit the youth group's capacity to enhance their internal business processes focus. The study recommended that the youth groups should continuously and consistently work towards improving the building blocks of their internal business process focus, to improve the success rates of donor-funded projects.*

**Keywords:** Balance Scorecard, Internal Business Process Focus, Donor-Funded Projects, Youth Groups

## Introduction

Traditionally, most organizations have judged their health by how much profit they make. The importance of financial figures notwithstanding, they only give a short-term focus on organizational performance. However, organizations need to build more sustainable projects over time which requires monitoring the performance of all parts of the organization from both the financial and non-financial performance yardsticks. This concept is best presented using the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) strategic model that focuses on high-level strategy and in-depth measures (Sibarani, 2023). BSC translates an organization's vision and mission into actual operational actions while viewing organizational performance from four perspectives: the financial perspective, the customer/stakeholder perspective, the internal business processes, and the continuous improvement perspective (Kumar, S. et. al., 2024; Kaplan & Norton, 2000).

There has been a growing trend among donor aid agencies, including NGOs, to involve youth-based organizations in implementing donor-funded projects in developing countries, especially in Africa (Odera, 2022; OECD, 2024). The Kenyan government has particularly transferred resources near the community through devolved funds, for example, the Youth Enterprise Fund, the Constituency Development Fund (CDF), the Local Authority Transfer Fund (LATF), and the Uwezo Funds meant to spur development projects among the local youths (Chitere, 2018). Despite the impressive statistics of youth involvement in implementing various donor-funded projects, some surveys have shown declining trends in project success across Africa. A recent McKinsey-Devex survey suggests that 64% of donor-funded projects fail, while the World Bank has invested more than US\$16 billion in more than 90 projects in Africa over the past 20 years (World Bank, 2023), its project failure rate is over 50% in Africa, which is greater than the 40% failure rate observed in other poor regions of the world and shows that African projects are lagging. Studies by The Associated

Press (2007), Ika (2012), and Owonikoko (2021) reveal that only half of Africa projects initiated by the World Bank succeed. This failure remains a familiar trend among many other agencies and donor countries.

Several problems have been cited as responsible for the enormous failure rate for various projects across Africa, notably termed as notorious and critical implementation problems. Some observers note geography, bad governance, resource curse, and conflict as bearing a good share of the project failure factors (United Nations, 2021). In Nigeria, lack of project management capacity and poor design are responsible for the program failures while in Ghana "dirty" politics has been cited as the primary cause of youth-based project and program failure (Martin, 2016). In Kenya, project implementation among youth-based organizations has faced a plethora of project management problems, among them structural/contextual problems, institutional/ sustainability problems, and managerial/organizational problems. A weak monitoring and evaluation system, poor culture of corruption, and lack of accountability have also been blamed on the high failure rates of various projects implemented by youth-based organizations across Kenya (Hall, 2022; Chitere, 2017).

Project implementation often presents a myriad of challenges for managers considering the complexity of projects that require simultaneous keenness to a variety of budgetary, human, technical and physical variables (Kumar, S., et. al., 2024). Project managers are therefore faced with a difficult job to ensure a seamless integration of project units in order to deliver the desired project deliverables (Kaplan & Norton, 1996). This requires a concise conceptualization of a workable project implementation model that lays a blue print for managers in their day-to-day duties of project implementation. Thompson, Strickland, and Gamble (2008) proposed that effective strategy implementation requires a stronger fit between strategy and organizational capabilities, internal

operating systems and processes, reward structure and the organization's work climate. Rani (2019) highlights major steps through which strategy could be implemented including the identification of project short-term objectives, initiation of specific functional tactics, identification and communication of supportive policies that empower the work force and the design and integration of commensurate reward system. Strategy articulation, validation, communication and monitoring have also been identified by various authors as specific activities that define strategy implementation (Kabeyi, 2019; Mwanyika, 2017; Donna, 2018).

Internal Business processes focus is one of the BSC perspectives suggested by Kaplan and Norton (1992). It focuses on the internal business operations that enable organizations to satisfy stakeholder needs and those results that lead to the financial success of the organization. An organization's internal processes are those practices and strategies used to align and control the organization's operations (Cheyenne, 2024). They include operational procedures for planning, implementation, performance measuring, monitoring, and reporting progress of organizational activities to meet the specified project objectives (Kollberg & Elg, 2011). Robert and Norton (2006) suggested that the identification of critical internal business processes would enable organizations to deliver specific value propositions that could crucially attract and retain key customers in particular market segments and ensure stakeholders' satisfaction for an enhanced financial return. This involves the identification of new critical processes at which the organizations must excel to meet financial and customer perspectives with a clear balance between the long wave innovation cycle and the short wave operational cycle of the project. Rodney, Robert, and Cameron (2017) note that in the short run, organizations will focus on producing products and services that will

give momentum to quick-win financial gains, while in the long run, emphasis is placed on the continual development of products and services that cope with the changes in stakeholders' needs and preferences for sustained financial returns or stakeholder value (Carter, 2024).

Focusing on an organization's internal business processes is enhanced through a coordinated process of Business Process Re-engineering (BPR) that implements a sustainable Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) technique to centrally manage organizational operations (Plattfaut, 2022). According to Siavash and Mohammadi (2019), BPR involves reviewing and testing business processes to minimize errors and maximize achievements.

## **Methodology**

### ***Research Design, Data Types, Sampling***

The objective of the research was to determine the influence of BSC's internal business process focus on the implementation of youth-based donor-funded projects in Homabay County. The study adopted a correlational research design using primary data that was collected from a sample size of 216 youth group managers drawn from a population of 471 youth groups registered in Homabay County. The sample size was obtained using stratification and systematic sampling. The researcher classified the target population into 8 strata based on the 8 Sub-Counties then used systematic sampling to select every 2<sup>nd</sup> youth group from the sampling frame (Makwana D. et. al., 2023). A total of 216 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents, of which all (100%) were returned. Analysis of missing values and diagnostic tests using the Mahalanobis Distance Test led to the elimination of 5 cases, which were considered outliers, and another 5 cases that had missing values, hence yielding 206 useful questionnaires for a response rate of 95.37% as depicted in Table 2.1.

**Table 2.1**

*Target Population and Sample Size*

Sub-county	Population	Sample/Distributed Questionnaires	Outliers/Incomplete Questionnaires	Useful Questionnaires	% of Response
Ndhiwa	17	17	1	16	7.41%
Suba South	10	10	0	10	4.63%
Rachuonyo North	44	44	2	42	19.44%
Suba North	41	41	3	38	17.59%
Rangwe	37	37	2	35	16.20%
Rachuonyo South	23	23	1	22	10.19%
Rachuonyo East	22	22	0	22	10.19%
Homabay Town	22	22	1	21	9.72%
<b>Total</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>95.37%</b>

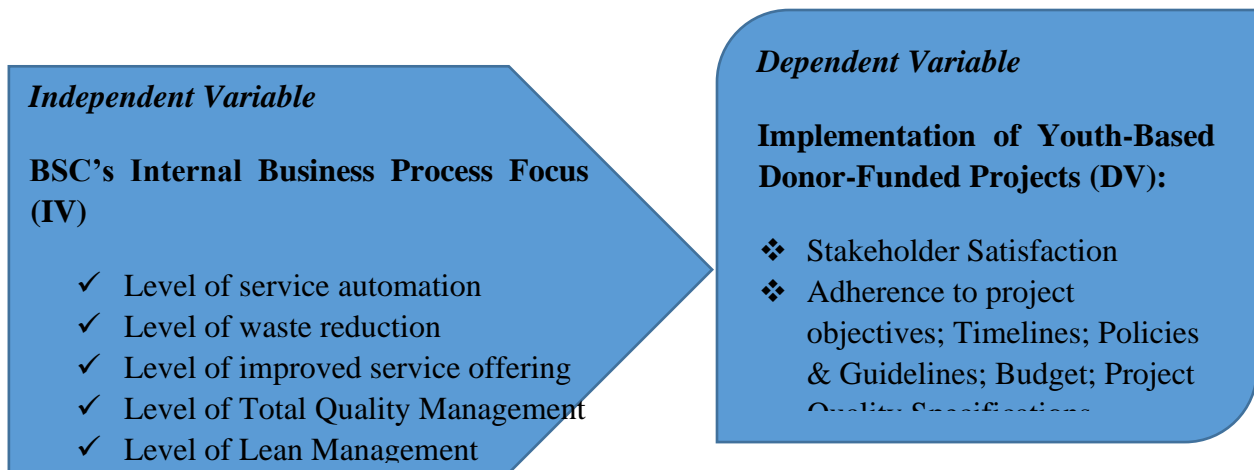
**Data Analysis and Hypothesis Testing**

Data was analyzed using multiple regression analysis [Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression

model] in order to deduce the relationships between the independent and dependent variables whose indicators are depicted in figure 1.

**Figure 1**

*Conceptual Framework (Author, 2024)*



The Null Hypothesis in this study was that internal business process focus does not significantly influence the implementation of youth-based donor-funded projects in Homabay County. In order to test the existence of a regression

relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable the researcher used t-test in regression analysis with the regression models presented in Table 2.2.

**Table 2.2**

*Hypothesis Testing*

S/N	Hypothesis	Hypothesis Test	Hypothesis Testing Framework	Regression Model
1	H <sub>0</sub> 1	t-test	H <sub>0</sub> : $\beta_1 = 0$ H <sub>a</sub> : $\beta_1 \neq 0$ Reject H <sub>0</sub> if p-value < 0.05; at $\alpha < 0.05$	$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \epsilon$

**Findings and Discussions**

***Findings on the Indicators of Implementation of Youth-Based Donor Funded Projects.***

The overall results, summarized in Table 3.1, indicated that the organization’s ability to implement donor-funded projects in Homabay County is achieved through: enhanced project efficiency and effectiveness; ensuring that all defined project objectives were achieved;

adherence to specific project timelines and work schedules; regularly enhancing continued stakeholder satisfaction; ability to identify and meet stakeholder needs while implementing donor-funded projects; availability of sufficient policies, guidelines and procedures to be followed and adhered to while implementing projects; availability of detailed budgets for each project work items to be followed; and the ability to abide by the budgetary provisions.

**Table 3.1**

*Descriptive Statistics of Implementation of Youth-Based Donor-Funded Projects.*

Statement:	S.	D	D	N	A	SA	Mean	SD
Availability of specific project timelines, work schedules to be followed and adhered to.	0	1	16	88	101	4.40	0.654	
	(0.0)	(0.5)	(7.8)	(42.7)	(49.0)			
Ability to complete donor-funded projects within the stipulated time lines.	0	1	18	92	95	4.36	0.661	
	(0.0)	(0.5)	(8.7)	(44.7)	(46.1)			
Availability of sufficient policies, guidelines and procedures to be followed and adhered to while implementing projects.	0	0	22	91	93	4.34	0.665	
	(0.0)	(0.0)	(10.7)	(44.2)	(45.1)			
Ability to adhere to the stipulated policies, guidelines and procedures that have been developed for project implementation.	0	2	21	92	91	4.32	0.694	
	(0.0)	(1.0)	(10.2)	(44.7)	(44.2)			
Availability of detailed budgets for each project work items to be followed while implementing projects	0	2	21	93	90	4.32	0.693	
	(0.0)	(1.0)	(10.2)	(45.1)	(43.7)			
Ability to abide by the budgetary provisions while implementing donor-funded projects.	0	2	22	93	89	4.31	0.697	
	(0.0)	(1.0)	(10.7)	(45.1)	(43.2)			
Availability of specified quality standards to be followed and adhered to while implementing projects	0	5	19	93	89	4.29	0.734	
	(0.0)	(2.4)	(9.2)	(45.1)	(43.2)			
Ability to adhere to and comply with the quality specifications and demands while implementing donor-funded projects.	0	1	19	88	98	4.37	0.671	
	(0.0)	(0.5)	(9.2)	(42.7)	(47.6)			
Ability to identify and meet stakeholder needs while implementing donor-funded projects.	0	1	20	91	94	4.35	0.673	
	(0.0)	(0.5)	(9.7)	(44.2)	(45.6)			

Regularly enhancing continued stakeholder satisfaction.	0	2	17	90	97	4.37	0.677
	(0.0)	(1.0)	(8.3)	(43.7)	(47.1)		
Having well-defined project objectives to be achieved while implementing donor-funded projects.	0	2	15	90	99	4.39	0.666
	(0.0)	(1.0)	(7.3)	(43.7)	(48.1)		
Ensuring that all defined project objectives are achieved in the course of implementing donor-funded projects.	0	1	16	88	101	4.40	0.654
	(0.0)	(0.5)	(7.8)	(42.7)	(49.0)		
Enhanced project efficiency and effectiveness	0	0	12	94	100	4.43	0.602
	(0.0)	(0.0)	(5.8)	(45.6)	(48.5)		
<b>Overall Mean</b>						<b>4.36</b>	<b>0.538</b>

**Notes:**  $N = 206$ . Scale [Range of Mean's Interpretation]: 1- *Strongly Disagree (S.D)* [1.00 – 1.79], 2 – *Disagree (D)* [1.80 – 2.59], 3 – *Neutral (N)* [2.60 – 3.39], 4 – *Agree (A)* [3.40 – 4.19], 5 – *Strongly Agree (SA)* [4.20 – 5.00]; Figures in (bracket) represent percentages.

### ***Findings on the Indicators of Balance Scorecard's Internal Business Process Focus***

The overall results showed that the organization's internal business processes focus is enhanced by: making quality management an integral part of the organization' internal processes; clearly defining the organization's value system and streamlining its operations for more efficient and effective service delivery; putting in place necessary procedures to ensure value creation for enhanced customer satisfaction; putting in place various strategies to

improve service and product offering; having elaborate customer feedback mechanism to receive product/service reviews; putting in place sufficient plans to ensure reduction of resource wastage; and effectively implementing and reviewing the organization's plans for the reduction of resource wastage. The results also indicated that the organizations were still struggling with service automation and did not have adequate equipment and skill-set to manage service automation for their respective organizations as presented in Table 3.2.

**Table 3.2**

*Descriptive Statistics of Balance Scorecard's Internal Business Processes Focus.*

<b>Statement: <i>The organization...</i></b>	<b>S. D</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Has automated its services	15	71	34	71	15	3.00	1.131
	(7.3)	(34.5)	(16.5)	(34.5)	(7.3)		
Has sufficient equipment and skill-set to manage service automation	15	65	41	74	11	3.00	1.089
	(7.3)	(31.6)	(19.9)	(35.9)	(5.3)		
Has put in place sufficient plans to ensure reduction of resource wastage.	2	23	38	117	26	3.69	0.867
	(1.0)	(11.2)	(18.4)	(56.8)	(12.6)		
Effectively implements and reviews its plans for the reduction of resource wastage	3	24	41	116	22	3.63	0.878
	(1.5)	(11.7)	(19.9)	(56.3)	(10.7)		
Has put in place various strategies to improve its service and product offerings	4	16	32	119	35	3.80	0.880
	(1.9)	(7.8)	(15.5)	(57.8)	(17.0)		



Has an elaborate customer feedback mechanism to receive product/service reviews	6 (2.9)	15 (7.3)	36 (17.5)	112 (54.4)	37 (18.0)	3.77	0.927
Has put in place necessary procedures to ensure value creation for enhanced customer satisfaction (Lean Management).	6 (2.9)	18 (8.7)	29 (14.1)	104 (50.5)	49 (23.8)	3.83	0.984
Has clearly defined its value system and streamlined its operations for more efficient and effective service delivery for enhanced management.	5 (2.4)	18 (8.7)	26 (12.6)	105 (51.0)	52 (25.2)	3.88	0.968
Has made quality management an integral part of its internal processes (Total Quality Management).	3 (1.5)	19 (9.2)	22 (10.7)	104 (50.5)	58 (28.2)	3.95	0.943
Has put in place mechanisms to monitor the quality of its products and services with regular reviews and corrective measures in place.	2 (1.0)	19 (9.2)	21 (10.2)	105 (51.0)	59 (28.6)	3.97	0.921
<b>Overall Mean</b>						<b>3.65</b>	<b>0.779</b>

**Notes:**  $N = 206$ . Scale [Range of Mean's Interpretation]: 1- *Strongly Disagree (S.D)* [1.00 – 1.79], 2 – *Disagree (D)* [1.80 – 2.59], 3 – *Neutral (N)* [2.60 – 3.39], 4 – *Agree (A)* [3.40 – 4.19], 5 – *Strongly Agree (SA)* [4.20 – 5.00]; Figures in (bracket) represent percentages.

### **Hypothesis Testing Results.**

The relationship between BSC's internal business processes focus and the implementation of youth-

based donor-funded projects was examined using standardized slopes ( $\beta$ ) as reported in Table 3.3.

**Table 3.3**

### **Regression Model Coefficients.**

<b>i) Model Summary<sup>b</sup></b>						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson	
1	.435 <sup>a</sup>	.189	.186	.525600	2.252	

a. Predictors: (Constant), Internal Business Process Focus

b. Dependent Variable: Project Implementation

<b>ii) ANOVA<sup>a</sup></b>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	13.492	1	13.492	48.837	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	57.737	209	.276		
	Total	71.229	210			

a. Dependent Variable: Project Implementation

b. Predictors: (Constant), Internal Business Process Focus

		iii) Coefficients <sup>a</sup>				
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.093	.179		17.235	.000
	Internal Business Process Focus	.335	.048	.435***	6.988	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Project Implementation/\*\*\* $p < 0.001$

The regression model revealed a significant positive effect on the implementation of youth-based donor-funded projects [ $F(1,206) = 48.837$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ]; with the application of BSC's internal business processes focus explaining a 18.9% ( $R^2 = 0.189$ ) of variance in the implementation of youth-based donor-funded project in Homabay County as shown in Table 3.3 (*i and ii*). The findings also revealed that there was a significant positive relationship between BSC's internal business processes focus and the implementation of youth-based donor-funded projects ( $\beta = 0.335$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) as presented in Table 3.3 (*iii*). The p-value computed ( $p = 0.000$ ) was thus less than the significance level of ( $p < 0.05$ ), consequently, the null hypothesis ( $H_{01}$ ) was rejected. The results indicated that a unit change on BSC's internal business processes focus resulted into a 0.435 unit increase in the implementation of youth-based donor-funded projects in Homabay County. Therefore, the results exposed the significant role BSC's internal business processes focus plays in achieving better implementation performance of youth-based donor-funded projects in Homabay County. These findings, thus, were consistent with those of previous studies that have lauded the significance of internal business processes focus as a key ingredient for the successful implementation of projects. For instance, (Rodney, Cavan, & Cameron, 2018), in their study of interpersonal success factors for strategy implementation, found out that the integration of business processes from start to finish and the inter-dependence of various organizational departments and units through a

unified database management and information technology support have proven to be key strategies for improving efficiency and effectiveness of strategy implementation and hence the performance of various projects and programs. Another finding by (Bolisani & Bratianu, 2017), revealed that ill-defined and un-streamlined business processes result in inconsistencies across various business functions and confusion that may slow down service delivery and attainment of organizational objectives. It is considered a key bottleneck to strategy implementation (Plattfaut, 2022). The gains organizations receive from focusing on their internal business processes have also been exposed by the dynamic capabilities theory, upon which this study was based. Dynamic capabilities allow firms to continually have competitive advantage and help firms avoid developing core rigidities that inhibit the development of inertia and stifle innovation (Carter, 2024). It is compounded in the organization's capabilities that create dynamism in team creativity and innovativeness, knowledge management, learning mechanisms, fluid structures, management orientation and team efforts that support organizational growth and development. Whereas the findings of this study re-affirmed the notion that the gains of BSC's internal business process focus cannot be whisked away, some identified bottlenecks that inhibited the capacity of the youth organizations to enhance their internal business processes focus were also exposed, including: a weak service automation



capacity and a weak framework for reduction of resource wastage.

### Conclusion

An organization's internal business processes are those practices and strategies used to align and control the organization's operations. They include operational procedures for planning, implementation, performance measuring, monitoring, and reporting progress of organizational activities to meet the specified project objectives. The results of this study exposed some disparities between responses that indicated notable weaknesses the youth groups had with regard to the strength of their internal business processes, despite the significant role this plays in

project implementation. Ill-defined and un-streamlined business processes, result in inconsistencies across various business functions and confusion that may slow down service delivery and attainment of organizational objectives. In order for the organizations, therefore, to improve their internal business processes, it is imperative that they must invest in modern technology, equipment and technical skills to install and implement service automation; they must consistently and consciously embrace total quality management; enshrine the concepts of lean management; have elaborate customer feedback mechanisms to receive product/service reviews; and put in place sufficient plans to ensure reduction of resource wastage.

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