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Stakeholders Engagement and Project Performance

A Case of Inspire, Educate and Empower Rwanda (Teaching Assistantship Project Phase II)

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the engagement of stakeholders in project performance, with a case study of Inspire, Educate and Empower (IEE) in Rwanda. The study used a mixed-methods approach, with both qualitative and quantitative data analyses. The research design was descriptive, and the study population was 227 people from IEE Organization Rwanda, including project beneficiaries, stakeholders, project managers, and IEE administrative staffs. The sample size was 144 respondents, data collected through structured questionnaires. Primary and secondary data collection methods were used. Primary data was collected using questionnaires, and secondary data was collected from literature, reports, and journals. Findings were analyzed using descriptive statistics through Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS). The findings of the study indicated that there is a strong positive correlation between stakeholder engagement and project performance. The study also found that project planning, project implementation, and decision making all have a significant impact on project performance. The conclusion of the study is that stakeholder engagement is essential for project success. The study recommends that project managers and organizations should actively engage with stakeholders throughout the project lifecycle in order to improve project performance. The study recommends that project managers and organizations should: identify all stakeholders early in the project lifecycle. Understand the needs and expectations of stakeholders. Communicate regularly with stakeholders. Involve stakeholders in decision making. Manage stakeholder conflict effectively. The results from the field analyzed and tested where statistically indicated a positive correlation of stakeholder engagement and project performance. The researcher concluded that stakeholder engagement has a positively significance on project performance in Rwanda.

Keywords: *Stakeholders Engagement, Project Performance, Inspire, Educate, Empower Rwanda*

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1.0 Introduction

The success of projects and their implementing organizations greatly depends on the involvement and careful consideration and management of stakeholders. There should be strong coordination and communication among stakeholders in order to maximize organizational or project profitability and sustainability. The concept of stakeholder engagement is a vital aspect of any project, activity, or program that is being executed successfully. A stakeholder can be a single person, a group of people, or an organization that is affected by or has an interest in a program. Stakeholders may include customers, project managers, developers, subcontractors, vendors, financing agencies, customers, owners, staff, and local communities (Jason, 2016). Project stakeholder engagement is described as the ongoing commitment and development of stakeholder interactions to achieve a successful project or program. Stakeholders can typically be engaged in the planning, implementation, management, and tracking of project operations (Moungnoi, 2017). The significance of stakeholder engagement in project performance is not just limited to the above-mentioned statements. A study about the challenges of stakeholders in product market development projects conducted in Nigeria revealed that stakeholder involvement had a significant impact on the financial performance of new product development projects (Al Nahyan et al., 2019). Stakeholders are also involved in the decision-making processes, as well as the planning, development, and execution of projects. It is therefore crucial to managing their wants and expectations for the success of the project.

On the other hand, a study that assessed the management of stakeholder effectiveness and their perceptions of project management using the example of the Livelihoods and Social Protection Programme in the Greater East Region of Ghana found that the concerns and participation of relevant stakeholders were extremely important to the operations of the NGOs. Problems such as unhealthy, conflicting interests, lack of commitment, inadequate interest, recognition, and appreciation, anti-stakeholder leadership concerns, and ingrained perspectives, beliefs, and practices were found to have a major negative impact on the operations of the NGOs (Ayatah, 2012). In addition, a study conducted in Uganda about the participation of stakeholders in extractive schemes found to have a positive impact on the progress of projects (Hassan, 2013). According to a study conducted in Rwanda by Umugwaneza, Nyabera, and Njenga (2021), there is a link between stakeholder engagement and the success of the project. Organizations or initiatives can no longer decide whether or not they want to engage with stakeholders; they must now decide when and how best to do so. Stakeholder engagement depends on the understanding that "those societies should have the opportunity to comment on and contribute to the formulation of decisions that affect them; in today's culture, if they are not aware of it, they will either have to find out later (Taneich, 2018). This research basically aims to acknowledge the contribution of stakeholder engagement to project performance in Rwanda.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Project failure continues to be a serious matter in Rwanda during the period of 2020-2022, which is due to several reasons, but the pre-dominant one is lack of stakeholder determination in the scheme's life cycle. According to Davis, (2014) and Eyaih-Botwe, (2015), the key outbreak to the failure of project is attributed to the role of stakeholders involved in those projects. Mafokosi in his research about the causes of project failure in railway infrastructure projects; found out that the failure in stakeholders' management and the lack of their engagement to design the objects and implementation of project target into the failure of the whole project (Mafokosi. 2018). According

to KPMG data, at least one initiative failed in the preceding year for about 70% of businesses (Lim, 2020). According to the PwC Global Project Management Survey, only 2.5% of the 10,640 projects examined and finalized with 100% success rate. What about the remaining 97.5% of companies? The reasons for this are either that the deadlines, the budget, or the objectives and/or scope were not reached based on deficiency of stakeholders' support in the life cycle of project (Cohen & Henry, 2019). In 2021 research was made in Ghana by Boham & Adinyira once examining source of disappointment for the project; results indicate that stakeholder joint it's the main factor for the scheme achievements (Boham & Adinyira, 2021). Therefore, stakeholder management and stakeholder involvement are significant aspects of project success, according to the above research. At every point of the project life cycle, stakeholders must be involved, and this cannot be ignored under any circumstances.

1.2 Objective of the Study

- i. To examine the effect of Project planning on project performance in Inspire, Educate and Empower (Teaching assistantship project phase II).
- ii. To explore the correlation between decision making and project performance in Inspire, Educate and Empower.
- iii. To analyze project implementation influences on the performance of project in Inspire, Educate, and Empower Rwanda organization (TeSaching assistantship project phase II).

2.0 Literature Review

This section will present the empirical review and theoretical framework for this study.

2.1 Empirical Literature Review

Stakeholder engagement researchers have recently produced some excellent research work. Numerous studies have found that projects are carried out significantly contribute to the economic development of both emerging and established nations (Kimunduu et al., 2016). Despite this level of importance, studies have revealed that there is still a lack of stakeholder participation, which has led to a new area of research on the factors that affect project performance. Researchers are quite interested in the present trend regarding on the impression of education over progressiveness of project. Outcome of stakeholder engagement on project performance has been the subject of numerous research (Nyabwanga, 2011), and the findings show a favorable relationship between risk management techniques and project management success.

2.1.1 Stakeholder Capacity Building and Projects Performance

Mutua, Waiganjo & Oteyo, (2014) quoted by Nzuma (2022) evaluated the contract management outcomes on the funded schemes in Nairobi, Kenya, medium-sized production companies. The study obtained its data from representatives from the 22 firms targeted. Therefore, in this study A survey of Cross-Sectional was adopted, and structured questionnaires adopted. The results of the research disclosed a beneficial effect of contract management on project results. Fixed-price contracts, project acceptance criteria, dispute resolution, and project management training are all fundamental contract management factors identified as having an impact on project performance. Shams (2016) also assessed capacity building as a component of sustained competitiveness in organizations.

2.1.2 Stakeholder Communication management and Projects Performance

By referring to Mutuku, & Mathooko, (2014) explored the impact of communication on staff motivation. The research embraced the technique of descriptive survey and targeted 287 participants at Nokia Siemens Networks, including senior executives, middle-level executives and support employees. The research discovered that sharing data had the biggest impact on employee motivation, comprised of staffs' participation in taking of decision, such that communication stations, while channel of communication 7 C's had the least impact on staffs' incentive. The research proposed that the executives of the company should involve the staff of all executives in order to allow them to have expertise in the complexity of the business. Even though the reviewed research looked at communication in an organization, it did not assess project performance. Instead, the study focused on employee motivation, thus a conceptual gap exists, which the current study sought to address, Early stakeholder involvement in building projects in New Zealand was found to be the primary factor influencing dilemmas and productivity of project advancement, (Einur, 2016).

2.1.3 Stakeholder Role in Work Breakdown Structure (WBS)

According to Sutrisna and Ramanayaka (2018), work Breakdown Structure allows for the systematic, organization of project work (WBS). As a result, it is methodical procedure to breakdown project scope within the project in a hierarchical manner, and it also serves as a systematic road map for project planning phases. Each task can be distinguished from others. Assigning roles, responsibilities, and responsibility to particular people or organizations within the project is made easier as a result. To maintain character and scope clarity and increase productivity, the WBS technique divides the entire project into discrete jobs. For work-based priorities, recognizing interfaces and relationships is also beneficial. According to Menoka (2014) also investigated the performance of sustainability-related projects in the construction sector. The study placed a major emphasis on stakeholder participation in order to accelerate the progress of the building project by achieving construction sustainability.

O'Halloran (2014) looked on project managers' knowledge of stakeholder management in the Irish construction industry. The results of the primary research revealed that project managers in the Irish construction sector regarded a majority of stakeholder analysis and engagement techniques as effective. The study conducted by Magassouba et al.(2019) in the United Kingdom to determine the role of stakeholder on development project revealed that stakeholders are one of the critical steps involved in project success.

2.1.4 Monitoring & Evaluation and Projects Performance

Phiri conducted study on the impact of M&E strategies on project efficiency. In order to identify a significant correlation between M&E-project results, two successfully implemented projects by African Virtual University (AVU), the Virtual University for Cancer Control Network (VUCC net), and the Multinational Project (MNP), were evaluated using a blended ex-post-facto research design and survey. Results show that leadership role in monitoring and evaluating the project has an impact on its effectiveness (Phiri (2015). Yona, Nyonje & Inyega, (2022) in their study about the influence of routine programme monitoring on performance of curriculum instructional project in TVET institutions in Kenya. Ouma and Kamaara (2018) investigated the factors that contributed to the success of Pathfinder International initiatives in Kenya.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Stakeholders Theory

The stakeholder method has been praised as a potential tool for comprehending the firm context (Oakley, 2011). This strategy tries to expand management understanding of its tasks and responsibilities to include non-stockholder group's interests and claims in addition to identify stakeholder injection and output models of the company and the profit maximization function (Mansuri *et al*, 2004). According to Patton (2008), the stakeholder model posits that there is no stakeholder which was before order of importance for one set of interests and advantages over another, and that all individuals or organizations with valid interests participate in a business in order to gain benefits (Karl, 2007). According to the stakeholder theory, organizational management should identify people or groups with an interest in or who are affected by an organization or project, understand their needs, and specify the steps required to address those needs (Bonnafous-Boucher, 2016).

2.2.2 Theory of Performance

The Theory of Performance (ToP) pioneered by Don Elger in 2006 highlights six basic attributes that form a framework for describing performance and its measurement. Attributes adopted in the framework are the level of knowledge, level of identity, context of performance, skill level, fixed factors and personal factors. In addition, the theory provides three axioms these are; immersion, performer's mindset, and reflective practice as elements that further guide the assessment of performance (Don 2006).

2.3 Conceptual Framework

independent variables

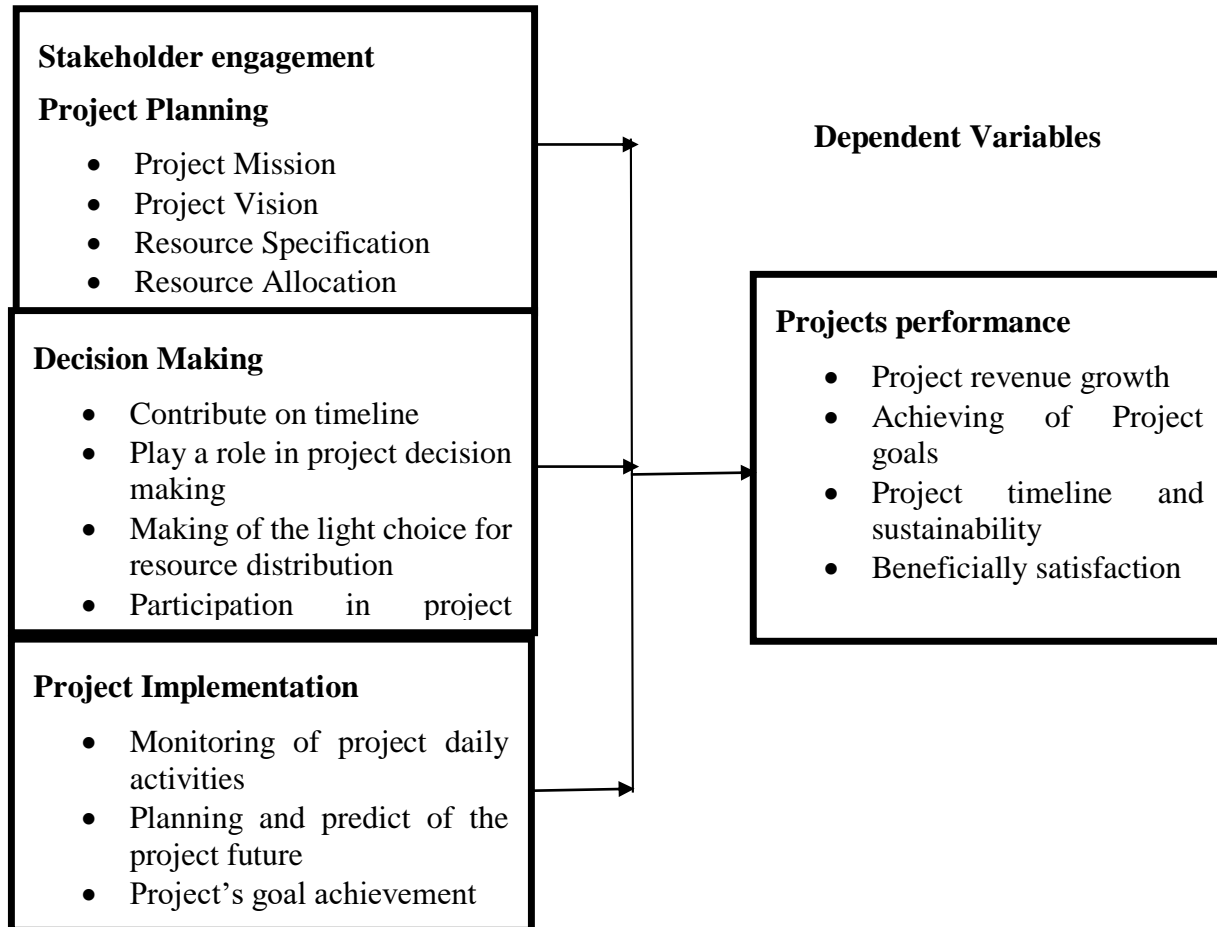


Figure 1 :Conceptual Framework

3.0 Research Methodology

The study employed descriptive research designed. The target Population defined as a group of individual persons, objects, or items from which samples are taken for statistical measurement' (Merriam-Webster, 2017). It is a total number of people or an element located in an area where a study is conducted. Sample Size Practicing of Slovin's (1967) method the sample size regulated from a total population of 227 attendants and measured the illustrative of the real population for in this research. The formula to be used is as follow: $n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$

Whereby n= Sample size

e= Probability of error (Its desired precision is 0.05)

N= The estimate of the population size.

Therefore; $n = \frac{227}{1+227(0.05)^2} = 144$

4.0 Research findings

Profile information about the gender of respondents from IEE Organization Rwanda (Teaching assistantship project phase II) is 79 male respondents (54.9%) and 65 female respondents (45.1%).

Table 1: Correlation Matrix

		Project Performance	Project expansion	Sustainability of IEE Organization Rwanda (Teaching assistantship project phase II)	Level of satisfaction of IEE stakeholders
Project Performance	Pearson Correlation	1			
Project expansion	Pearson Correlation	.932**	1		
Sustainability of IEE Organization Rwanda (Teaching assistantship project phase II)	Pearson Correlation	.946**	.904**	1	
Level of satisfaction of IEE stakeholders	Pearson Correlation	.972**	.933**	.944**	1

By explaining all over variables were tested the response indicated that there is strong positive correlation between independent variables and dependents variables where the findings indicated that project progressiveness has high strong positive correlation by $r=0.932$ (93.2%). Whereas project sustainability with very high positive correlation by $r=0.946$ (94.6%), meanwhile, the level IEE stakeholders have a very strong correlation by $r=0.972$ (97.2%) which indicate the project implementation, sustainability and performance of project. It is due to the strong positive engagement of stakeholder hence project performance.

Table 2: Regression Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.269	.119		-2.261	.025
	Stakeholders engagement	.520	.037	.611	14.019	.000
	Decision making	.539	.063	.398	8.519	.000
	Project implementation	.000	.061	.000	-.004	.997

Table 2 shows the analysis of regression coefficient of three indicator of variable that comprised of: Stakeholders engagement, Decision making, and Project implementation. Once again this analysis facilitated in the testing of hypothesis of the research that formulated by using outcome t-statistics and P=Values which attained on about each indicator of the variable.

H₀₁: Project planning has no statistically significance on the performance of Inspire Educate, and Empower. Table 2 above present the regression coefficients where (B₁=0.611) thus for stakeholders' engagement which was statistically significant (14.019, p=0.000), since the p-value is less than 5%. This means that null hypothesis is rejected at 5% level significance implies that stakeholders' engagement is statistically signifies the project implementation. Further, the regression coefficient was positive; it means that the first unit accelerates in involvement by taking decisions which result to project implementation hence project performance of IEE Rwanda. Therefore, the unit 0.611 of stakeholders' engagement in project decision making has a positive influence that leads on project performance in IEE, Rwanda. H₀₂: There is no correlation between decision making and project performance in Inspire, Educate and Empower. Table 2 above shows the analysis of regression coefficient of (B₂=0.398) for stakeholders' decision making which was definitely statistically significant with (8.519, p=0.00). Once the p-value less than 5%, the null hypothesis is rejected at 5% level of significance it implies that stakeholders' decision making has a statistical significance on the project performance of IEE and Rwanda in general due to the fact that IEE present all projects that in Rwanda in this research project. Mostly regression coefficient of decision making has positively significance by 0.398 on project performance in Rwanda. H₀₃: Project implementation has no statistically significant influence on project performance of Inspire Educate Empower. The table 2. Shows the analysis for every Regression Coefficient of (B₂=0.000) for project implementation which was statistically significant at, (t=0.004, P=0.000), since the P-value less than 5% level significance thus means that project implementation has a statistical significance on the project performance in Rwanda. Foremost, regression coefficient was positive means that one-unit increase stakeholder engagement led to project implementation accelerates the project performance of IEE Organization Rwanda (Teaching assistantship project phase II Rwanda by 0.997. This is an indicator of signifying project performance in Rwanda.

5.0 Conclusion

Effects of project planning on performance of the project; the researcher done the research on the matter about effect of project planning, the results from IEE Organization indicated a positive significance of project planning on performance of the projects in organization of IEE Rwanda. The researcher analyzed all the results and concluded that planning for projects signifies its performance level of the projects of IEE Rwanda and all projects. About Stakeholder decision making, the researcher conducted research on stakeholders' decision making the results from the field indicated the relationship between stakeholder decision making and project performance; the researcher analyzed all the results and concluded that stakeholder decision making has a positive relationship on project performance of IEE organization Rwanda. Once look at Project implantation influence performance of IEE Organization Rwanda (Teaching assistantship project phase IIs The results from the field analyzed by the researcher and realized that project implementation has a positive significance on project performance. Therefore, researcher concluded that project implementation influences project performance in IEE Organization at large this is due to the positive indicator from attendants. Therefore, Project performance is due to stakeholders and IEE administrator, the results from the field analyzed and tested where statistically indicated a positive correlation of stakeholder engagement and project performance. The researcher concluded that stakeholder engagement has a positively significance of project performance.

6.0 Recommendations

Recommendations after the research and analysis that done by the researcher, the researcher recommends to IEE Organization Rwanda (Teaching assistantship project phase II Rwanda authorize the stakeholder engagement in management of the project such that may be equality of the project supervision. IEE Organization Rwanda (Teaching assistantship project phase II should strength the team work by providing the training employees about project mission and vision. This is in form of equalizing the implementation, sustainability hence performance of project. Once again the researcher recommends IEE Organization Rwanda (Teaching assistantship project phase II to improve in monitoring of the project whereby all beneficially should be in the position of supervision. Mostly it helps the project to attain its goals. Suggestions for further studies. The current research was the engagement of stakeholders in project management to implement its goals and better performance of IEE Organization Rwanda (Teaching assistantship project phase II Rwanda, but the is still a gap in the research related to project, the researcher's suggestion for other researchers to work on how the project monitoring, impact of project down on communities of Rwanda, contribution of international projects on communities of Rwanda better standards living. Should also conduct research on effects of monitoring and evaluation government projects in Rwanda.

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