

***EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, CHANGE MANAGEMENT AND PROJECT
IMPLEMENTATION IN NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY***

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between emotional intelligence, change management and project implementation within NEMA. The objectives were; examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and project implementation; examine the relationship between change management and project implementation; assess the relationship between emotional intelligence and change management; and examine the mediation effect of change management in the relationship between emotional intelligence and project implementation in NEMA.

This study was a cross-sectional research design along with a quantitative research approach. The study focused on 29 projects under the KCL main project targeting the individual project manager/assistant, main project manager/assistant and field officer. Primary data was obtained using a structured questionnaire instrument. The validity of the instrument was determined using expert judgment and CVI while reliability using pretesting and Cronbach Alpha coefficient. Data was analyzed using SPSS v. 25 and Med Graph system to obtain frequency tables, inferential statistics and Med Graph used to interpret results.

The study found that there exists a significant and positive relationship between emotional intelligence and project performance. There was a positive relationship between change management and project implementation. It was also revealed that emotional intelligence is positively associated with change management. Results revealed that change management fully mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and project implementation.

The study concludes that emotional intelligence and change management are key drivers of project implementation. More so, change management fully facilitates

the relationship between emotional intelligence and project implementation. This study recommends; enhancing self-awareness; intensify planning for change; proper managing change; and reinforcing change to boost project implementation.

Background to the Study

Project implementation is crucial because no project can attain intended outcomes and deliverables unless it is implemented (Mujabi et al., 2015). During this stage, project managers are able to identify how well proposed ideas and expectations of the different stakeholders can be put into reality through a series of activities (MacLean et al., 2012). Otherwise, they would simply gripe with an idea of how the several activities and work plans will be conducted. This explains why project implementers are keen to establish what needs to be done to successfully implement projects. Successful project implementation necessitates fulfilling all intended outcomes and deliverables within the planned time, budget or cost and scope. Such a project must also satisfy the needs of targeted beneficiaries where it implemented (Mujabi et al., 2015; Mwelu et al., 2019).

Importantly, Dynamic Capabilities Theory (DCT) informs that possession of dynamic capabilities is key for project implementation. The theory indicates that projects are prone to change which can affect the normal progression of the project if there is no effective change management (Teece, Pisano & Shuen, 1997). As such, this theory postulates that change management is inevitable in ensuring successful project implementation. On the other hand, Contingency theory puts it that there is no universal strategy or plan that can guarantee project implementation. Rather, project managers and team exercise emotional intelligence to be able to identify appropriate policies, plans and strategies to ensure successful project implementation (Burns & Stalker, 1961). Accordingly, contingency theory indicates that emotional intelligence is crucial for ensuring successful project implementation.

Nevertheless, ensuring successful project implementation remains a major challenge. This is expressed in consistent failure of projects to be fulfilled within time, scope, budget and meet beneficiaries' satisfaction (Performance Management Institute, (PMI, 2018)). Indeed, a survey by United Nations Development Plan (UNDP, 2018) involving 2,390 projects indicates 6.3% of projects in Latin America states of Peru, Mexico and Cambodia failed to satisfy beneficiaries interests mainly due to inadequacies in emotional intelligence. Furthermore, KPMG, AIPM and IPMA (2019) indicate over 81% of projects executed globally report time overruns; 56% do not meet the standard required; 42% do not satisfy beneficiaries; while 67% report budget overruns because they are unable to manage unprecedented changes during implementation.

Furthermore, in Uganda, NEMA has been implementing various projects, one of the mostly completed one being; Conservation and Sustainable Use of the Threatened Savana Woodland in the Kidepo Critical Landscape in North Eastern Uganda. However, Mukalazi (2017) reveals the activity to construct a tourist cultural village in Atubungimoe was two months late and incurred additional expenditure worth UGX. 7.78million. It is revealed that team leaders were not emotionally intelligent in handling community concerns causing resistance and conflicts which resulted in delayed implementation. In addition, failure in change management resulted in failure to complete 75% of beehives of Kapedo and Lolelia Sub-Counties and $\frac{3}{4}$ of community groups which had been scheduled (Okiria-Ateker, 2017).

Although, emotional intelligence (Asare, 2016; Rezvani et al., 2016) and change management (Belias & Koustelios, 2014; Nkuruziza et al., 2016) have been pointed out as key drivers of project implementation, it appears like most of the available studies have been conducted in other countries than Uganda with different dynamics. As such, it remains unclear whether these variables are also applicable in Uganda's context. In addition, there are suggestions that change management mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and project

implementation (Martinsuo & Hoverfält, 2018), although no statistical analysis is presented to that effect to support or reject the notion. These gaps propel the researcher to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence, change management and project implementation in a local context.

Statement of the Problem

Implementers of projects are required to execute all activities and deliverables within planned time, scope, budget, and satisfy beneficiaries (Mwelu et al., 2019). When these attributes are fulfilled, it is then concluded that the project has been successfully implemented. Whereas this is the case, NEMA's recent Conservation and Sustainable Use of the Threatened Savana Woodland Project has characterized numerous time and budget overruns with activities such as; establishment of an ecotourism, and community initiative for biodiversity conservation & land use management. Community groups which were meant to be formulated were never formed while fewer beehives than earlier planned were constructed in Kapedo and Lolelia Sub-Counties (Okiria-Ateker, 2017). If this is not checked, NEMA is likely to experience unprecedented resources wastage resulting from project reworks. Some of the funders of NEMA projects could also pull out putting the authority into financial difficulties. It is anticipated that failure of NEMA to successfully implement this project can be attributed to inadequate emotional intelligence (Martinsuo & Hoverfält, 2018) and failures in change management (Nkuruziza et al., 2016).

Research Objectives

To examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and project implementation in NEMA

To examine the relationship between change management and project implementation in NEMA

To assess the relationship between emotional intelligence and change management in NEMA

To examine the mediation effect of change management in the relationship between emotional intelligence and project implementation in NEMA

Research Questions

What is the relationship between emotional intelligence and project implementation in NEMA?

What is the relationship between change management and project implementation in NEMA?

What is the relationship between emotional intelligence and change management in NEMA?

What is the mediation effect of change management in the relationship between emotional intelligence and project implementation in NEMA?

Methodology

Research Design

This study was a cross-sectional research design, and applied a quantitative approach. The research design was a best fit for this particular study which had short time-frame within which it was supposed to be completed. In addition, the research design which was used enables drawing fast conclusions and recommendations, thereby; addressing the research phenomenon (Creswell, 2014). The quantitative research approach was used because it would clearly indicate the causal relationship between studied variables, hence providing answers to the research questions.

Study Population

The study population comprised 29 projects under the Conservation and Sustainable Use of the Threatened Savana Woodland in the Kidepo Critical Landscape in North Eastern Uganda (KCL) project (Okiria-Ateker, 2017). These projects comprised the unit of analysis.

Sample Size

This study used a sample of 28 projects under the KCL, and this was based on the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table for selecting samples from known population. The study applied simple random sampling technique to select the sample. This method involved writing each project on a separate piece of paper and subsequently pulling all the projects together. Upon thorough mixing, a selection exercise was

conducted. This involved picking a single paper at a time without replacing until the 28 projects were selected. This method was applied since it is free from bias because it guarantees that each project stands equal chance of being selected.

Data Collection Instrument

The study used a structured questionnaire instrument to obtain whatever data used herein. The instrument was selected because it solicits data which can effectively be used to quantify results (Creswell, 2014). The researcher developed closed-ended questions which were anchored on a 5-Point Likert ranging from 1-5. Under this scale, 1 meant strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-not sure, 4-agree while 5 meant strongly agree. The researcher applied this scale it allows respondents to rank their responses by clearly expressing the magnitude of agreement or disagreement (Vagias, 2006).

Data Analysis, Presentation and Interpretation

Data obtained from the field was cleaned, edited, coded and captured in SPSS v. 25 for analysis. Whereas data was obtained from different categories of respondents including; project manager/assistant, KCL project manager/assistant and field officer, the researcher integrated all the responses into one data set during analysis. Data analysis was neither categorical nor assessed based on each project studied. After analyzing the data, the researcher obtained frequency tables, correlation, regression analysis and Med Graph to present results. Frequency tables presented results related to demographic characteristics. Correlation Analysis was used to indicate causality between studied variables, while regression examined predictability. A Med-Graph was used to present results analyzing mediation effect.

RESULTS

Response Rate

The number of projects from which at least a participant was obtained were 22 as opposed to the targeted 29 projects. This represents 75.9% response rate which is above the minimum recommended rate of 70% for basic research. The response rate therefore implied that the data obtained in this study was not only enough to be relied upon to analyze; but also to be generalized to the entire unit of analysis.

Demographic Characteristics

The demographic characteristics obtained in this study constituted project characteristics and respondents' characteristics. This study used frequency tables to present these results.

Project Characteristics

The characteristics obtained comprised duration of the project, actual completion, primary funder and number of projects running. These results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Project Characteristics

<i>Demographic</i>	<i>Frequency (n=22)</i>	<i>Percent</i>
<i>Duration of sub-project</i>		
1 year	4	20.0
2 years	11	48.0
3 years	4	18.7
4 years	1	4.0
5 years	2	9.3
<i>Expected completion date</i>		
2016	4	20.0
2017	11	48.0
2018	4	18.7
2019	1	4.0
2020	2	9.3
<i>Actual completion of sub-project</i>		
2016	1	6.7
2017	4	16.0
2018	12	53.3
2019	3	13.3
2020	2	10.7
<i>Primary funder of NEMA projects</i>		

<i>International</i>	20	92.0
<i>Government</i>	2	8.0

Table 1 revealed that most of the projects under the KCL project had a timeframe of 2 years and therefore expected to be completed by end of 2017. This meant that most of the projects under the KCL project were long-term. This implied that such projects had numerous deliverables which were meant to be achieved to be considered successfully implemented. The results further revealed that the actual completion of most of the projects occurred in 2018. These results meant that most of the projects under the KCL project were characterized by time overruns. Furthermore, results postulated that most projects under NEMA were primarily funded by international agencies. This meant that most projects by NEMA characterized with a high budget which necessitates international support to be implemented.

Respondents' Characteristics

This study obtained information related to gender, age bracket, education and experience of the different categories of respondents who participated. These results are presented in Table 4.2.

Table 2: Respondents' Characteristics

Demographic	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
<i>Male</i>	50	75.8
<i>Female</i>	16	24.2
Age Bracket		
<i>Less than 30</i>	14	21.2
<i>30-39</i>	34	51.5
<i>40-49</i>	16	24.2
<i>50-59</i>	1	1.5
<i>60 and above</i>	1	1.5

Education

Diploma	16	24.2
Bachelors	28	42.4
Master's Degree	17	25.8
Others	5	7.6

Experience

Less than 5	22	33.3
5-10	41	62.1
11 above	3	4.5

Note: frequency reflects the total number of filled questionnaires obtained from respondents from the 22 projects

Results presented in Table 2 indicated that majority of the respondents were male. In this case, these findings meant that the dominant workforce of the KCL project comprised of males as opposed to females. This could be explained by the fact that all sub-projects under the KCL were implemented in upcountry areas of Uganda, favoring males to grab these opportunities because they are more flexible. Furthermore, the results revealed that most participants were aged between 30-39 years. These findings meant the KCL project had mainly young people. These are highly flexible and aggressive in their actions, so they could easily maneuver through change encountered during project implementation. Likewise, results established that most of the participants had bachelor's degree or master's degree. The implication is that KCL project contained highly competent personnel who were capable of achieving successful project implementation. In terms of experience, the results revealed that majority of participants had 6-10 years. This meant that the KCL project had experienced personnel who had the potential to make sure the project is completed within time, scope, budget and beneficiary satisfaction.

Correlation Analysis

This study used Pearson Correlation Analysis to establish the casual relationship between studied variable. In particular, this study used Pearson Correlation Analysis because it provides more realistic results. The results are presented in Table 4.3

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Analysis

Variable/Construct	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Emotional Intelligence	1								
(1)									
Self-awareness (2)	.74**	1							
Self-Management (3)	.50**	.18	1						
Relationship Management (4)	.63**	.21	.23*	1					
Change Management (5)	.51**	.45**	-	.28*	1				
			.15						
Planning for Change (6)	.23*	.28*	-	.01	.69**	1			
			.22						
Managing Change (7)	.27*	.32**	-	.10	.49**	.17	1		
			.07						
Reinforcing Change (8)	.45**	.41**	-	.31**	.76**	.29*	.36**	1	
			.16						
Project Implementation	.53**	.46**	.02	.21	.68**	.44**	.24*	.61**	1
(9)									

Notes: n=22 projects; *. $p < .05$ level (2-tailed). **. $p < .01$ level (2-tailed);

Values rounded to nearest two-decimals

4.3.1 Emotional Intelligence and Project Implementation

Table 3 obtained that there exists a significant and positive relationship between emotional intelligence and project performance ($r = .53$, $p < 0.01$). These results meant that improving emotional intelligence would facilitate project

implementation. Specifically, the results revealed that self-awareness is significantly and positively associated with project implementation ($r=.46$, $p<0.01$). In this regard, the results meant that boosting self-awareness would enhance project implementation. On the other hand, the results obtained non-significant and positive relationship between self-management and project implementation ($r=.02$) and non-significant and relationship between relationship management and project implementation ($r=.21$). These results meant that neither self-management nor relationship management would enhance project implementation even if they were to be improved. Overall, these results implied that emotional intelligence can enhance project implementation. For this to happen, emotional intelligence should be exhibited in terms of improvement in self-awareness.

Change Management and Project Implementation

Correlation results in Table 3 indicated significant and positive relationship between change management and project implementation ($r=.68$, $p<.01$). The results meant that enhancing change management would improve project implementation. Furthermore, the results revealed significant and positive relationship between planning for change and project implementation ($r=.44$, $p<.01$) and a significant and positive relationship between managing change and project implementation ($r=.24$, $p<.01$). A significant and positive relationship between reinforcing change and project implementation was also revealed as indicated in Table 4.3 ($r=.61$, $p<.01$). From these findings, it is implied that boosting change management in terms of planning for change, managing change and reinforcing change are important in enhancing project implementation.

Emotional Intelligence and Change Management

Table 3 revealed a significant and positive relationship between emotional intelligence and change management ($r=.51$, $p<0.01$). The results meant that boosting emotional intelligence would stimulate change management. Moreover, the results indicated that there exists a significant and positive relationship between self-awareness and change management ($r=.45$, $p<.01$). A significant and positive relationship was also obtained between relationship management and

change management ($r=.23$, $p<.01$). These findings meant that improving self-awareness and relationship management is likely to stimulate change management. In this case, these results implied that it is necessary to boost emotional intelligence in terms of self-awareness and relationship management in order to enhance change management. On the other hand, the results revealed non-significant and negative relationship between self-management and change management ($r=-.15$). These results implied that self-management does not enhance change management.

Regression Analysis

The study used multiple regression analysis to examine the predictability of the independent variable and the mediating variable towards the dependent variable. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Multiple Regression Analysis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		R	R ²	Adj.		t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta				R ²	ΔR^2		
1 (Constant)	1.097	.336								
Emotional Intelligence	.510	.095	.533		.533	.285	.275	.285	5.388	0.000
2 (Constant)	.652	.290								
Change Management	.485	.084	.555		.715	.512	.498	.227	5.791	0.000

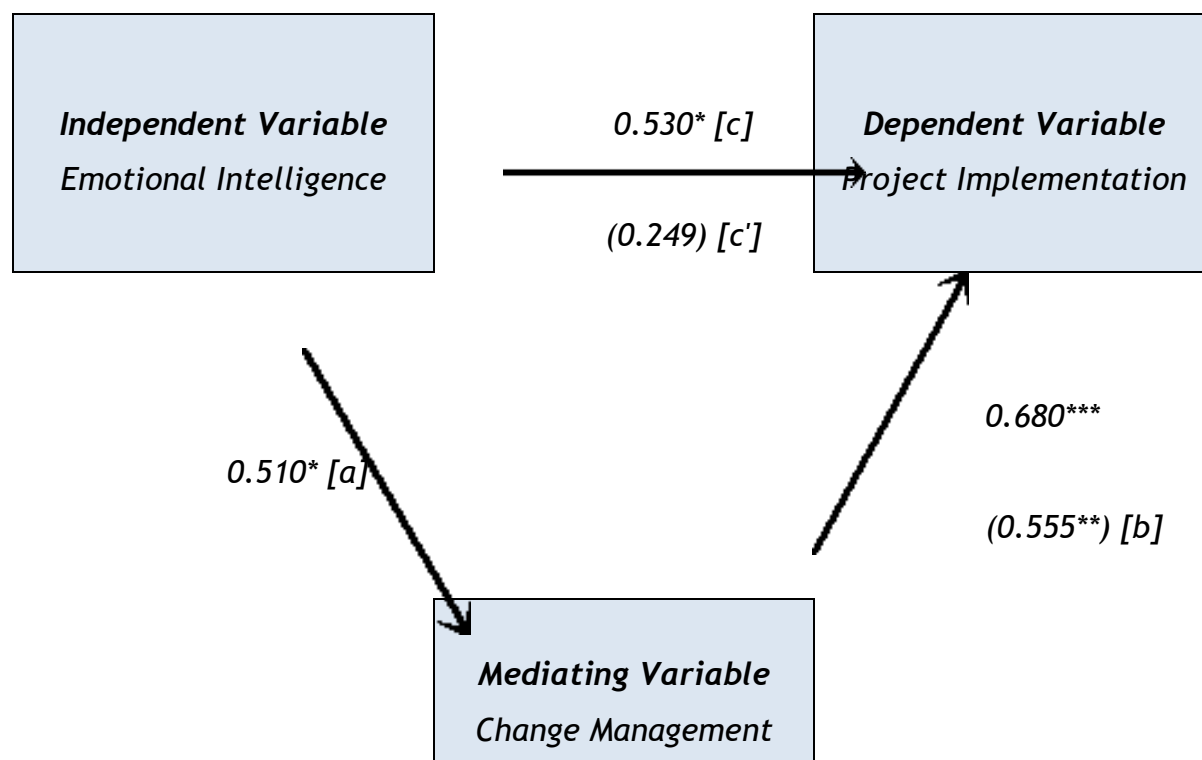
Notes: 22 projects; F-value (Model 1) =29.029; F-value (Model 2) =27.753 VIF<5; Tolerance>.1; Durbin-Watson=1.977

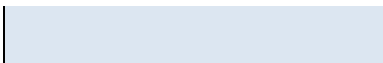
Table 4 revealed Adj. $r^2 =.498$ in relation to the predictability of emotional intelligence and change management towards project implementation. These results meant that jointly emotional intelligence and change management

predicted up to 49.8% of the variances in project implementation. The results further obtained standardized coefficient $Beta=.533$, $Sig<.05$ in relation to emotional intelligence and $Beta=.555$, $Sig<.05$ in relation to change management. These results meant that jointly emotional intelligence and change management significantly predict project implementation. The results revealed $\Delta R^2=.285$ in regards to emotional intelligence, which meant that emotional intelligence contributed 28.5% of the total variance of project implementation. On the other hand, the results revealed $\Delta R^2=.227$ in relation to change management. This meant that in specific, change management explained 22.7% of the total variance in project implementation. Henceforth, the above results implied that emotional intelligence is a better predictor of project implementation compared to change management.

Mediation of change management in the relationship between emotional intelligence and project implementation

The study analyzed the mediation using Med Graph. The results are presented in Figure 4.1.





Type of mediation=Full; $n=22$; Direct=.530; Indirect=.281; *, *** significance at $p<.05$, $p<0.001$; Sobel z-value=3.818547; $p=0.000134$

Figure 1: Mediation of change management in the relationship between emotional intelligence and project implementation

Results in Figure 4.1 revealed Sobel z-value= 3.818547 and p-value=0.000134 in examining the mediation of change management in the relationship between emotional intelligence and project implementation. From these results, it was evidenced that the Sobel z-value was greater than the p-value. In addition, the p-value obtained was less than .05 ($p<.05$). The satisfaction of these two conditions meant that change management mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and project implementation. These results revealed that the beta weight for the basic relationship of emotional intelligence and project implementation denoted as $c(r=.530)$ was significant ($p<.05$). On the other hand, the beta weight upon the inclusion of the mediating variable (change management) denoted as $c'(r=.249)$ was not significant. These results meant that change management was a full mediator in the relationship between emotional intelligence and project implementation

Conclusion

This research concludes that change management is a key driver of project management specifically among NEMA projects. The lesson portrayed is that improving change management would result in successful project implementation. It teaches that projects need effective change management to increase the possibilities of completing within scheduled time, budget, scope and beneficiary satisfaction. Importantly, the study endorses the inevitability of effectively planning for change, managing change and reinforcing change within its change management framework. Therefore, policy makers and managers need to be systematic while conducting change management within projects.

Recommendations

Self-awareness should be enhanced among project members of NEMA projects. This authority should make sure that personnel selected to conform with commonly accepted values; tolerate constructive criticism and express a positive attitude towards learning new things.

Projects by NEMA must intensify planning for change by fully understanding the scope of the project, making proper resource forecasts and identifying key priority areas of the project that need close monitoring.

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